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The Enigma Illusion of Motion - Visual or Mental?

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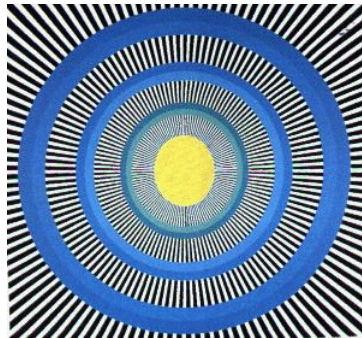
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The Enigma Illusion of Motion - Visual or Mental?

Neuroscientists at Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center have discovered a direct link between eye motions and the perception of illusory motion that solves a 200-year-old debate.

2 points

They conducted a study based on the Enigma [painting](#), a visual illusion in which rotational motion is seen within a stationary image. The artwork has been at the center of a debate over whether the brain or the eye is behind the perception of illusory motion.



The Enigma by Isia Leviant

The illusion is that the blue circles seem to be rotating. This also reminds me of when colours seem to oscillate at their boundaries - notice that the rings are not a [uniform](#) hue of blue.

Well, the researchers found that eye movements were largely the cause of the illusion, rather than any brain activity. It is thus a mis-perception rather than a mis-interpretation.

Now, if you think this may be an amusing but frivolous experiment, think again. Dr. Martinez-Conde says, "The findings from the study could help design future prosthetics for patients with [brain damage](#) or brain lesions that affect the perception of motion."

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