The Unconscious Has a Mind of Its Own

A new research suggests that we've been underestimating what unconsciousness is capable of.

Consciousness is a very popular topic in psychological science, but new research by ELSC's member Prof. Leon Deouell suggests that we've been underestimating what unconsciousness is capable of. A study published in *Psychological Science* shows that the unconscious mind is more intricate and sophisticated than we think.

Volunteers looked through a stereoscope that allowed each eye to view a separate image. In one eye, they viewed continuously flashing blocks of changing colors that suppressed the perception of other objects. In the other eye, they viewed scenes of people interacting with objects that were either congruent (e.g. a woman putting food in an oven) or incongruent (e.g. a woman putting a chessboard in the oven). They were instructed to press one of two buttons when they detected something in the field of vision that had the interaction scenes. Volunteers pressed the button quicker when the scene was incongruent than when congruent.

Incongruent scenes came into awareness much faster than congruent ones, meaning that objects and backgrounds are integrated through unconscious processing. The unconscious mind recognized something was off about the incongruent scene and brought it to consciousness quicker than congruent scenes to help make sense of it.

Read the full research paper:

This news release was first published by *Psychological Science.*
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