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.

*a woman putting either food or a chessboard in the oven, a boy holding a bow and either an arrow or a tennis racket, and two athletes playing basketball with either a ball or a watermelon.*

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.*
Learn more about our exciting upcoming events!

read more

Studying at ELSC

Our Int'l Ph.D. program provides outstanding students with top-notch courses in computational neuroscience.

read more

The Building

The Jerusalem Brain Sciences Building will provide a state-of-the-art research and teaching facility for the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences.

read more

ELSC Media Channel

Get into our media channel and investigate ELSC's latest videos: seminars, public lectures, courses and video articles.

read more

Source URL: https://elsc.huji.ac.il/content/unconscious-has-mind-its-own