

John Ericson's Digital Presentations

Stimulating talks presented with style and humour.....

A Lecture or a Day of Special Interest

The Art of Illusion

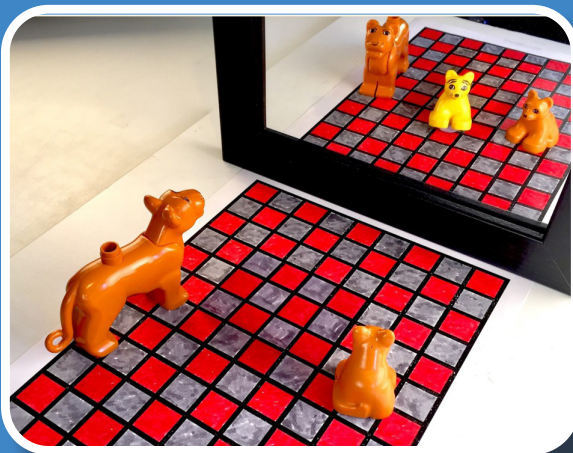
Illusions both entertain and fascinate us!

This thought-provoking presentation is well illustrated with carefully chosen examples taken from both popular culture and the fine arts. The lecture is in two parts. The first half explores what illusions are, where they have come from and most importantly how and why they deceive us.



Some examples will simply entertain; others will either challenge or confuse us. In some instances, you will not believe what you are seeing. We begin with illusions that occur naturally in the environment such as this untouched photo of the Devil's Bridge in Saxony.

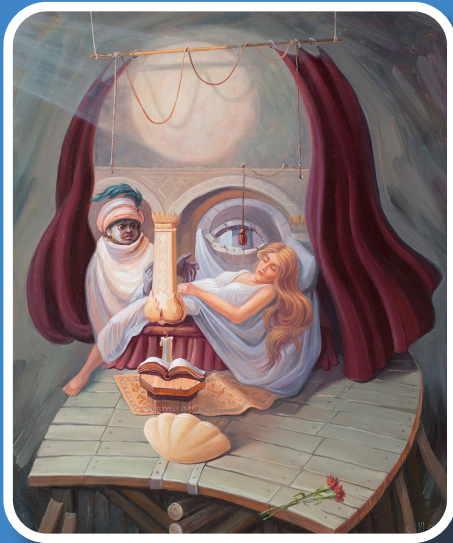
In simple terms an illusion is a *message to the brain that in common sense terms does not make sense*. Consider for a moment another reflection illusion - the cat



in the mirror - an example of a contrived illusion. If we can see the cat in the reflection, why is it not there in the actual scene? Quite baffling, or is it? Whenever we look at a picture, we bring to it what we already know or think we know. In this example there is a simple explanation to the riddle.

In the second part of the lecture we explore how illusions have been used **'in art'** and **'as art'**.

Numerous artists have challenged and entertained us with their creations. The amazing images of MC Escher are well known to us but the creative paintings of many other artists are less familiar. For example, Borrell del Caso's 'Escaping Criticism' (1874) shows a young boy escaping from the very painting in which he was created. Other artists have intrigued us with hidden 'pictures in pictures' as demonstrated by this portrait of 'Shakespeare' by the Ukrainian artist Oleg Shupylak.



Lastly, we will turn our attention to the sculptures of Bruno Catalano, whose bronze surrealist sculptures are sometimes referred to as 'not all there'. 'Les Voyageurs' is one of a series depicting the themes of exile and detachment.



Examples of Catalano's work can be seen in both Marseille and Venice, some of which are permanently under water! In summary, engaging with visual illusions will encourage us to look more carefully and more critically at all the artwork we choose to engage with.