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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NEW NOVA SERIES, “YOUR BRAIN,” TAKES VIEWERS ON A SURPRISING JOURNEY THROUGH MODERN NEUROSCIENCE TO DISCOVER HOW THE BRAIN *REALLY* WORKS**

**Two One-Hour Episodes Premiere Wednesdays, May 17 and May 24, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C**

**Also available for streaming at** [**pbs.org/nova**](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/series/your-brain/)**,** [**NOVA on YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline)**, and the** [**PBS App**](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/)

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**BOSTON; May 17, 2023—***Is what you see real*? *Does your mind control you?* The **PBS science series NOVA**, a production of **GBH**, reveals the surprising answers to these questions and more in a new two-part series, **YOUR BRAIN**, premiering **Wednesdays, May 17 and May 24 at 9pm ET/8C on PBS.** The series, **hosted by** **neuroscientist Heather Berlin**, **PhD**, takes viewers on a mind-boggling journey into the latest research on the human brain, uncovering new insights into how it processes the world and makes you who you are.

Dr. Berlin, a neuroscientist, clinical psychologist, and associate clinical professor of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, explores the neural basis of impulsive and compulsive disorders with the aim of developing novel treatments. She is also trying to unravel the brain basis of consciousness and creativity.

“I have been fascinated by the human brain and its role in our subjective experiences since I was five years old,” **said Berlin**. “**YOUR BRAIN** is the perfect distillation of a lifetime of research, clinical experience, and personal inquiry, enriched by the important work of many of my friends and colleagues in neuroscience. I’m so excited to share this thought-provoking new series with the world.”

The series’ first episode, **YOUR BRAIN: PERCEPTION DECEPTION**, examines how your brain shapes reality and why you can’t always trust what you perceive, sharing surprising tricks and shortcuts the brain takes to help humans survive. The second episode, **YOUR BRAIN: WHO’S IN CONTROL?**,dives into the latest research on the subconscious, revealing surprising insights behind sleepwalking, anesthesia, game theory, and more in a quest to discover what really drives the decisions humans make. Both one-hour episodes of **YOUR BRAIN** will be available for streaming at [**pbs.org/nova**](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/series/your-brain/)**,** [**NOVA on YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline)and the [**PBS App**](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/).

Through an assessment of scientific experiments, educational exercises, and sensory illusions, **YOUR BRAIN** explores a wide range of themes to demystify the brain’s processes, including:

**ILLUSIONS AND REALITY**

Neurons in the brain process sensory signals, such as light, heat, sound, smell, and pressure. Yet the data is often incomplete, so the brain fills in the blanks to create an edited version of reality, even on the most basic level. **YOUR BRAIN: PERCEPTION DECEPTION** explores various visual, auditory, and tactile illusions and how the brain reacts to them. Referencing the widely debated “blue-and-black or white-and-gold” dress that went viral on the internet in 2015, MIT neuroscientist **Rosa Lafer-Sousa, PhD,** explains how color is actually an interpretation of the brain. And **Theanne Griffith, PhD**, a neuroscientist at the University of California, Davis, breaks down the translation of pain sensors to the brain. These illusions and experiments demonstrate that humans’ perceptions of the external world are less objective than many of us would like to believe.

**PERCEPTION AND CONSCIOUSNESS**

Humans have been fascinated by consciousness for thousands of years. To define consciousness and its role in how people perceive the world, **YOUR BRAIN: PERCEPTION DECEPTION** follows neuroscientist **Lorella Battell, PhD,** at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, where she conducts a series of experiments to assess the level of conscious awareness in someone who developed an apparent blind spot following a stroke. Surprisingly, the person identifies certain objects that appear in the blind spot, despite not consciously seeing them, confirming that perception can be distinctly separate from conscious experience.

**MEMORY AND SENSE OF SELF**

The brain is a storytelling machine, weaving together a story based on what it can infer from memory. Yet scientists have found that when we remember something, our perception of that memory becomes less accurate over time. In **YOUR BRAIN: PERCEPTION DECEPTION**, neuroscientists **Stephen Macknik, PhD,** at the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center, and **Daniela Schiller, PhD,** at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinaiexplain the unique brain mechanism called reconsolidation, in which your brain returns a memory into long-term storage by rebuilding neuronal connections. As a result, the stories we tell ourselves, or what we consider our memory, are simply our brain’s constructions — and just like our perceptions, our sense of self as understood through our memories can be considered an illusion.

**DECISION-MAKING AND AGENCY**

How is it possible to do complex behaviors like walking, eating, and sometimes even driving while sleeping? In episode two, **YOUR BRAIN: WHO’S IN CONTROL?** Berlin visits **Emmanuel During, MD**, a clinical associate professor of neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, who studies the functions of the brain when an individual is sleepwalking. The brain goes through periods of high and low activity during normal sleep patterns, but when sleepwalking, we see a unique buildup of slow waves. **Susana Martinez-Conde, PhD,** a professorat SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, offers insight on the functions of the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for deliberate choices and self-awareness, and how its inactivity during sleepwalking can illuminate how we make decisions.

 **EMOTIONS**

Our brains have evolved to help us understand other people, and our emotions serve as our internal compass to navigate this. **YOUR BRAIN: WHO’S IN CONTROL?** follows Dartmouth College neuroscientist **Luke Chang, PhD,** as he studies how emotions like greed and guilt affect our decision-making. Chang scans the brains of study participants while they play a game from behavioral economics called the “Trust Game.” Chang explains how different regions of the brain impact our emotions with the historical example of **Phineas Gage,** a railroad foreman who suffered a traumatic brain injury that has offered researchers insights into how different parts of the brain affect different aspects of our personality.

**TRAUMA**

Emotional trauma can impact our brains just as much as physical trauma. Some emotional experiences are so extreme, the impact they have is passed down from generation to generation through genetic outcomes. Columbia University neuroscientist **Bianca Jones Marlin, PhD,** looks at how trauma experienced by our parents and grandparents can impact future generations.

**CREATIVITY AND FLOW STATES**

**YOUR BRAIN: WHO’S IN CONTROL?** explains some of the ways in which our behavior is influenced by outside factors and explores parts of the brain that allow us to feel like the authors of our own life. Neuroscientists are trying to understand the idea of true creativity, and what happens when we fully “let go” of conscious control. University of California, San Francisco neuroscientist **Charles Limb, MD,** studies our brain’s ability to improvise, and offers insight into how we can improve at some of our most beloved hobbies, from shooting free throws to hitting a killer tennis serve.

“The human brain is one of the most complex structures we know and it’s the source of every thought we have. The more science reveals about this amazing organ, the more insight we gain into ourselves,” said **NOVA Co-Executive Producer Julia Cort.** “Each episode of this series takes viewers on an entertaining journey through cutting-edge research in neuroscience and real-life stories full of surprising twists and turns — shedding light on big questions that go to the very heart of who we are.”

“At NOVA, we are committed to promoting scientific literacy and curiosity through innovative and engaging storytelling, and this new series is no exception,” said **NOVA Co-Executive Producer Chris Schmidt**. “**YOUR BRAIN** takes viewers on a compelling quest to unravel the secrets of the brain — that amazing biological network in our heads where worlds are made.”

**YOUR BRAIN: PERCEPTION DECEPTION** and **YOUR BRAIN: WHO’S IN CONTROL?** premiere **Wednesdays, May 17 and 24 at 9pm ET/8C on PBS.** Both episodes will also be available for streamingat [pbs.org/nova](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/series/your-brain/), [NOVA on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline), and the [PBS App](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](https://www.pbs.org/passport/videos/). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](https://help.pbs.org/support/solutions/5000121793) website.

**YOUR BRAIN: PERCEPTION DECEPTION** is a NOVA Production by Little Bay Pictures for GBH. Hosted by Heather Berlin. Written, Produced, and Directed by Michael Bicks & Anna Lee Strachan.

**YOUR BRAIN: WHO’S IN CONTROL?** is a NOVA Production by Structure Films for GBH. Hosted by Heather Berlin. Produced & Directed by David Alvarado and Jason Sussberg. Telescript by Jason Sussberg. Story by Michael Bicks and Anna Lee Strachan. Additional Producing and Directing by Michael Bicks & Anna Lee Strachan.

Executive Producers for NOVA are Julia Cort and Chris Schmidt. NOVA is a production of GBH. **YOUR BRAIN** is distributed internationally by [PBS International](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/pbsinternational.org/__;!!Ppj8HQ!K1aGrSPwuX1yowPbZ8yyVY68YzhfEwGgLQwajid0jt-D3cgmuSrae4Krms_9jOcYWxCUUIgJZ38fj8kx3QTpmrKOXA$).

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**About NOVA**

[NOVA](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019) is the most popular primetime science series on American television, demystifying the scientific and technological concepts that shape and define our lives, our planet, and our universe. The PBS series is also one of the most widely distributed science programs around the world, and is a multimedia, multiplatform brand reaching more than 55 million Americans every year on TV and online. NOVA’s important and inspiring stories of human ingenuity, exploration, and the quest for knowledge are regularly recognized with the industry’s most prestigious awards. As part of its mission to make the scientific enterprise accessible to all, NOVA is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its work, from the production process to the range of stories we tell and the voices we amplify. In addition, science educators across the country rely on NOVA for resources used in the classroom as well as in museums, libraries, and after-school programs. NOVA is a production of GBH; more information can be found at [pbs.org/nova](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019), or by following NOVA on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NOVApbs/), [Twitter,](https://twitter.com/novapbs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/novapbs/?hl=en).

**About PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’s broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS’s premier children’s media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math, and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV — including a 24/7 channel — online at  [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/), via an array of mobile apps, and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [PBS.org](http://pbs.org), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following  [PBS on Twitter](https://twitter.com/pbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pbs) or through  our  [apps for mobile and connected devices](http://www.pbs.org/anywhere/home/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at  [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](https://twitter.com/PBS_PR).

**About GBH**

GBH is the leading multiplatform creator for public media in America. As the largest producer of content for PBS and partner to NPR and PRX, GBH delivers compelling experiences, stories and information to audiences wherever they are. GBH produces digital and broadcast programming that engages, illuminates and inspires, through drama and science, history, arts, culture and journalism. It is the creator of such signature programs as MASTERPIECE, ANTIQUES ROADSHOW, FRONTLINE, NOVA, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, *Arthur* and *Molly of Denali,* as well as WORLD Channel and a catalog of streaming series, podcasts and on-demand video. With studios and a newsroom headquartered in Boston, GBH reaches across New England with GBH 89.7, Boston’s Local NPR®; CRB Classical 99.5; and CAI, the Cape and Islands NPR® station. Dedicated to making media accessible to and inclusive of our diverse culture, GBH is a pioneer in delivering media to those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired. GBH creates curriculum-based digital content for educators nationwide with PBS LearningMedia and has been recognized with hundreds of the nation’s premier broadcast, digital and journalism awards. Find more information at [wgbh.org](https://www.wgbh.org/).

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