

BEAU LOTTO

- Neuro-Scientist
- Founder of Lottolab

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Beau Lotto is a globally renowned neuro-scientist who specialises in perception research, and has for years wowed the world of science with work that blurs the boundaries between neuro-science and the arts. As well as bending the science of perception, he is also trying to transform the way people think not just about themselves but also about the world around them.

The focus of Beau's research is perception, but his interest lies as much in a philosophical as scientific understanding of how humans see the world around them. Perception underpins creativity, and therefore innovation; even education is, in principle, the creation of perception. His research encompasses not just human vision, but bee and robot vision too. Beau goes even further by breaking down boundaries not just within his own discipline but between disciplines, by collaborating with artists, musicians, fashion designers and others – anyone who has an interest in exploring different ways of seeing (and doing) things.

Beau's centre of perception research, known as Lottolab, has become a hybrid science lab-art studio which, as well as undertaking highly controlled experiments resulting in papers published in the top international scientific journals, produces stunning visual illusions and installations that have been included in exhibitions at the Hayward Gallery, the Serpentine Gallery and the Science Gallery in Dublin, among others. His illusions are used by many other scientists, artists, teachers and science museums internationally.

For Beau, the potential for science to not only amaze, but also to transform the way people think of the world is particularly true in the case of children. His workshops give primary and secondary schoolchildren the chance to design their own experiments and analyse their own data, and evidence shows that not just their view of science, but also their confidence and their approach to learning is transformed in the process.

Beau's experimentalist, visionary approach to science has won him a wide audience, which has broadened dramatically since 2010 with his significant contributions to two episodes of BBC TV's Horizon programme. One journalist has suggested that Beau could do as much good for the public appreciation of science as Jamie Oliver has done for our appreciation of food and cooking.

Beau has lectured on perception for TED, the RSA series, and the BBC, and also given talks to banks, governments, and universities such as Harvard. He is an inspiring and motivational speaker and uses illusions, games and interaction to engage his audience. Beau gave his second TED talk in July 2012. His first was in 2009 and showed how the brain creates perceptions of oneself and one's world towards a better understanding of self. His second talk fostered innovation by offering a new route into uncertainty and thus a deeper understanding of creativity and learning.

His organisation Lottolab finished its two-year residency in May 2012 at the world's best known Science Museum (in London), where they created new paradigms and programmes for engaging small and large audiences with new ways of thinking about science, art and culture. Among other results were two BBC 2 Horizon programmes, two programmes with National Geographic Channel, the world's first science paper authored by primary school children, which itself resulted in a freely-accessible science education curriculum predicated on creating real science through play.

In Spring 2013 Lottolab will be creating The Experiment in San Francisco with the Peter Baumann Foundation and other investors from Silicon Valley. The Experiment will be a pop-up laboratory space that truly explores what it means to 'be human' in highly controlled but wholly creative environment that is a nightclub, cabaret and laboratory. The result will be a truly unique experience that blurs the boundaries between science, art and culture, with the aim of shining new light onto human nature.

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