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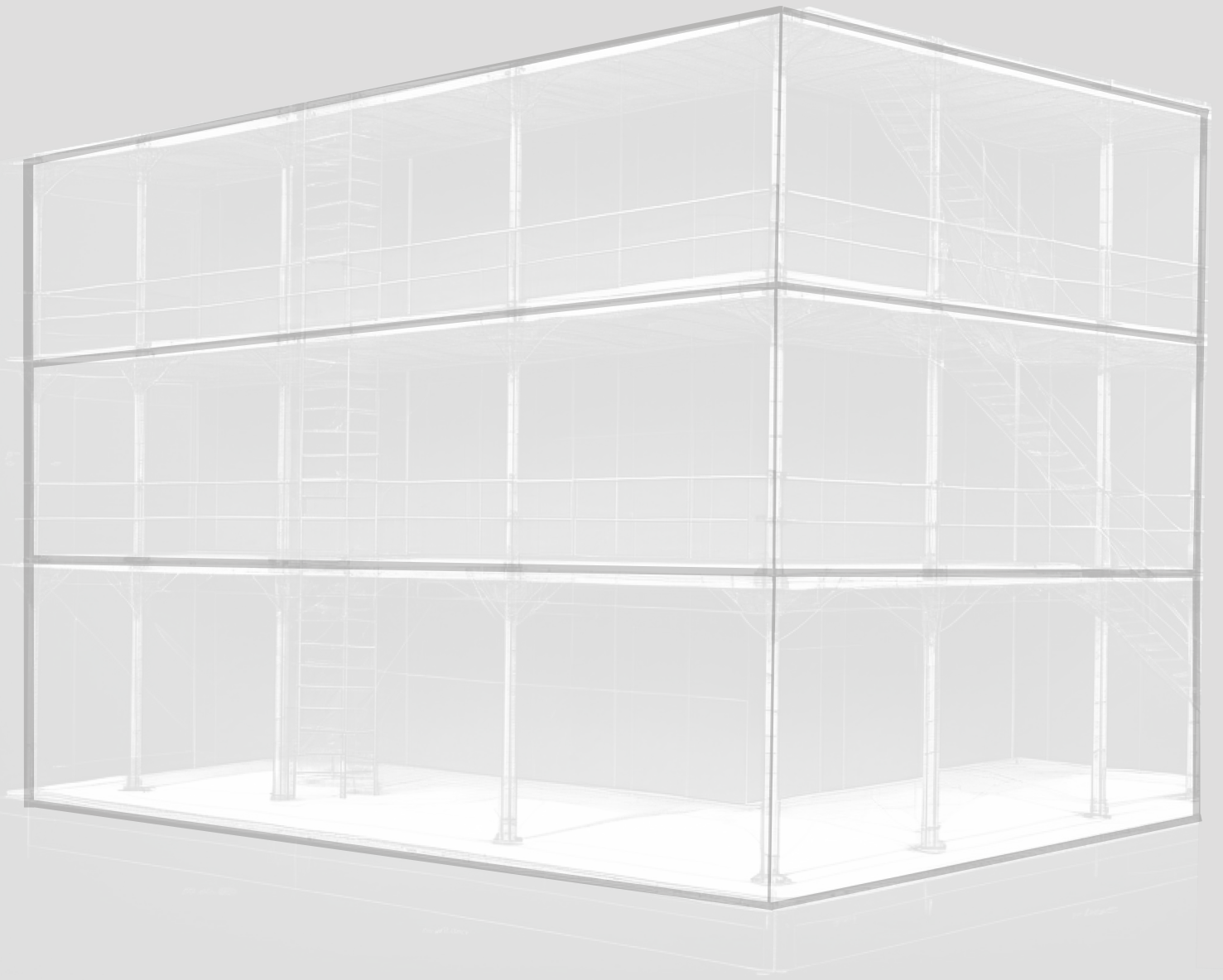
PROJECT: A PERFORMANCE-LECTURE ON THE MENTAL ARCHITECTURE OF MAGIC

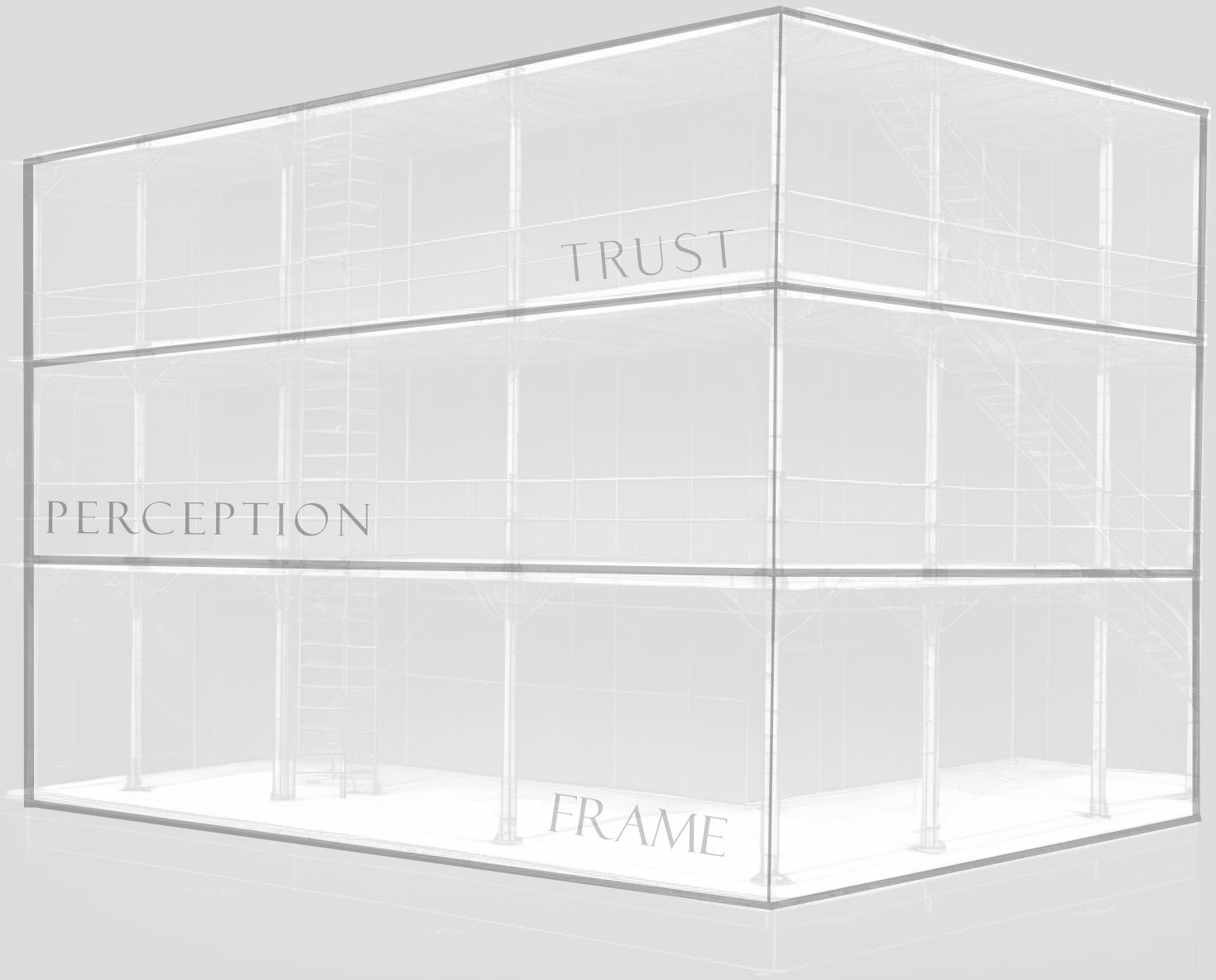
Tuesday, September 10, 2024

National Arts Club • 15 Gramercy Park South New York, NY 10003

J E A N E T T E
A N D R E W S
S T U D I O

*Unique Mental Structure to Produce Belief in the
Magic Possesses a
Impossible*

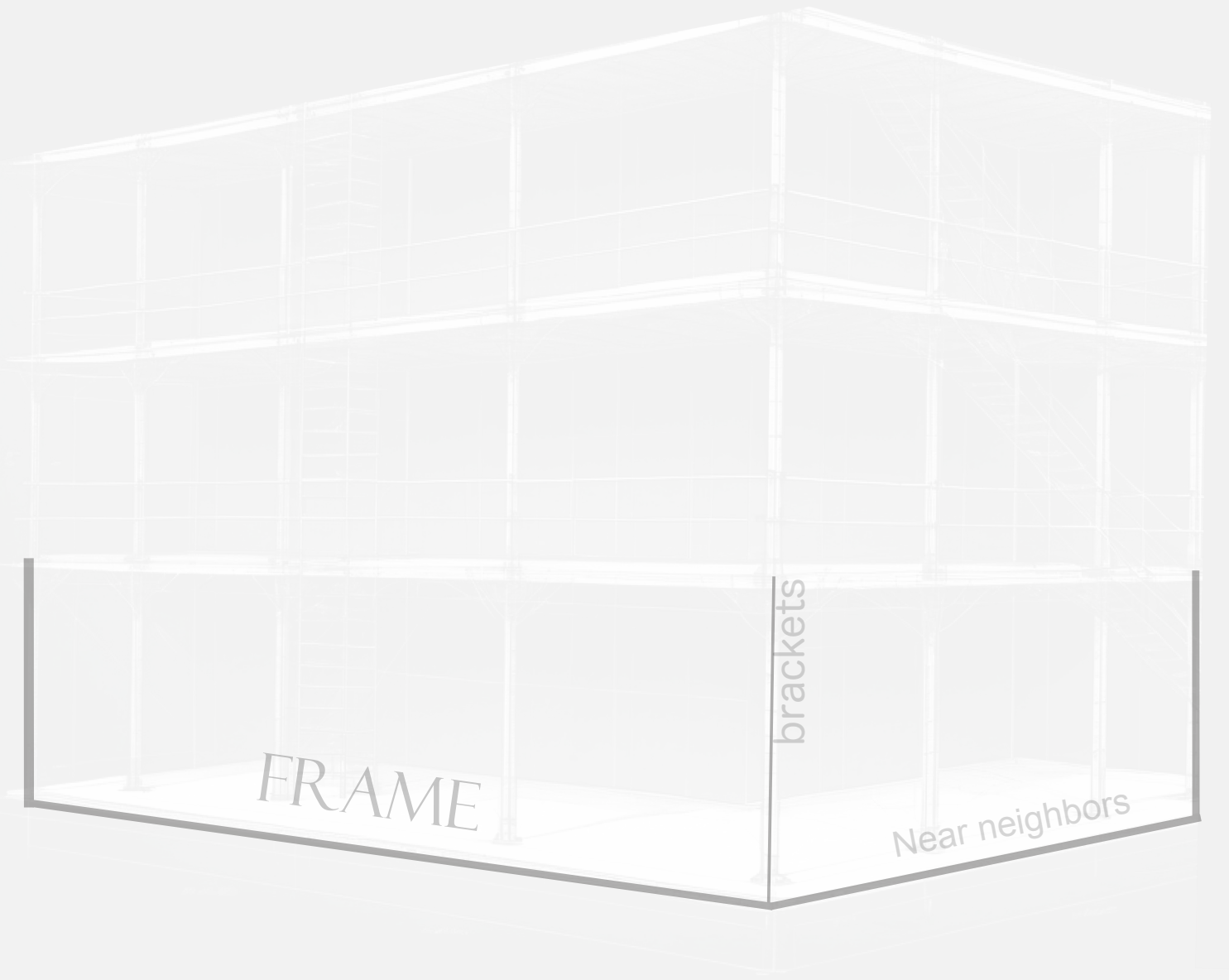




TRUST

PERCEPTION

FRAME



FRAME

brackets

Near neighbors

“A performing art in which audiences are entertained by tricks, effects, or illusions of seemingly impossible feats, using natural means.”

- Google Arts & Culture

MAGIC SHOW

stakes

scrutiny

outcome

We know it's a performance and they are not claiming supernatural means, we know there is a trick at hand...

Show often denotes and artificiality or intentionality behind it

MAGIC TRICK

Literally telling us you're being tricked... There is this explicit acknowledgment that we're being deceived

transparent | deception

C. Thi Nygeun notes that games give us the "capacity to fail in a safe space, games are a magic circle ... where the meanings don't bleed into the real world, and not feel like a failure in real life."

DECEPTION

Both fellow magician Matthew Holtzclaw and I talk about this concept

catalyst for productive, conscious skepticism and metacognition

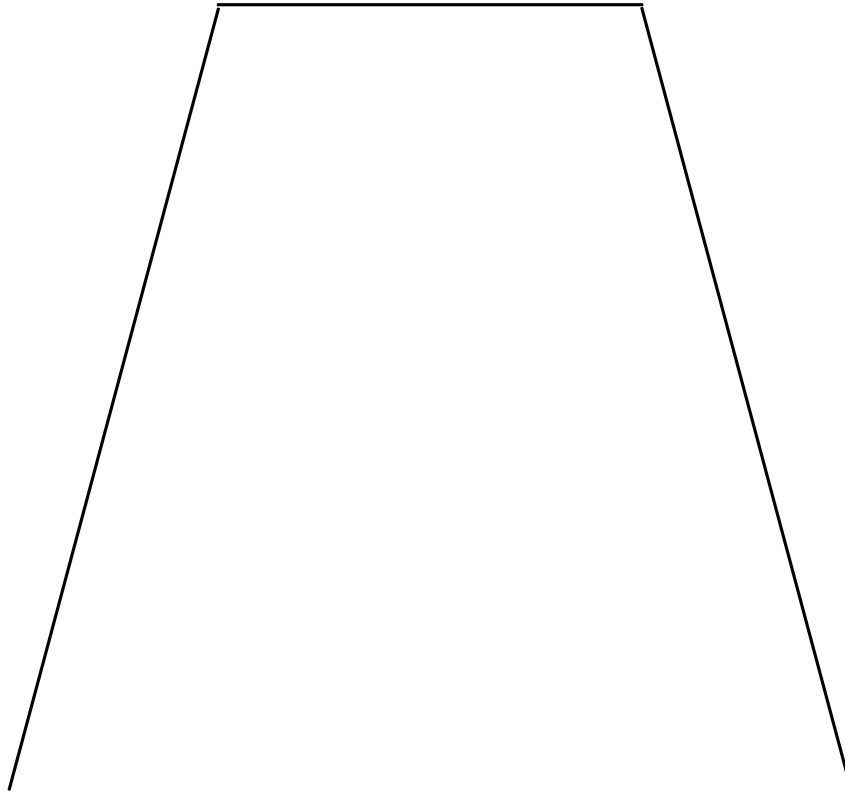
FICTION vs. 'REAL WORLD'

MAGIC SHOW

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FICTION vs. 'REAL WORLD'

C. Thi Nygeun notes that games give us the “capacity to fail in a safe space, games are a magic circle ... where the meanings don’t cross out so you can fail in the game and not feel like a failure in real life.”

Emotional, affective experience

FICTION vs. 'REAL WORLD'

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PLAY

FICTION vs. 'REAL WORLD'

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MAGIC SHOW MAGIC TRICK

catalyst for productive, conscious skepticism and metacognition

FICTION vs. 'REAL WORLD'

MAGIC IN A PLAY

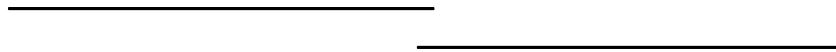
Emotional, affective experience

GAMBLING CON

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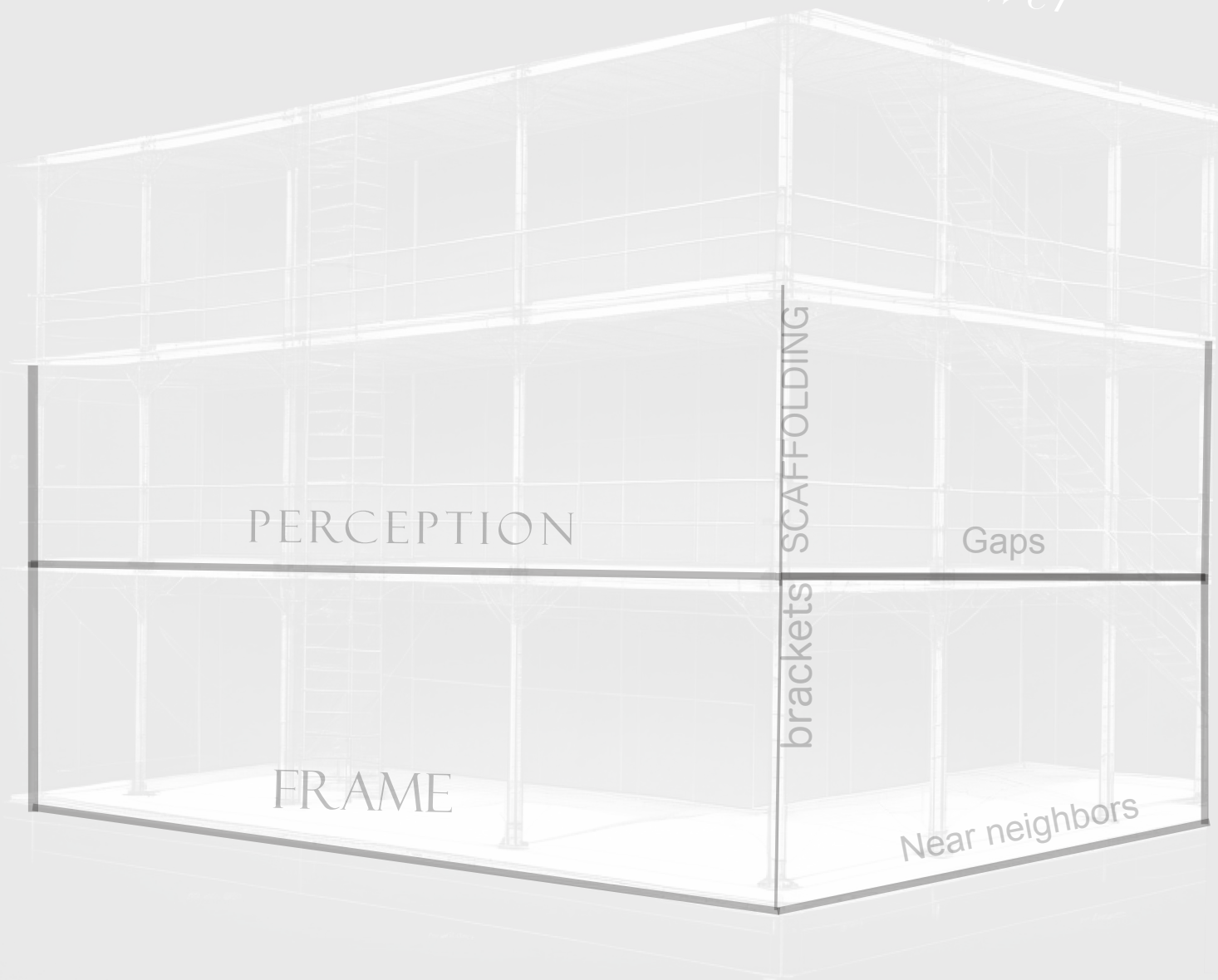
The magic show as a bracketed mental playground and a mental safe space for perceptual and epistemic failure or have our beliefs or perceptions challenged

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The magic show as a bracketed mental playground and a mental safe space for perceptual and epistemic failure or have our beliefs or perceptions challenged...

*Magic Possesses a
Unique Mental Structure to Produce Belief in the S
Impossible
it's cultural framing
&
filled in gaps in the mind of the viewer*

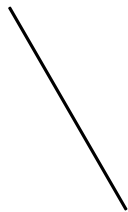


MAGIC EXPLOITS THESE GAPS TO POINT OUT TO US THAT THEY EXIST

“Each of us are limited cognitive beings, that each sees a little patch of the world, somehow has to link them up correctly, and somehow has to link them up from our limited patch.”

catalyst for productive, conscious skepticism

GAPS

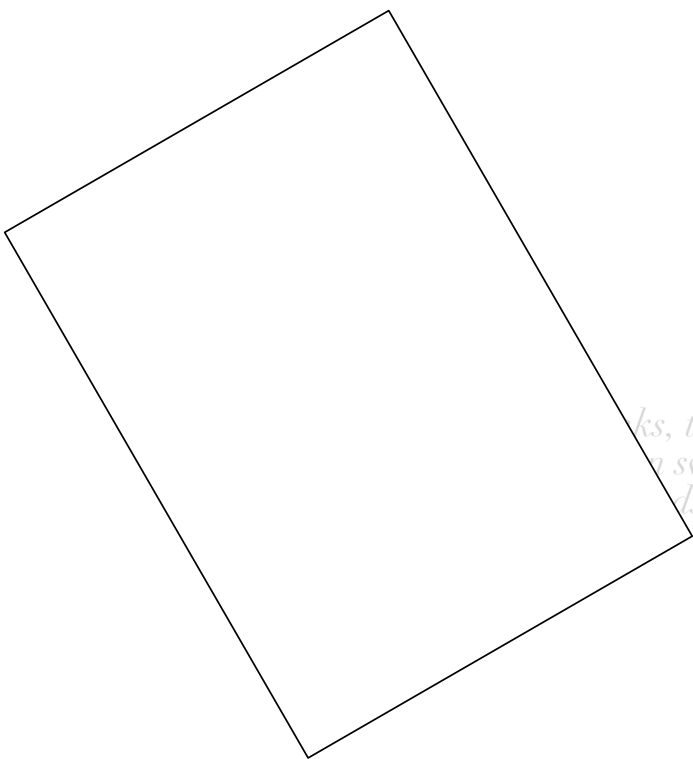


The links, those filling in of the gaps, that's the job of the magician to swoop in to make you fill in the gaps in a way that affords for an incredible event.

The links, those filling in of the gaps, that's where the magician swoops in make you fill in the gaps in a way that affords for an incredible event

GRAHAM JONES

“Magicians have developed an elaborate working understanding of the mainsprings of perception along with a corresponding repertoire of sleight-of-hand techniques calibrated to induce perceptual error [...] seeking to illuminate the mental processes of perception.”



Trade of the Tricks

*Tricks, those filling in of the gaps, that's where the
swoops in make you fill in the gaps in a way
leads for an incredible event*

categorize

Don't actively think about how to hold it what it's

used for etc. every time _

how other people use them etc.

glasses

GAPS

Take for example something even more stripped

down like color

we assume the apples are red or green or some

variation thereof

apples

categorize

predict

GAPS

Brain as prediction model

Pattern recognition

Magic occurs in the filled in gaps in the mind of the viewer



*Magicians know what 'end effect' we want
you to perceive*

Aka

the end shape of the building

GAPS

predict

Magic occurs in the filled in gaps in the mind of the viewer

So the performance is often us building a carefully designed scaffolding that traces out the exterior shape of that 'building' so that you make all of the mental jumps to fill in where we need you to.

GAPS

Magic is providing this structure that is giving you touchstones where you can visually and cognitively jump from stable point to stable point while inferring or glossing over things that may be incorrect, or completely missing (which is where the magic technique is hiding OR where you are filling in to make something incredible happen...)

predict

Magic occurs in the filled in gaps in the mind of the viewer

we need to know which perceptual points viewers are likely to gloss over and which ones they are likely to be skeptical of

thus we can:

- Build extra support beams where needed

- Use the ones that do not need support (are less likely to be scrutinized often as moment to either enact technique or to bolster other claims, or give you false clarity or build a sense of trust

GAPS

stakes

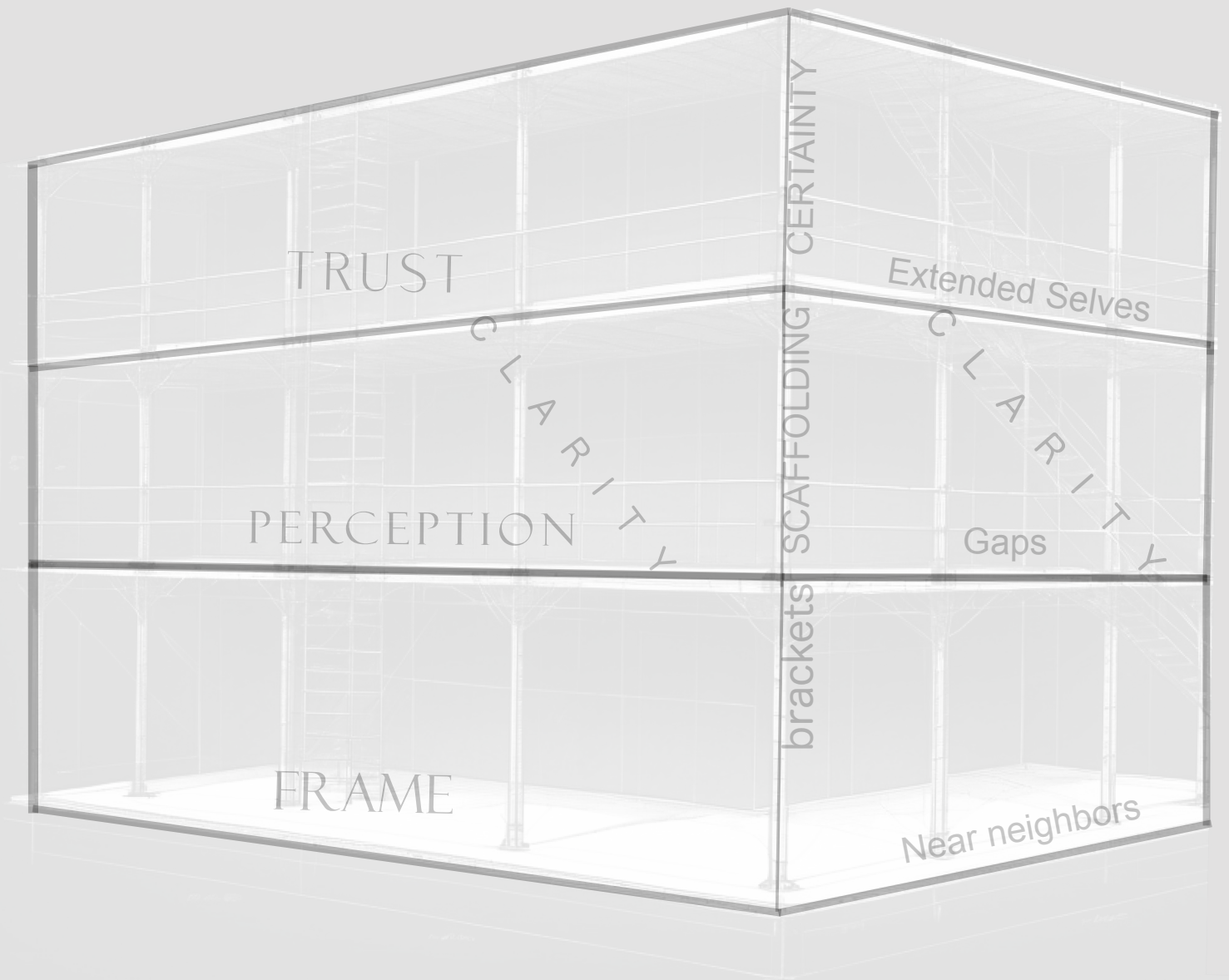
scrutiny

outcome

predict

*Magic Possesses a
Unique Mental Structure to Produce Belief in the Impossible*

*it's cultural framing,
filled in gaps in the mind of the viewer &
mutual trust*



Illusion of CLARITY

thought ender

C Thi Nygen

“it’s probably thought through enough” = quick heuristic

Unexpected or the confusing is a rule to keep investigating and

clarity as a way to stop investigating

give a system of thought a feeling of clarity

“stage magicians send signals of ‘boring’ and ‘interesting’ — confusing to think about vs clear and settled”

———— > Certainty

Certainty

YOU

That **clarity** makes you feel certainty and thus trust in the situation that you are seeing

Trust in ones own perceptions

historically proven to be true

your heuristics / shortcuts are reliable enough for your brain to make predictions & functioning everyday

——— > others

“Extended selves”

“One view as the only way that we can know things is as a huge collective unit”

Multiple vantage points and the thickness of perception of others

now we trust:

the situation of the magic performance,

our own perceptions as accurate, and

the reactions of others

verify

(trust but)

member of audience is involved (more literally extended self)

Especially when there is a shift in authority or agency
gives rise to trust because of community member acting in place of oneself in good faith

Equal footing re authority but new / more agency

————— > trust

Nygen notes

Annette Baier's "Trust and antitrust"

"Making yourself vulnerable by putting something in their power - in particular of their goodwill."

So magic is a major display of reciprocal, epistemic trust

a good faith act of both parties doing this |
v
v

Magician puts deception up to scrutiny

(and is is vulnerable because one may be caught out due to cultural frame of transparent about deceiving)

And spectator puts their ability to be deceived

(to this hostile epistemic actor to take advantage of assumptions and mental shortcuts)

Not a Post. Script.

Alief vs belief

Am I really 'believing' in the impossible?

Maybe not...



*rational and the sensation
worlds,*

Post. Script.

Tamar Gendler's idea of 'alief'

a mental state that is automatic or habitual, and can be
in conflict with a person's explicit beliefs.

responses that are sometimes conscious and sometimes based on
how things seem."You can believe one thing while alieving another."

Alief appears to be at play in magic.

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*Magic Possesses a
Unique Mental Structure to Produce Belief in the
Impossible*

A ribbon cutting

*rendering the full structure of the seemingly impossible
in the filled in gaps in the mind of the viewer
led in gaps in the mind of the viewer &
mutual trust*

