

Books & Arts of the year

Our pick of 2011's Books & Arts coverage.

20 December 2011

Neanderthal cognition, future dystopias and the maths of magic featured in some of the starring books and arts reviews and Q&As from 2011. A [subscription](#) is required to view this content.

▫ **1. Q&A: Illuminating the dark**

As he releases a 3D documentary about the prehistoric paintings in Chauvet Cave in southern France, Werner Herzog — the German director of *Fitzcarraldo* and *Grizzly Man* — talks about cave art and the hostility of nature.

4 May 2011

▫ **2. Q&A: The mathemagician**

Mathematician Persi Diaconis of Stanford University in California ran away from home in his teens to perform card tricks. As he publishes a book on the mathematics of magic, co-authored with juggler and fellow mathematician Ron Graham, he explains what makes a good trick.

26 October 2011

▫ **3. Q&A: Speculative realist**

Novelist Margaret Atwood's essay collection *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*, published this month, is a companion piece to her dystopian fictional world of global warming and engineered plagues. The Canadian author discusses where she gets her science, and her concerns for the future.

5 October 2011

▫ **4. Technology: Game for change**

Sara de Freitas applauds a bold argument that online gaming can save the planet.

16 February 2011

▫ **5. Biotechnology: Making people**

Today's wariness of reproductive technologies stems from myths, legends and Hollywood, finds Chris Mason.

16 March 2011

▫ **6. Higher education: Academic questions**

Two provocative books skirt around why universities should get back to teaching, finds David Helfand.

7 September 2011

▫ **7. Psychology: How we form beliefs**

Religions and superstitions may stem from the brain's ability to spot patterns and intent, finds A. C. Grayling.

22 June 2011

▫ **8. Climate change: Lands' End to the Arctic**

Henry Pollack relishes a climate-science narrative with an intrepid and passionate businessman at its heart.

27 April 2011

▫ **9. Mathematics: Alice in time**

Gillian Beer chronicles the passage of time in its many manifestations through Lewis Carroll's enduring classics.

16 November 2011

▫ **10. Neuroscience: Neanderthals in mind**

Clive Gamble relishes the inside story on the cognitive abilities of our fossil relatives.

2 November 2011

Nature | doi:10.1038/nature.2011.9672