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Interview with Miroslaw Magola in Mysteries Magazin April 2008

The Magnetic Man

PSI-talent challenges sceptics “I don’t cheat!”

Miroslaw Magola’s amazing “attractive” powers

Be it metal vessels, marble or wood: Nearly everything sticks to Miroslaw Magola. For several years now, German Miroslaw Magola, formerly from Poland, has been keeping people amazed with his unbelievable performances. With criticism growing, he now promises, “For the future, I will also appear using talcum and gloves.”

2002: In the middle of the ample foyer of the congress hall housing the Basel Psi-convention, kneels a bald-headed man of medium age on the floor – surrounded by amazed spectators. Before him are placed several metal pots of different sizes, all turned upside down. Cautiously, the man lays his hand on the bottom of one of the vessels, Then he slowly lifts his arm – and the spectators hardly believe their eyes. The heavy vessel seems to stick to the palm of his hand. As though it were magnetically attracted. Miroslaw Magola smiles – and concentrates again. Then – still kneeling on the ground – he performs the same spectacle with his other hand. Slowly he reaches out with both his hands, each of them having a metal pot sticking to it. Then he smashes them against each other with full force, like a cymbalist. Several times, even. Without the pots falling down, as everyone would suspect. Alarmed by the noise, several of the visitors eye Magola to witness this exceptional performance. Slowly the “magnetic man” lowers his hands with the pots “sticking” to them again, places them gently on the carpet, where they separate from his hands – as though a hidden magnet was deactivated. Magola smiles. Stunned, the audience spontaneously applaud. More people halt. Because the uncommon guest holds some more surprises in stock. In a similar way, he “lifts” more objects with his hands, waving about wildly with his arms – but the objects still stick to his palms. Big cooking pots seem to even stick to his forehead, although, according to the laws of gravitation, they should crash downwards.

“I call it energy ...”

How does he do it? “Everybody possesses powers like these, but everybody must find his own way to find out how to use them”, Magola is convinced. “I call it energy – others may call it call it god. I want the people to see that at my performances, gravitation doesn’t work the way we know from a physical point of view.” He has been accused of many things. Like, he would be using glue, chemical substances or hidden devices like magnets. “That’s all rubbish”, Magola assures. “After all, it does also work with wood, porcelain, marble blocks of 2 kg weight and other kinds of material, as visitors to my performances know. Furthermore, everybody may test my objects before and after the show – you won’t find the slightest trace of glue or any other substance there.”

Today, he is also an artist, and he has an eventful past behind him. Born on 29 may 1958 in Gorzow Wielkopolski, he has been deeply involved in anti-communist resistance in Poland in the mid eighties, which finally landed him in prison. In 1987, he fled to Germany, where he asked for political asylum. “I was brought to a refugee’s camp in Neuburg/Donau, an old army casern from WW II”, he remembers. “Being quite isolated there, I enforcedly had a lot of time on my hands for my philosophical studies. One day, while in the kitchen, I perceived that certain metallic objects stuck to me. But, with my political situation, I was occupied with other matters, so I didn’t care much.” Miroslaw Magola’s request for asylum was answered in the affirmative. Since 1989, he has been living in Munich with his family, and in 2002, he became naturalized. “After the change in Poland, I turned my back on politics and travelled to the USA, where I met up with some friends. There, in a private circle, I have performed ma

magnetic powers before them, just for entertainment. They stimulated me to demonstrate my talent to interested investigators and to have me examined by them.”

“No tricks!”, physicist says

One of the scientists with whom Magola came into contact about 1997, was Dr. Friedber Karger of the Max-Planck-Institute for Plasma physics in Garching near Munich, who has had, as a precaution, his test series with the “miracle man” filmed. He has years of practice, having tested several “magnetic men” up to now.

“I have been doing several pre-testings with Magola”, Karger stated, “We could definitely exclude the use of magical tricks or non-allowed devices.” It could also be verified that Magola’s powers had nothing in common with classical magnetism, as there were also objects made of plastic, stone or glass sticking to his skin. “Furthermore, his powers do not work from a distance, as we could ascertain by further investigations. So, they are just working from a short distance.”

So how does the physicist explain these abilities? “We know of the geckos that they have got millions of nano-hairs on their soles with which they can achieve a stupendous adhesive power. So to me the question puts itself if magnetic men like Magola are perhaps able to paranormally change their skin into something like this for a short time. This would at least explain their adhesiveness in a conventional way, from a physical point of view.” In order to test this hypothesis, a microphysical test on Magola’s skin would be necessary, “which we were unable to perform due to a lack of time.”

Dr. Walter von Lucadou of the parapsychological advice center in Freiburg/Breisgau does not want to go that far. He does not want to exclude the “gecko phenomenon” definitely, though. However, it seems more probable to him that the effect is linked to a special build of the muscular tissue of the “magnetic men” – insofar as it might contract beneath the skin under strong pressure and thus provides a strong “suction cup effect”.

Criticism from the USA

James Randi wants nothing with these explanations. reason: the self-styled “psi-debunker” and magician from the USA thinks nothing of the “magnetic men”. To him, people with extraordinary abilities are all cheaters and frauds – although in this case he remains silent about how the pole dupes the experts. Nevertheless, Randi has declared battle upon Magola, as he has announced loud-mouthedly on his website: “I wrote him by e-mail on July 3rd last year and told him to apply, but I also told him that I’d dust his skin with talcum powder — a substance that seems to inhibit magnetism for these performers.”

“A strange kind of argumentation. Even if talcum would inhibit Magola’s powers, this would not prove that his abilities were not of paranormal origin”, Dr. Friedbert Karger says. But Randi, however, could not care less for those objections. After all, Magola “has made much noise about being tested, but has never submitted his talents to us for that purpose.”

“Not right”, Magola counters. While in the USA in the nineties, he already had invited Randi to his performances – without any response. “Additionally, I have also uploaded a video on the internet especially for Randi, in which I dust the pots with talcum before my experiments.” The new video is impressive, but it fails to prove his abilities conclusively, as he himself has to admit after criticism has been uttered. “Sceptics may think that it isn’t talcum I have dusted on my pots in front of the camera.” From 2008 on he will now start to work with talcum in public, “so that everyone can see with his own eyes that I do not cheat.”

Additionally, he will put on thin medical gloves in front of spectators, he promises – “because my powers will work even then.” A tempting promise – because if the man is still right with talcum and gloves, then neither Lucadou’s theory of the “muscular suction cup” nor Karger’s “gecko-hypothesis” will apply. Nevertheless, Magola has yet to stand proof. But when you listen to him, you will see that he is serious. It seems he knows that it works from his own experience.

Magola: “I don’t want to and I don’t have to convince anybody. It’s my assignment to show what I have to show so that everybody can form his own opinion.”

Can he transmit his powers?

Cutback to the Basel psi-days: After his performance in the foyer, Miroslav Magola now stands on the stage of the congress center in front of thousands of spectators. He asks some of them on stage for further experiments. Then he “sticks” a metal object to the forehead of a perplexed woman, while he supports the back of her head with his hand. The miracle happens: Although she moves her head wildly up and down, the object all of a sudden also sticks to her – but just as long as Magola leaves his hand at the back of her head. This scene can be found on the internet now, too. Has James Randi seen it already?