



Senses and Society

THEMATIC GROUP NEWSLETTER



Editorial Note

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IV ISA Forum of Sociology

Porto Alegre, Brazil • July 14-18, 2020 • Events Center PUCRS



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
April 25 – September 30, 2019

www.isa-sociology.org

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Editorial Note

Welcome to Issue 16 of the newsletter for ISA Thematic Group 07, 'Senses and Society'. The purpose of this twice-yearly publication is to offer news and opportunities for members and friends of the group, highlighting new publications of interest to scholars of the senses, publicizing future ISA meetings and activities, and reporting any Thematic Group plans or discussions to those who cannot be physically present at meetings. This newsletter and all previous ones will always be available on the TG07 page of the ISA website ([click here](#)).

A snapshot of **News** is offered on p.2, a feature I would like to expand upon in future issues. Any events, workshops, symposia, museum exhibitions, or art exhibitions around the world of interest to the group? By all means send me a brief description with time/date/place details.

One of the main stories this issue is the **ISA Forum of Sociology in Porto Alegre, Brazil, July 14-18 2020**. Members of the Committee have already selected and approved a series of 7 panels, and panel titles and the procedure for you to submit abstracts is detailed here on pages 4-7.

The **Publication Highlights** includes brief descriptions of recent publications of potential interest to members of TG07, and of course some are authored by group members. Pages 8-10.

Mark Paterson

Vice-President & Newsletter Editor of TG07

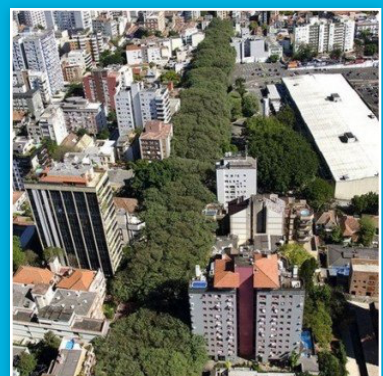
**Department of Sociology,
University of Pittsburgh**

As always, please feel free to email me (paterson@pitt.edu) with any relevant news, publications, or calls for papers that fellow Group members could benefit from.

Senses and Society in Brazil 2020

IV ISA Forum of
SOCIOLOGY
July 14-18, 2020
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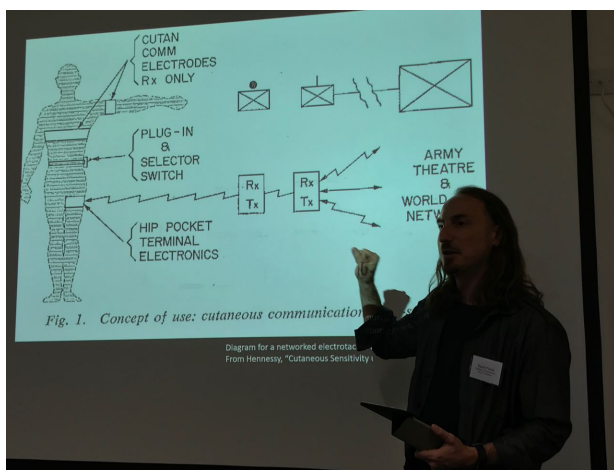


News

UCL InTouch Project

At UCL in London there is a large multi-million pounds European Research Council (ERC) project on digital touch entitled 'InTouch'. On July 10 David Parisi and Mark Paterson were invited to talk at a one-day Symposium entitled 'Haptic Media Studies: Touch and Desire in a Digital Age'. The event, run by Professor Carey Jewitt, Dr. Kerstin Leder Mackley and others, invited a diverse audience of designers, artists, engineers, and academics (click [here](#) for program). The day included a workshop activity and two talks, with responses from InTouch:

- David Parisi, Utopian Touch: On the Production of Desire for New Haptics Technologies (pictured)
- Mark Paterson, Haptic Methodologies and Multi-Sensory Mediations: Desiring Representations



Senses and Society in Brazil 2020



IV ISA Forum of Sociology
Challenges of the 21st Century: Democracy, Environment, Inequalities, Intersectionality
Porto Alegre, Brazil
July 15-21, 2018

With SEVEN panels organized by TG07 members plus the Business Meeting, the forthcoming ISA Forum in Porto Alegre will be a magnificent opportunity to share our sensory scholarship.

A full list of the panels is detailed over the next few pages of this newsletter (pages 4-7).

If you are interested in presenting a paper, it is recommended that **you contact the Session Organizer(s) for each panel first**. Their details are listed after the panel abstract. Then, please submit an abstract on-line **before September 30, 2019 24:00 GMT** to [here](#) (or paste the following into your browser):

<https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/forum/porto-alegre-2020>

Sensations and Emotions in the Affective Turn: Empirical and Theoretical Encounters (Joint Session with TG08)

In a context where, in the last few years, social sciences have been discussing on how to name and study affects and affections, we consider it is important to invite the different area of study dealing with such concepts and theoretical fields. How senses and emotions affect each other? In which way sensory and emotional studies can contribute to one another? What other perspectives, empirical or theoretical viewpoints, could bring? Whether it is a property of someone/something, a quality of reality, or a relation between things, the issue has been in our agenda for several years. Often described as forces generated by an encounter, affects studies encourage interdisciplinary approaches in our capacities to act, connect, to affect and be affected. It also offers the potential to overcome division between body and mind, individual and social, inside and outside, self and other. We welcome theoretical, methodological and empirical reflections on broad themes, which convey social studies at the intersection of emotions, senses, affects and society as possible ways of crossing thematic boundaries to enrich each perspective. Contributions could range from social belonging to cultural practices, from embodiment to socio-political spheres in order to engage and encourage cross-disciplinary dialogues.

Session Organizers

Victoria D'HERS, CONICET-IIGG, Argentina
Email: victoriadhers@gmail.com

Florence FIGOLS, Faculty Member, Concordia University
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The Sense of Data and the Data of Sense: Bodies, Technologies, Spaces

Since Andrejevic and Burdon's 2015 paper on the 'sensor society', we are becoming accustomed to a tide of revelations concerning the darker side of digital surveillance and the 'Quantified Self' movement. News coverage focuses on personal data, with a seemingly endless series of breaches or stories of manipulation by brokers and unknown foreign actors (e.g. Cambridge Analytica). But the underlying and persistent phenomenon of what Shoshanna Zuboff (2018) has termed 'surveillance capitalism' remains unchallenged. The technical infrastructure that facilitates the monitoring of bodies encompasses the spaces of work, leisure, and the home, and includes embedded sensors, geolocation tracking, and face recognition technologies. In parallel with so-called 'smart cities', with their allure of convenience and control for citizens, are stealthier and potentially coercive forms of surveillance such as infra-red monitoring of consumer behaviors in stores and malls, and the tracking of workers' bodily movements within offices, factories, warehouses, and distribution centers. What is the future of work and play as we increasingly reside within larger ecologies of sensors, and robotic and autonomous systems? What historical forces and developments have allowed these infrastructures to flourish? The panel invites theoretically-informed papers, and welcome those that engage either conceptually or empirically with the intersection of technologies, senses, and spaces. Areas might include: sensor societies; surveillance capitalism; bodies and interfaces; human-robot interactions; 'aesthetic' encounters; the 'Quantized Self' (QS) movement, and availability of biometric data collection in everyday life (e.g. FitBit, Nike+, Strava, Apple Health).

Session Organizer

Mark PATERSON, Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh
Email: paterson@pitt.edu

The Sensory Politics of Living Together: Everyday Exchanges in the Twenty-First Century

This interdisciplinary panel, while continuing a previous panel's focus on Iain Chambers' 2008 *Mediterranean Crossings*, takes the possibility of *convivencia* – of presumed harmonious co-existence among ethnic and religious communities – as its starting point. *La convivencia*, referring to a historical period of relations between Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain before the 1492 expulsions, has been applauded as exemplary, on one hand, and criticised as utopian thinking, on the other (Menocal 2002; Fernández-Morera 2006). Conceptually, however, its meanings, whether historical or mythical, haunt the pressing challenges posed by migrational movement, diaspora, civil war, poverty and inequality for the twenty-first century's opening decades: how, we might ask, do different communities, needing to share space, manage the task of living together? This, of course, is a question for the conference as a whole, but takes a specific form in this panel. The power of the senses as tools for political insight, especially for framing meanings of difference, becomes critical. The intention is to explore sense-scapes of difference (for example, in the "mixed" cultures of port cities, ethnic neighbourhoods, refugee camps) and their possibilities for productive moments of intersectionality. In other words, the panel aims to trace the ways that people taste, smell, see, hear and feel resonances of "other" in cultures of the everyday and negotiate their own positioning – individually, collectively, governmentally. The challenge then becomes reconceptualising difference not as homogeneity but within a "wider, worldly, and more fragile constellation of a multilateral modernity" (Chambers, 2008)

Session Organizer

Jean DURUZ, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, University of South Australia
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Drugs, Arts and Society : From the Depiction of the Extra-Sensorial Experience to Popular Culture

Arts, whether fine or pop art, are always a sensorial experience, by which the artist tries to express a vision or a feeling, using the language of the senses (sight, sound, sometimes other methods of perception in some installations or happening of modern art). The challenge is even bigger when it comes to the staging of the altered state of consciousness created by drugs ingestion, but it has been risen to by various artists (the painter Isaac Abrams in his psychedelic art, the movie maker Gaspard Noé in "Enter the Void", 2009...). The panel aims at questioning this kind of materials, that is any artistic support describing the alteration of senses by drugs. The key questions of this panel would be: how can we describe what is apparently unspeakable and with which kind of sensorial aesthetics? Moreover, through pop art and the democratization of the access to psychotropic substances in the last century, the "psychonautism" of a few became a wider experience with impacts on social imaginary. How can we measure and study this link ? In the field of popular culture, movies, modern art paintings or happenings, techno music festivals, deploy a series of sound or visual shapes to be analyzed. Expected papers should address some of these issues. There is no restriction of cultural or geographical frames, although contributions on the contemporary period (XIXth-XXth centuries) would be appreciated. Papers should address the field of sociology, including visual sociology, history anthropology or even any interdisciplinary perspective in humanities.

Session Organizer

Alexandre MARCHANT, PhD and researcher in History, ENS de Cachan (Institute for Political Social Sciences), France
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Excursions in Sensory Ethnographies: Teaching, Writing, Doing

In the field of sensory scholarship, scholars have been scrutinising and analysing sensory experience, sensory models and symbolism in relation to social actors of particular groups or cultures, and their sensory ways of being. In the process, we also consider our own sensory knowhow and learning as ethnographers. How are sensory data procured and articulated through various means and modes of communication and writing? How can one teach about the deployment of the fieldworker's senses and body as a living, physical, sensing and experiencing agent that is deeply enmeshed in everyday and intimate encounters? How can we attend to the question of sensory experience by accounting for the relationships between bodies, minds and the sensory of in the context of the classroom? How do we carry out sensory ethnographic research that accounts for the manifold ways where multisensoriality is integral both to the lives of people who participate in our research and to how we ethnographers practise our craft? The panel invites papers that deliberate upon the craft, writing, teaching and doing of sensory ethnographic research to encompass debates on researcher positionality, pedagogy, ethics and writing.

Session Organizer

Noorman ABDULLAH, National University of Singapore
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Experiencing Silence and Expanded Time; Other Sensory Pathways and Knowledge

In this contemporary era of acceleration and proliferation of information we are immersed in a world of continuous interruptions and sensory over-stimulation. To cultivate other spaces in order to disconnect from our daily habitus has become a challenge; silence and time are now considered as rare and luxurious. In counterpoint we can witness the emergence and the integration of "slow" practices in different professional fields and everyday life. How can we attend and experience spaces of silence and attention, expanding the feeling of time as potentialities to others sensory and perceptive pathways to work from? Indeed, this session wants to highlight the senses embedded in contemporary or traditional practices counteracting a world infused by speed and data as well as diverse approaches operating in counterpoint to hegemonic ways of doing and sensing. How can we create new sensory relations and intensities involving specific qualities of attention? How can we expand our sensory experience to remap notions of "in depth quality" versus quantity in terms of sensory information? How does slowing down involve new "ways of doing" while opening up new insights and possible transformation? We invite participants interested in sharing their engagement in practices and studies ranging from the everyday life to embodied and artistic approaches, including trans-cultural and trans-disciplinary perspectives; on the potentialities of the senses as generator of states of presence, perceptions, imagination, "ways of being" while interacting with others and/or our surroundings in order to unfold new sensory experiences and knowledge.

Session Organizers

RITA CASTRO, Associate Professor, University of Brasília, Brazil
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Florence FIGOLS, Faculty Member, Concordia University
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The Political Life of Sensation

While sensory scholarship has burgeoned over time to address such domains of social scientific inquiry including materialities, art, religion, food and foodways among others, the political life of sensation remains a fairly underdeveloped area of sensory research, having only recently gained some traction in analyses of everyday political realms and encounters. This panel aims to bring together discussions on how the senses relate to varying political dimensions in social life. It locates the nexus of the senses, power, and politics across a range of topics comprising, inter alia, manifold statecraft and political behavior, political systems and biopolitics, citizenship and democracy, protest and demonstrations, and belonging, in illuminating the importance of studying the senses as political, and politics as sensorial. How are sounds deployed as a mechanism of political power? How do social actors engage with the senses in contexts of war, violence, and conflict? How is political propaganda intertwined with sensory expressions of power and identity? By focusing on select sensory modalities and experience, as well as the sensorium in whole, the panel bridges the political and the sensible and attempts to challenge the assumed binary of which the former connotes reason and the rational, and where the latter is connected to the emotional and the affective.

Session Organizer

Kelvin LOW, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore
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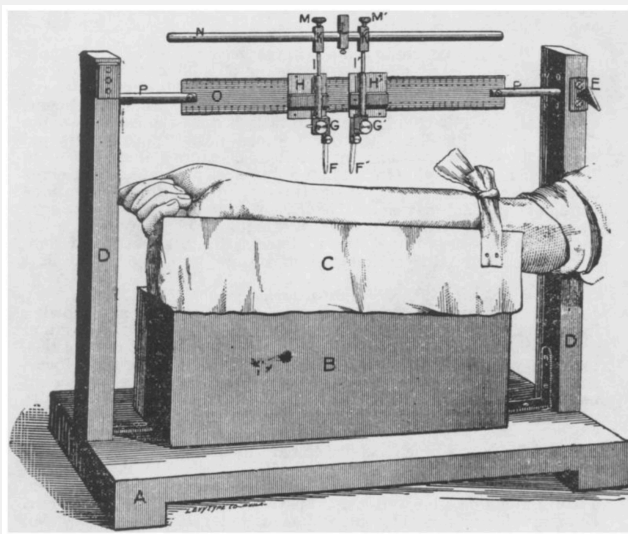
TG07 Business Meeting

Of course, whether you are a Committee Member, a Member at Large, a Board Member, or just interested in our group and wish to find out more, one of the slots assigned to us in the Business Meeting. Everyone is welcome.

Publication Highlights

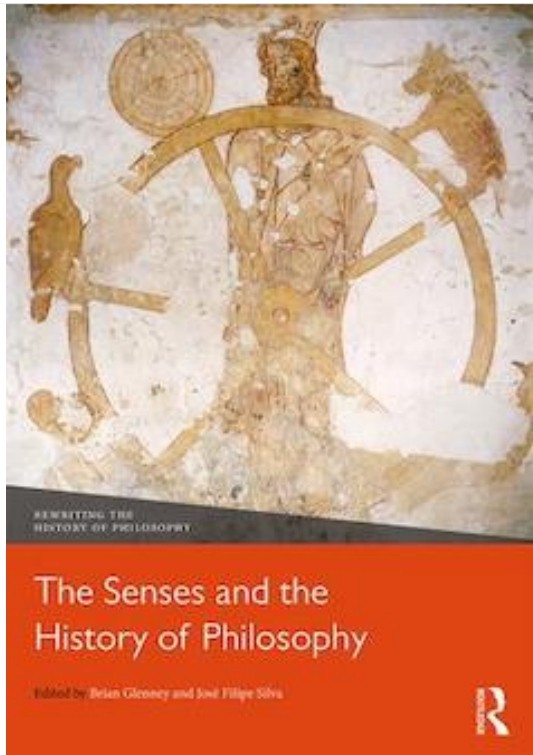
Taina Kinnunen, Marjo Kolehmainen (2019) 'Touch and Affect: Analysing the Archive of Touch Biographies', *Body & Society* 25(1): 29-56.

This article examines touch and its significance from an affect studies perspective. Touch makes our bodies more-than-one in a very concrete way, yet in body and affect research it has largely remained a philosophical abstraction, with few empirical explorations. Our theoretical deliberations are based on empirical material consisting of 'touch biographies' written by people of various backgrounds in the 2010s in Finland. The biographies are embodied-affective data, and our analysis of them offers a novel perspective on the ways touch forms a part of affective relations and communal history. The touch biographies highlight diverse and multi-temporal ways of attuning to, registering and recognising the social as it happens. Furthermore, our discussion opens up a new perspective on the study of affective privilege and inequality.



Mark Paterson (2019) 'On Pain as a Distinct Sensation: Mapping Intensities, Affects, and Difference in "Interior States"', *Body & Society* Onlinefirst

A recent widely reported study found that some participants would prefer to self-administer a small electric shock than be bored. This flawed study serves as a departure point to diagram pain and sensation beyond the boundaries of the individual body, consisting of four sections. First, in terms of laboratory-based experimentation and auto-experimentation with pain, there is a long history of viewing pain and touch through introspective means. Second, later theories of pain successively widened the scope of the physiological mechanisms and external influences on the organism, such as Melzack and Wall's cybernetics-influenced gate control theory. Third, we briefly consider the nervous system as a homeostatic system, which finds an historical parallel in explanations of the milieu intérieur of the organism, via Claude Bernard and Kurt Goldstein. Fourth, pain helps tip the organism as a whole from perception to action, but also operates beyond the organism as a biopsychosocial phenomenon.



Brian Glenney and José Filipe Silva (Editors), *The Senses and the History of Philosophy*
Routledge

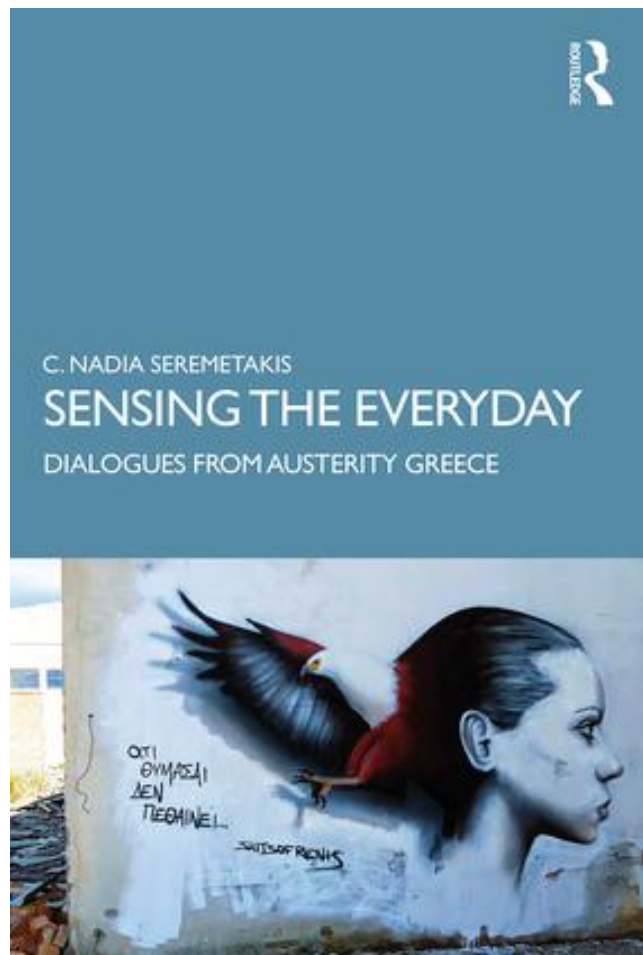
The study of perception and the role of the senses have recently risen to prominence in philosophy and are now a major area of study and research. However, the philosophical history of the senses remains a relatively neglected subject. Moving beyond the current philosophical canon, this collection offers a wide-ranging and diverse philosophical exploration of the senses, from the classical period to the present day. Written by a team of international contributors, it is divided into six parts:

- Perception from Non-Western Perspectives
- Perception in the Ancient Period
- Perception in the Medieval Latin/Arabic Period
- Perception in the Early Modern Period
- Perception in the Post-Kantian Period
- Perception in the Contemporary Period.

C. Nadia Seremetakis

Sensing the Everyday: Dialogues from Austerity Greece
Routledge

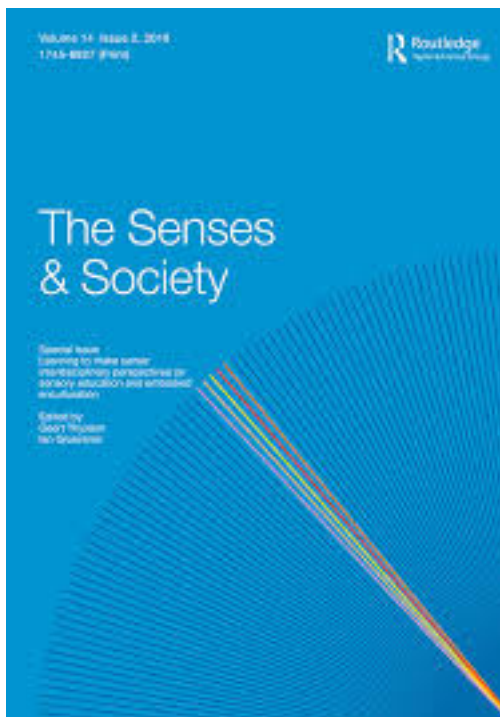
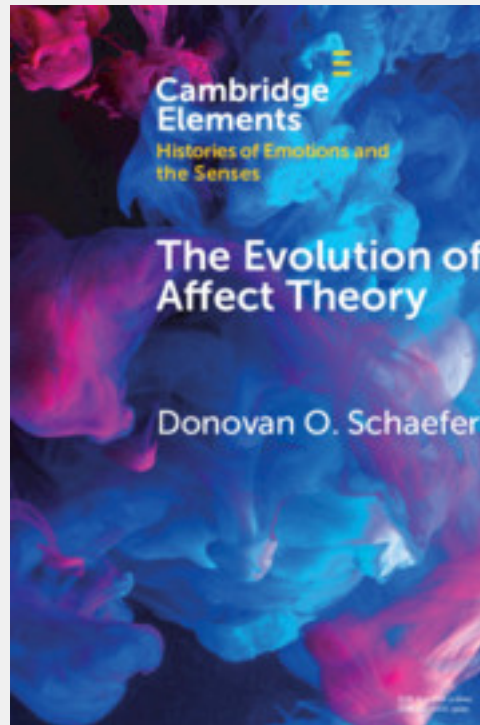
Sensing the Everyday is a multi-sited ethnographic inquiry based on fieldwork experiences and sharp everyday observations in the era of crisis. Blending sophisticated theoretical analyses with original ethnographic data, C. Nadia Seremetakis journeys from Greece to Vienna, Edinburgh, Albania, Ireland, and beyond. Social crisis is seen through its transnational multiplication of borders, thresholds and margins, divisions, and localities as linguistic, bodily, sensory, and performative sites of the quotidian in process. The book proposes everyday life not as a sanctuary or as a recessed zone distanced from the structural violence of the state and the market, but as a condition of im/possibility, unable to be lived as such, yet still an encapsulating habitus. The book locates her approach to ethnography and the 'native ethnographer' in wider anthropological and philosophical debates, and proposes a dialogical interfacing of theory and practice, the translation of academic knowledge to public knowledge.



***Histories of Emotions and the Senses*, book series (Part of the ‘Elements’ digital resources) Cambridge University Press. (More info [here](#))**

‘Elements’ consist of original, concise, authoritative, and peer-reviewed scholarly and scientific research, organised into focused series edited by leading scholars, and provide comprehensive coverage of the key topics in disciplines spanning the arts and sciences.

Born of the emotional and sensory ‘turns’, *Histories of Emotions and the Senses* move one of the fastest-growing interdisciplinary fields forward. They probe happiness and fear, smell and sound—and they ask if these can be neatly separated by discrete words, or if they are cross-cultural. They concern and problematize such topics as affect theory, the dichotomy of discourse vs. experience, intersensoriality, multisensory processing, embodiment, distributed cognition, epigenetics, human-animal relations and affective neuroscience. They touch on issues of pressing socio-political and sociomedical relevance, such as ‘felt facts’, racism and hate speech, mental health, emotional labour and artificial intelligence.



‘Methods of Aesthetic Enquiry: Interdisciplinary Encounters’

**A special issue of *The Senses and Society*
Edited by Dee Reynolds and Boris Wiseman**

The special issue examines through a ‘temporally inflected lens’ some of the complex entanglements of learning, senses, and sense making; body-sensory experience and practice; and culture and society. We thereby aim to bring into dialogue inter-/ multisensorial approaches to education as a project and praxis and processes of ‘enculturation’, which have always, in one way or the other, involved ‘embodied’ learning (and imaginaries thereof), rather than mere ‘mental processing’. We link this proposed research paradigm to incisive scholarship on ‘cultural learning’ through sensorial lenses, after which we tease out six key questions or concerns emerging from a review of relevant, recent research. These key concerns help to contextualize state-of-the-art ‘sensuous education scholarship’ introduced in the final section of the article and elaborated further in the ensuing contributions to this special issue.