



Senses and Society

THEMATIC GROUP NEWSLETTER



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Editorial Note

This newsletter arises out of the ISA Thematic Group but is also distributed across a large community of scholars from around the world who are interested in this area. Dr. Kelvin Low and I maintain the email list, and new names are being added all the time. Whether you're one of the recent additions to this community of scholars, or 'regulars': welcome to Issue 17. As usual, the purpose of this twice-yearly publication is to offer relevant news and opportunities, highlighting new publications of interest to scholars of the senses, publicizing future ISA meetings, activities, and plans. This newsletter and previous issues are available on the TG07 page of the ISA website ([here](#)).

News (pp. 3-4). Of course, we're gearing up for the **ISA Forum of Sociology in Porto Alegre, Brazil**, in July. Abstracts have been reviewed, panels sorted, and everyone who submitted something should have been notified by now. But readers may be interested in the multi-disciplinary conference organized by David Howes, **Uncommon Senses III: The Future of the Senses in Montreal** in May. **Mark Smith's exciting book series 'Perspectives on Sensory History'** is also featured, as a few volumes are published and more are in the pipeline.

Publication Highlights (pp. 5-7) includes brief descriptions of recent publications of potential interest to members of TG07, and of course some are authored by group members.

As always, please feel free to email me (paterson@pitt.edu) with any relevant news, events, symposia, publications, exhibitions, or calls for papers that fellow Group members could benefit from. By all means send me a brief description with time/date/place details.

Mark Paterson

Vice-President of TG07 & Newsletter Editor



News

Uncommon Senses III: The Future of the Senses conference will be taking place May 1–4 2020 at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. This international, interdisciplinary conference is sponsored by the Concordia University Centre for Sensory Studies. Submissions are invited from scholars across the social sciences, humanities and arts interested in exploring the future of the senses in a changing world.



The deadline has recently been extended to **December 15, 2019**. If you're interested in submitting something or registering to attend, [click here](#). Registration will open on January 1 2020. Regular fees are \$180. Reduced fees of \$90 available for students and based on need. Inquiries may be addressed to senses@concordia.ca.

KEY THEMES

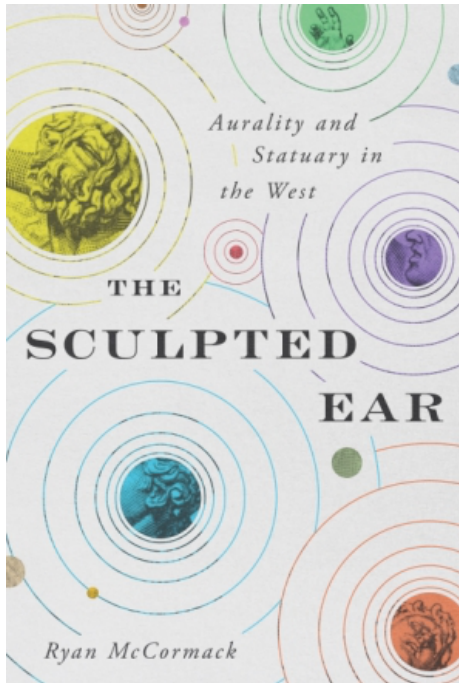
- Engaging the senses through design
- Multiple modalities of multi- and inter-media
- Coming to be of the sensor society
- Rise of sensory politics
- Sensory challenges of climate change

Other themes include (but are not limited to):

- Sense-based research methods (sensory ethnography, sensory cartography)
- Multisensory education
- Sensory alterity (including Critical Disability Studies)
- The urban sensorium (including “smart” cities)
- Sentient ecologies

Perspectives on Sensory History: New Book series from the Pennsylvania State University Press

General Editor: Mark M. Smith



Books published in Perspectives on Sensory History will examine the roles of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching in shaping how people have experienced, fashioned, and understood their worlds. They will explore the full social, political, geographical, technological, or cultural contexts of our senses of space, place, and displacement; ability and disability; affect and social interaction. And they'll explore these situations across the globe—in both Western and non-Western regions—and in all time periods.

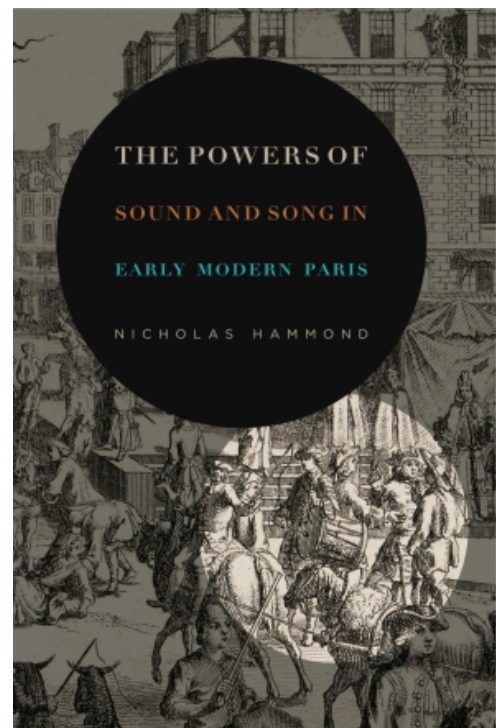
Perspectives on Sensory History welcomes historically informed and theoretically sophisticated scholarly studies that draw from disciplines such as art, archaeology, geography, media studies, and science and technology studies. In addition to specialized studies, the series will occasionally include accessible works that

will be of interest to non-specialist readers.

The series will also include edited collections of essays on a single topic that juxtapose critical perspectives or intervene in interesting ways. Submissions should include a 3-5 page proposal outlining the intent of the project, its scope, its relation to other work on the topic, and the audience(s) you have in mind. Please also include 2-3 sample chapters, if available, and a copy of your C.V.

The advisory board includes Camille Bégin, Martin A. Berger, Constance Classen, Karin Bijsterveld, Kelvin E. Y. Low, Bodo Mrozek, Alex Purves, Richard Cullen Rath.

Published so far: Ryan McCormack, *The Sculpted Ear*, Nicholas Hammond, *The Powers of Sound and Song in Early Modern Paris*



Publication Highlights

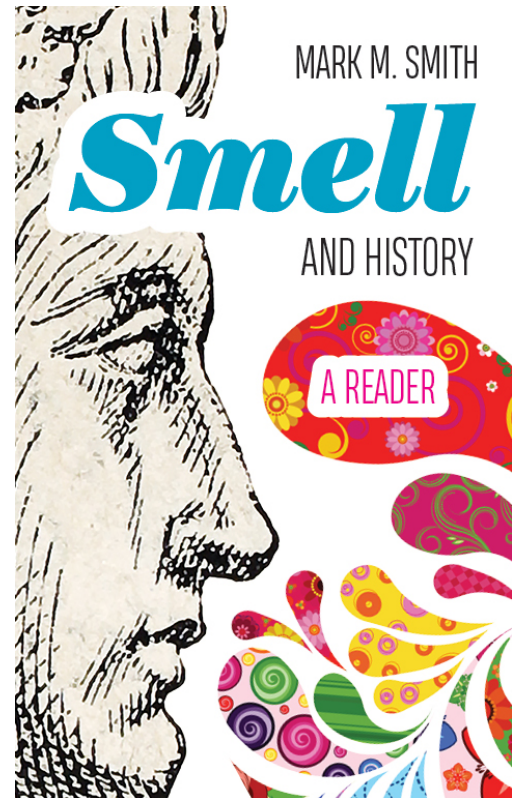
Smell and History: A Reader

Mark M Smith

West Virginia University Press

Smell and History (link) collects many of the most important recent essays on the history of scent, aromas, perfumes, and ways of smelling. With an introduction by Mark M. Smith—one of the leading social and cultural historians at work today and the preeminent champion in the United States of the emerging field of sensory history—the volume introduces to undergraduate and graduate students as well as to historians of all fields the richness, relevance, and insightfulness of the olfactory to historical study.

Ranging from antiquity to the present, these ten essays, most of them published since 2003, consider how olfaction and scent have shaped the history of medicine, gender, race-making, class formation, religion, urbanization, colonialism, capitalism, and industrialization; how habits and practices of smelling informed ideas about the Enlightenment, modernity, and memory; how smell shaped perceptions of progress and civilization; and how people throughout history have used smell as a way to organize categories and inform worldviews.



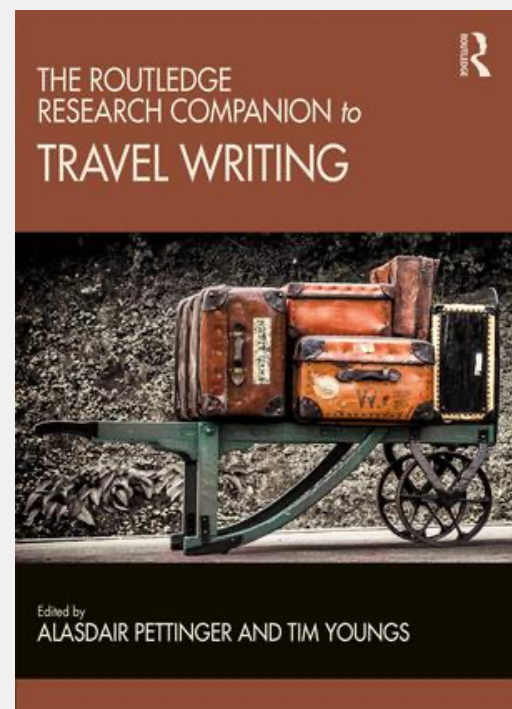
Routledge Research Companion to Travel Writing

Eds. Alasdair Pettinger and Tim Youngs

Routledge

Showcasing established and new patterns of research, *The Routledge Research Companion to Travel Writing* takes an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and to travel texts themselves. The volume adopts a thematic approach, with each contributor considering a specific aspect of travel writing – a recurrent motif, an organising principle or a literary form. All of the essays include a discussion of representative travel texts, to ensure that the volume as a whole represents a broad historical and geographical range of travel writing. Together, the 25 essays and the editors' introduction offer a comprehensive and authoritative reflection of the state of travel writing criticism and lay the ground for future developments.

Includes a chapter from one of our members, Prof. Clare Brant, entitled 'Smelling'



Kelvin E. Y. Low (2019) 'Theorising Sensory Cultures in Asia: Sociohistorical Perspectives', *Asian Studies Review*, 43:4, 618-636 ([link](#))

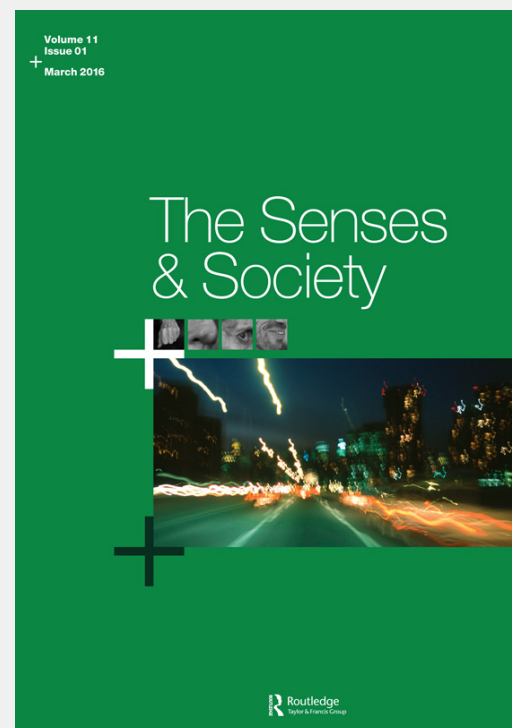
Sociocultural meanings of the senses in society have recently received scholarly attention in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history and geography. With some exceptions, extant works have mainly focused on Euro–American contexts, or non-industrial societies. This article ethnographically documents and analyses the social life of the senses in everyday life historical contexts within Asia. I propose three theoretical themes: sensory models and modalities; sensory moral economies; and sensory transnationalism. These themes exemplify how social actors and institutions employ and accord meanings to the senses that can be located in the fabric of everyday cultural experiences, spanning different social arrangements and encounters. I examine more closely indigenous sensoria where sensory practices stemming from different parts of Asia are marshalled as sources of sociocultural theorising. This is a response to and continuation of extant works on sensory cultures in other contexts, raising, concurrently, cross-cultural comparisons. These comparisons will also initiate a rethinking of “Asia” through sensory intercrossings and encounters.



Eileen Harris, Lois Frankel, Claudie St. Arnaud & Alanna Bamber (2019) 'Puzzling pieces: a sensory design learning tool', *The Senses and Society*, 14:3, 351-360 ([link](#))

In the most recent issue of the journal *The Senses and Society* comes an article which is also a sensory design 'toolkit':

This article gives an account of an activity that is part of a collection of instructional materials for learning about sensory aspects of design for products, environments, and services. It describes the participants' experiences and reflections in a workshop at DeSForM, the 10th Conference on Design and Semantics of Form and Movement. The article highlights the participants' engagement with one of the exploratory activities, Puzzling Pieces, that was in the process of being developed. The unique ways in which the attendees translated theoretical multi-sensory design perspectives into activities for heightening multi-sensory awareness and consciousness of sensory interactions suggest that this activity may be a useful tool for finetuning the sensory design process.



Multisensory Living in Ancient Rome: Power and Space in Roman Houses

Hannah Platts

Bloomsbury ([link](#))

Classicists have long wondered what everyday life was like in ancient Greece and Rome. How, for example, did the slaves, visitors, inhabitants or owners experience the same home differently? And how did owners manipulate the spaces of their homes to demonstrate control or social hierarchy?

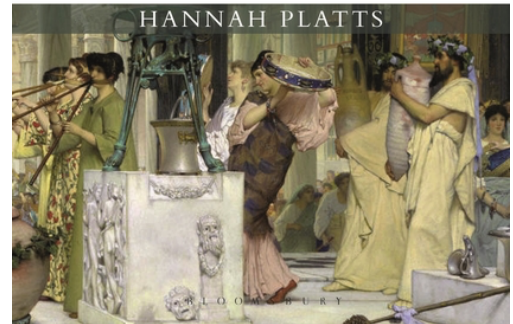
To answer these questions, Hannah Platts draws on a diverse range of evidence and an innovative amalgamation of methodological approaches to explore multisensory experience – auditory, olfactory, tactile, gustatory and visual – in domestic environments in Rome, Pompeii and Herculaneum for the first time, from the first century BCE to the second century CE. Moving between social registers and locations, from non-elite urban dwellings to lavish country villas, each chapter takes the reader through a different type of room and offers insights into the reasons, emotions and cultural factors behind perception, recording and control of bodily senses in the home, as well as their sociological implications. *Multisensory Living in Ancient Rome* will appeal to all students and researchers interested in Roman daily life and domestic architecture.



Multisensory Living in Ancient Rome

POWER AND SPACE IN ROMAN HOUSES

HANNAH PLATTS



Smell in Eighteenth-Century England: A Social Sense

William Tullett

Oxford University Press ([link](#))

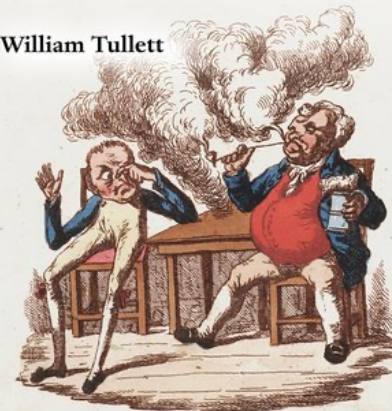
- Makes the case for new ways of thinking about the history of the senses, experience, and the body
- Provides a wealth of new material on, and interpretations of, eighteenth-century life
- Demonstrates the evolution of new ideas of 'privacy in public' and personal space in the crucible of eighteenth-century sociability
- Draws on a wide range of sources: ranging from diaries, letters, and sanitary records to satirical prints, material culture, and periodicals
- Reflects on the theoretical underpinnings of sensory history and establishes the importance of habituation, sensitization, and attention to understanding past practices of sensing

OXFORD

Smell in Eighteenth-Century England

A Social Sense

William Tullett



THE PAST & PRESENT BOOK SERIES