



Senses and Society

THEMATIC GROUP NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter Editor

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Editorial Note

Welcome to Issue 15 of the ISA Thematic Group 07, 'Senses and Society'. If your eyes passed over any previous editions, you'll notice this one looks rather different. That's because there is a new Editor, Mark Paterson, who was also been elected to the new position of Vice President of TG07. Dr. Kelvin Low, who remains President, has done a fantastic job with all previous newsletters stretching back to Issue 1 in 2011, and wished to pass on this editorial duty. This newsletter and all previous ones remain available on the TG07 page of the ISA website ([click here](#)), by the way.

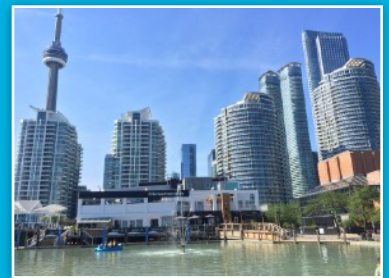
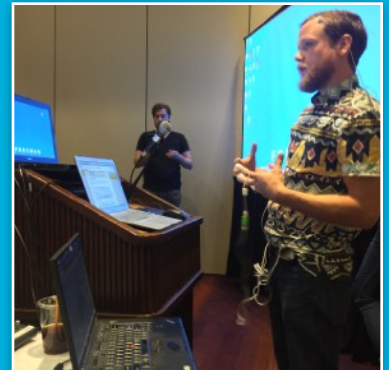
The change in Editor is part of larger changes in the Group. During the Business Meeting at ISA World Congress in Toronto last July, more people have been recruited into Committee positions, and there is now a Board for consulting and advising, as I report later in this Newsletter (page 4).

Although there is a new look, the purpose of this twice-yearly publication remains the same - to communicate across members of the group by 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.

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.

Mark Paterson
Vice-President & Newsletter Editor of TG07
Department of Sociology,
University of Pittsburgh

Senses & Society in Toronto



With no less than NINE panels, spread from the 16th - 19th July, and with decent attendance throughout, a real diversity of theoretical approaches and methodologies was evident, including film screenings. More photos on the next page.

TG07 at XIX ISA World Congress, Toronto



Above: Noorman Abdullah, NUS. Bottom Left: Boroka Bo, UC Berkeley. Below right: Mark Paterson (University of Pittsburgh) and Carey Jewitt (UCL). Photos courtesy of Kelvin Low.



New Committee 2018-2022

Publicized and facilitated by the Election Officers Emma Felton (Queensland University of Technology) and Jean Duruz (University of South Australia), back in May of this year the nomination forms for future Committee members were sent out, with elections taking place at the XIX ISA World Congress in Toronto in July. The election took place at the Business Meeting on Friday 20th July. Dr. Low also announced a new position, the role of Vice President, to help with the future coordination and growth of the group. The new Board for TG07 for 2018-2022 is:

President	Kelvin LOW, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Vice President, Newsletter Editor	Mark W.D. PATERSON, University of Pittsburgh, USA
Secretary-Treasurer	Noorman ABDULLAH, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Members at Large	Emma FELTON, Queensland University of Technology, Australia Florence FIGOLS, Concordia University, Canada William GIBSON, University College London, UK Mariangela Mihai JORDAN, Cornell University, USA Devorah KALEKIN-FISHMAN, University of Haifa, Israel Alexandre MARCHANT, ENS Cachan, France

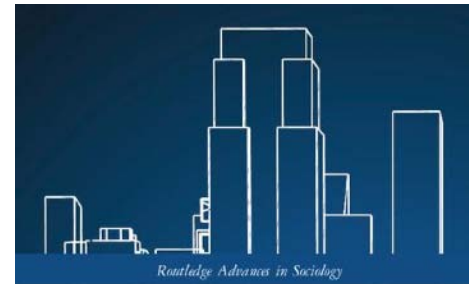


The new Board 2018-2022. From left to right: Alexandre Marchant, William Gibson, Mark Paterson, Kelvin Low, Emma Felton, Jean Duruz, Mariangela Jordan, Noorman Abdullah; Elisa Garcia (non-member). Florence Figols took the photo.

TG07: State of the present, and a glimpse of the future

Summary from the Business Meeting at XIX ISA World Congress

Current status. The President Dr. Kelvin Low gave a summary of the present state of the group. Active membership (i.e. those who are members of ISA and pay the \$20 fee to the TG) is 28. The state of the finances shows a modest balance of \$1000, which can be invested in future activities. Past activities involving TG07 included a workshop in April 2015, 'Food and the Global Asian City'. Publications directly resulting from the Group in 2018 include the *Food, Culture & Society* special issue 'Eating in the City', edited by Kelvin Low and Elaine Ho, and the Routledge collection *Senses in Cities*, edited by the two founders of the Group, Kelvin Low and Deborah Kalekin-Fishman.



SENSES IN CITIES EXPERIENCES OF URBAN SETTINGS

Kelvin Low and Deborah Kalekin-Fishman



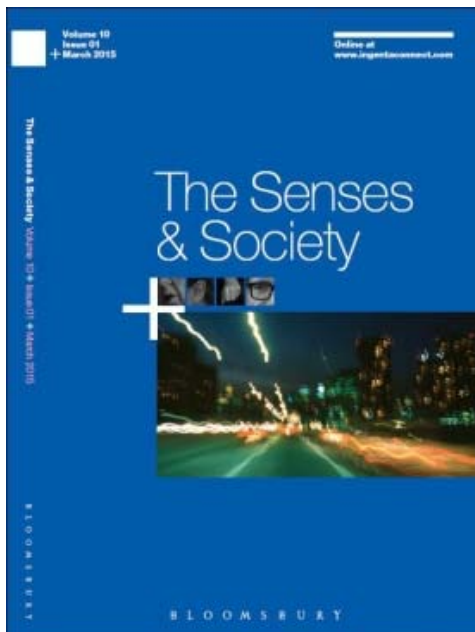
New Positions. The Elections offered an opportunity to transfer Newsletter duties from Dr. Low, and there was discussion about putting Newsletter information on a website, with access to works in progress or working papers so that other Group members could contribute and comment. We'll be working on this. The new position of Vice President was advocated by Dr. Low, and this new position will help coordinate the strategy of the Group as we grow for future ISA meetings and non-ISA Group activities.

Future directions. With the future growth of the Group in mind, Dr. Low also discussed the pathway from a Thematic Group to a Working Group. TG07 is quite some way towards becoming a Working Group, as defined by ISA statutes. We need:

- a list of signatories of 25 ISA members in good standing (i.e. who have paid individual membership dues) with geographical diversity as determined by the Executive Committee: members from at least 10 countries in 2 continents or 7 countries in 3 continents.
- the members applying should be able to demonstrate that they have shared an appropriate level of collective scientific activity as a Thematic Group for at least 4 years.
- a report on the recent and planned activities of the group

In addition, future activities of TG07 need not be tied to regular ISA meetings. The second point, 'collective scientific activity' may also be pursued in workshops at our home universities or institutions, for example. So, a symposium, workshop, or day conference at a University that TG07 members belong to, on any continent, could also be 'branded' as ISA-related events. This is something to bear in mind if you organize something at your institution. **Do make sure that you let us know about it (paterson@pitt.edu)**, so that we can publicize it in the Newsletter and our upcoming website, too.

The Senses and Society Journal.



The editor of the journal, Professor David Howes (Concordia University, Montreal), who also curates the Sensory Studies website (sensorystudies.org), was present at all TG07 panels and contributed a wealth of questions and comments in each. Prof. Howes is keen that members of TG07 submit articles to the journal, and the new TG07 Vice-President, Mark Paterson, is on the journal's Editorial Board. In the Business Meeting we discussed how the journal should be of interest to all members of the Group, not only because we share a name, of course, but also due to the significant overlap between the aims and scope of the journal (e.g. [here](#)) and the Thematic Group. In fact, Prof. Howes and Dr. Low would ultimately like to make the connections between our group and the journal more formal. In the

meantime, if you have a manuscript in progress, or you are thinking of a venue for publication, *The Senses and Society* offers a relatively fast review process. First set up by David Howes and Michael Bull with Berg in 2006, and then transferred to Bloomsbury Academic when he started his book series there, it is now published through Taylor and Francis. Along with original articles they also publish reviews of art exhibitions, books, conferences, examples or exhibitions relating to design, and shorter articles. Browse the list of recent articles and issues here: www.tandfonline.com/toc/rfss20/current

The Senses & Society aims to:

- Explore the intersection between culture and the senses
- Promote research on the politics of perception and the aesthetics of everyday life
- Address architectural, marketing and design initiatives in relation to the senses
- Publish reviews of books and multi-sensory exhibitions throughout the world
- Publish special issues concentrating on particular themes relating to the senses

Publication Highlights

Special Issue: Skin Matters: Thinking Through the Body's Surfaces

Body & Society 24 (1-2) March-June 2018 [[link](#)]

Edited by Marc Lafrance

Articles

Introduction: Skin Studies: Past, Present and Future
Marc Lafrance

Teen Self-Cutting: Sacrificing a Part to Save the Whole, David Le Breton

Skin Work: Understanding the Embodied Experience of Acne, Marc Lafrance and Scott Carey

'A Petty Form of Suffering': A Brief Cultural Study of Itching, Naomi Segal

Making Skin Visible: How Consumer Culture Imagery Commodifies Identity, Janet L Borgerson and Jonathan E Schroeder

Skin Portraiture in the Age of Bio Art: Bodily Boundaries, Technology and Difference in Contemporary Visual Culture, Heidi Kellett

Notes & Commentary

Notes on Jean-Luc Nancy's Being Nude: The Skin of Images, Christina Howells

Collapsing the Surfaces of Skin and Photograph in Cosmetic Minimally-Invasive Procedures, Rachel Hurst

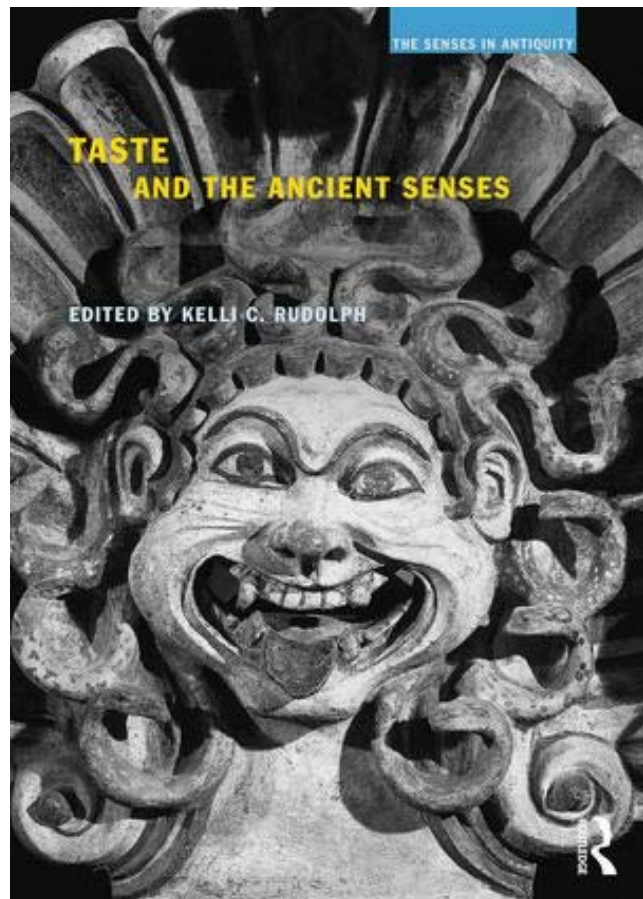
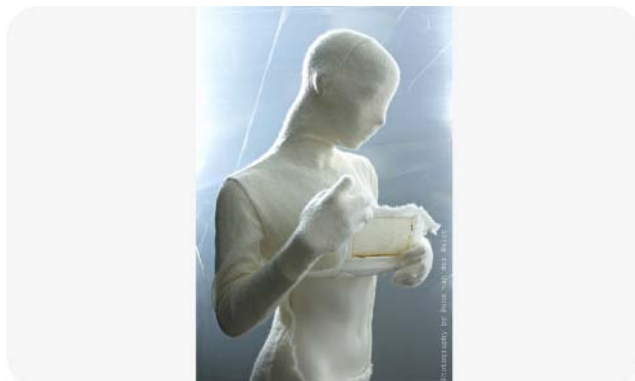
Skin and Scars: Probing the Visual Culture of Addiction, Julia Skelley

Interview

Interview with Cynthia Hammond: Drawings for a Thicker Skin, Cynthia Hammond and Marc Lafrance

Afterword

The Skinscape: Reflections on the Dermalogical Turn
David Howes



Book Series: The Senses in Antiquity

Series Editors: Mark Bradley & Shane Butler
Routledge [[link](#)]

There are currently six volumes in the series, covering touch, taste, smell, sight, sound, and synesthesia.

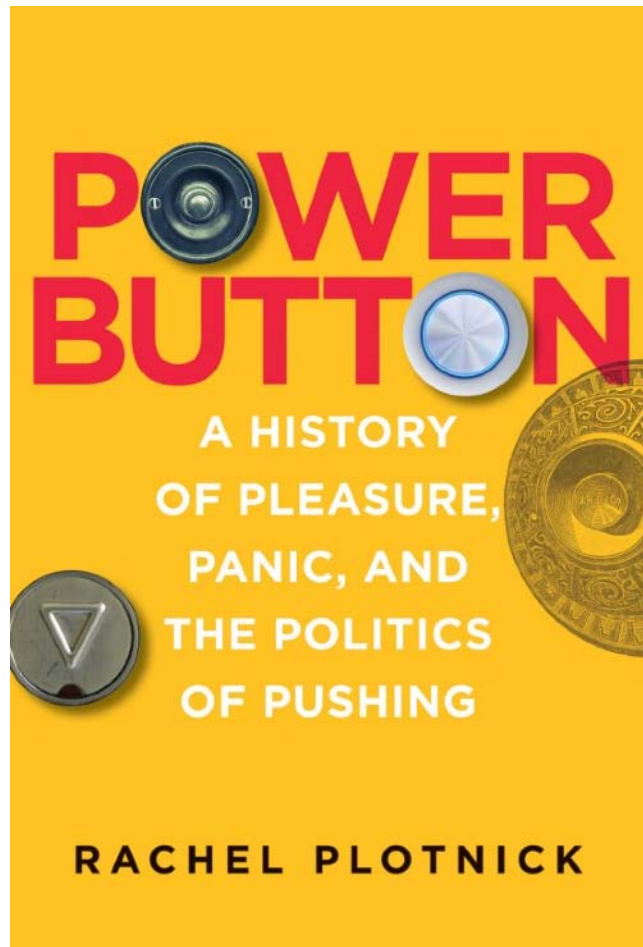
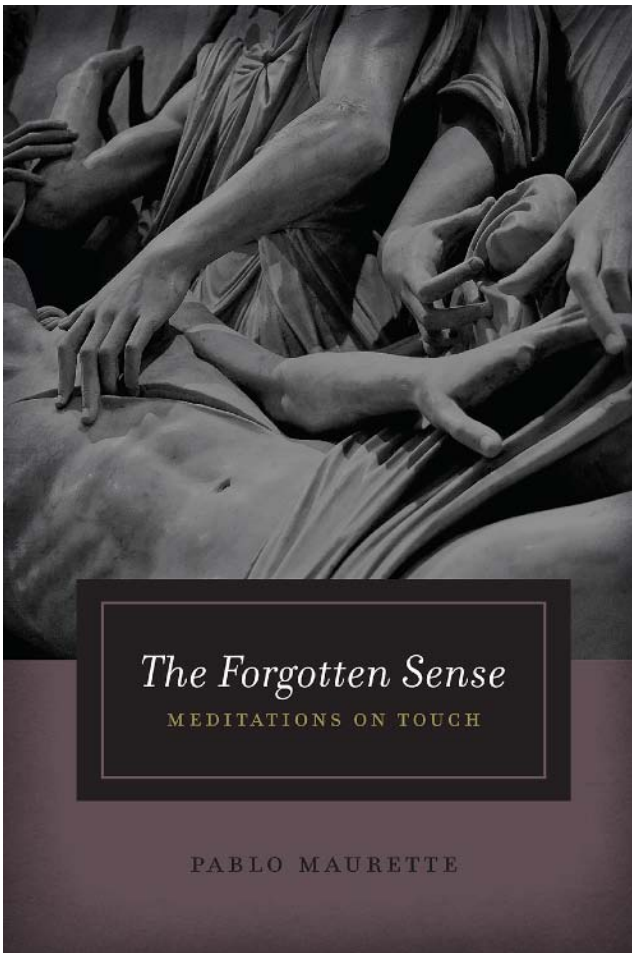
Like us, ancient Greeks and Romans came to know and understand their world through their senses. Yet it has long been recognized that the world the ancients perceived, and the senses through which they channelled this information could operate differently from the patterns and processes of perception in the modern world. This series explores the relationship between perception, knowledge and understanding in the literature, philosophy, history, language and culture of ancient Greece and Rome.

The Forgotten Sense: Meditations on Touch

Pablo Maurette

University of Chicago Press [\[link\]](#)

The Forgotten Sense gives touch its due, addressing it in multifarious ways through a series of six essays. Literary in feel, ambitious in conception, admirable in their range of reference and insight, these meditations address questions fundamental to the understanding of touch: What do we mean when we say that an artwork touches us? How does language affect our understanding of touch? Is the skin the deepest part of the human body? Can we philosophize about a kiss? To aid him in answering these questions, Pablo Maurette recruits an impressive roster of cultural figures from throughout history: Homer, Lucretius, Chrétien de Troyes, Melville, Sir Thomas Browne, Knutsen, Michel Henry and many others help him unfurl the underestimated importance of the sense of touch and tactile experience.

***Power Button: A History of Pleasure, Panic, and the Politics of Pushing***

Rachel Plotnick

MIT Press [\[link\]](#)

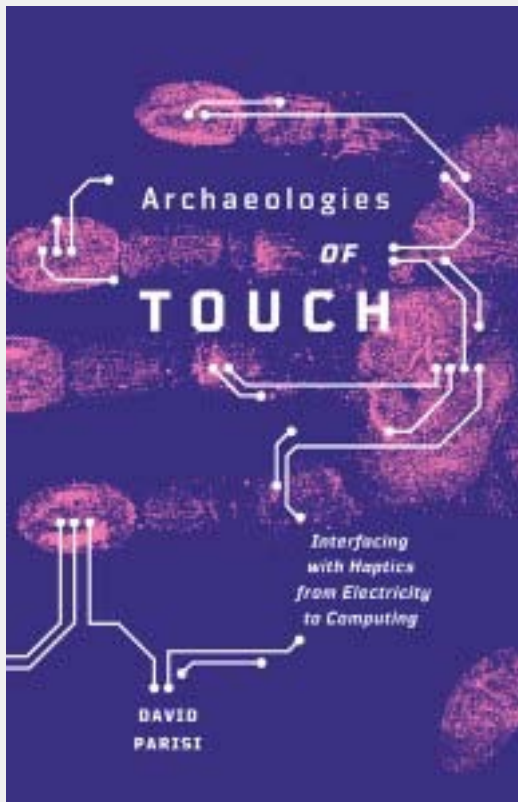
In *Power Button*, Rachel Plotnick traces the origins of today's push-button society by examining how buttons have been made, distributed, used, rejected, and refashioned throughout history. Focusing on the period between 1880 and 1925, when "technologies of the hand" proliferated (including typewriters, telegraphs, and fingerprinting), Plotnick describes the ways that button pushing became a means for digital command, which promised effortless, discreet, and fool-proof control. Emphasizing the doubly digital nature of button pushing—as an act of the finger and a binary activity (on/off, up/down)—Plotnick suggests that the tenets of precomputational digital command anticipate contemporary ideas of computer users.

Archaeologies of Touch: Interfacing with Haptics from Electricity to Computing

David Parisi

University of Minnesota Press [[link](#)]

A material history of haptics technology that raises new questions about the relationship between touch and media. David Parisi offers the first full history of new computing technologies known as haptic interfaces—which use electricity, vibration, and force feedback to stimulate the sense of touch—showing how the efforts of scientists and engineers over the past 300 years have gradually remade and redefined our sense of touch. *Archaeologies of Touch* offers a timely and provocative engagement with the long history of touch technology that helps us confront and question the power relations underpinning the project of giving touch its own set of technical media.



A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE SENSES
IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

Edited by Constance Classen



A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Empire, Volume 5 of the series A Cultural History of the Senses

Constance Classen

Bloomsbury Academic [[link](#)]

A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Empire brings together a group of eminent historians to explore the aesthetic, cultural and political formation of the senses during a period of momentous change. *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Empire* presents essays on the following topics: the social life of the senses; urban sensations; the senses in the marketplace; the senses in religion; the senses in philosophy and science; medicine and the senses; the senses in literature; art and the senses; and sensory media.