

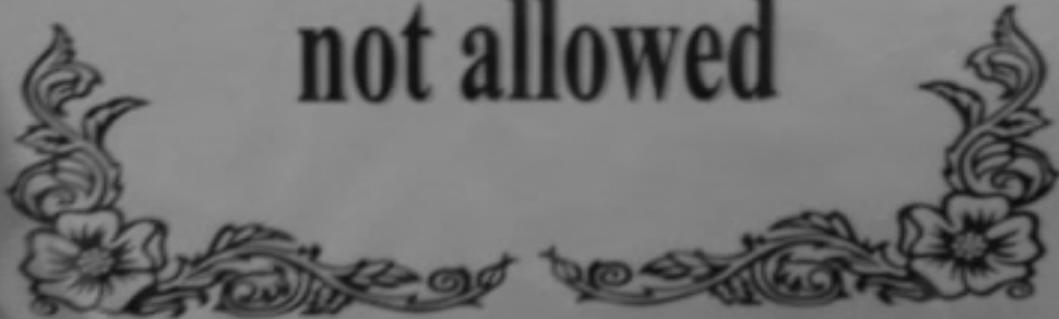


TASTE
MORE THAN FOOD

請勿拍打西瓜

Spanking Watermelon

not allowed



SENSES & SOCIETY

Newsletter Issue 1

2011

Contents

- Editorial Note
- Objectives of Proposed Thematic Group
- Research Highlights/Recent Publications
- Announcements

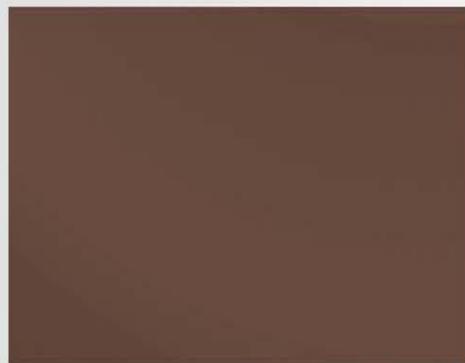
Editorial Note

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are pleased to share with all of you this inaugural newsletter in relation to our recent initiative to establish a Thematic Group on ‘Senses and Society’ within the International Sociological Association (ISA).

Recent research on socio-cultural interpretations of the senses have drawn scholarly attention to the important role that the senses play in various aspects of social life. This is reflected in the range of empirical endeavours and conceptual deliberations, including analyses on notions of the self and community, the relationship between senses and theoretical arguments on space and place, as well as the historicity of the senses in relation to religion, gender, and ethnic and migrant communities.

Given the burgeoning attention to the senses, both within sociology and other disciplines in the social sciences and beyond, it is an opportune time for ‘Senses and Society’ to be established as a Thematic Group within the ISA. The TG will be able to provide an institutional venue where scholars working in similar areas on the senses can then share and exchange further deliberations, as well as initiate both personal and institutional contacts at the various activities and meetings that the TG will be organising from this year on.



Editorial Note

To kick off our proposal for this TG as well as to facilitate an exchange of ideas, debates, and research highlights, this newsletter provides a platform where researchers working on the senses are invited to share recent research projects or to announce publications/calls for papers pertaining to the senses. We hope you will find this newsletter useful and relevant towards broadening the scope of sociological and social scientific inquiry by placing priority on the social salience of senses in a wide-ranging scope of analytical endeavours on society and social life. Additionally, any suggestions or feedback as to how we can develop the TG in terms of its outlook and goals are warmly welcome. Our proposal for the TG has been submitted to the ISA Research Coordinating Committee in January and we hope to bring you good news soon.

Finally, we would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you to this exciting epistemic community!

Co-Initiators of 'Senses & Society' TG

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Objectives of Proposed Thematic Group

- To carve out and broaden the parameters of sensory scholarship by inviting researchers working on variegated aspects of culture, power, gender and other dimensions of social life to critically address the social politics of the senses;
- To provide grounds for discussion and debate pertaining to analyses of the senses in both local and trans-national settings and cultures;
- To expand upon extant sensory studies beyond research conducted in Euro-American contexts, with non-industrial communities, or through historical inquiry, so as to locate how the senses function in a plurality of social settings, both in historical and contemporary dimensions;
- To explore and deliberate upon embodied forms of research and fieldwork that incorporates both the senses of the researcher and the researched, and to consider how sensory experiences may be articulated through different media of data presentation and analyses;
- To interrogate conceptual debates in social scientific projects that have to do with analysing how senses and society avail further theorising on larger social processes of globalisation, migration and transnationalism, and the flows of peoples, lifestyles, and circulation of ideas, habits, and goods through different arenas of everyday life;
- To explore possibilities of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary investigations of sensory experiences.
- Curricula review and development of modules related to sensory studies in the interest of pedagogical enhancement.

Research Highlights/Recent Publications

*The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture:
A Sociology of the Senses*
(Routledge, forthcoming 2011)

Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk

Taste, sight, sounds, sensory experiences – all physical experiences, right? Yes, but not exclusively physical. As this original text sets out to explain and provocatively so, there are cultural and social factors interacting with and modulating sensory experience. This will be the first text (for advanced undergraduates as well as graduate courses) to explore this new field of inquiry and also to provide a synthesis of the underlying physiological, neurological, and psychological bases for why this is so.

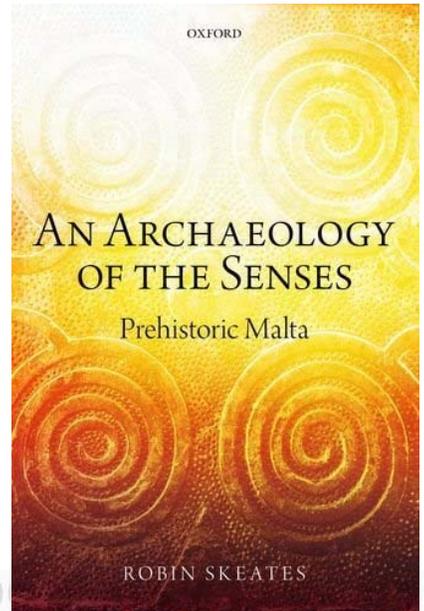
Research Highlights/Recent Publications

An Archaeology of the Senses: Prehistoric Malta

(Oxford University Press, 2010)

Robin Skeates

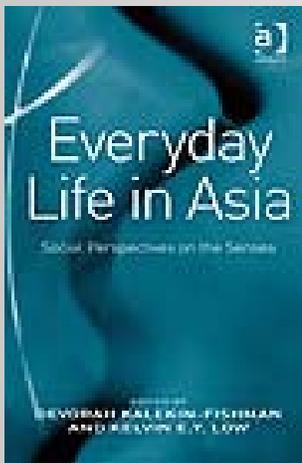
Despite the fundamental importance of the senses in human experience, archaeologists have, until recently, tended to neglect the abundant sensory dimensions of the material world they investigate, with the exception of the sense of sight, which has dominated archaeological theory and practice. In this book Robin Skeates establishes a well-defined methodology for an archaeology of the senses, produces a challenging new interpretative synthesis of Maltese prehistoric archaeology, and provides a rich archaeological case-study for the emergent interdisciplinary field of sensual culture studies. Using the combined methods of reflexivity, inventory, experimentation, thick description, and creative writing, Skeates explores the senses of sight, sound, smell and taste, touch, spatiality, the emotions, and their synaesthetic interplay.



Research Highlights/Recent Publications

Everyday Life in Asia: Social Perspectives on the Senses
(Ashgate 2010)

Edited by Devorah Kalekin-Fishman & Kelvin EY Low



While much sensory research has been conducted in ‘Euro-American’ contexts, among non-industrial societies, or through historical studies, sensorial investigations of non-Western communities have been empirically limited. *Everyday Life in Asia: Social Perspectives on the Senses* is an endeavour taken up in this direction to

examine the manifold associations and uses of the senses in different Asian countries and through a variety of transnational settings where sensory paradigms interact. Through explorations of the senses in Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, China, and Israel, *Everyday Life in Asia* offers a range of detailed case studies that demonstrate how sensory experiences of space and place provide a lens to flesh out different meanings embedded in everyday life.

Research Highlights/Recent Publications

Pink, Sarah. (2011) 'Multi-modality and Multi-sensoriality and Ethnographic Knowing: or can social semiotics be reconciled with the phenomenology of perception and knowing in practice' *Qualitative Research* 11(1).

Petrick, Gabriella M. (2010) "Larding the Larder: Designing Taste for the Modern Age" *The Senses & Society* 5(3):382-387.

Vannini, Phillip, Dennis Waskul, Simon Gottschalk, and Carol Rambo. (2010) "Sound Acts: Elocution, Somatic Work, and the Performance of Sonic Alignment." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 39(3): 328-353.

Thierry Baccino, Daniel Cabrol-Bass, Joël Candau, Candice Meyer, Tobias Scheer, Marcel Vuillaume, Olivier Wathelet. (2010) "Sharing an Olfactory Experience: The Impact of Oral Communication." *Food Quality and Preference* 21(5): 443-452.

Announcements

1. There are two upcoming major meetings organised by the ISA in 2012 (Second ISA Forum, Buenos Aires) and 2014 (XVIII ISA World Congress, Yokohama) where we would like to propose panels on the Senses. We invite suggestions on themes that will showcase current sensory research.
2. We welcome any call for papers/publications pertaining to conferences/projects on the senses that can be included in our next newsletter.

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