

# The Touch of the Present: Educational Encounters, Aesthetics and the Politics of the Senses

## ABSTRACT:

This presentation explores my forthcoming volume *The Touch of the Present: Educational Encounters, Aesthetics and the Politics of the Senses* (SUNY Press). In particular I discuss the nature of educational encounters as a time and space of becoming that is deeply connected to our sensory experiences of the world. Drawing on a range of theoretical positions on embodiment, the senses, education, and aesthetics, it offers a theory for conceptualising encounters as at once sensual and educational. The book conceives of our perceptual contact with/in/of the world as a form of 'touching' and 'being touched by' that is singular in its eventfulness and yet connects us relationally with our environment. Thus I explore, on the one hand, how encounters create conditions through which social hierarchies and processes of racialisation and sexualisation become lived experience and, on the other, how sensation also generates radical potential that can challenge the social arrangements through which the becoming of a subject emerges. Encounters are in this way seen as a space and time through which one can become 'socialised' into a given order whilst also carrying the potential for 'becoming' beyond the cultural scripts we are given. In exploring this double aspect, the book keeps a constant eye on the sometimes ambivalent and undecidable dimensions of our educational practices.

## BIO:

Sharon Todd is Professor of Education at Maynooth University, Ireland. A former graduate of the PhD in Humanities Programme at Concordia, she has been Professor of Education at Stockholm University (2004-2014) and Associate Professor at York University in Toronto (1997-2004). She is currently engaged in the areas of aesthetics, sensibility and contemporary art practices and their connection to educational and political transformation. She is currently working on a book titled "The Touch of the Present: Education, Encounter and the Politics of the Senses" (forthcoming from SUNY Press). Previous publications include *Learning from the Other: Levinas, Psychoanalysis and Ethical Possibilities in Education* (SUNY, 2003) and *Toward an Imperfect Education: Facing Humanity, Rethinking Cosmopolitanism* (Paradigm, 2009), the co-edited volumes *Re-imagining Educational Relationships: Ethics, Politics, Practices* with M. Griffiths, M. Honerod and C. Winter (Wiley, 2014) and *Philosophy East/West: Exploring the Intersections between Educational and Contemplative Practices* with O. Ergas (Wiley, 2015). She is currently President of the International Network of Philosophers of Education.

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### Location

Peter Wall Institute for Advanced  
Studies Seminar Room



### Date + Time

Wed Nov 2, 2022  
2:30 - 4:30 pm



### Speaker

Dr. Sharon Todd

Hosted by the David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education

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