



Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses In Society

By David Howes, Constance Classen

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Ways of Sensing is a stimulating exploration of the cultural, historical and political dimensions of the world of the senses. The book spans a wide range of settings and makes comparisons between different cultures and epochs, revealing the power and diversity of sensory expressions across time and space. The chapters reflect on topics such as the tactile appeal of medieval art, the healing power of Navajo sand paintings, the aesthetic blight of the modern hospital, the role of the senses in the courtroom, and the branding of sensations in the marketplace. Howes and Classen consider how political issues such as nationalism, gender equality and the treatment of minority groups are shaped by sensory practices and metaphors. They also reveal how the phenomenon of synaesthesia, or mingling of the senses, can be seen as not simply a neurological condition but a vital cultural mode of creating social and cosmic interconnections. Written by leading scholars in the field, *Ways of Sensing* provides readers with a valuable and engaging introduction to the life of the senses in society.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is an important book. It will stand as the most informed yet accessible treatment we have of both the individual senses and the relationship among the senses. Howes and Classen offer readers a wholly fresh, compelling, and absorbing account of the ways the senses have worked in a vast variety of social and historical formations." - Mark M. Smith, *University of South Carolina, USA*

"Howes and Classen have produced a wonderfully lucid and learned account of how we should understand the role of the senses, historically, comparatively and in our own everyday lives. A great pleasure to read." - Michael Bull, *University of Sussex, UK*

About the Author

David Howes is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Centre for Sensory Studies at Concordia University, Montreal. His books include *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991), *Cross-Cultural Consumption* (1996) and *Empire of the Senses* (2005).

Constance Classen is a cultural historian specializing in the body and the senses, and the director of an interdisciplinary research project on the senses in art and the museum. Her books include *Worlds of Sense* (1993), *The Color of Angels* (1998) and *The Deepest Sense* (2012).

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