By the time I visit Montreal I will hopefully have completed a manuscript for my new book project called _A Sensory Education_. This book takes a close look at how sensory awareness is learned and taught in expert and everyday settings around the world. My ethnographic examples vary from the medical schools where I spend time, studying how doctors train their sensory skills of diagnosis (part of a larger project I lead in Maastricht called _Making Clinical Sense:_ makingclinicalsense.com), to cookbooks and IKEA instructions. The central message of the book is that sensing is not innate or acquired, but evolves through learning that is shaped through social and material relations. In particular the book looks at the work that goes into sensory education, including vocabularies, lesson-set ups, the design of instructions and the role of industry.

Much of this will not be new to many in the audience. What I would like to explore in this talk is the process of writing the book - a process that involved not only studying instruction but also making and designing educational materials too. As I want the reader to not only read about but also work through sensory instructions, the book has elements of a “how-to” format, which meant I needed to experiment a lot with the instructions myself. For example, as I wrote about the teaching tools in Maastricht, the Netherlands, I knitted a uterus. I made a 19th century instrument to measure the blueness of the sky when writing about learning sensory vocabulary, then tried to make a YouTube instructional video of the process. I included instructions on how to make these materials in the book and want to explore in the talk the possibilities and limitations of this kind of material thinking, another challenging aspect of what it means to write sensorially.

Anna Harris grew up in Tasmania, Australia, and has close ties to Montreal where her mother was born and lived until migrating to Tasmania in the 70s. Similarly moving across oceans, Anna now lives in Maastricht, in the Netherlands and is an Assistant Professor of the Social Studies of Medicine at Maastricht University. She pursues an approach to the social study of medicine that is grounded in ethnographic studies of contemporary medical practices, her clinical experience working in hospitals, and collaborations with historians, doctors, artists, museum specialists and craftspeople. Anna’s research spans the fields of anthropology, science and technology studies, medical education and medical humanities and health sociology. Her empirical cases focus on the anthropology and history of technological medical practices, especially concerning questions of sensorality, embodiment and learning. She also writes about hospital infrastructures (see www.pneumaticpost.blogspot.com and @pneumaticpost).