



# THE TOUCH OF THE PRESENT: Education, Becoming and Awakening

Sharon Todd, Maynooth  
University, Ireland

**Thursday October 24, 2019**  
**2 – 4 p.m.**

LB-322, 1400 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

This presentation explores educational encounter as a space and time of becoming that is deeply bound up with our sensory experiences of the world. In particular, I discuss how we might think of encounters as a form of 'touching' and 'being touched by' that lack any sharp borders between what is 'inside' the subject and what is 'outside' in the world. This liminal space has been identified variously as 'enaction' 'co-emergence' and 'co-creation' in various theoretical traditions. I relate these conceptions of encounter to an idea of education that exists beyond both dominant understandings of education as socialisation and critical understandings of education as liberation. I discuss how encounters are times and spaces through which one can not only become 'socialised' into a given order or potentially become interruptive of that order, but also how they can offer an undecidable dimension to our educational practices that inherently has both political and aesthetic implications for becoming. Drawing on philosophical, aesthetic and Buddhist resources, I reframe 'becoming through encounter' as an educational-sensual process of 'awakening' that touches on all three of these dimensions.

**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, tentatively titled, *The Touch of the Present: Education, Encounter and the Politics of the Senses*. 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.

**This event is free and open to the public.**

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