

CENTRE FOR SENSORY STUDIES

TALKING SENSE LECTURE SERIES



Biohybrid Bodies: The hybridization of the senses now and into the future

Ned Barker

4 April 2024

4:00 – 5:30 PM EST

In-Person: H-1120, Hall Building,
Concordia University

Virtual: [Zoom Link](#)

Pain – Movement – Breath. These are near-universal sensory features of corporeal existence. They also lie at the intersection of biology-culture, mind-body, and in recent years are increasingly being technologically remade. Through my research into the emergence of hybrid bodies across artistic, sporting, and industrial contexts each of these aspects of embodiment (and many more besides) have come newly under ethnographic focus.

In this talk I introduce the technological and conceptual space in which my Leverhulme project [Biohybrid Bodies](#) exists. Then I draw on examples from the field to discuss what sensory studies has to offer here. Cultural approaches help us realise that “The senses are made, not given” (Howes, 2022, p.1). Stepping out from history, through the present, towards the future I ask: is a revolutionary *remaking* of the senses underway and what is at stake? Without clear answers I sketch a novel sensory research framework for tracking the development of biohybrid bodies as they move into, and across, society.

[Ned Barker](#) is Senior Research Fellow at the UCL Knowledge Lab, where he leads the research theme Technology, the Body and Cognition. He has a background in sensory ethnography attuning his practice to performance art, sporting cultures, modes of industrial production, technological mediation of touch, and experimental collaborations with artists. His current research project [Biohybrid Bodies](#) is funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Recent sensory publications include [An Ethnographer Lured into Darkness](#), [Sensory Explorations of Digital Touch](#), [An Ethnography of Dirt, Danger, and Industrial Robots](#), [Moving Sensory Ethnography Online](#), and [Living Capsules](#).

*A reception will follow in the Centre for Sensory Studies office, H-1122.01