

CENTRE FOR SENSORY STUDIES



SENSORY PRACTICES IN DISABILITY ARTS AND EVERYDAY LIFE LECTURE SERIES

Creating Theatre for All the Senses— Except Sight

Audrey-Anne Bouchard

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1:00-2:30 PM EST, [Webinar Registration Link](#)

Theatre is a very visual art form. What does a person who is blind perceive from a theatrical experience? Partially-sighted artist Audrey-Anne Bouchard draws on her lived experience of vision loss to explore how to create and communicate theatre beyond the visual, which typically shapes the relationship between performers and audience members. In her work, rather than being a handicap, her different sensory abilities become a pretext for reinventing the creative process and the art form we know as theatre. Her immersive performances *Camille* and *Fragments* involve all of the audience's senses – but sight. While specifically designed with and for the community of people living with low vision, her creations are also accessible to sighted audience members invited to experience the work wearing eye shades. In this presentation, Audrey-Anne reflects on the origins of her practice and the emergence of a creative methodology that moves beyond the visual.

Audrey-Anne Bouchard is a Montréal-based theatre director and lighting designer whose work explores multisensory performance and access beyond the visual. A Concordia alumna (BFA, Theatre Design), she has designed lighting for dance and theatre in Montréal and internationally and taught Design and Production at Concordia University and at the National Theatre School of Canada. In 2011, she completed a Masters Degree in Performing Arts at Université de Nice and Université de Bruxelles in the context of which she studied the sensorial experience of performers and audience members. In 2016, drawing on her lived experience of low vision, she initiated *Au-delà du visuel*, a research-creation project exploring the possibility to create and communicate dance and theatre to an audience living with low vision. With a team of collaborators, Audrey-Anne developed immersive works that engage all the audience's senses except sight. *Au-delà du visuel* created the performances *Camille* (2019), and its later iteration *Camille: le récit / Camille: The Story*. For *Camille*, Audrey-Anne received significant recognition, including the Monique Lefebvre Universal Accessibility Award and a Montréal English Theatre Award (META) for Outstanding Direction. Acclaimed by the media and the public, her second piece *Fragments : celle qui m'habitait déjà*, was presented at MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels) last November. Besides her artistic practice, Audrey-Anne is also active as an accessibility consultant and collaborated with various art councils, organizations and the city of Montreal in the development of inclusive practices.