

MEMORYANDTOUCH

AN EXPLORATION OF TEXTURAL COMMUNICATION

A one-day conference to accompany the exhibition

HAPTIC – awakening the senses

Date: 7th May 2008

Venue: Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD

Fee: £65 (£25 Students limited number) to include lunch

Please return the completed booking form with payment to:

Peter Walshaw
University College for the Creative Arts
Ashley Road
Epsom
Surrey KT18 5BE

Phone: 01372 202480

pwalshaw@ucreative.ac.uk

For further information about the Conference and other related events please visit: www.transitionandinfluence.com

MEMORY AND TOUCH: AN EXPLORATION OF TEXTURAL COMMUNICATION

One-day Conference 7th May 2008 Royal Institute of British Architects, London

BOOKING FORM

Name.....

Organisation (if applicable).....

Address.....

.....

.....Phone No.....Email.....

No. of Tickets Price per ticket

I enclose a cheque for _____ made payable to University College for the Creative Arts at Epsom and Farnham

Credit/Debit Card: Visa/Mastercard/Switch/Delta (delete where appropriate)

Card No. _ _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _

Start Date: _ _ / _ _ Expiry Date: _ _ / _ _ Issue No: _ _ Security Code: _ _ _

(last 3 digits from sig. strip)

Nat. Student Union No. _ _ _ _ _

Lunch: non-vegetarian vegetarian *(please tick)*

Special Needs: Wheelchair space

Please note, we do not accept American Express cards or Diners International.

Cancellation: up to 14 days before event 50% of ticket price, thereafter no refund.

Memory and Touch: an exploration of textural communication

Conference organised by University College for the Creative Arts

Venue: Royal Institute of British Architects, Portland Place, London

Date: May 7th 2008

“touch cannot be in opposition to itself, can never be perceived as surface or source, but an acknowledgement that actual is mutual – a conjoining of two.”ⁱ

As babies we learn to define and refine our relationship with our surroundings through licking, touching, smelling, hearing and seeing, and throughout our lives we continue to experience the world through our senses. Our skin is the active medium through which we process information; the mucous membranes and the membranes of the eardrum and retina allow us to taste, smell, hear and see. Yet once we have acquired verbal language, we rarely acknowledge how much we understand through our textural awareness; there is an intimacy, a privacy surrounding our sensory experiences, their very bodily nature a potential source of embarrassment. The more we attempt to control our environment and our interaction with the physical world through intellectual scrutiny of objects, and deny the fundamental importance of textural experience, the more we risk losing that level of communication achieved through attention to the senses, for “to touch is also to be touched”ⁱⁱ. And as such always creates a dialogue, a communication both before and beyond text.

The importance of the sense of touch as a means of communication and our diffidence in acknowledging that bank of accumulated textural intelligence, provides a direct link to the recent considerations of the nature of Haptic and Haptic design as identified and developed by the highly distinguished Japanese designer Kenya Hara. Kenya Hara is Chief Designer of the world-wide design company MUJI, Chief Executive of Nippon Design, and works with international architects Shigeru Ban and Toyo Ito. Kenya Hara’s ground-breaking exhibition of ‘Haptic- awakening the senses’ will be shown at RIBA London in May 2008 and the conference Memory and Touch: an exploration of textural communication will take place to coincide with the Opening of the exhibition. Kenya Hara will be the Keynote Speaker at the Conference, other speakers will include fellow exhibitor Masayo Awe who will discuss the creation of her collaborative work ‘Haptic dictionary’.

The legacy of our earliest cognitive explorations is, as Kenya Hara writes: “that the sense of touch dwells in that of sight, while that of smell exists in that of hearing”. It is possible to touch colour in a sense, because very bright red will work on expectation and somehow the colour will bring some warmth. Some people see cloth through the sound it makes, the sound when people are walking and the cloth moves against the skin; expensive textiles especially make a more beautiful sound, and that there is very often an erotic connection to the sound of certain textiles. Presentations will draw on a wide variety of interpretations, disciplines and experiences, exploring the symbolic, cultural, social and technical aspects of textural communication. For more information visit www.transitionandinfluence.com and follow the links.

ⁱ Chadwick, Helen ‘Lumina Delights’ in ‘Enfleshings’ p69 pub Aperture Foundation 1989.

ⁱⁱ Rodaway Paul (1994). *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. p41 London. Routledge,