

## A WORD FROM THE EDITORS

Human sensory experience is very rarely, perhaps never, the domain of only one particular sense, isolated from the others. This has already been emphasized forcefully by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who noted that our sensory experience is always intertwined. This is because in experiencing the reality around us we use all of our senses at the same time, which effectively (and often very impressively) reinforce each other. Therefore, our experience of the world is always multisensory. The visual influences the auditory and *vice versa*, and what is tactile, gustatory, and olfactory is never far behind. The multisensory experience of the world around us directly affects how and what we think and feel, what we know and create—and, therefore, who we are.

The sensory turn, which highlights the importance of the body and its senses, and focuses especially on the previously underappreciated multimodal and multisensual perception of the world, is currently taking place across the humanities and social sciences. Within this turn, it is recognized, among others, that the sense of sight, which was always highly esteemed in the Western world, is being supplanted by the other senses, usually undervalued in the past. Today, without doubt, the multisensory experience involving the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste constitutes an attractive subject of ongoing research for the academics studying different forms of culture, art, film, and design.

The original articles collected in this special issue of our *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze (Annals of Cultural Studies)* serve as an invitation to discuss multisensory experience in culture, art, film, and design. All the papers address interaction, coexistence, and representation of human multisensory experience in various contexts. The authors analyze how human experience is depicted through sensory perception, usually intermingled with affective performance and/or the powerfulness/powerlessness of the human corporeality. The papers focus on a variety of works including films, artistic performances, works of designers, and pieces of art to answer the question of the impact of multisensory experience on the worldview. Needless to say, the authors understand multisensuality as a multidimensional concept that

can and should be approached from various research perspectives and with the use of diverse methodologies.

**Monali Chatterjee**, in her article analyzing the films by Buddhadeb Dasgupta, one of the most famous Indian film directors, examines the unique portrayal of multisensory experiences present in Dasgupta's cinematic works. The audience of Dasgupta's poetic cinema engages with the materiality of his films through the appeal of an interplay of various senses. This article also attempts to find out what new possibilities there are for the discipline of filmmaking in creating an alternative reality using the depiction of multisensory experiences. **Kamila Kalista** continues the exploration of the interplay of various senses in cinema in her essay on the influences of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, William Shakespeare, and Oscar Wilde in Woody Allen's films, including *Small Time Crooks*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, *Match Point*, and *Irrational Man*. Kalista concentrates on the interaction of the senses, or, as she calls it, "the sensual polyphony", in Allen's works, and how it contributes, along with the laughter, "the great leveller", to making all things equal in the cinematic world. **Iga Pękala** and **Magdalena Witkowicz** focus on the multisensual representations of isolation and intimacy crisis in a few contemporary Polish films: *Love Tasting*, *All These Sleepless Nights*, and *Sweat*. The authors in their analyses use, among others, Vivian Sobchack's sensuous theory and Laura U. Marks' haptic visuality in order to demonstrate how new Polish films can effectively appeal to the senses other than sight and hearing.

Further studies included in this special issue focus on other artistic endeavors besides cinema. **Sandra Katarzyna Imko**'s paper is a proposal of a reflection on the weaving artworks of the Polish artist, Magdalena Abakanowicz, from the perspective of their multisensory character. Imko suggests, drawing on the phenomenological approach of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, that engaging the body is a crucial aspect while interacting with Abakanowicz's art. **Agata Stronciwilk**'s article looks at environmental engagement through the lens of multisensory experience. Stronciwilk analyzes various art projects by contemporary artists: Dagna Jakubowska, Diana Lelonek, and Peter de Cupere, who address this issue in an emotional, embodied, and tangible way. The author claims that the multisensory experience becomes argument in the discussions about the anthropogenic roots of climate change. The contribution by **Abigail Wiese** touches upon the topic of multisensuality and the affect of shame in the artistic performances of Gabrielle Goliath. Wiese analyzes the engagement of the spectator-

participant in the performance, understanding the body as a communicative instrument ready to be involved on a multisensual level. Finally, **Anna Wiśnicka** in her paper assumes a broad multisensory design stance to investigate materials, methods, and techniques introduced by Scandinavian designers, which contribute to the multisensorial aspect of their work.

Undoubtedly, the exploration of multisensory experience is a fascinating and constantly evolving topic that emphasizes the profound interconnectedness of our sensory perceptions. Our senses collaborate tirelessly, shaping our understanding of the world and influencing our thoughts, emotions, and creative endeavors. Today, the academic community is increasingly drawn to this captivating topic, recognizing its relevance in culture, art, film, and design. The essays collected in this issue of the *Annals* are intended to prompt further academic discussion of the multisensory experience in various contexts, with the use of a variety of perspectives and methodologies. With each essay we understand better the impact of our multisensory perception on our worldview and gain a deeper appreciation of the intricate interplay of our senses, discovering new dimensions in our experience of the world.

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