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SENSES

Senses can be understood as physiological systems enabling living beings to experience their bodies and environment through the processing of stimuli. Historically a five-sense model incorporating sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell has been dominant in culture, but science has long accepted that there are more than five senses and (depending on the model) includes senses such as pain, mechanoreception (e.g. balance) and blood pressure (Howes, 2009, p.24). The senses play a role in various philosophies, most notably phenomenology (see, for example, Merleau-Ponty, 2002, pp. 240-282), which is concerned with perception and experience, but they also connect to materiality, production and reception. Comics Studies' is generally ocularcentric, understanding the senses other than sight only as metaphorical and implicit in a *visual* presentation (McCloud, 1994, pp.118-137). The physical senses are rarely addressed in Comics Studies (Hague, 2014, Lord, 2016), but do appear in some studies of reception, in which readers often remark on 'the comic as a physical object – an object experienced' (Gibson, 2015, p.102). An increasing focus on comics' materiality in Comic Studies since around the mid 2010s and the development of Sensory Studies as a more coherent grouping at the intersection of various disciplines (Sensory Studies, 2020) suggests a route by which the senses might be more substantively incorporated into the study of comics in the longer term.

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