ABSTRACT (500 words)

Probing Complex Perceptual Shifts: Exploring Personal Synaesthetic Experiences Through Multisensory and Immersive Registers

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This presentation examines how synaesthetic perception can act as a transformative mode of understanding the world, using an autoethnographic and phenomenological research approach to explore the fluid boundaries between sensation, memory, environment, and artistic creation. Drawing from lived experience with Audio-Tactile Synaesthesia, the research investigates how sensory overlap reshapes temporal perception, relational awareness, and the formation of core memories, revealing how synaesthetic experience translates as an embodied form of knowing.

Across this research, synaesthesia is framed not as an anomaly but used as a heightened form of sensorial empathy—a neurological and physiological responsiveness in which sounds become tactile presences, memories gain physical texture, and environmental stimuli create affective resonances across the body. These cross-sensory "threads" act as conduits linking past and present, conscious reflection and subconscious response, forming what is described as sensorial registers: dynamic, multisensory pathways that mediate how reality is felt, interpreted, and expressed.

The studio practice forms a central research method, employing autographic, automatic, and blind drawing; sculptural processes; and materially responsive making to translate ineffable synaesthetic sensations into physical artefacts. These works emerge through touch-led engagement with materials such as wax, clay, paper, and carved surfaces, where each mark or indentation becomes an embodied notation of synaesthetic experience. Sound, treated as a tangible, textural material, guides movement, gesture, and form, enabling the creation of drawn and sculptural "scores" that reflect the corporeal impact of auditory stimuli. Through this process, the artwork becomes both documentation and translation—a means to render inner sensorial landscapes accessible to others.

The research also considers the role of immersive and interactive technologies in mediating synaesthetic perception. In a cultural moment increasingly defined by digital distortion, artificial intelligence, and shifting notions of authenticity, the project experiments with multisensory installations that use projection, sensor-driven audience interaction, and tactile, interactive, kinaesthetic sculptural objects to invite audiences into an authentic shared, synaesthetic encounter. Rather than distancing viewers from embodiment, these technologies are employed to cultivate an altered but intimate sensorial engagement—an "obscured familiarity"—that gently destabilises habitual perception while grounding participants through touch, sound, and visually empathetic presence.

By situating personal synaesthetic experience within broader conversations about multisensory integration, empathy, and the materiality of perception, this research contributes to interdisciplinary understandings of how humans navigate and construct reality through sensorial insight. It aligns with emerging perspectives from neuroscience, philosophy, and art practice that challenge hierarchical sensory modalities and instead foreground the body as an active, relational site of knowledge production. Ultimately, the work proposes synaesthesia as a generative lens through which to reconsider the interplay between sensation and memory, inner worlds and reality, and the boundaries between perception and the senses.

This presentation will include reflections on methodology, excerpts of multisensory fieldwork, and examples of practice-led translation processes and outcomes, offering insight into how synaesthetic experience can expand artistic, perceptual, and empathic possibilities.