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SENSING THINGS: MERLEAU-PONTY, SYNAESTHESIA & HUMAN-CENTREDNESS

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ABSTRACT

Sensoriality is an increasingly important theme within design discourse and practice. However, despite current and previous enthusiasms, there have been few attempts within mainstream design to construct an ongoing critical engagement with sensory experience. In this paper I argue that a phenomenological approach to the senses throws light on current debates about sensoriality in general and the theme of human-centredness in particular. I dramatise this argument by discussing cross-modal or, as it is more commonly known, synaesthetic perception. I use this discussion to prepare the ground for a broader, phenomenologically informed and speculative discussion about design and human-centredness.

Keywords: sensoriality, phenomenology, human-centredness.