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Touch: Sensuous Theory And Multisensory Media



Synopsis

In *Touch*, Laura U. Marks develops a critical approach more tactile than visual, an intensely physical and sensuous engagement with works of media art that enriches our understanding and experience of these works and of art itself. These critical, theoretical, and personal essays serve as a guide to developments in nonmainstream media art during the past ten years—sexual representation debates, documentary ethics, the shift from analog to digital media, a new social obsession with smell. Marks takes up well-known artists like experimental filmmaker Ken Jacobs and mysterious animators the Brothers Quay, and introduces groundbreaking, lesser-known film, video, and digital artists. From this emerges a materialist theory—an embodied, erotic relationship to art and to the world. Marks's approach leads to an appreciation of the works' mortal bodies: film's volatile emulsion, video's fragile magnetic base, crash-prone Net art; it also offers a productive alternative to the popular understanding of digital media as "virtual" and immaterial. Weaving a continuous fabric from philosophy, fiction, science, dreams, and intimate experience, *Touch* opens a new world of art media to readers. Laura U. Marks, associate professor of film studies at Carleton University, Ottawa, is a critic and curator of artists' independent media. She is the author of *The Skin of the Film* (2000).

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