

# DISRUPTING EARLY CHILDHOOD: INHERITANCE, PEDAGOGY, CURRICULUM

## The Vitality of Touch and the Aesthetics of Educational Encounters

with **Sharon Todd** (Maynooth University, Ireland)

Thursday, September 10, 2020 | 3:00pm - 5:00pm (EST) on Zoom



In light of the current pandemic, the idea that touch is vital to education seems to verge on the border of obsolescence. However, given that education transpires through encounters students have with the world, be these through tablets, computers, textbooks, persons or other forms of materiality, there remains an undeniable sensory dimension to education that is indeed vital for practices of teaching in these times. In particular, I link the dynamics of touch - as both a touching and being touched by - to an aesthetic understanding of educational encounters. To do this, I turn first to Aristotle's understanding of touch as central to life itself in order to contemplate how it is not merely one of the senses but signifies as the primary mode of all bodily contact with the world. This vital aspect will then be examined in relation to the specific ways bodies experience contact, through their membranes, morphological make up and their movements. Here, I draw on a number of philosophers and theorists (such as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Juhani Pallasmaa and Erin Manning), and a recent installation entitled *The Boarding School* by Danish art collective Sisters Hope to demonstrate how the vitality of touch operates through those very practices we call educational.

**Sharon Todd** is Professor of Education and member of the Centre for Public Education and Pedagogy at Maynooth University, Ireland. She has published widely in the areas of embodiment, ethics, and politics in education and is currently writing a book for SUNY Press tentatively titled, *The Touch of the Present: Educational Encounters, Becoming, and the Politics of the Senses*. Her work has been informed by continental philosophy, feminist theory, aesthetics, and Buddhist scholarship. She is author of *Learning from the Other: Levinas, Psychoanalysis and Ethical Possibilities in Education* (SUNY, 2003) and *Toward an Imperfect Education: Facing Humanity, Rethinking Cosmopolitanism* (Paradigm, 2009). Her co-edited volumes include *Re-imagining Educational Relationships: Ethics, Politics, Practices* with M. Griffiths, M. Honerød and C. Winter (Wiley, 2014); *Philosophy East/West: Exploring the Intersections between Educational and Contemplative Practices* with O. Ergas (Wiley, 2015). <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/people/sharon-todd>

**Everyone is welcome to attend.**

Please RSVP by September 9, 2020 at

[https://yorku.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAsfuqrqT4tE9FrGsf0JFa\\_rnQt62iA6pCz](https://yorku.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAsfuqrqT4tE9FrGsf0JFa_rnQt62iA6pCz)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.