



*Touch me, touch me not:  
senses, faith and performativity in early modernity*

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This fourth issue of the *Open Arts Journal* brings together an exciting collection of essays that investigate the collaborative roles of the senses in the genesis and experience of renaissance and baroque art. Examining, in particular, the ways in which the senses were evoked in the realm of the sacred, where questions of the validity of sensory experience were particularly contentious and fluid, the contributors seek to problematise the neoplatonic imperialism of sight and sense hierarchies that traditionally considered touch, along with smell and taste, as base and bodily. The essays show that instead it was a multiplicity of sensory modalities – touch, sight, hearing and sometimes even taste and smell – that provided access to the divine, and shaped the imaginative, physical and performative experience of works of art. The issue's project thus brings us closer to achieving the art historian Geraldine Johnson's eloquent proposal: that by revisiting Michael Baxandall's famous 'period eye', we might, in fact, arrive at a more aptly described, historically-specific, 'period body'.

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