

## ENGAGING THE SENSES TO EXPLORE COMMUNITY EVENTS

MICHELLE DUFFY\* AND JUDITH MAIR†

\*School of Environmental and Life Sciences, University of Newcastle, Callaghan NSW, Australia

†Event Management in the UQ Business School, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

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Community events are often staged by local authorities as a way to boost the local economy, improve social cohesion, and foster a sense of belonging. However, although it is arguably comparatively straightforward to conceptualize how events may contribute in terms of economic impact, it is much more difficult to understand and assess how events can contribute to feelings of connectedness and belonging. To date the focus in the event management literature has been very strongly focused on what people think of events; this study instead draws our attention to what people *do* and how this may provide clues as to how they feel in terms of engagement. Recent studies in tourism, geography, and urban studies have started to explore the role the senses play in our engagement and participation in events. Turning to the senses as a means to explore our bodily engagement with an event provides an opportunity to examine inclusion and exclusion at an event from a new perspective. This article takes an interdisciplinary ethnographic approach to examine a case study of community and the Noosa Jazz Festival in Australia. Findings suggest that festivals, through their embodied participants, can facilitate feelings of inclusion in a community. Sound, vision, and the festival ambience emerged as being of key importance. The research demonstrates the benefits of interdisciplinary research, particularly drawing from sensual geographies, when exploring intangible constructs such as connectedness, inclusion, cohesion, and belonging.

**Key words: Festivals; Community; Senses; Sensual geography; Belonging; Cohesion; Inclusion**

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### Introduction

Local councils, organizations, and similar stakeholder groups invest substantial resources into community events such as festivals, fairs, farmers' markets, and fetes. The expectation behind such investment is that the event will generate a range of enhanced

social outcomes, such as a strengthening of community feeling; heightened notions of community belonging; improved social and civic engagement; increased avenues for building community renewal and resilience; and aiding the economy through generating employment and tourism dollars (Derrett, 2003). Previous research has considered the way

Address correspondence to Michelle Duffy, Associate Professor, Human Geography, School of Environmental and Life Sciences, Faculty of Science, The University of Newcastle (UON), University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia. Tel: + 61 2 492 15097; E-mail: [Michelle.Duffy@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Michelle.Duffy@newcastle.edu.au)

in which events impact society and community, although this has been less of a focus for researchers than the economic impacts (Mair & Whitford, 2013). Nonetheless, the key positive social impacts that have been identified include opportunities for socialization and enjoyment, volunteering, learning new skills, and boosting community pride (Barron & Rihova, 2011; M. Duffy & Waitt, 2011; Getz, 2012; Mair, 2014; Nordvall, Pettersson, Svensson, & Brown, 2014), while some of the negative impacts include disruption due to increased traffic, noise and pollution, loss of local amenities during the event, and the potential for antisocial behavior among attendees (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2012; Holmes, Hughes, Mair, & Carlson, 2014). Since the 1990s researchers have examined motivations for event participation (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Nicholson & Pearce, 2000), and psychological frameworks have provided a particular understanding in terms of needs, consumer behavior, and marketing, as well as communal well-being (Filep, Volic, & Lee, 2015; Getz & Andersson, 2010; Getz & McConnell, 2011; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012; Pearce & Pabel, 2015). In addition to the focus on the psychology of event attendance, recent studies in tourism, geography, and urban studies are opening up exciting avenues of research by turning to the senses and the ways in which our bodies capture and respond to the various elements of the community event—the sights, sounds, smells, experiences, and feelings that are aroused by participating in an event (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Giorgi & Sassatelli, 2011; Mackley-Crump, 2015; Waitt & Duffy, 2010).

The range of factors influencing community engagement in community events points to the significance of the variety of ways we may feel engaged or disconnected. Pink (2004) has suggested that by turning to the senses we can expand our understanding of everyday life beyond the conventional parameters of analysis. This echoes the earlier work of Rodaway (1993), who argued that we need to critically examine the role of the senses because such an approach contributes to “the fullness of a living world or everyday life as a multisensual and multidimensional situatedness in space in relationship to places” (p. 4). This in turn means thinking about our bodily interactions with our world and with others. Our bodily

encounters in and with the world are “not simply perceptual, but always involve emotional, cognitive and imaginative engagement; they are always relational” (Ansell, 2009, p. 200). The significance of the everyday is important to establishing ways of acknowledging and celebrating ideas of community, yet the mundane habits, practices, and experiences of daily life often go unnoticed, even though recent arguments in social and cultural theory propose that such things matter profoundly (Horton & Kraftl, 2006; Lorimer, 2008). An important discussion that arises out of the sensual geographies literature questions how best to capture and communicate the ways in which we are entangled in and through the places and communities in which we live—because this highlights that we are embodied beings that encounter and interact through the senses with our everyday world.

Rethinking methodological approaches so as to explore the everyday through the senses is not new; the work of feminist, postcolonial, and indigenous scholars, as well as in those working in the creative arts, has challenged long-held assumptions about how we conceptualize and communicate knowledge about the world (Chilisa, 2012; Gibson-Graham, 1994; Lisahunter & Emerald, 2016; Rose, 1993; Schwan & Lightman, 2015; Smith, 1999). Longhurst, Ho, and Johnston (2008) have strongly suggested that researchers use their bodies as “instruments of research” (p. 215). This also requires a way of presenting such data and its analysis appropriately, for, as Longhurst et al. (2008) pointed out, “smells, tastes, gestures, reactions, clothing, glances and touches often slip away unnoticed and/or undocumented” (p. 208) and we are left with what Crang (2003) called a “ghostly absence” (p. 494) of bodies. However, although offering a potentially rich source of data to better understand community formation and even transformation, this sensual approach has not been widely used in the events field to date. We want to bring the bodies of both the researchers and those being researched back into an analysis of festival events as a way to consider how our sensual engagement contributes to feelings of social engagement (see also Duffy, Waitt, Gorman-Murray, & Gibson, 2011).

This article draws upon the field of sensual geographies to explore how attending or otherwise being affected by community events engages the different

senses, and to consider what this may tell us about the event experience. We focus on the role the senses play in our encounters with a festival event. Through engaging our senses, the event may facilitate a deeper involvement and greater feelings of connection, or we may be constructed more in terms of observers or audience that then establish different sorts of relations. Using ethnographic methods in the context of the Tastings on Hastings lunch held at the 2015 Noosa Jazz Festival, we illustrate how a deeper exploration of the role of the senses and experiences offers important insights into what constitutes successful community events.

### Literature Review

The “linguistic turn” in the humanities and social sciences has made important contributions to the ways in which scholars conceptualize and interrogate the world. Yet, we are well aware as to how we can be affected by a range of cognitive and bodily sensations that interpellate us into our everyday places and communities (Boyd & Duffy, 2012; Duffy et al., 2011). Thus, an important critique of this “empire of signs” (Howes, 2005, p. 1) is our propensity to ignore the sensations of the body in the modern defense of the subject/object distinction (Brennan, 2004). Bodies and the spaces they inhabit are inseparable (Duffy et al., 2011; Edensor, 2010; Lefebvre, 2004; Merleau-Ponty, 1962), and a turn to the senses offers opportunities to consider our bodily relations to place and each other. A full exploration of the senses is beyond the scope of this article and available elsewhere (see for example, Classen, 1993; Howes, 1991, 2003, 2005; Low, 2012; Pink, 2004; Porcello, Meintjes, Ochoa, & Samuels, 2010). What is presented here focuses on the ways in which experiential engagement produces certain forms of social relations.

Consideration of the experiential aspects of community events and the social impact of sensorial engagement has had a strong focus in the anthropological and sociological literature. Scholars drawing on the work of Durkheim (1912/1995), and later that of V. Turner (1969), explore how events encourage opportunities for enacting a collective consciousness through the generation of strong, often spontaneous feelings of connectedness that are aroused through the senses (Eade & Sallnow,

2000; Falassi, 1987; Handelman, 1990; Sepp, 2014). This body of literature frames community events as something set apart from the everyday (Durkheim, 1912/1995); however, what is significant to this discussion is the use of the senses to create a more heightened state of feeling and emotion within participants. A similar exploration of the senses is also found in human geography literature (Diaz-Barriga, 2003; Derrett, 2003; Duffy et al., 2011; L. Duffy, Waitt, & Gibson, 2007; Fincher & Iveson, 2008; Lewis & Dowsey-Magog, 1993; Waitt & Duffy, 2010). Work in the social sciences in the last few decades has emphasized the significance of the senses in instituting forms of sociality because of the ways in which sensory experience contributes to concepts of the self and culture and their interrelationship (Low, 2012). As Ingold (2011) argues, “the senses are not keyboards or filters that mediate the traffic between mind and world. They are rather—as Gibson (1966) always insisted—aspects of the functioning of the living being and its environment” (p. 315). This framing also means that although we can focus on individual senses and explore how each address differing ways of engaging with and being in the world, such an approach ignores the interconnectedness of the senses in human perception (Pink & Howes, 2010). As perceptual psychology and neurobiology has found, the differing senses “reinforce one another, giving us a unified picture of everyday reality taken from multiple perspectives” (Cytowic, 2010, p. 46). However, the meaning we attribute to certain registers of the senses arises out of cultural constructions that reveal “society’s aspirations and preoccupations, its divisions, hierarchies, and interrelationships” and that the senses therefore have a “role in *framing* perceptual experience in accordance with socially prescribed norms” (Classen, 1997, p. 402; italics in original). A more recent turn to emotion, affect, and embodiment has offered opportunities to critically explore the senses, which are the difficult yet taken for granted aspects of engaging with events.

Although acknowledging that emotion and affect are not discrete things, and making distinctions between them sets up “unhelpful dualisms” (Bondi, 2005, p. 445), there are nonetheless differing conceptualizations that shape our understanding of our relations with the world. Emotion refers to an

individual's psychological states (e.g., anger, disappointment, resentment, joy). However, emotion is not simply something felt within an individualized body; rather, it is produced within networks of relations, both human and nonhuman (Bondi, Smith, & Davidson, 2005). Although there is no one definitive meaning of affect (and this is often further complicated by its association with terms such as emotion, feeling, or sensation), in very broad terms affect is understood as the bodily capacity to act and be acted upon. Affect, then, is relational, integral to an "emergent and transforming experience" (Thrift, 2008, p. 176). Affect moves between, "as a vehicle connecting individuals to one another and the environment . . . connecting the mind or cognition to bodily processes" (Brennan, 2004, p. 19). Nonetheless, feeling, emotion, and affect shape and communicate both who we are and how we interact. The emotions and affect generated have "the potential to reconfigure listeners' relationships to place, to open up new modes of attention and movement, and in so doing to rework places" (Gallagher, 2015, p. 468).

The generation of strong, often spontaneous feelings of connectedness arising out of participants' responses to the sensual (visual, oral, olfactory, and haptic) elements of an event are a significant part of the process of sociality, producing what V. Turner (1982) calls *communitas* (see also E. Turner, 2012). Importantly, these intense feelings of belonging can operate across different social structures including class, ethnicity, or gender, and serve to reaffirm group identity and belonging (Costa, 2002; Falassi, 1987; Lavenda, 1992; St John, 1997). The emotional impact aroused while participating in these events has also become important for a tourist market that seeks to participate in a form of modern-day pilgrimage or those in search of some notion of an authentic "other" (MacCannell, 1976). Nevertheless, the senses can arouse feelings of exclusion, alienation, and even disgust while also offering a means to challenge hegemonic power structures.

Hence, the focus in this presentation of the literature of the senses explores how we may be brought into the event through the ways in which the activities of the event engages our various senses, or how the senses may contribute to feelings of detachment from the event. Important to this discussion, and to the analysis that then follows, is that the senses

are not simply unmediated physiological responses to the world and therefore precultural (Classen, 1997). Rather, the meanings we give to sights, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactilities are "essential clues to the ways by which a society fashions and embodies a meaningful world" (Classen, 1997, p. 405). Therefore, making sense of events is a political act, our various bodily, emotional, and affective responses marking us as belonging or not to the festival community. Our senses are significant because they shape the way we experience an event, and through activating the senses we may be brought into an event where we may not be active participants or even not part of the festival location's communities.

In summary, the generation of feelings of connectedness to an event, *communitas*, is a significant part of the way that participants experience an event and can also influence identity and belonging, both in a positive and a negative way. Yet, although literature on the event and festival experience has focused on individual senses (e.g., sound or sight), researchers have broadly failed to take sufficient account of the interconnectedness of the senses in human perception, and the role this play in socialization processes. The aim of this article is to use "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) to represent and consider in a more nuanced way the role of sensual geographies in shaping the festival experience.

### Methodology

The phenomenological tradition with its origins in the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Husserl (1913/2014) starts from the premise that reality is perceived through our experiences of it; yet this perceived thing precedes and exceeds our experience (Toadvine, 2008). Husserl (1931/1981) describes this in terms of the "privileged position" of the human body; that "everything I encounter gives itself as arranged *around* the body with which I perceive" (Husserl, quoted in Casey, 1997, p. 218). Merleau-Ponty argues phenomenology is a "manner or style of thinking" (quoted in Toadvine, 2008, p. 21) that requires "radical reflection" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2002, p. 280). However, an important critique is that phenomenology emphasizes the individual and subjective over the social and communal (Pink & Howes, 2010).<sup>1</sup> Integral to our approach in examining

the senses at a festival is to critically reflect upon the ways in which the unfolding of the event may affect how our bodies *feel*. The narratives presented in the field notes are an important means to communicate this, for as lisahunter and emerald (2016) explained, “sensual and sensory methods and methodologies can help us to capture our storied worlds in ways that reveal complex embodied, emplaced, multisensorial social phenomena” (p. 142). Therefore, we have incorporated detailed ethnographic notes as a means to record and convey the experience of attending this festival event.

### *Case Study Method*

This article has adopted a case study approach. Case studies can involve single cases or multiple cases, and can be intensive or extensive (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Yin, 2012). This study uses an intensive case study approach, described by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), as an approach that focuses on finding out as much as possible about a single given case. Intensive case study research draws on qualitative research traditions and aims to understand and explore the case from “the inside” and develop an understanding from the perspectives of the people involved in the case (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The key interest is in the case itself and not in any predetermined theoretical propositions, even though arguably, the study of a singular case has the potential to contribute towards theory development (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991).

Ethnography and case study methods are complementary methods, given their ability to explore phenomena of interest and provide detailed insight (Yin, 2012). Ethnography is the contextualized understanding and representation of people and their experience of their worlds (Till, 2009). Ethnography has also been described as a practical approach to research that involves deliberate and systematic examination of phenomena within its natural surroundings (Hammersley, 2010). The role of the researcher is to focus on the people, perspectives, conceptions, experiences, interactions, and sense-making processes involved in the study, using “thick description” (Geertz, 1973), which allows for sharing of the rich and multifaceted details of a case (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

This thick description is also “one of the most important means for achieving credibility in qualitative research” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843). However, the importance of reflexivity within ethnographic methodologies should be acknowledged—the researcher should have an awareness of their presence, their position, and their interaction with the subject/s of the research (Emerson, 1987). In this study, the researchers took the role of “participant as observer” while actively participating in the festival (Gold, 2001).

### *Background to Case Study*

The location for the case study reported in this article is Noosa Heads, on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia. The town has a population of approximately 3,999 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011), and is around a 90-min drive from the state capital, Brisbane. Noosa, and more specifically Noosa Heads, is a small pocket of advantage within the Noosa Shire. It is an area of above-average income and has a significant proportion of second homes and retirees (AEC Group, 2015). Each year in September, Noosa holds the Noosa International Jazz Festival. Part of the festival is a celebration of local food, wine, and jazz called “Tastings on Hastings” and this community event forms the basis for exploration. During this event, the main street in Noosa Heads (Hastings Street) is closed off to traffic and a range of local restaurants set up tables and chairs in the middle of the street (see Figs. 1–5), and offer a set menu, drinks, and plenty of jazz music.

### *Data Collection*

As discussed above, this research is based on a single case study. Given that the aim of an intensive case study is to investigate and elaborate upon the details and specificities of one unique case, the research must be contextualized within the case. The data collection took a qualitative approach, primarily using participant observation and interviews with key stakeholders, but also including information from the festival website, maps, photos, and event programs to contextualize the research.

Participant observation is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people



*Figure 1.* Watching the scene: Rococo Noosa, Bistro & Bar, 42 Hastings Street (photograph by author).



*Figure 2.* Behind the Tasting at Hastings lunch, outside Crawdaddys restaurant, 18 Hastings St, Noosa (photograph by author).

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*Figure 3.* Still from amateur video of Noosa Jazz Festival parade (audiovisual by author).



*Figure 4.* Still from amateur video of Noosa Jazz Festival parade (audiovisual by author).

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Figure 5. Tastings on Hastings (photograph by author).

under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (Kawulich, 2005). Both authors attended the event in the role of observer as participant, where the researcher is an observer who is not a member of the group under study (in this case attendees at Tastings on Hastings) and who is interested in participating as a means for conducting better observation and, hence, generating more complete understanding of the group's activities (Kawulich, 2005).

As noted, four interviews were carried out with key festival stakeholders, including the festival director, and representatives of local business, council, and community. Interviewees were purposefully selected for their knowledge and familiarity with the community under study (Biernaki & Waldorf, 1981). This type of sampling is known as criterion sampling, where participants are approached to be part of a study because they meet a particular criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). In this study, interviewees with a thorough knowledge of the event and the local community were sought. Each interviewee was contacted using publicly available contact details and asked if they would be interested in taking part in the project. Each interview

was carried out face to face, and lasted approximately 1 hr. Interviews were audio recorded with permission and transcribed afterwards.

In total, the data used for this project included field notes, photographs and event maps and programs, festival website contents, and the transcripts of interviews. However, only the field notes and interview transcripts were formally analyzed. The remainder of the data (photographs, maps, programs, and website contents) were used to contextualize and communicate the research and inform the researchers' thinking about the event.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using a two-stage coding process and manual data analysis techniques were used. Initially, open coding was undertaken. Open coding involves the very first data classification and is a product of analysis in early stages (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). All data were coded according to themes derived both from the literature, mainly using the five senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste) and from the emergent data. Following this, focused coding was undertaken. Focused coding facilitates



the creation of more specific categories for coding data (Charmaz, 1995). At this stage, important themes emerged, which are those that will be discussed in the following section. These included how different bodies felt during the event, multisensory engagement, and how the senses facilitated different types and levels of participation in the event.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Creating Expectations Through the Senses*

We had decided to get to Hastings Street early. Although early September, the morning was quickly heating up, the sun had quite a bite to it. Yet there was still moisture in the air; the previous day had been hot and humid until the evening when it was more pleasant wandering along Hastings Street in search of dinner. We weren't able to get tickets for the lunch event—it was sold out as soon as it was announced, the festival director had told us—but we did hope that we might be able to sit ourselves at a café. Seems a lot of people had a similar idea. Men wearing hi-visibility vests hurriedly placed fencing along the middle of the Street while others redirected traffic—soon all traffic will be stopped so the Jazz Festival's Opening Parade can move its way along past the outdoor diners. Local restaurants provide lunch for up to 650 diners seated outdoors along the entire length of Hastings Street. Restaurant staff busily set up tables along the southern side of this road's divide; smoothing table cloths, carefully placing cutlery, ensuring white wine has been placed in buckets of ice. We can hear the sizzle of barbeque at some restaurants, and the aroma of what is cooking wafts out and makes our mouths water. Somewhere ahead of us we can hear the clink of glasses. Young waitresses stand in the shade of the Pandanus trees that line this street, chatting while they wait for the lunch guests to be seated. Unlike the more languid movement of shoppers yesterday, there was a definite buzz around us. Those lucky enough to get tickets were already gathering, greeting friends and looking around for a possible early drink. Others hurry into the shopping mall, perhaps trying to get last minute groceries before easy movement is hampered by midday events. Some, possibly knowing how difficult it will be to even get a cup of coffee until well after the event has finished, are happily seated at the Rococo Noosa, a restaurant that has the more European style of seating arrangement that encourages its clientele in people-watching. A waiter glides out carrying a tray of coffee cups, and deftly hands out the latté, mocha and flat white to the correct person. What a great place that would have been for us to view the

opening event! Still others, particularly the young and those more interested in getting down to the beach for the day, take little notice of the bustle around them, unaware as those organising the street closure call out to them to mind where they are walking. We finally manage to find ourselves a bench to sit on that will allow us to observe both the parade and those having lunch. (Field notes, September 4, 2015, Noosa Jazz Festival)

In these ethnographic notes, the researchers attempted to capture how different bodies felt in the period immediately prior to the parade and lunch—those of the researchers as well as the bodies of those around the researchers—in order to critically consider the ways in which the senses shape and influence the expectations of the festival event. Although descriptions of those who seek to avoid participation, or are unaware of the festivities going on around them are included, the focus is on those responses that appeared receptive to the festivities in Hastings Street at the Tastings on Hastings and parade as a means to critically evaluate the role of the senses in designing community events. This event is the official opening of the Noosa Jazz Festival,<sup>2</sup> highly anticipated by members of the “Noosa glitterati”; indeed, their support ensures the inconvenience of road closures are tolerated (personal communication with Festival Director). The event is a sell-out each year, and is particularly popular with local residents who often book well in advance to be sure of getting a seat (personal communication with Festival Director). As noted, lunch tickets cost AU\$85 per person, which may be prohibitive for many, and tickets are limited. Yet even while targeted primarily at paying lunch guests, those who are simply there to wander up and down the street observing and enjoying the atmosphere do have opportunities to participate through various sensory pathways. There is, then, a fostering of sociability (Melnick, 1993), where opportunity exists for a collective involvement in social activity that serves to enhance social relations (see also Chalip, 2006).

### *Facilitating Inclusion Through Sensual Engagement*

Not long after those who have tickets to the Tastings on Hastings have seated themselves and started their lunch, we hear the sound of “Waltzing Matilda” coming towards us. Those of us sitting

along the footpath dash out to stand along the barriers running down the centre of the road, cameras at the ready, waiting for a glimpse of the band. Leading the parade are three young women holding banners proclaiming the Noosa Jazz Festival, closely followed by a tall, slightly self-conscious young man wearing a cap and holding a banner for the James Nash State High School located in Gympie. Then the jazz band; until now 'Waltzing Matilda' was played in a fairly straight forward manner, but as the band marched by us we could hear much more of a jazz inflection in the melody and the syncopated rhythm of the trumpet. Hats and sun glasses perhaps helped those performing, but many of us watching decided to retire back to the shade of the Pandanus trees. Those who stay out in the sun looked to be the grandparents of those in the band—taking photos or short videos on their smart phones, and waving to those they recognised amongst the performers. The festival's director had talked about the necessity of including youth in the program—not just the parade but also to play on the stages of the festival village. "These are the stars of tomorrow," she told us, "and the festival gives them an opportunity to perform on a stage. It's exciting to think the Noosa Jazz Festival could be the launch pad for the next big thing in Jazz." A white, open car drives into view, and seated on the back seat are the Jazz festival "monarchs," smiling and waving to onlookers. A ute emblazoned with "Zinc"—the parade's sponsor—moves by. Members of the Brisbane Jazz Club, carrying parasols to keep the sun's rays at bay, smile and giggle at something one of the members has said. A couple display their skills at swing dancing, although the music of the marching band is now hard to hear, and at one-point miss catching hands as they turn. She laughs, and they move on. Then two women who twirl multiple hoops around their arms and torso while wearing high-heeled ankle boots come into view. They keep smiling, but you do get the feeling that it is hot and hard work. The sound of the jazz band is long gone, instead is the raucous laughter of a woman seated at the lunch tables. There's a gap, and people lean over the railing trying to see what is heading towards us next along the street. Around those of us standing on the street are the sounds of people talking, laughing and the occasional clink! of glasses. Eventually a group of ukulele players move towards us, all wearing brightly coloured shirts and hats, most wearing sunglasses against the sun's glare, and, although we can see them strumming their instruments as they accompany themselves singing, it is very difficult to make out what the song is. Behind them a unicycle rider in tartan pants, cap and full beard weaves around a stilt walker, who

swirls around in her costume of red and yellow. It's a surprising jumble of performers! The final two entrants—a motor bike hauling a two-seater that holds a banjo and guitar duo and then a surfing mascot for the Noosa lifeguards in a beach buggy—and the parade is over. Behind us, someone claps along with banjo and guitar duo. Glad to get out of the sun, we decide to try and find a café for a cool drink. (Field notes, September 4, 2015, Noosa Jazz Festival)

Much research has explored identity, festivals, and belonging through representational practices, and examined how communal identity is constituted by a combination of elements such as song lyrics, costume, and instrumentation (e.g., Cohen, 1997; Connell & Gibson, 2003; Kong, 1996). Studies on the role of music in festivals has emphasized the role of particular genres of music and how these serve to represent certain identities and imagined spaces. For example, anthropological and geographical work in the past has sought to map the spatial diffusion of styles and genres and overlay this onto certain defined community identities (e.g., Carney, 1997; Lomax, 1976). However, more recent work seeks to understand how festivals generate social connectedness and notions of belonging through different registers, specifically those through the body, including emotion and affect (e.g., Chambers, 2007; Waitt & Duffy, 2010). A multisensory engagement can tell us much more about how festival activities may lure us in and arouse emotions that have the potential to encourage us to be more, or less, open with others. As Thibaud (2011) suggested, our multisensory engagement with the spaces we inhabit gives rise to "an ambiance [that] expresses an 'affective tonality' . . . ambiance gives access to the various moods and emotional tones of urban life" (p. 204). Therefore, the experiential qualities of festival events are significant to how we may respond to what is going on around us.

In the ethnographic examples presented here, the ways in which the lunch and parade are embedded and structured within the public space of Hastings Street facilitates varying levels of participation. This is important for community events where it may not be possible for all to be fully involved. Analysis of the ethnographic notes uncovered three main themes that facilitate and enhance opportunities for

sociality and feelings of community connection: ambience, sound, and vision.

Although the researchers were observers rather than participants, they nonetheless argue that a turn to the senses helps us to develop a deeper understanding of embodiment in relation to festivals and events. This is significant to a better understanding as to why people attend festival events. Drawing conclusions about the Tasting on Hastings event, three key themes related to the senses arose. In relation to sound, paying guests at the lunch did not enjoy a better experience than nonpaying visitors. In fact, as each restaurant had its own jazz band playing, paying guests could only listen to one band during the lunch, while those free to wander up and down the street were able to move from place to place listening to a variety of music. As examined elsewhere (e.g., Duffy, 2005; Morton, 2005; Waitt & Duffy, 2010), sound and music plays a significant role in creating a festival ambience, for, as Ansdell (2004) suggests, “music possesses certain qualities and ‘powers’ that allow personal and social things to happen” (p. 72). This speaks to strategies for inclusion that encourages wider participation from all sectors of the community, one of the aims of the festival.

Reflecting on the visual senses, all visitors and paying guests were able to watch the street parade that took place just prior to the lunch being served. Naturally, lunch guests were guaranteed a good view as they had seats next to the road. However, this free event offered a great deal more inclusivity for all, as there were plenty of places to watch the parade even if not attending the lunch. Again, inclusion in the event did not require tangible resources (money to buy a ticket, or being a member of the apparent “elite” of Noosa).

Finally, in relation to ambience, it is important to note that although there are some locals who do not really engage with the event, the street parade and lunch creates an ambience that sets up expectations about Hastings Street that extend beyond the day. Once again, this relates closely to building an inclusive community, which is embedded within the sensual geographies of Noosa Heads’ environs, and enables people to engage and participate at a number of levels. The boundaries between the festival event and its geographical and social context are porous because the influences and effects of

the festival event spill out beyond its temporal and spatial boundaries, a process called festivalization (Bennett, Woodward, & Taylor, 2014; Cremona, 2007; Roche, 2011). The event is interpellated into the community’s calendar of “memorable and narratable pasts, with the sociocultural rhythm of life in the present, and with anticipated futures” (Roche, 2011, pp. 127–128; see also Duffy et al., 2011). Therefore, the festival, rather than transcending the everyday, becomes intimately embedded within the cycles of the public sphere (Giorgi & Sassatelli, 2011). The bodily experiences aroused by walking around Hastings Street and the emotions and affects this generated are integral to establishing these social relations—and the expectations that the future event will reaffirm these feelings of community.

### Conclusion

This article has focused on exploring the sensualities of an event. Festivals are about adding value to everyday lives, celebrating community, enhancing creativity, and fostering belonging (Duffy & Waitt, 2011). Chalip (2006) talked of the importance of the “big thrill” and the “buzz” of festivals in sustaining place-based attachments (Chalip, 2006); however, analysis of events and festivals has a tendency to assume that the eye and words alone can convey participants’ experiences, meanings, and practices (Duffy & Waitt, 2011). To date our focus in the event management literature has been very strongly focused on what people think of events; this study instead draws our attention to what people *do* and how this may provide clues as to how they feel in terms of engagement. Observation and analysis show that festivals, through their embodied participants, can facilitate feelings of inclusion. This arises out of an engagement with the senses, which capture the attention and draw people into the event that may then go on to create some sense of belonging (Cohen, 1997; Connell & Gibson, 2003; Kong, 1996).

The sensual elements of the event—the smells of different foods, the sounds of cooking, the preparation for the parade, as well as the excitement in those settling in to eat—all create an ambience that invites others in. At a festival, then, any notion or feeling of belonging is most deeply created out of the bodily, affective, and emotive experiences of

being “in the groove together” (Keil & Feld, 1994, p. 167). Probyn’s (2000) exploration of “gut reactions” offered a means to reveal how such experiences unfold. Gut reactions refer to a process that draws attention to the embodied ways that a person inhabits the world—their moods, emotions, and bodily sensations. A bodily response to an affective force that may become named as comfort, guilt, shame, or pride tells us something about how individual dwells in that context. By paying attention to the active role played by the body in the process of making sense of place we may then be able to trace the affective relations arising out of engaging with the event’s activities. We do need to be aware that such attribution of meaning is only partial—we cannot fully know how people feel simply through observation. Nonetheless, psychologists argue that we do possess a communicative capacity that helps decode emotions, and that this is significant to how social relations are structured. In this framework emotions are understood as “repertoires of readiness” that elicit certain responses in others because “emotions provide scripts not of words but of ways of relating” (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 2011, p. 425, 428). This in turn is important in creating a festival event, as organizers need to be aware that the emotions and affect generated have “the potential to reconfigure listeners’ relationships to place, to open up new modes of attention and movement, and in so doing to rework places” (Gallagher, 2015, p. 468).

In terms of contribution to knowledge, this study has provided important information for our current understanding of events and the senses and the future development of theory in this field. Although it would not be appropriate to generate hypotheses on the basis of an individual case study, nonetheless it can be suggested that the senses, and in particular, the interconnected nature of the senses, has a far more significant effect on the event experience than has previously been recognized and thus extends the work of Boyd and Duffy (2012), Duffy et al. (2007), Duffy et al. (2011), and Waitt and Duffy (2010). In terms of future development of theory, a focus on the ways in which bodily experiences constitute bonds of social connectedness should be a fundamental part of research into the sensual dimensions of festivals. Thus, sensual and bodily engagement is a political act because our various

bodily, emotional, and affective responses mark us as belonging or not to the festival community. In practical terms, our research has suggested ways for event organizers or local authorities to improve inclusivity and access to festivals, even where there is high cost, restricted, or ticketed elements. For example, it is generally accepted that festivals with free entry tend to be more inclusive and accessible to a wider audience; however, we might consider how the sounds of a festival permeate far beyond any gates, fences, or ticketed boundaries, creating a more inclusive ambience and allowing experience of a festival by those not able to access the festival itself. This may take the form of a free satellite event that takes place outside the boundaries of the paid or ticketed festival, yet that still allows people to congregate, enjoy some of the social aspects of taking part in an event, and listen to the live music. Parallels can be drawn here with the way that live sporting events offer free broadcasts on big screens at selected locations around a city, allowing those without tickets to experience at least some aspects of the live event. Other suggestions for practitioners include introducing more sensual elements into an event experience (e.g., music where previously there was none; during queueing, or while there are no musical acts performing on stage) in order to enhance the experience for attendees.

Naturally, the study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First and foremost, as exploratory qualitative research, we do not intend this study to be generalized to other settings or event types. Further, as we conducted the study in the roles of “observers as participants,” we accept that a different interpretation of the senses of participants may be valid. Nonetheless, we argue that this study highlights important considerations that may be relevant in other contexts, and suggest this is a fruitful avenue for further research in event management.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>A recent debate within *Social Anthropology* between David Howes, Sarah Pink, and Tim Ingold offers insight into the differing and, at times, conflicting ways in which the senses are conceptualized and the implications this then has for exploring processes of sociality (Ingold, 2011; Pink & Howes, 2010)

<sup>2</sup>Although there are a few concerts held in the evening prior to this official opening.

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