

## Sounds of February, Smells of October: A Sensory History of the Russian Revolution

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(Goldsmiths, University of London)

### LECTURE SERIES

**Tuesday,  
22<sup>nd</sup> May  
2018**

12:15 - 13:15

Campus Biotech  
Room H8.01.D (144.165)  
9, chemin des Mines  
Geneva

Hastily leaving the house, we hurried to the Troizky Bridge. Here we found a large but orderly crowd listening to the firing and greedily drinking in every bit of news. Nobody knew anything positively. Boom! Rat-a-tat, tat-tat-tat-tat. ‘Who’s firing? On whom?’ This was the question that Pitirim Sorokin posed in his Petrograd diary on February 23, 1917, the first day of what would become known as the February Revolution. Modern revolutions are many things, but they are also – and, temporally speaking, first and foremost – stimuli that interact with the human senses in new ways. What is more, the Russian Revolution was a deliberate attempt to alter the human sensory apparatus itself, overturning the hierarchy of the five senses, ousting vision and sound from their privileged places, elevating tactility to the top, and blurring their boundaries in a kind of synesthesia akin to Russian faktura. This lecture considers the sensory dimensions of the Russian Revolutionary process. It asks what taking the “sensory turn” might add to our understanding of this process and how senses and emotions were connected in it ■

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