

# Uncommon Senses V:

Sensing the Social, the Environmental,  
and Across the Arts and Sciences

**Saturday, May 10, 2025**

**2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

**IN PERSON OR ONLINE**

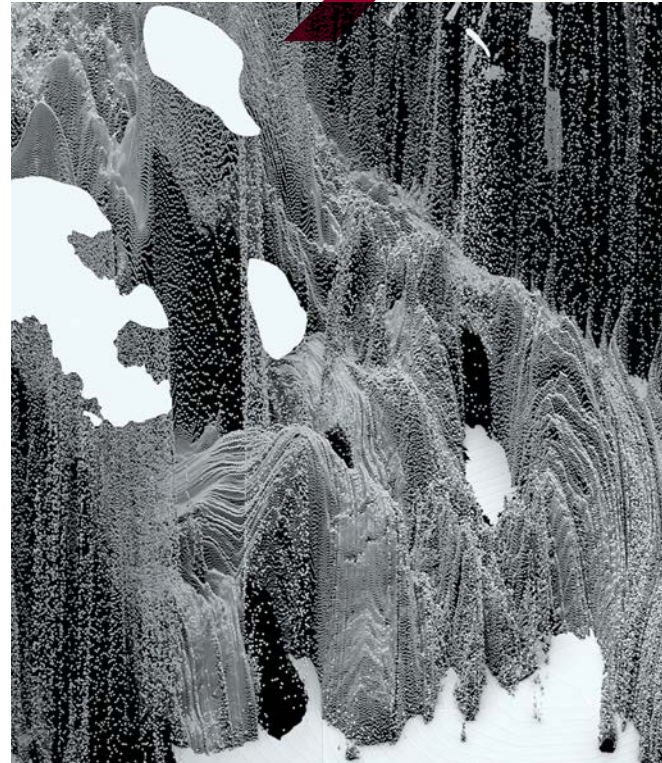
Online: multimodal Grenadine platform (see QR code)

In-person: MB-9.CD, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, John Molson Building,  
Concordia University, 1600 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.,  
(Metro Guy-Concordia)

**Free and open to the public.**

## The Liminality of Sensing with Saadia Mirza

Environmental perception entails techniques of hearing, seeing and sensing unresolved natural processes in infinite variations of time and space. These techniques also reveal aesthetic and political imperatives that shape the discovery, imagination, and exploration of the natural world. How does someone listen to an 11,000-year old glacier? Or visualize the morphology of a treacherous mountain range? Environmental knowledge has always relied on sensibilities that are simultaneously material and discursive; whether we speak of the rich spectrum of words used in First Nation languages for describing ensembles of snow and ice, Humboldt's cyanometer for qualifying the exact blueness of the sky, or the emergent vocabularies describing the 'singing' of deglaciating landscapes via acoustic sensing in contemporary glaciology. Moreover, these sensibilities reveal liminal thresholds between seeing and hearing, matter and meaning, interiority and exteriority, and the traditional ontological divisions between land, sky and ocean floor. The keynote speaker argues that sensing entails positioning oneself at the very edge of a phenomenon—inhabiting the liminal—in order to observe a field of rapidly morphing forces. Drawing examples from landscape archaeology to glaciology and environmentally-informed art, she will explore environmental sensing as rhythms, vibrations, bandwidths, resonances, and frequencies that create fluid and liminal sense-impressions of an unresolved natural process, and through it, opportunities for remapping and rephrasing the criss-crossing umwelts of the planetary sensorium.



VIDEO STILL FROM A PHENOMENOLOGY OF ICEBERG COLLISIONS  
(2024) BY SAADIA MIRZA

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Saadia Mirza (Social Sciences Fellow, University of Chicago) works in the fields of anthropology, media and art. Her current research examines perceptions of geological processes and environmental change through the use of sensing systems, climate modeling, and landscape simulation. She has taught anthropology, architecture, media and artistic creation across France, Pakistan, and the USA

**Registration:**



**Questions:**

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