

The 5th Dutch Touch meeting

The 5th Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social and Affective Touch in the Netherlands, also known as “Dutch Touch”, took place in Amsterdam on the 23rd of November 2021. The society is a space that brings together researchers from Dutch universities who study touch, representatives of companies specialized in haptics, artists, haptic therapists, and other practitioners working with touch. These meetings have been a source of collaboration and inspiration for over half a decade now.

This time the meeting was held in a hybrid format – with 25 attendees offline and about 15 participants online. We exchanged ideas and discussed our most recent work. Of course, a large part of the discussion spanned around the effect of the two years of the global pandemic on touch. The most debated question was which aspects and effects of touch can be mediated by technology and which cannot.

The highlights of this 5th-anniversary meeting were two guest speakers from outside the Netherlands. Aikaterini Fotopoulou from University College London spoke about the neuroscience of affective touch.

Merle Fairhurst from the University of Bundeswehr of Munich discussed novel approaches to studying touch in the world of social distancing. We hope to nourish and deepen exchange and collaborations with international colleagues while maintaining the cozy and personal format of the Dutch Touch meeting.

The next Dutch Touch meeting will be held in the next academic year of 2022-2023. If you want to stay informed about the next Dutch Touch meeting or help with the organization, please contact Dasha Kolesnyk, d.kolesnyk@utwente.nl.

On behalf of all those who study social and affective touch, we would like to express our gratitude to 4TU.NIRICT fund for supporting this initiative.

