

Frans Evers- The academy of the senses

This excerpt from the book the Academy of senses by Frank Evers is an introduction to what is synesthesia and in which terms you can best describe it, as well as what is a synesthetes (the person that has synesthesia).

Evers describes the most common experiences of people that claim to have synesthesia where they visualise music, smell flavour or even smell the shifting of temperatures. Their experience is a different connection on how our senses react or interact with our surroundings. For example a day of the week can be a coloured shape, a number can be another image associated to a color, a music piece can be a series of colours that are put on canvas according to the synesthetes personal experience and interaction with that piece.

The book contains a fair amount of statistics and quotes from people that describe their personal unique way of experiencing and encountering various phenomena through their senses from the very beginning. Though I understand the reason those “testimonies” have been placed there it feels to me like Evers needs to include those from the very introduction of the book in order to convince the reader that this way of perceiving senses is something real. It happened to Jerry, Christine, Carmen and all this fellows that are quotes with their first names, like they are our someone we know, an ordinary person with extraordinary way of sensing things.

Then of course there are references for those who are interested to dive in to the early life of a synesthetes and how and why these people develop this way of perceiving certain external stimuli. In my opinion the book could have less testimonies in the beginning to become convincing. I would rather prefer a text that derives from those unique experiences that lies between reality and fiction. For the rest of us that way of seeing or hearing thing is unheard of therefore it lies in the line between truth and lie. For that reason exactly I believe a piece of painted/heard/tasted poetry would make it much more convincing and interesting.

As expressed in the book of Evers these are common experiences of people that have synesthesia, unlike me and many other people that experience senses in a completely ordinary way. Meaning we hear music instead of seeing music as coloured moving strings. Fascinating as that sounds I wonder at the same time how frustrating could that be? How can someone with this charisma or let's say unique way of experiencing senses can share that with his surroundings if they have a completely different experience. Is that making the people with synesthesia feeling that they can not communicate that with the rest of the people? Is it easier to be surrounded by people like you? With the same way of “seeing” things?