

different world. It is a world beyond visual inspiration, something he senses is actually deeper, it is about how things feel and are felt, are connected to body memory and what is called whole body seeing. The body does not feel what the eyes see.

At the end of the book after Hull has lived through the first five years of blindness with increasing confidence, feeling 'like a person who has managed to survive.' Although this is 16 years ago, his odyssey into the world of blindness remains timeless. Hull's biography, is of course, before the coming of the internet upended the conventions of visibility, where the extent to which sighted people cultivated relations with others without the usual visual information, increased dramatically. Although Hull published a revised version (*On Sight and Insight*) in 1997 it would be fascinating to read Hull's experience and perspective on new technology, including its influence on sound design.

What especially comes through is the differences between the sighted and the non-sighted world, how wide the gap is between the two. The book also acts as an informal exploration of the senses, and sets one wondering the extent to which the image-saturation of contemporary society has impoverished knowing through all the sense organs. Perhaps the loss has been greater than we let ourselves acknowledge. Many years ago Edwin Carpenter, writing in his book, *Eskimo Realities* showed how Aivilik Eskimo's of north-west Canada, possessed an extreme heightened awareness enabling them to easily find their way through their environment, a landscape which to outsiders appear monotonous and repetitive, without noticeable landmarks. Carpenter believed it was a network of symbolic, natural markers, not physical points, but 'relationships between, say, contour, type of snow, wind, salt, air, ice crack,' which enabled his Eskimo friends to easily know where they were. Carpenter was also astonished by the accuracy of the maps he asked some of his Aivilik hosts to draw. Their careful tracing of the contours of the coasts they knew so well was uncannily accurate when compared to the modern mapping of the same land. Yet this inner mapping knowledge had been learnt through the senses. If an Aivilik out in a boat came upon heavy fog, he would have listened to the sound of waves and the direction of the wind to find his way home.

The suspicion remains that the mind of the last few hundred years is progressively chipping away at our facility to experience the world through all our senses. This is embodied in, for instance, the lives we live, the technology we create, and the structures we build. The latter was expressed by the Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa, in a small polemical essay, *The Eyes of the Skin*, which argued that modern architecture was dominated by the visual, and was in need of a whole body rebalancing. Granting credence to this, it is those who

are already inhabiting the other worlds and have a deep knowledge of the senses who may be able to proffer wise guidance away from a world wholly dominated by the visual. *Touching the Rock* is one of those rare books, which in its understated way, does exactly that. OL



Top two maps of their home terrain by Aivilik eskimos, Lower map prepared later from aerial photography