

elluminateme

THE INVISIBLE MEDIUM

How Artists Are Using Scent to Shape Meaning

elluminateme

THE INVISIBLE MEDIUM

How Artists Are Using Scent to Shape Meaning

Hello

Smell is the most intimate of our senses. It arrives before language, bypasses logic, and settles directly into memory and emotion. Invisible yet powerful, it remains one of the least explored artistic mediums in a world dominated by the visual.

This issue we explore artists who use scent not as decoration, but as material. Sissel Tolaas treats smell as data and truth. Jeppe Hein and Olafur Eliasson use it to heighten our awareness of space and the body. Peter de Cupere, Maki Ueda, Wolfgang Georgsdorf, Oswaldo Maciá, Clara Ursitti and Gayil Nalls push scent into performance, composition and cultural memory. Ernesto Neto and Anicka Yi create immersive, sensorial worlds where smell becomes inseparable from touch, technology and speculation. M Dougherty and perfumer David Lev Jipa Slivinschi reveal scent as a precise yet poetic language.

Together, these practices show that scent can communicate what images and words cannot. It disrupts, lingers, and resists capture. It demands presence.

As our lives become increasingly mediated by screens, scent reminds us that meaning is not only seen or read. It is felt, inhaled, remembered.

Steven Kainth
Founder, Elluminate

Best,
Steven Kainth
Founder, Elluminate Me

p.s. Feel free to share this document with anyone who may also find it valuable.

Cover page image: Sissel Tolaas



Sissel Tolaas

Sissel Tolaas treats scent as data and truth, using smell to map social and cultural realities.

elluminateme

Installation view of Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion, with scent work by Sissel Tolaas, 2024. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art.

How scent functions in Sissel Tolaas practice

In Sissel Tolaas' work, scent is treated as data and language rather than decoration. Smell functions as a research tool, a way of documenting reality, carrying memory, identity and environmental information that often escapes visual representation. Odour is not edited for comfort. Instead, it is used to provoke cognitive and emotional responses, challenging deeply ingrained cultural distinctions between what is considered pleasant and unpleasant.

Tolaas systematically collects real smells from cities, landscapes, objects and people, often focusing on overlooked or socially charged environments. These odours are chemically analysed, archived and precisely reconstructed in the laboratory, creating an extensive olfactory archive of contemporary life. The recreated scents are then released into space through installations, sprays or controlled diffusion systems.

Often presented as scent libraries, immersive environments or carefully timed sequences, these works confront visitors with specific places, events or social conditions. By encountering smell as information rather than atmosphere, audiences are asked to reassess how they perceive, categorise and assign value to the world around them.



Molecular Communication, 2019. Photo: Roman März



Sissel Tolaas exhibition design for RE_____, exploring smell through site-specific works. Photo: Formafantasma.



AirREborn is an immersive installation by Sissel Tolaas that translates real environmental data into sensory experience.

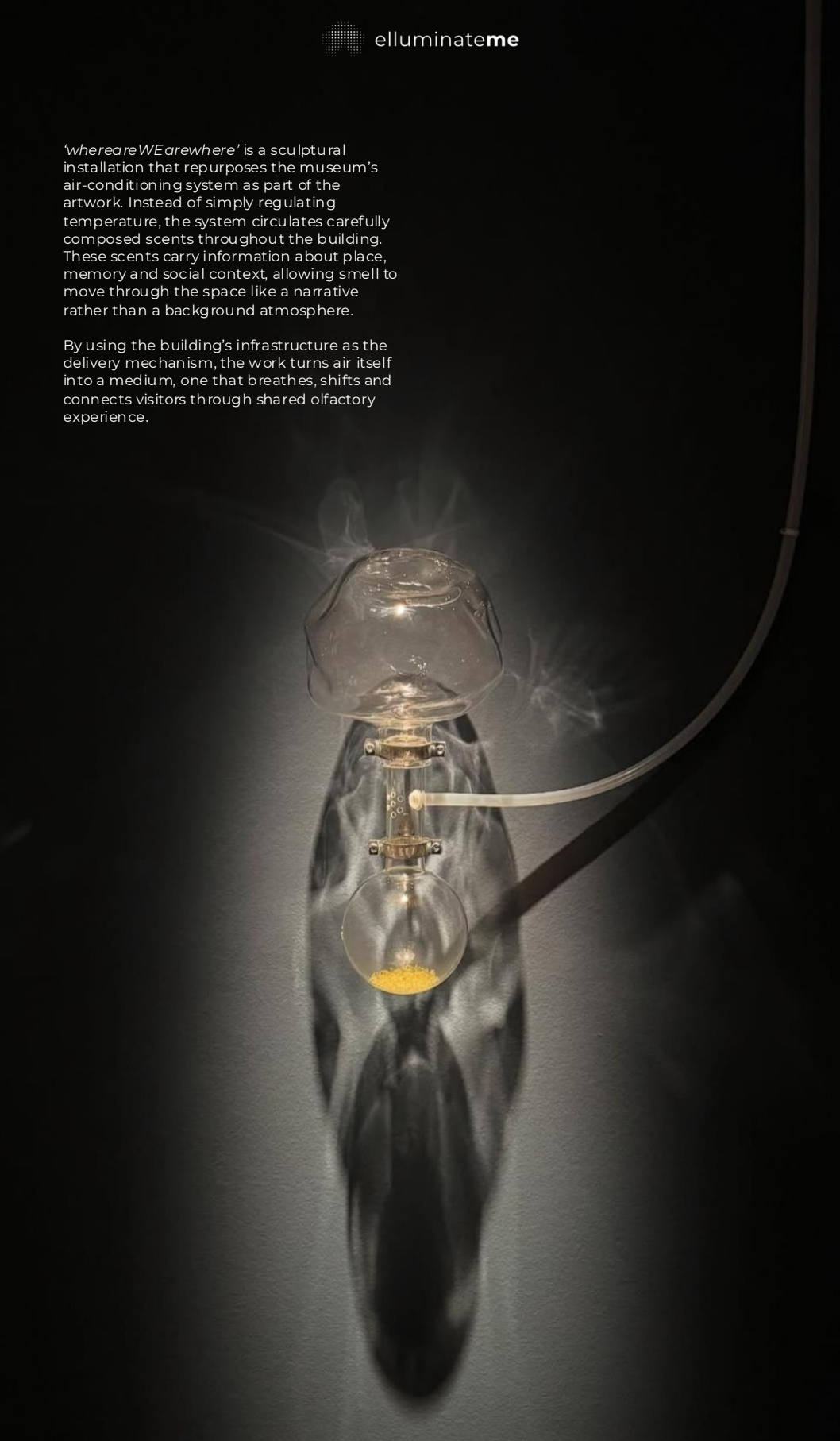
Sensors positioned along the Norwegian coastline capture both wind movement and the smell of the ocean. This information is transmitted into the exhibition space, where the scent of the sea is released through a ventilation system, and the force of the wind is made visible through the movement of suspended textiles. Rather than representing nature symbolically, *AirREborn* physically reintroduces it, allowing air and smell to enter the space as lived information.

The work exemplifies Tolaas' approach to scent as data and language, using smell to convey place, atmosphere and environmental presence beyond the visual.

Image: formafantasma

'whereareWEarewhere' is a sculptural installation that repurposes the museum's air-conditioning system as part of the artwork. Instead of simply regulating temperature, the system circulates carefully composed scents throughout the building. These scents carry information about place, memory and social context, allowing smell to move through the space like a narrative rather than a background atmosphere.

By using the building's infrastructure as the delivery mechanism, the work turns air itself into a medium, one that breathes, shifts and connects visitors through shared olfactory experience.





Jeppe Hein

Jeppe Hein creates interactive works that heighten awareness of the body, space and presence.

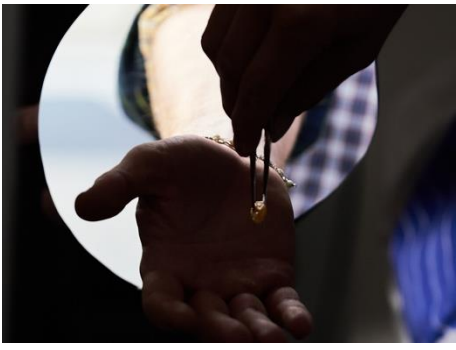


How scent functions in Jeppe Hein practice

In Jeppe Hein's work, scent functions as an invisible trigger for awareness, emotion and bodily presence. Rather than carrying explicit narrative or representation, smell operates as a subtle interruption of the everyday, gently heightening attention to space, memory and internal states.

He introduces scent into spatial installations and interventions, often diffused quietly into architectural or public environments where it is encountered unexpectedly. The presence of smell is never announced; it reveals itself through sensation, encouraging visitors to slow down and become more attuned to their own breathing, movement and perception.

These scents are deliberately minimal and non-referential. Their purpose is not to depict a place or object, but to shift emotional tone and deepen bodily awareness. Working in dialogue with mirrors, light, water and spatial structures, scent becomes one element within a larger sensory system, activating the viewer as an active, embodied participant rather than a passive observer.





elluminateme



RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

Right Here, Right Now is a multisensory participatory installation by Jeppe Hein that invites visitors into an immediate, embodied experience of perception. Created as part of a Ruinart (champagne) commission, the work engages all five senses, combining sight, sound, touch, taste and smell to heighten awareness of the present moment. Among its sensory elements is the subtle diffusion of Chardonnay blossom, linking the experience to the material origins of champagne while remaining non-representational. Rather than instructing viewers how to engage, the installation encourages playful exploration, prompting visitors to slow down, notice their own sensory responses and reconnect with the act of being fully present in space and time.



Image: koeniggalerie

elluminate



Hein's limited-edition Ruinart Rosé Jeroboam. Courtesy of Ruinart.



Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson creates immersive environments using light, air and subtle sensory cues, including scent, to make perception physically felt.



Moss Room is an immersive installation in which walls and surfaces are covered with living reindeer moss, transforming the exhibition space into a dense, organic environment.

The work engages the sense of smell through the moss's natural, earthy scent, alongside touch and sound absorption, heightening bodily awareness and altering perception of space, time and atmosphere.



The forked forest path. Photo: Antony Carr

How scent functions in Olafur Eliasson practice

In Olafur Eliasson's work, scent functions as an atmospheric and perceptual amplifier rather than a focal medium. It operates alongside light, temperature, humidity and colour to heighten bodily awareness and gently destabilise the dominance of vision. Smell supports his broader interest in how humans sense, inhabit and co-produce space, encouraging visitors to recognise perception as an active, embodied process.

Eliasson often collaborates with scientists, perfumers and engineers to introduce scent indirectly into large-scale installations. Rather than being isolated or overt, smell is embedded within environmental systems such as mist, air currents, fog or climatic conditions. In this way, scent subtly alters how visitors breathe, move through space and emotionally register their surroundings, contributing to an experience that unfolds through the body as much as through the eye.



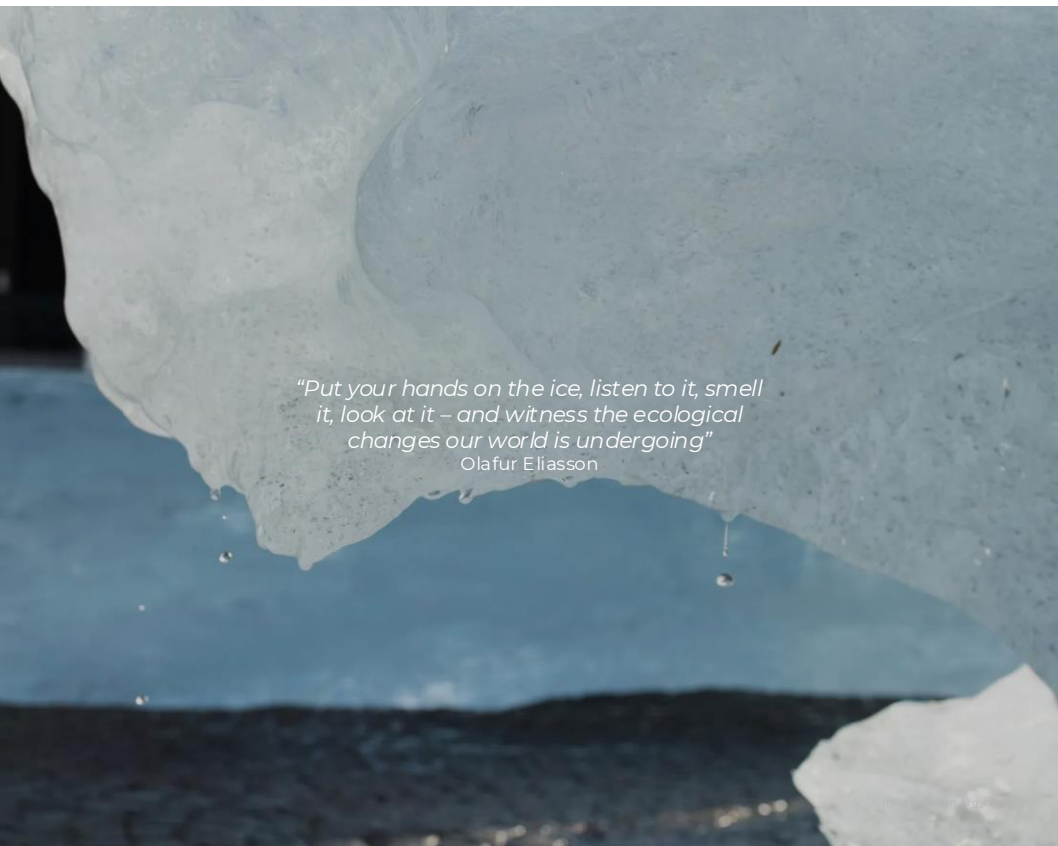


Dufttunnel
A rotating tunnel filled with living plants that immerses visitors in shifting natural scents, using smell as the primary medium to activate bodily awareness and spatial perception.



This artwork is known as Ice Watch as the artist wanted the people to watch ice as it melted in public. It was a temporary installation that was meant to serve as an explanation and a reminder of the impacts of climate change.

Eliasson believed that the ice was beautiful, and you can smell it, touch it, and essentially lay your hands on it to witness the cooling and the melting. Touching the ice is like touching Greenland, making people have an emotional connection with the environment.



"Put your hands on the ice, listen to it, smell it, look at it – and witness the ecological changes our world is undergoing"
Olafur Eliasson



Peter de Cupere

Peter de Cupere treats scent as a confrontational medium, designed to disrupt comfort and expectation.



How scent functions in Peter de Cupere practice

In Peter de Cupere's work, scent operates as the primary sculptural medium. Smell carries meaning, narrative and emotion, often addressing social taboos, environmental concerns and the uneasy boundary between attraction and repulsion. Odour is deliberately used to trigger instinctive, bodily reactions before any intellectual interpretation can take place, positioning the nose as a site of immediate judgement.

De Cupere constructs physical objects and mechanical sculptures designed to produce, release or transform smells. These take the form of scent machines, olfactory organs, inflatable structures, breathing devices and interactive installations in which the audience actively triggers the emission of odours. The body becomes both participant and receptor, entangled in the work through action and response.

The scents themselves are carefully engineered using chemical compounds, natural materials or synthetic blends. They are frequently paired with visual, sonic or kinetic elements, making smell perceptible beyond the nose. Through this multisensory orchestration, scent becomes visible, audible and tangible in space, asserting itself as a full-bodied artistic material rather than an invisible backdrop.







To Smell a New World

An immersive olfactory exhibition exploring nature and climate change through scent installations, sculptures and poetic models that engage smell as a primary sense.

Image: Peter de Cupere, Scharpoord Cultural Centre, Knokke-Heist



Maki Ueda

Maki Ueda treats scent as a delicate, time-based medium that shapes how we sense the everyday.

elluminateme



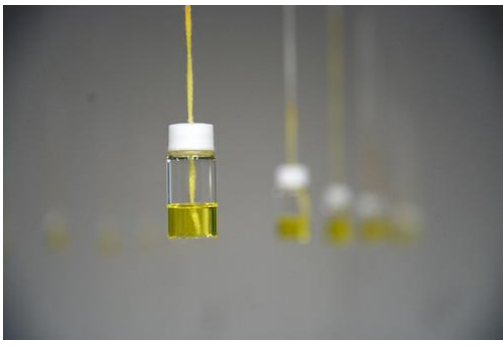
Ether Aromatic Mythologies installation view, 2025.
Image: Marc Walker.

How scent functions in Maki Ueda practice

In Maki Ueda's work, scent functions as a sensory interface and a tool for communication. Smell is used to explore perception, memory, intimacy and cultural coding, often in close relationship with sound and the human body. Rather than being decorative, scent becomes a means of connecting internal sensation with external experience.

Ueda creates participatory installations, performances and experiments in which smell is intentionally introduced, exchanged or followed. These take the form of smell-based walks, olfactory performances, scent-emitting objects and interactive works that investigate how people recognise, recall and emotionally respond to odours. In many of her projects, smell operates as a guide, signal or social connector, quietly shaping human interaction and shared experience.





Sharing Vibes: As Part of Resonating Place"



Making the Invisible Visible: Smell and Air as Commons

This project takes smell as a starting point to explore air as part of the *commons* — a shared resource that belongs to everyone and no one, like oceans, forests or public space. Air is something we collectively depend on, shape and affect, yet rarely perceive as a common responsibility. By focusing on smell, the project seeks to make the invisible qualities of air perceptible and experiential.

The work unfolds across three interconnected strands. First, it creates spaces for learning through lectures and workshops, inviting participants to reflect on air, smell and shared environments. Second, it undertakes research that uses technology to measure and visualise smell, translating a highly subjective sensory experience into something that can be observed, discussed and compared. Third, it results in spatial installations and exhibitions that express air circulation itself, allowing visitors to see, sense and move within the dynamics of air.

By treating air as a medium of exchange carrying scent, information, pollutants and biological signals between humans and all living organisms, the project reframes smell as more than a personal sensation. It becomes a way to think about biodiversity, ecosystems and biomes, and about how closely our bodies are entangled with the environments we inhabit.

Ultimately, *Making the Invisible Visible* encourages a shift in perspective: from seeing air as empty or neutral, to recognising it as a shared, living system that connects us to each other and to the wider world.



Wolfgang Georgsdorf

Wolfgang Georgsdorf treats scent as a time-based medium, creating instruments that make smell performable like music.



How scent functions in Wolfgang Georgsdorf's practice

In Wolfgang Georgsdorf's work, scent is treated as a time-based language. Smell operates in a similar way to music or cinema, unfolding sequentially to create meaning through rhythm, contrast and duration. Odour is approached as a compositional medium capable of carrying narrative, emotion and abstraction over time.

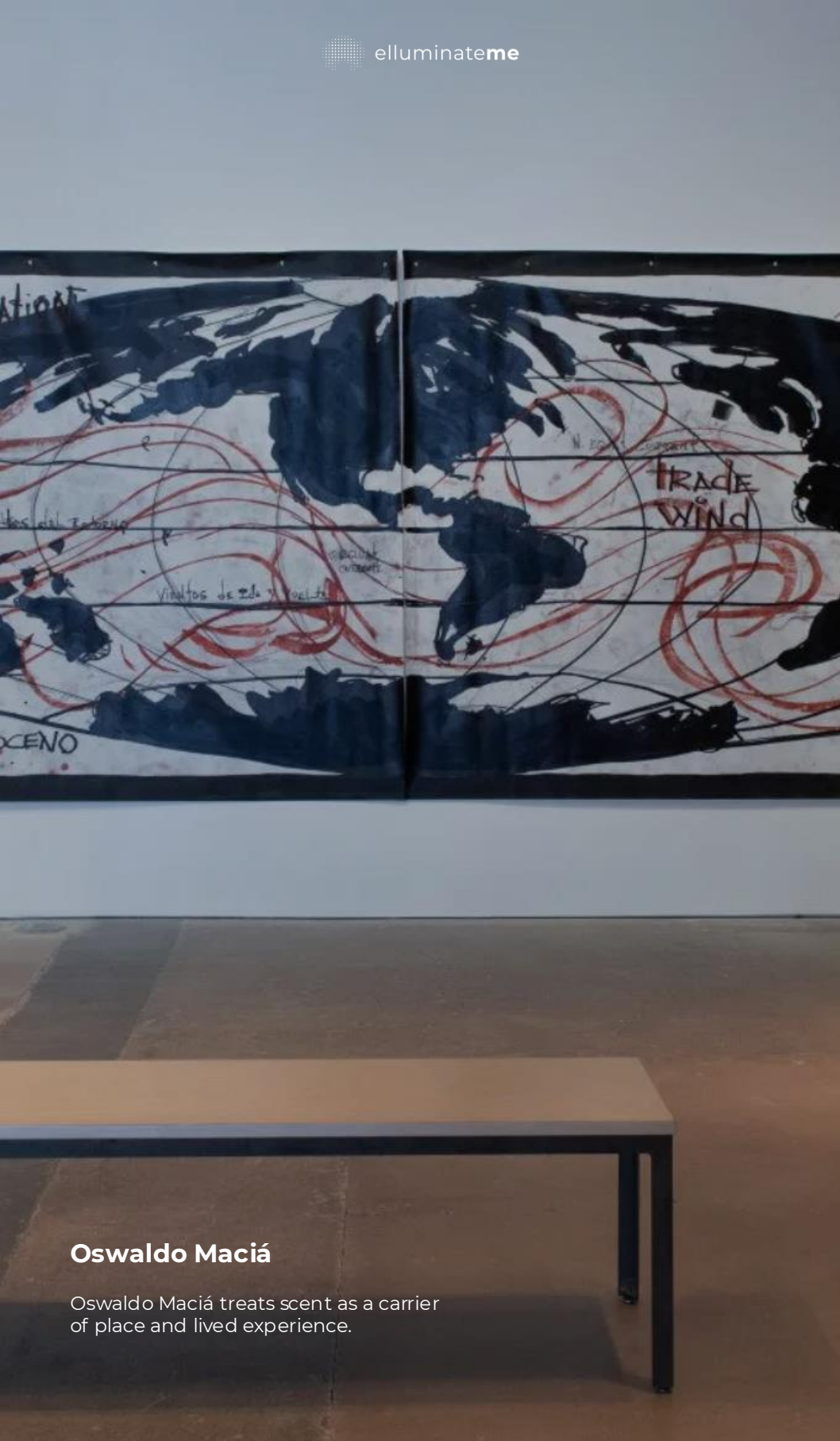
Georgsdorf invented and built Smeller 2.0, a custom instrument designed to release precisely programmed sequences of scents into space. Using this system, he composes olfactory "scores" in which individual smells appear, overlap and fade according to a defined timeline.

These works are presented as live or recorded olfactory performances, allowing audiences to experience smell as a structured, temporal art form rather than a static or incidental sensation. In doing so, his practice repositions scent as something that can be read, followed and remembered in time.





Smellodies: composing dramatic "scentscapes"



Oswaldo Maciá

Oswaldo Maciá treats scent as a carrier of place and lived experience.

elluminateme



Installation combining research, maps and sound with the diffusion of tree resins and plant-based scents from Central America. Smell is used as a cartographic and political tool to trace migration, colonial routes and cultural exchange.

How scent functions in Oswaldo Maciá practice

Maciá treats scent as a spatial and time-based material, comparable to sound. He releases custom-made odours into architectural or sculptural systems where they circulate, fade and return, shaped by airflow and movement. Each visitor encounters the work differently, depending on position, breath and duration.

Smell is often paired with sound recordings from natural or urban environments. Both act as invisible forces filling the same volume of space, unfolding through rhythm and duration. Using fans, ducts and custom chambers, Maciá controls how scent travels and disperses, creating sculptures that remain unstable and continuously shifting.





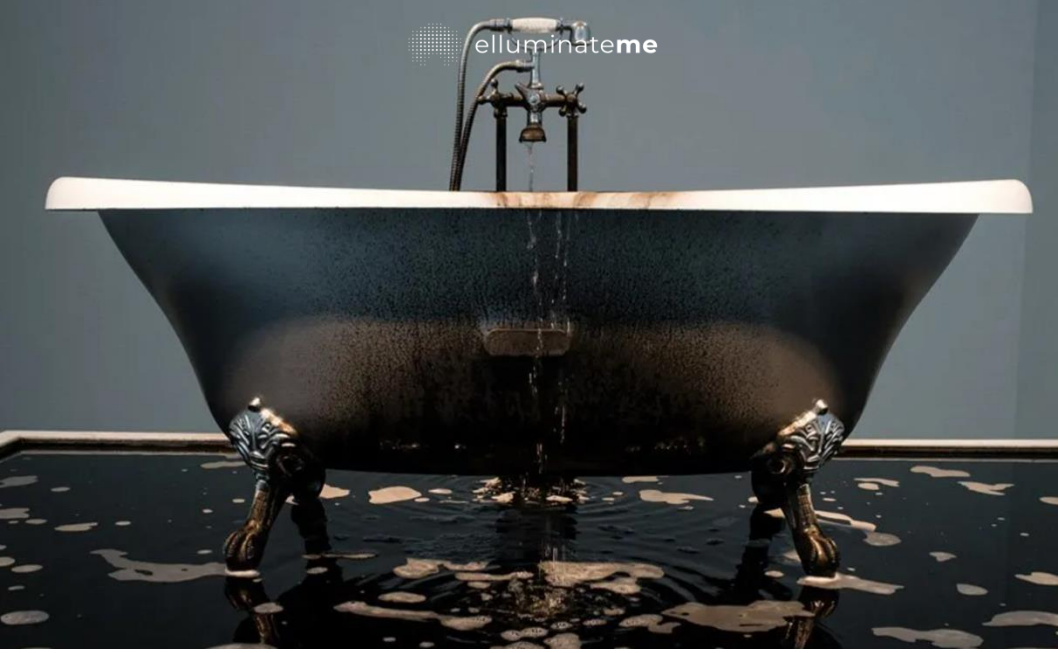


Forest of Balms

An olfactory acoustic sculpture combining fans, fabric infused with Balsam of Peru, megaphones and a fifteen-minute sound loop. The scent is released through air circulation, carrying the material history of the balsam, harvested from Myroxylon balsamum by workers in El Salvador using scorched bark and repurposed cloth to absorb the resin.

The work links smell to colonial trade and migration. Balsam of Peru, one of the first perfumes to cross the Atlantic, moves from Maya medicinal use to European perfumery through colonial extraction. Sound recordings of desert winds and rainforest insect pollinators echo these movements, evoking displacement, cross pollination and the fragile balance of ecosystems shaped by forced and accidental journeys.





Under the Horizon
Olfactory-acoustic sculpture

An immersive sculpture, where smell and sound shape perception. The work releases an underground scent composition based on carrot seed, encountered without visual reference, making a familiar smell difficult to identify and forcing intuitive engagement.

A bathtub filled with black liquid sits on a plinth, accompanied by sounds of machine stitching and artificial rain recorded in a Bulgarian military-uniform factory. Smell functions as a primary sculptural medium, bypassing language and activating memory and instinct.





Clara Ursitti

Clara Ursitti uses scent and sound to explore identity, ritual and the politics of the body.



The Smell of Fear. Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, 1996.
Two-level installation. Motion-sensor dispensers released alternating scents of perfume and a synthetic reconstruction of Judy Garland's body odour, developed with biochemist Dr George Dodd, activated as visitors passed. A basement video showed Garland's final Over the Rainbow performance. Smell operated as a direct, bodily trigger of exposure and vulnerability.

How scent functions in Clara Ursitti practice

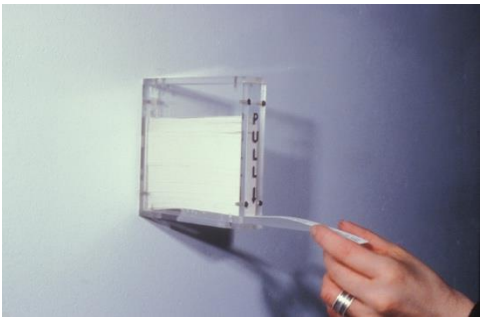
Clara Ursitti uses scent as a primary artistic medium to examine identity, intimacy, social norms and power structures. Smell operates where language and images fail. It triggers instinctive, bodily reactions and exposes cultural rules around attraction, disgust, gender and presence. In her work, scent carries psychological and social information. It replaces representation with direct sensory contact, forcing the viewer to experience the work through the body rather than through interpretation.

She engineers and deploys specific smells in real spaces. These include synthetic reconstructions of her own body odour, concentrated perfumes worn by performers, pheromonal traces collected from clothing, and site-specific scent releases.

Smell is diffused through rooms, triggered by movement, worn by participants, or embedded into social situations such as exhibition openings. The work often has no visual marker. The artwork exists as a scented situation that alters behaviour, perception and social dynamics in real time.



Monument, 2015. Commissioned for 'The Smell of War', De Lovie – Poperinge, Belgium. The scent of decaying human flesh and mist vapour dispersed into an empty room every half hour, similar to the daily ringing of church bells.





Clara Ursitti. Jeux de
Weizmann Institute - Tel Aviv
Israel - curated by the
Contemporary Art Society in
London.
A series of identical bottles on
a shelf. One containing the
Serge Luten fragrance Jeux de
Peau and another the scent
from a skin analysis.



Gayil Nalls

Gayil Nalls treats scent as a social and geopolitical material, encoding identity, history and power into smell.



The Smell of George Washington's False Teeth is an artist-created scent composed of essential oils and botanical alcohol, housed in a ready-made decanter.

How scent functions in Gayil Nalls practice

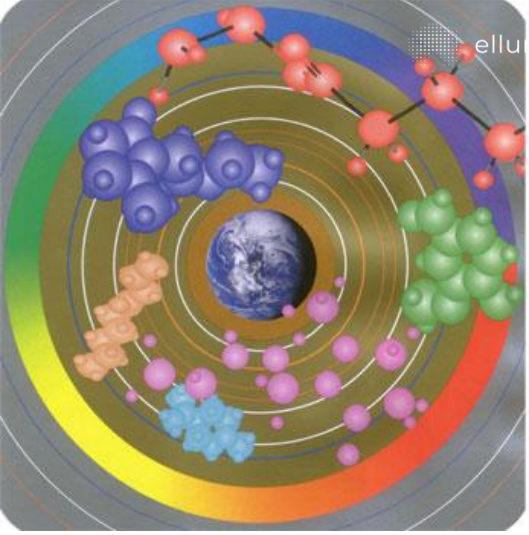
Gayil Nalls uses scent as a social, political and geopolitical material. Smell operates as a carrier of national identity, collective memory and power relations. Her work treats countries, cities and global events as olfactory entities, translating abstract political realities into bodily experience. Scent becomes a tool to question borders, representation and the way cultures are reduced to symbols. The audience encounters geopolitics through the nose, before language or ideology intervenes.



She researches specific places or events and composes bespoke scent formulations to represent them. Each scent is produced as a physical artefact, often housed in uniform containers and labelled with the name of a country, city or political situation. These scents are then assembled into large-scale installations such as grids, archives or maps that visitors can smell individually or collectively. The work functions as an olfactory atlas, where geopolitical systems are experienced through accumulation, comparison and proximity of smells.



Emergence (an abstraction), 2021 Oil-based work comprising volatile signatures of terrestrial world heritage plants—some used since the beginning of human history.





World Sensorium is a large-scale social olfactory sculpture where Nalls translates global population data into a single scent composition made from botanical materials.

The scent is released into public space and only exists when embodied by crowds. It premiered during the New Year 2000 celebrations at Times Square and was simultaneously staged at the White House Millennium Gala and later at the Vatican Jubilee. The work treats smell as a collective, geopolitical medium.



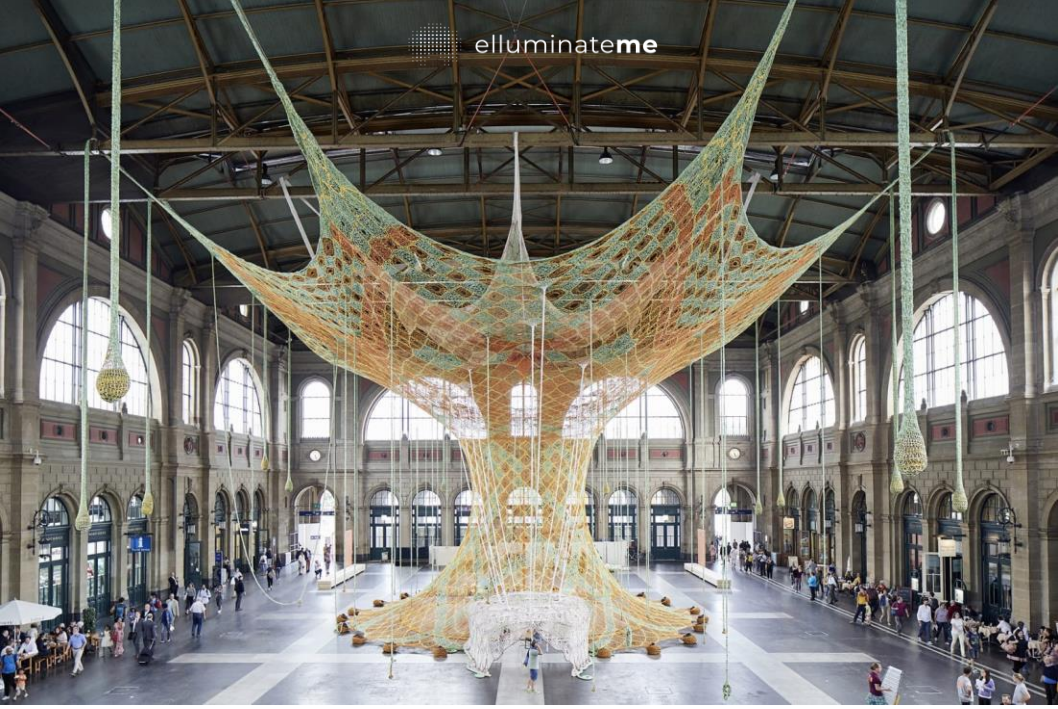






Ernesto Neto

Ernesto Neto creates immersive, scent-infused environments that invite the body into shared presence and connection.



GAIAMOTHERTREE
Beyeler Foundation for the Zurich train station, Basel
Image: Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

How scent functions in Ernesto Neto's practice



For Ernesto Neto, scent is a structural and relational material. He uses smell to activate memory, bodily awareness, and collective presence inside space. Scent operates as an invisible connector between bodies, architecture, and ritual. It slows perception, shifts attention away from visual dominance, and draws visitors into a state of heightened sensory awareness. Smell in his work is closely linked to healing, spirituality, and Indigenous knowledge systems, particularly those of the Amazon. It is never decorative. It is a carrier of meaning, ancestry, and embodied knowledge.



Neto physically fills large-scale textile sculptures with aromatic materials such as spices, herbs, leaves, seeds, cloves, turmeric, cumin, lavender, and medicinal plants. These materials are suspended in stretched fabric structures that visitors can walk through, touch, lean into, or sit beneath. The scent is released passively through air movement and proximity, changing depending on humidity, heat, and the number of people present. In many installations, the act of breathing the scent becomes part of a shared ritual. The smell is inseparable from the form. It defines how the sculpture is inhabited, how long people stay, and how the space is emotionally and physically experienced.



Ernesto Neto's installation uses smell as a direct, physical material. Stockings filled with organic spices such as clove, pepper, and turmeric release distinct scents into the space. The works are arranged together, forming a group of objects that share a common structure but differ in smell and density. Each piece has a specific olfactory presence. Clove produces a heavy, floral scent. Pepper is sharper. Turmeric is dry and earthy. Smell defines the identity of each object and becomes the first point of contact for the viewer.

The making process is simple and repetitive: fill, knot, place. These actions produce soft forms that rest on the floor and change through gravity and time. Colour and odour pass through the fabric. Titles such as *Puff*, *Paff*, and *Poff* refer to breathing and expansion. The scent is not added externally. It comes from the materials inside the sculpture and shifts with air movement and proximity. The viewer experiences the work by breathing the same air as the objects, encountering the piece through smell before interpretation.





Ernesto Neto 'lifecommunity' Cotton string crochet, spices (clove, cumin, turmeric, ginger, black pepper and white pepper), pebbles, wooden hooks, expanded clay, terracotta pots, soil, plants, water, bricks, lavender, chamomile, mulch. Installation view, Between Earth and Sky.
Image: Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.



Anicka Yi

Anicka Yi uses scent and living systems to challenge ideas of authorship, intelligence and the human body.



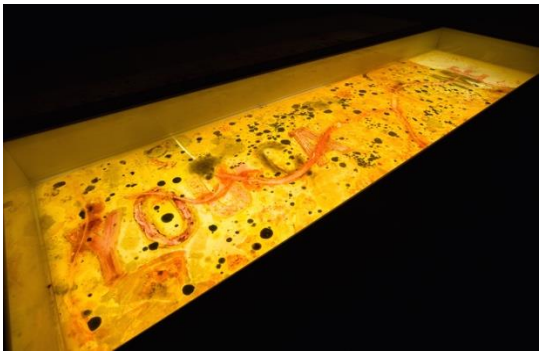
A forensic, lab-like installation built around bacterial samples from women in Yi's network. Smell is produced from cultivated bacteria and released into the space, so the audience experiences the work through the air and the body, not only visually. Photo: Jason Mandella

How scent functions in Anicka Yi's practice

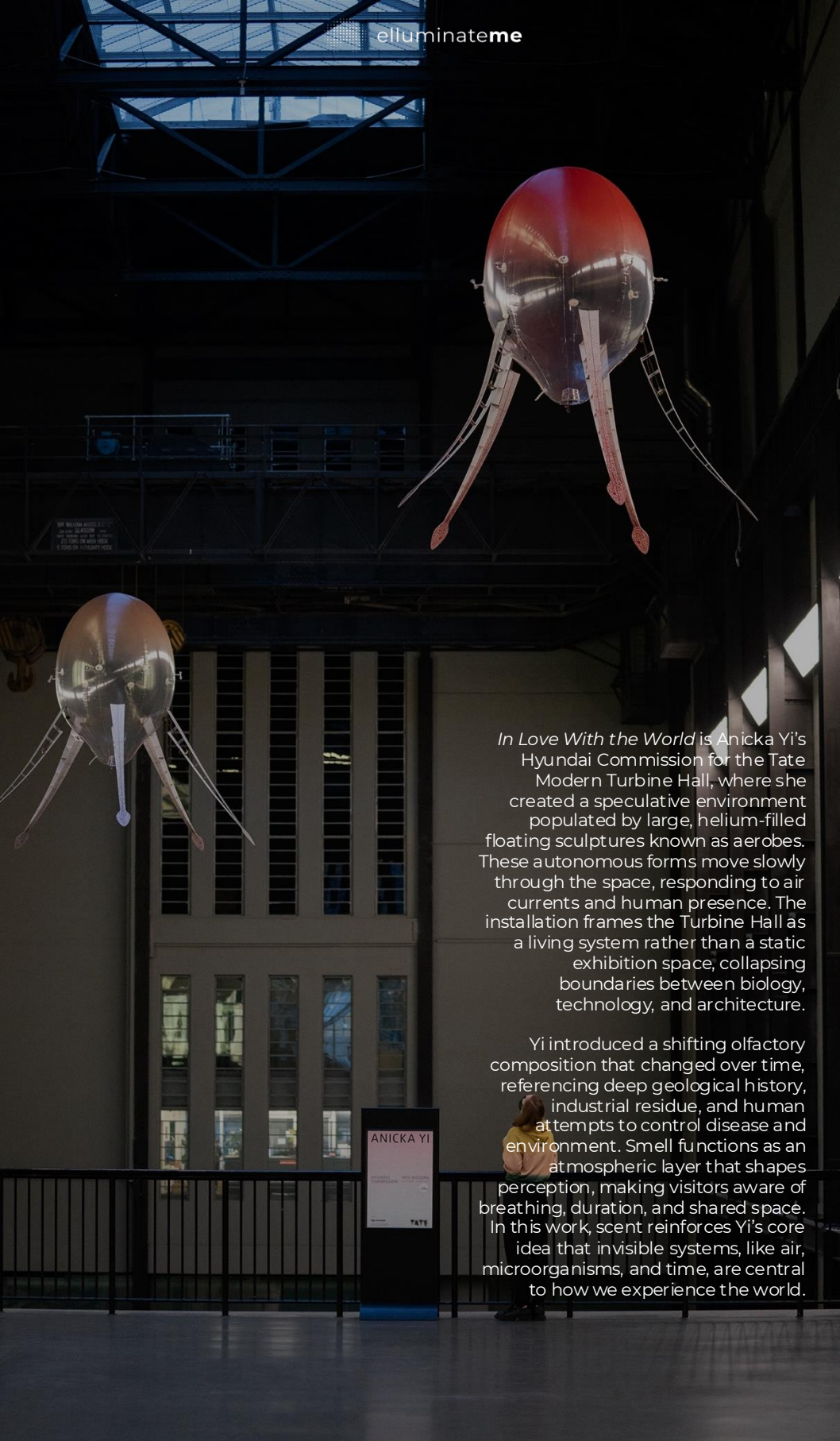
In her work scent challenges the dominance of vision in art and shifts attention to biological, political, and social processes. Odour becomes a way to speak about contamination, intimacy, migration, gender, and power, positioning the viewer as a breathing body inside the work.

Yi collaborates with perfumers, chemists, and scientists to create custom scent compounds, often derived from human, bacterial, or environmental sources. These scents are released into exhibition spaces through vents, fans, walls, or sculptural structures. She builds installations where smell circulates, lingers, and changes over time, sometimes combined with video, sculpture, or living organisms such as bacteria or algae.

The work is experienced physically through inhalation, with scent behaving as an active, unstable material that cannot be fully controlled or fixed.







In Love With the World is Anicka Yi's Hyundai Commission for the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, where she created a speculative environment populated by large, helium-filled floating sculptures known as aerobes. These autonomous forms move slowly through the space, responding to air currents and human presence. The installation frames the Turbine Hall as a living system rather than a static exhibition space, collapsing boundaries between biology, technology, and architecture.

Yi introduced a shifting olfactory composition that changed over time, referencing deep geological history, industrial residue, and human attempts to control disease and environment. Smell functions as an atmospheric layer that shapes perception, making visitors aware of breathing, duration, and shared space. In this work, scent reinforces Yi's core idea that invisible systems, like air, microorganisms, and time, are central to how we experience the world.



There Exists Another Evolution, But In This One is a solo exhibition presenting a series of sculptural and environmental works that examine biological processes, materials, and systems. The exhibition brings together objects, organic matter, and controlled environments that reference evolution, fermentation, and non-human forms of life. Yi treats scientific research and laboratory processes as part of her artistic method, translating them into spatial installations rather than representational imagery.

Smell is present as a by-product of living and decomposing materials. Odour emerges from substances such as bacteria, algae, or fermented matter used within the works, making scent inseparable from the physical conditions of the installation. In this exhibition, smell functions as evidence of ongoing biological activity, reinforcing the idea of art as a living system that exists in time and continues to change while on display.



Klara Ravat

Klara Ravat uses scent as a relational and performative medium to explore social rituals and embodied connection.





How scent functions in Klara Ravat's practice

In Klara Ravat's practice, scent is closely tied to the body and to personal and collective histories. Smell often activates emotional and psychological responses before conscious interpretation takes place, allowing experience to unfold instinctively rather than analytically. She uses olfaction to question how identity, presence and absence are perceived through non-visual senses, accessing layers of meaning that are difficult to articulate through language or image alone.

Ravat creates installations and performative works that incorporate custom scent compositions, everyday odours or materials that naturally emit smell. These scents are introduced into space through simple, often discreet means such as containers, fabrics or direct release into the room. The physical forms are deliberately minimal, placing emphasis on the sensory encounter itself. In this way, scent becomes the primary carrier of meaning, shaping how visitors emotionally register the work and relate to their own embodied memory.







The Aroma lab - Science of distillation of aroma - The newest addition to Mediamatic's Biotoop: The Aroma Lab. This is a working space for scent distillation. The DIY olfactory lab was initiated by Klara Ravat and Mediamatic, when Ravat was an artist in residence at the Biotoop. Separated from our Clean lab, where sometimes stinky bacterial processes lead the way, this space is only meant to support nice scents. There will be workshops, public activities, artist meet-ups en the possibility to do your own experiments.

Anisa Xhomaqi With: Klara Ravat, Margherita Soldati



Distilling the scent of leaves - Olfactory artist Klara Ravat gave a workshop on how to distill the scent of Amsterdam. Klara Ravat, Margherita Soldati

M Dougherty

M Dougherty works with scent as a subtle, emotional medium that shapes perception rather than spectacle.

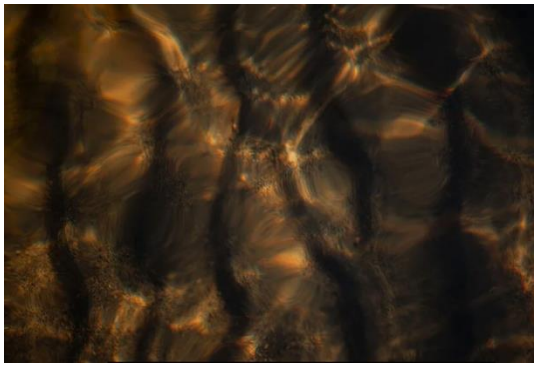




How scent functions in M. Dougherty's practice

Scent functions as an environmental and cognitive medium. Dougherty uses smell to shape space, behaviour, and awareness, treating it as something that can be breathed, navigated, and learned from. It operates as a bodily interface that connects memory, biology, and place, often activating slow perception and attentiveness. Smell becomes a way to work with care, ecology, and interspecies relationships, revealing how environments affect bodies through invisible atmospheric conditions.

Dougherty creates olfactory installations that formulate scent compositions, build diffusion systems, and produce scented sculptural forms using materials such as wax, mycelium, and natural compounds. Their practice also includes workshops, tools, and instruments for smelling, learning, and interacting with odours.







Scents of Us is a multi-sensory exploration in which scent is made visible and audible. The work focuses on smell as a perceptual force that shapes how environments are experienced and shared. It brings attention to scent as an active presence, revealing its role in perception, proximity, and interaction.

Participants engage with four custom-built diffusers, each releasing a single-compound odour molecule found both in human scent profiles and in nature. These compounds were selected to emphasise the continuity between human bodies and the natural world. The diffusers, designed with an analogue appearance, function as input sensors. When activated, they trigger corresponding audio cues and real-time visual responses on an LED screen, where individual and collective scent traces merge and shift.



This project was selected for the 2024 NYC Media Lab x Chanel Virtual Synesthesia Challenge and received the Innovation Award as the top project.





David-Lev Jipa-Slivinschi

Founder: Toskovat' Perfumes
David-Lev Jipa-Slivinschi creates fragrances that refuse comfort and instead confront memory, violence and reality.



At the intersection of art, scent and cultural critique stands **David-Lev Jipa-Slivinschi**, a perfumer and creative director whose work challenges the very idea of fragrance as something merely pleasant. Trained across disciplines and influenced by his Eastern European heritage, Jipa-Slivinschi sees perfume not as adornment but as narrative, a way to communicate memory, emotion and sometimes unspeakable truths that words alone cannot carry.

His most discussed creation, Inexcusable Evil, encapsulates this ethos. Launched under his brand Toskovat', the perfume is a radical departure from mainstream olfaction. Instead of florals and citrus, its composition evokes the sensory chaos of conflict and destruction: gunpowder and ozone at the top, a heart of blood, bandages, iodine and burning flowers, and a base of fallen concrete, rain and incense.

Rather than disguising discomfort, *Inexcusable Evil* amplifies it. Jipa-Slivinschi has spoken bluntly about not intending it as something people "wear" in the conventional sense, but as a shock to the olfactory system, a visceral reminder of wartime realities and human suffering that society often sanitises.

In doing so, he ignites a deeper conversation about the role of scent in contemporary culture. What happens when perfume refuses to flatter and instead confronts? How does smell operate as a form of protest, memory and empathy? *Inexcusable Evil* sits in that space, at once uncomfortable and unforgettable and invites us to think beyond beauty as the primary purpose of fragrance.

Extending this dialogue beyond the bottle, Toskovat' also maintains a dedicated radio station on Spotify, a curated audio space that functions as an extension of the olfactory experience. The brand encourages listeners to follow the station in tandem with exploring its scents, using sound to evoke moods, narratives and emotional states that parallel the stories behind each perfume. It suggests that scent does not operate in isolation: perception is multisensory, shaped by sound, memory, context and imagination as much as by molecules on the skin.

By bridging fragrance and broadcast, Jipa-Slivinschi expands the very definition of perfumery into the realm of experiential art. *Inexcusable Evil* is not just a scent; it is a prompt to feel, reflect and question. In a field dominated by marketing and predictability, his work remains bravely unpredictable.



Tamburins

Tamburins is a South Korean fragrance brand that uses art, sculpture and immersive installations to translate scent into physical, emotional experience.

Tamburins, the South Korean fragrance and beauty brand owned by the cult eyewear brand Gentle Monster. They use art in their installations as a sensory and conceptual framework, not as decoration or retail theatre.

Rather than treating stores as places to display products, Tamburins approaches each space as a temporary exhibition. Sculptural forms, installations and commissioned artworks are used to translate the *emotional world of a fragrance* into physical space. The art often feels ambiguous, tactile or slightly unsettling, mirroring the brand's preference for scents that are textured and complex rather than conventionally "pretty".

How Tamburins uses art:

Sculpture as narrative
Large-scale sculptures or object-based installations are designed to embody the mood, tension or duality of a scent. These works are not literal representations of notes, but abstract expressions of feeling, memory or desire.

Collaboration with artists
Tamburins frequently collaborates with contemporary artists, designers and set-builders, allowing external creative voices to shape each installation. This keeps the brand culturally adjacent to the art world rather than purely commercial fragrance.

Spatial storytelling
Installations are often immersive, guiding visitors through zones of texture, shadow, material and scent. Art is used to slow people down, encourage contemplation and heighten bodily awareness before they encounter the perfume itself.

Art as sensory amplifier
Visual art, form and materiality work alongside scent to deepen perception. Rough surfaces, organic shapes, exaggerated scale and unexpected materials help visitors *feel* the fragrance before consciously smelling it.

Ephemeral and changing
Like exhibitions, Tamburins installations are temporary and evolve with each launch. This reinforces the idea of perfume as a cultural artefact rather than a static consumer product.













Tamburins flagship store in Seongsu, Seoul

elluminateme







Various installations from across their stores in South Korea

elluminateme

We Don’t Just Spot What’s Next. We Help You Act on It

Steven Kainth has spent over two decades helping global brands navigate innovation. At the heart of his work is a belief that communication should move people — and deliver results.

.

“Steven is truly a rare find. He’s a brilliant strategist with a keen ability to stay tuned into those industry happenings that others seem to miss. He is the consummate dot-connector, making profound observations that tie the current trends to client needs in practical, usable, achievable ways. He is deft and inspiring in his communications with current and prospective clients: they seem to hang on his every word... But it's not just flair. He has the substance to back it up.”

General manager, Berkshire Hathaway company

TO EXPLORE HOW ELLUMINATE CAN SUPPORT YOUR NEXT PROJECT OR STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

elluminateme.com

Some of our clients and brand experiences:

fitbit Google FORTNUM &MASON EST 1707 hp Mercedes-Benz

MICHAEL KORS Microsoft OAKLEY OMEGA

PRADA Ray-Ban SONY SONOS UGG

Bespoke insight reports are available on request. Topics include:

AI | AR | Audio | Digital, Social & Media | Experiential Marketing | Fashion Tech | Health & Wellness | MR | Materials | RR | Retail | Robotics | Sports Tech | Transportation | Wearable Technology | Workspaces | VR