

Workshop: Malodours as Cultural Heritage?

Date: December 15-16, 2021

Location of hosting Institution: [Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin at the Humboldt Forum](#); Berlin, Germany

Organizers: EU-research network [Odeuropa](#) & [Berlin Center for Cold War Studies \(BKWK\)](#) of [Leibniz-Institute for Contemporary History \(IfZ\)](#)

Format: Guided at home Nose-on sessions with malodours; live and pre-recorded lectures

Participants: open for virtual participation



Caption: Strawberries by Klaus Pichler- Sort: Strawberries 'Elsanta' / Place of production: San Giovanni Lupatoto, Verona, Italy / Cultivation method: Foil greenhouse / Time of harvest: June - October / Transporting distance: 741 km / Means of transportation: Truck Carbon footprint (total) per kg: 0,35 kg / Water requirement (total) per kg: 348 l / Price: 7,96 € / kg; photo courtesy of [Klaus Pichler](#).

Description

Sensorial perception is as much a cultural phenomenon as a physical and biological function. Fragrances, aromas, and the mouth-watering smells of foods are defining elements of our social perception, building memories and situating us into particular cultural contexts. But what about the unpleasant or foul odours? Heritage and museum initiatives tend to shy away from malodours, focusing on pleasant fragrances from the past, distorting our ideas about olfactory history. In this workshop an interdisciplinary group of scholars and museum professionals will explore and challenge the topic of stench, dealing with the specifics of historicising malodours. The border between the malodorous and the pleasant is not only individually, but also collectively, culturally and historically defined. What do malodours tell us about transitions and advancements within urban, social, cultural, and environmental contexts? How can the sense of smell act as a measurement of analysis for histories of the past and present? How can we locate malodours, intangible by definition, within the cultural heritage sector and how can they be used as a storytelling technique?

A Note on the 'Nose-On' Components

★ DIY Alternatives for Remote Smelling ! ★

The *Malodours as Heritage?* workshop will provide the opportunity for online participants to experience the unique scents that are paired with most of the speakers' talks in a do-it-yourself way! For the first time, online participants of this workshop will be able to actively participate by arousing their olfactory stimuli with similar scents to the ones presented in each talk. These scents can be found in everyone's home or daily surroundings. Therefore, we would like to share with you a few suggestions for olfactory alternatives that will help you to be prepared for the days of the workshop. We also kindly advise you to take notes during each smelling process so that you can give us your valuable feedback regarding your individual olfactory experience.

Attention

Some of these smelling suggestions may trigger unexpected reactions. Please be mindful of memories, associations and physical reactions that may occur while following the remote smelling experience. You should follow these suggestions at your own discretion.



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Programme:

DAY 1: December 15, 2021.9:45-15:35 (all times in CET)

ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/99267525332>

Welcome and Introductory Session

9:45-10:15

Moderator: None

- **Paul Spies** (Stadtmuseum Berlin/ Humboldt Forum) " Welcome note on behalf of the Stadtmuseum"
- **Bodo Mrozek** (BKKK/IfZ) "Welcome note on behalf of BKKK"
- **Sofia Ehrich** (Odeuropa, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) "Welcome note on behalf of Odeuropa"

Session 1: Malodours as Cultural Heritage?

10:15-11:30

Moderator: **Lizzie Marx** (Odeuropa, University of Cambridge)

What is a malodour? Who defines this? Why would we consider malodours as heritage? How can we identify and document malodours through AI? How can we make use of digital heritage collections to find historical narratives and sensitivities of malodours? How can we use malodours as a storytelling technique within heritage institutions?

- **Inger Leemans** (Odeuropa, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) "Malodours as Cultural Heritage?: A Short Introduction."
- **Cecilia Bembibre** (Odeuropa, University College London) "Fluffy Growth and the Threat of Decay: An Exploration of the Smell of Mould". It will follow a discussion with Cecilia and Tomasz Sawoszczuk

To smell mould, we suggest two options:

- ★ If it is possible, take a walk through the woods or a park and smell the environment, specifically some fallen wet leaves that have been staying in damp soil.
 - ★ Alternatively, buy some fresh beetroot, leave it in a closed bag outside the fridge and open it to smell on the day of the talk.
- **Victoria-Anne Michel** (Odeuropa, Anglia Ruskin University) "Smellscapes of Museums, Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Heritage Sites"

For the scent of libraries and archives, we suggest that you:

- ★ Pick up an old, aging book from your home or buy a cheap one in a second-hand shop or flea market and smell its pages.
- ★ Alternatively, place a piece of paper in the oven at a low temperature (50 °C) for one hour.

Q&A

Break

Session 1 continued: Malodours as Cultural Heritage?

11:50-12:30

Moderator: [Victoria-Anne Michel](#) (Odeuropa, Anglia Ruskin University)

- [Raphael Troncy](#) (Odeuropa, EURECOM) "Modeling and Classifying Scents in Knowledge Graphs"
- **Bernardo Fleming** (International Flavours and Fragrances) "On Briefing Perfumers to Create Malodourous Heritage Scents for Museums"

Q&A

Lunch Break: 12:30-13:30

Session 2: Smell Cabinets

Inspired by the Cabinets of Curiosities which aimed at categorizing objects belonging to natural history, these two breakout rooms will focus on the following smells/objects: **Smells of Leather and Body Fluids** (continue in the [main webinar](#)) and **Smells of War and Smells from 'Hidden' Infrastructures - Sewers** (leave main webinar and follow this [Zoom link](#) which will also be provided again just before the session). These Smell Cabinets will happen simultaneously, therefore you must choose which pairing you would like to join (**Smells of Leather and Body Fluids OR Smells of War and Smells from 'Hidden' Infrastructures - Sewers**)

LOCATION: Main Webinar

For Smell Cabinets, Leather and Body Fluids and Smells, please stay in the link of the main webinar.

13:30-16:00

Smell Cabinet: Smells of Leather

Moderator: [Raphael Troncy](#) (Odeuropa, EURECOM)

- [Sofia Ehrich](#) (Odeuropa, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) "Storytelling with Malodours in Guided Tours: Early Results from the Scents Created for the Museum Ulm"

For reproducing the scent of a historical, perfumed tanned leather, you can combine the three smells of :

★ Leather, from leather goods that you can find at home or explore a nearby leather shop.

- ★ Tannins from a green tea infused for too long, from a red wine (especially Cabernet Sauvignon) or from unripe persimmon fruit. You can also smell Tannic acid, if available.
 - ★ Rose water or Rose essential oil.
- **Shivani Kapoor** (O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India) - "Smelling Caste: Politics of Odours in a Leather Tannery"

To experience the smell of blood and leather respectively, you could :

- ★ Spray water on an old metallic object, like keys, to release the smell of it.
- ★ Shivani Kapoor has also suggested that you bring any leather goods such as bags, boots, gloves, etc. to your computer for the talk.

Q&A

Smell Cabinet: Body Fluids and Smells

Moderator: **Victoria-Anne Michel** (Odeuropa)

- [Mathias Zinnen](#) (Odeuropa, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg) "Searching for Smell Gestures in Historical Paintings"
- [Helene Loos](#) (Odeuropa, Chair of Aroma and Smell Research, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen, Germany, and Fraunhofer Institute for Process Engineering and Packaging, Freising, Germany) "Body Odours - Chemical Composition and Function in Human Social Communication"

For this talk, two smells may be contemplated; blood and sweat respectively. To reproduce them, you can :

- ★ Spray water on an old metallic object such as keys to release the smell of it.
 - ★ Keep a few articles of sweaty clothes (like a t-shirt after doing sports or working out) in a closed plastic bag and smell it during the talk.
- [Ruben Verwaal](#) (Institute for Medical Humanities, Durham) "How Physicians Grew Sniffy About Sweat"

To reproduce the smell of sweat, we suggest that you :

- ★ Keep some sweaty clothes (like a t-shirt after doing sports or working out) in a closed plastic bag and smell it during the talk.

Q&A

LOCATION: Zoom link hosted by Helena Gand at the Berlin Center of Cold War Studies

For Smell Cabinets, Smells from 'Hidden' Infrastructures - Sewers and Smells of War, please leave the main webinar and follow this [Zoom link](#) which will also be provided just before the Smell Cabinet begins.

13:30-16:00

Additional Zoom-Meeting Information

<https://zoom.us/j/99553651273?pwd=MTZkSGVaWTNlb2g5Y215WHNSQ09qQT09>

Meeting-ID: 995 5365 1273

Passcode: 451123

Smell Cabinet: Smells from 'Hidden' Infrastructures - Sewers

Moderator: [Inger Leemans](#) (Odeuropa, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

- **Rebeca Ibáñez Martín** (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) "Urban Sewers and Innovation"

For the smell of sewer, if you cannot go down to your city's sewers, we suggest that you:

- ★ Boil a piece of broccoli or cauliflower and keep it in a closed container for a few hours. When you would like to experience the smell, carefully open the jar and take a whiff.

- [Lizzie Marx](#) (Odeuropa, University of Cambridge) "[Exhibiting a Foul Canal at the Mauritshuis, The Hague](#)"

To experience the smell of a 17th century Dutch canal, we suggest that you:

- ★ Let flowers sit in water for five days. Afterwards, smell both the dipped stem and the old water.

- [Aude Hendrick](#) (Museums of the City of Brussels) "How to Play with Odors Associated with Sewers?"

For the smell of sewer, If you cannot go down to your city's sewers, we suggest that you:

- ★ Boil a piece of broccoli or cauliflower and keep it in a closed container for a few hours. When you would like to experience the smell, carefully open the jar and take a whiff.

Q&A

Break

Smell Cabinet: Smells of War

Moderator: [William Tullett](#) (Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge)

- [Bodo Mrozek](#) (Berlin Center for Cold War Studies) "Smells like Cat Scat: Border Crossing Stenches in Times of Political Partition"

To experience the smell of brown coal, we suggest that you smell :

- ★ Charcoal that is usually used for BBQ. If the smell is not strong enough, you can crush some in a plate. Be careful not to inhale too deeply as you may get powder on your nose.

- [Caro Verbeek](#) (Kunstmuseum The Hague, Vrije Universiteit) "When Foul Becomes Fragrant - Reconstructing the Olfactory Universe of the Futurists"

For this talk, there are two distinct smells suggested:

- ★ For the smell of old urine, you can visit the public toilets of the city or the ones of a busy cafe/ bar. In case you have a cat, you could leave its litter box for 2 days before the workshop..
- ★ For the smell of Cologne 4711, either ask for a free sample of Cologne 4711 at a perfume store or buy a small bottle (about 12 euros) from a store.

- [Josely Carvalho](#) (Independent artist) "Within the Smells of History"

To learn more information about "Within the Smells of History" by Josely, see:

- ★ [Within the Smells of History - Josely Carvalho](#)

Q&A

Please return to the [main webinar link](#) after this session.

16:00-16:30: Concluding Remarks

Day 2: December 16, 2021.9:45-16:00 (CET)

ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/99367254226>

Welcome and Reflection on Day 1

9.45-10.00

Session 3: Malodours and Environmental Relations: Past and Present

10:00- 11:00

How has the presence, perception and impact of malodours changed in the face of industrialization? To what effect and in what institutional and social contexts? What role does smell play in environmental annoyance and toxicity? How could we use malodours in heritage spaces to help enhance environmental awareness? What are the dominant historical narratives and sensitivities around malodours? How can we make use of digital heritage collections to find these?

Moderator: Rebeca Ibáñez Martín (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)

- [Clara Muller](#) (Nez, The Olfactory Magazine) "Experiencing the Foul Breath of the Capitalocene. The Potency of Olfactory Art"

To smell pollution:

- ★ If you have the opportunity to go to a car garage, please take some time to smell this environment.
 - ★ This experience can be enhanced by exploring a busy street with many cars, buses or motorcycles.
- [Tina Asmussen](#) (German Mining Museum Bochum, Ruhr University of Bochum) "The Smell of Early Modern Silver Refining"
 - [Emily Cockayne](#) (University of East Anglia) "The Stench of Coal Tar"

To reproduce the smell of coal gas, we suggest that you smell:

- ★ Charcoal that is usually used for BBQ. If the smell is not strong enough, you can crush some in a plate. Be careful not to inhale too deeply as you may get powder on your nose.

Q&A

Break

Session 3 continued: Malodours and Environmental Relations: Past and Present

11:10-11:50

Moderator: Rebeca Ibáñez Martín (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)

- [Anton Philip van Harreveld](#) (Guest Researcher at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) "The Impact of Malodour on Environmental Aesthetics and Public Health"

To smell Horses, we suggest that you :

- ★ Smell some horses if you live nearby any.
- ★ Otherwise, you could again use the scent of old urine either by visiting the public toilets of the city or the ones of a busy cafe/ bar, or leave your cat's litter box for 2 days before the workshop, or pour some drops of ammonia liquid on a blotter.

- [William Tullett](#) (Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge) "That New (and old) Car Smell: Automotive Odours"

Q&A

Session 4: Shaping 'Otherness' Through Smell

11:50-13:00

How are gender, class, race, and sexuality constructed not only through social and cultural institutions but also carried out through definitions of sensorial 'otherness'? Who gets to define what is and what is not a malodour? What are the effects of such dichotomies for social and cultural relations? How has the definition of malodours historically created sensorial communities through the construction of 'otherness'?"

Moderator: Bodo Mrozek (Berlin Center for Cold War Studies)

- [Ally Louks](#) (University of Cambridge) "Witches, Demons and Nymphs: The Seduction and Subversion of the Olfactory Occult"

To explore the scent of 'burning witch', we suggest that:

- ★ You burn a piece of wool string.
- ★ You can also burn a bit of wood, like a wooden toothpick for instance, and smell it.

- [Stephanie Weismann](#) (University of Vienna) "Onion & Garlic - Giving a Sniff at the Jewish 'Other'"

For reproducing the smellscape of the Jewish neighborhood in interwar you could:

- ★ Leave some peeled onion and garlic in a plastic bag, glass jar or tupperware and open it during the talk.

- [Jean-Thomas Tremblay](#) (New Mexico State University) "The Character of Smog"

To smell pollution:

- ★ If you have the opportunity to go to a car garage, please take some time to smell the place.
- ★ This experience can be enhanced by exploring a busy street with many cars, buses or motorcycles.

Q&A

Lunch Break: 13:00-14:00

Session 5: How to Incorporate Malodours in Heritage Institutions?

14:00-15:30

Can we regard malodours as heritage objects? How can we preserve heritage malodours (and should we)? What are the different methods and practices we can apply to the uses of malodours within heritage institutes? How can we work with the different sensitivities and difficulties which come with malodours? How can heritage institutes use malodours as a form of storytelling and provide a new understanding of past communities? How should these institutes confront issues about accuracy vs representation of heritage scents?

Moderator: [Victoria-Anne Michel](#) (Odeuropa, Anglia Ruskin University)

- [Liam Findlay](#) (AromaPrime) "The Benefits and Challenges of Using Malodours in Educational Venues"
- **Nadjib Achaibou** (Symrise Mexico) "The Aesthetic Experience of a Terrible Smell"
- [Michael Philipp](#) (Museum Barberini, Potsdam) "Unpleasant Odours in Dutch Art of the 17th Century"

Q&A

Session 5 continued: How to Incorporate Malodours into Heritage Institutions?

14:45-15:30

Moderator: [Victoria-Anne Michel](#) (Odeuropa, Anglia Ruskin University)

- **Artists** [Regina Mamou and Lara Salmon](#) with [Joes Segal](#) (The Wende Museum of the Cold War, Los Angeles, California) "Common Fantasy: Tincturing Relics from the GDR"

To learn more information about "Common Fantasy / Gemeinsame Fantasie" see:

- ★ [Website – Research for the Bermuda](#)
- ★ [Common Fantasy](#)

- [Tasha Marks](#) (Independent Artist) and **Claire Dobbin** (Freelance Museum Curator) "Port City: Olfactory Creation and Curation" .

For reproducing the unique scent of 'Mink Skins', you can either smell:

- ★ Any leather goods you can find at home or in a nearby leather shop.
- ★ Fur Coats that you can find in second-hand shops and specialized fur shops.
- ★ Pets, such as guinea pigs or cats.

★ You can find out more information about the exhibition, "London: Port City" [here](#) and more information on the scents [here](#).

Q&A

Conclusion and Goodbyes

15:45-16:00

Concluding statements by [Inger Leemans](#) (Odeuropa, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and [Sofia Ehrich](#) (Odeuropa, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)