





A smell map of Bangalore

At the fifth edition of the UnBox Festival,
Pro Helvetia - Swiss Arts Council invited
Swiss artists Maeva Rosset and Giovanni
Sammarco to develop a smellscape of Bangalore.

With participants sharing memories, stories
and personal experiences of their cities and
smells, Maeva and Giovanni brought alive
these sensorial snapshots. They also invited
friends from back in Switzerland to respond
to them, and the exchange has resulted in
this little book, put together by UnBox.

Farsi menare per il naso di Anna Giramonti

Dicono che l'olfatto sia direttamente connesso alla memoria e alle emozioni. Dicono che la grande industria ha trovato un sistema per ingannare i nostri sensi: certi odori particolari ci fanno spendere di più. Dicono anche che se si sente il profumo di pane appena sfornato venga voglia di comperare una casa e l'odore di cuoio di comperare mobili costosi. Italo Calvino, nel 1994, diceva che l'uomo del futuro è senza naso. 25 anni dopo una ditta americana inventa, grazie alla tecnologia del naso elettronico, un contenitore che segnala quando un alimento sta per andare a male. Niente di più comodo: grazie alla tecnologia avremo sempre meno bisogno dei nostri nasi. Da bambina disegnavo spontaneamente volti privi di naso. Era un dettaglio che mi sfuggiva e quindi, in mezzo alla faccia, sotto la fronte e sopra il labbro superiore, non c'era proprio niente. Mio padre, quando eravamo

bambini e si passava in auto vicino a campi appena concimati, usava aprire i finestrini automatici davanti e di dietro per farci sentire "il profumo della natura", come lo chiamava lui. Lo faceva per prendersi gioco di noi - penso che lo divertisse udire le nostre lamentele dai sedili posteriori - ma ricordo di essermi chiesta se quel puzzo di liquame bovino non fosse in realtà un odore gradevole ai nasi dei contadini di quelle zone (sempre ammesso che ne avessero uno). In fin dei conti quel tanfo contribuisce a nutrire la terra e a far crescere un'erba più grassa e più appetitosa in primavera. Dicono che i nasi non smettano mai di crescere. Come le orecchie, i capelli, le unghie e i pesci. Alcuni vecchi hanno delle pinne smisurate. Forse è perché sono cresciuti in un'epoca dove l'olfatto serviva ancora ad orientarsi. Non ci resta che chiedersi: che ne sarà dei nostri nasi?

Lavender:

Tataguni Estate is a 400 acre property that belonged to Svetoslav Roerich and Devi Kahani.

Located around 30 km from the centre of Bangalore. This property has a large number of lavender trees. Grown for use in perfumery. There is an extraction and distillation facility on site.

Lavender offers a soothing and calming aura.

My College was in the north of Bangalore. I would often take my cycle and randomly go in a direction without having any destination in mind. One late afternoon, I was going through a field with a narrow lane and ended up in a dense eucalyptus plantation. The memory of the eucalyptus smell combined with the chirping of birds and the soft pre-sunset light still give me goosebumps.

LOCATION: A JIPURA SIGNAL
A ~~dist~~ DISTINCT FRAGRANCE FROM
BNG. FOR (ME) THAT IS DISTINCT
IS THE SMELL OF PARTIALLY
BURNT PETROL/DIESEL MIXING
WITH OTHER POLLUTENTS AT
E JIPURA SIGNAL

Location: Thyagaratha Nagar
I spent most of my summers
at my aunt's house in the
south of Bangalore, in a
traditional area called
basavangudi. The one smell
that I recall very vividly is
that of Agarbatti's (incense
sticks) in the house. As I
enter their house early
in the morning after my
train overnight, this
particular smell fills up
the area.

Fragments

par Sandrine L. Mehr

Odeur douce, un peu écœurante avec ses remugles d'étable, du feu de bouse séchée Mêlé au bois parcimonieusement employé, car trop rare et si cher

Du petit feu de village, au soir, pour le repas.

Notes piquantes et vertes de la jeune canne écrasée dans l'antique machine Pour un verre trouble et vert-jaune de jus frais, trop doux.

Chaos olfactif, en notes franches, primaires, comme des couleurs sans mélange Jetées sur un canevas par un artiste enragé, gonflé de vie et d'énergie

Des épices en vrac et en tas du grand marché de Bangalore.

Volutes douceâtres, lourdes, presque écœurantes

De l'encens bas de gamme, sans nuance, écoulé en continu

Aux portes des temples, pour y brûler nuit et jour en hommage, en prière, en supplique...

Senteur brute du sel non raffiné, omniprésent, qui ronge le métal des ponts

Et dessèche les écailles des poissons morts, étalés au soleil sous des nuages de mouches

Attendant le chaland, l'acheteur, le gourmet des bords de la Mandovi, contre le mur de la vieille douane portugaise.

Mélange goûteux des épices et de l'huile d'arachide du petit marchand de rue

Qui propose le meilleur bel puri de tout Tardeo Road

Et jongle avec les sachets de riz soufflé au piment, pour la plus grande joie des enfants.

Claque familière et chaude de l'air poisseux, au sortir de l'aéroport,

Qui me dit « Welcome home, Beti”

en m'enveloppant comme dans une coulée étouffante et humide.

Des senteurs de diesel, de déchets en décomposition, d'encens nagchampa vendu à l'unité...

Des effluves de sucre et de ghee émanant de la boutique du mitai wallah, derrière moi ;

Les notes hypnotiques et bien trop puissantes des guirlandes de jasmin dans les tresses noires des femmes, qui réveillent ma migraine, sourde, palpitant dans mes tempes et sous mon front...

Le parfum herbé, terreux, humide, du henné fraîchement préparé pour les arabesques ocres de mehndi en train d'être posées sur les mains d'un groupe de jeunes filles jacassantes et gaies comme un envol d'oiseaux du paradis en saris éclatants.

La puanteur âcre, piquante, nauséuse, des tranchées à ciel ouvert faisant office de tout-à-l'égout le long des cabanes de tôles, au pied des nouveaux immeubles.

L'odeur bleutée, râpeuse comme leurs feuilles, des vieux eucalyptus poussièreux, au

détour de la route vers Ooti,

fenêtre de la vieille Ambassador noire et jaune ouverte sur le soir bruisant des milles conversations de la jungle.

Le murmure huileux, sensuel et puissant des lourdes roses de Damas enfermées en gouttes mordorées et brillantes au creux d'un flacon tout rutilant de dorures...

Les piques fusantes de l'huile de moutarde si prisée au Penjab, utilisée par la sage-femme cassée, ridée, sans âge qui vient soulager les douleurs des dames en leur massant le ventre et l'âme.

La chair parfumée, laiteuse, vanillée d'une pomme-cannelle presque trop mûre ouverte et dégustée à même le champ lorsque c'est la saison...

Et celle, irrésistible, des premières mangues Alfonso, vendues au prix de l'or, leur peau verte et rouge luisante de tentations gourmandes, pour les amateurs fortunés de Bombay, Delhi ou d'ailleurs. Mais des grandes villes, toujours, loin des vergers du Sud.

L'Inde. Mon Inde. Multiple, dense, riche, grouillante, déserte, immense, familière, redoutée, étrangère... mais parfumée, toujours, comme la peau aux sillages safranés des princesses mogholes, la caresse d'un baloutchari tissé main entre soie et fil d'or sur un métier à tisser de Bénarès, exhalant encore le fantôme, sillage évanescent, de l'encens de la pooja brûlé à l'atelier. Mémoire de l'Inde. Odorante. Odoriférante. Saturée de senteurs et de puanteurs multiples et multiformes. Sillonnée de mémoires et d'évocations charnelles, sensuelles, prenantes, pulsantes... et toujours, toujours, liées à nos sens, tous, intimement... sens en éveil permanent, et intensément sublimés. Les odeurs de l'Inde. Son âme. Son sang. Sa chair.

Son identité profonde. La Vie.

as a kid growing up in Maleshwar in the late 80's, we had an abundance of places to play. And for most boys in India, that meant a place to play cricket. One of our favorite playgrounds was an open plot of land just outside the factory of Bharat Heavy Electrical Company. As we spent countless afternoons playing cricket, the sometimes faint sometimes acrid smell of welding metal and rust all seemed

to mingle into this indescribable melody. After a point, I associated that smell to the smell of freedom, of fun, of play, of a time in my life full of innocence and fun and a carefree time. Till today when I smell the faint smell of metal being welded, it instantly transports me back to that time making me wistfully yearn for even a few hours under that afternoon sun smacking around and chasing a cricket ball with my friends.

Il flad dalla segirtad

da Carin Caduff

Mes peis fan mal. Vai surviu entochen mesanotg. Mes cavels ners ein da grass, fredan da curry e fem.

Ell'ustria denton, freda ei d' odurs masculinas. Fried dad umens. Aftershave, cigarettas e suadetsch. Il bia ein ils umens nos hosps ed il bia ein els persuls.

Empau persula para era la vera en siu det. Ed aunc pli persula sesenta mia queissa, cura che siu maun setschenta sin ella.

Denton gi astgel jeu nuot. Jeu tegn en il flad, siarel ils egls e dumbrel sin quater.

Sch'jeu tegn en il flad lu baghegia miu tgierp in'armadira entuorn miu pèz. Nuot sa entrar, nuot vegnir maneivel.

Ils umens vegnan persuls.

Las dunnas ein a casa tier ils affons. Ellas cuschinan e preparan lur letgs. Scuorlan ora ils tapets & bandischeschan ils derschalets. Strehan ils cavels dil frunt, fan plaz per ina buna. Ina da bunanotg - ina da schurmetg.

Cura ch'jeu fladel en - fladan ellas ora. Nies flad secolligia, fuorma in quirass. Nus essan en segirtad.

location : Sunkadatte

~for me, Bangalore has always been all the outskirts of Bangalore. A place where my husband's mother stays. This place was close to her work place so she used to stay there. But we never liked it because of the distance. But if you can see this on the map, the place has a huge plantation belt / green belt next to it. It has very less civilisation and a lot of trees and extremely fertile soil. Although we never liked Bangalore travel, that area gave a ~~sense~~ sense of calmness. The area smelt of wet soil, trees, wet leaves and the smell of freshness.

DOMLUR FLYOVER

There is a transfer station at the Domlur Flyover where they sort all trash. The combined effect this has on the olfactory senses is tremendous!! So whenever I drive over this

flyover I make sure I roll up my car windows. It's a reflex action even before I reach that location.

Arriving in Bangalore yesterday evening, my first impressions were of the drop in temperature compared to Ahmedabad, where it was warmer and dusty. I waited for twenty minutes outside the airport, slightly back from the taxi rank. The evening breeze was cool and refreshing compared to the airconditioned flight, it had a pleasant smell of car fumes / petrol. The time was 10:30 PM. I can imagine that this makes a difference to my perceptions of pleasure.

I have lived in Bangalore most of my life. Over the years I have witnessed the slow death of the city. However there is one place, Cubbon Park, that I associate with energy and hope. Particularly on Sunday mornings, it is the freshness from the vast escape of greenery: that life pocket in the centre of the city makes it truly treasured space for me. It's the smell of nature that never seems to disappear and there is a lot of comfort in this association / familiarity for me personally.

Sur sa route

par Patricia Comby

Dans la moiteur de la nuit, une odeur familière de terre mouillée s'élève du sol presque entièrement lessivé après une pluie torrentielle. Le quartier est plutôt paisible à cette heure-ci mais des relents émanent du cœur de la cité. Des senteurs âcres et métalliques que l'air saturé de pollutions rejettent sur les quartiers avoisinants le centre de Bangalore.

La maison paraît se noyer dans un smog épais et étouffant. Et pourtant ! Cette modeste bâtisse se protège de la rugosité de la ville grâce à ses « armes secrètes ». Il y a tout d'abord les effluves d'encens. Familières et rassurantes. La suavité de l'Agarbatti contraste avec celle des fleurs de couleur jaunes du jardin qui sentent comme le pissenlit avec une intensité moins tenace. Des fleurs pour célébrer les couleurs de la vie et honorer les dieux.

La maisonnée se réveille tôt pour savourer la douceur du jour avant d'être enveloppée dans une chaleur suffocante. Le Masala Chai et son bouquet poivré embaument toute la cuisine – les épices se mêlant aux parfums bon marché de ses habitants. Les essences de cannelle, de cardamome et de gingembre frais couvrent la transpiration des corps à peine éveillés.

Un léger dégoût monte aux lèvres de notre visiteur. Il sort quelques instants et reste pensif ... sous l'avant-toit ... des images colorées lui rappelant son enfance ... Et surtout des fragrances envoûtantes de currys plus pimentés les uns que les autres. Il est bientôt sur sa route ... celles des épices qui chantent des lendemains exquis.

Lewara Layout Trench, Indiranagar
My regular walking path to work begins with the smell of sewage line that runs right outside my house. A smell that I have now gotten used to for the past 6 months. It's the first strong smell that I begin everyday with.

Smell at the BMTC buses
The BMTC - Bangalore metropolitan transport corporation (local transport service) I travel by the bus twice daily to commute to work. The smell in the buses (non-airconditioned) is a combination of old metal, sweat, someone who smokes and perfume. It's a multitude of scents that come together, particularly in non ac the temperature is higher elevates and the smell.

Odeur de l'Inde – Parfums des Indes : ballade olfactive down Memory Lane.

Par Sandrine L. Mehr

Bangaloruru. Memories from my youth. Almost lost in time and space, so present. Of a place then called Bangalore and still dozing in the shade of its eucalyptus-lined avenues. The Bangalore I first saw – or rather met, as I believe one meets a city (and fell in love or friendship with it – or not) as we do with people. A question of skin, of smells, of fluids... intimately. A Bangalore that doesn't exist anymore: it has been cut from its inhabitants' life like its trees. Taken down as a sacrifice to a buzzing, soulless ideal of a modern megalopolis. Complete with its cloying pollution: a toxic and intoxicating mix of cheap diesel, rotten things better left unidentified, especially during the monsoon rains, agarbattis burning in front of makeshift shrines, melting road tar in summer, cheap perfumes in the stalls of **Ghandi Bazaar**... And yet, Prajna's evocation of the very distinct, odoriferous atmosphere at **Basavanagudi Bull Temple** threw me back to the core of my most cherished, living images of a city that, despite the hectic changes and pace adopted over the past thirty years, is still there. Always will be. Defragmented, like thousands of tiny, timeless shards of a giant mirror. Its eternal, immortal soul. Dispersed over its many quarters and suburbs, like so many added, tiny, timeless, shining traces of a former, dismembered yet so powerfully alive Goddess. A vibrant presence to be perceived and followed through its countless, shape-changing aspects and odorant vibes. For those who notice them. But few are, even if not always fully aware of it.

The evocative power of the scent of jasmine, mixed to the powdery texture of curcuma powder and the greasy, balmy texture of the vermillion-hued kum kum, or the buttery smell of sandalwood, sold by the merchants at the entrance of a temple I was of course never allowed to enter: I do not need any other trigger to plunge back into my early days as a student, lost and enraptured in the many worlds and interwoven, fragrant dimensions of an intensely vibrant subcontinent. All of my memories of India, the ones that I so fervently call back to my mind when feeling homesick and so desperately wishing I can just close my eyes and be magically transported back to the banks of the **Mula river in Pune.** Reeking of mud, refuse, bracken water and sun-dried, white-washed stone strewn with insolently fresh and glowingly orange marigolds, around the tiny temple to the Goddess, near **Yerwada Bridge.** The flavour of the pedas bought as an offering to Lord Ganapati at Chitale Bhandu Mithaiwale, on **Bajirao Road.** The one and only sweets' and confectionary shop acceptable by all traditional devotees from the old town's most conservative boroughs. For Lord Ganapati, Ganesh-ji, is a true-blue gourmet: he would accept any offering presented with true devotion and respect, of course, but it's so rewarding to make that extra mile and ensure he will have the best sweets available in town. Save for the festival days, when my heart-sister Meena prepares her sinfully-rich modoks: the rich, heady flavour of pure ghee mixed with the sharpest hint of jaggery, the sugarcane raw sugar favoured for those

stuffing, heavy, sweet delicacies all Maharashtrian homes will serve especially on Ganapati festival. And the melting, freshly grated coconut. Wrapped in a little ball of soft rice flour dumpling dough, delicately steamed, so that all the perfumes of the God's favourite sweet can harmoniously mingle, like so many tiny, indecently rich, subtly perfumed sugar-bombs. Especially when drenched in a dollop of ghee... A dietary horror. An epicurean treasure. With its subtle hazelnut smell: the golden, vibrant, olfactive signature of a home-made, pure veg ghee no cook or home-maker worth her salt would ever dream about trying to ever so slightly lighten on the caloric side. Yes, indeed: India is an olfactory map in itself... a universe of smells, perfumes, odours, fragrances and... well, yes, stench as well. Sometimes. In the sun. Reminiscences of my long walks through one or the other slums-slowly-turning-into-a-residential-area near Parvati Hill, when I was coming back to my old landlady's home after my daily research sessions at Deccan College. Open sewers caked in dry mud, where pigs and crows were happily foraging in friendly comradeship. The smell of sweat mingling with spices and cheap mustard oil in the overcrowded lanes of **Shukrawar Peth**, on a market day. The metallic tang of the bloodied carcasses in Bangalore's butchers' area when I first visited, in the early, already stuffy days of a precocious summer spent in the Deccan in 1992. The smell of Nilgiri oil in the green glass bottle delivered to me over the - pure 19th century-polished-wooden -counter at the oldest drugstore still surviving glitzy modernisation on **MG Road**.

The rich, heavy, dark scent of the earth after the heavy July showers, so evocative of the sultry scent of pure patchouli oil. The glory of the over-ripe, soon-to-be-dead flowers in the gardens, at sunset. And of the fruit and vegetable stalls at **Crawford Market, in Mumbai**. The pungent smell of a rare kus kus attar unveiled with the grace of a performing magician by His Highness the Maharaja of Udaipur's Chief Perfumer, when I was discovering the fascination of traditional Indian perfumes in his magical, fragrant den near Shastri Circle. And the power of their magic, so strong that it used to be considered an art of royal political mastery to use them as a political weapon. Because all humans are sensitive to perfumes. And smells. They influence our mood, soothe our sorrows, enlighten our days. Or spoil a meal when inadequately chosen. "The heat and smell of spices" glorified by Kipling - Pier Paolo Pasolini's "L'Odeur de L'Inde"- The Smell of India. A vast, multi-hued, fragrant, smelly, perfumed 3D-tapestry of scents and memories, of reminiscences and evocations, of fragrant, strange, disturbing, exotic smells, intermingling, disappearing, elusively present in all my thoughts when thinking about India. A never-ending travel. But a fragrant one. Always. And forever.

Early mornings in winter
opening the door to the cool morning air,
I walk out to a new day. A house lingers
under the tree branches, which filter the
low sunlight. Is it fog? Is it soot? Is it
smoke from the fire set last night to keep
warm? Maybe all the three!! But it seems
heavily ~~for~~ on the cool pavement which seems
to pull the air towards it. I think of what
else the smoke could be from.... perhaps a
pile of leaves, and branches, and dust....
perhaps from the plastic bags leaking their
chemicals.... It's best I head back and shut
my windows or my home smells deadly.

I am not originally from Bangalore, but as I landed here for the
UnBox festival I went to my Uncle's House. He has a flat on Hayes R
INDIRANAGAR.

The first ^{thing} I noticed when I entered the home was the wooden furn
and the smell. It smelled like "Boys". Not the sweaty boys from school, not abad
smell at all. But I just knew that it smelled like boys. It was not a feminine
SMELL.

My 2 younger cousins also live in that flat, both teenage boys. Later while
using the bathroom I saw a large collection of perfumes, deodorants, and after-
shaves. So I feel the home smells like a mixture of these products that my
brothers were using as well as their natural odour.

The seasonal smellscape Mumbai
You can almost tell when the seasons turn in Mumbai
just by taking a deep whiff of the air out the window.
A personal favourite is the smell of the first rain
hitting the ground - petrichor! Changing to an oppressive
smell of humidity - as the season wears on. It creates
this suspended reality between sunshine and rain
as the city holds its breath for the next shower.
As the skies open up again, there's an electrically charged
smell as thunderstorms bring with them lightning
that charges the air. This defining scent then gives
way to the oppressive and sunshine then leading
into the smell of burnt fire-crackers as diwali
comes around before the crisp fresh smell of
winter air. All of this is simply a precursor to the
hot humid summer where the scent of body
odour and humidity combine to create

Eau de Bombay

Es müend hunderti vo Lüüt gsi sii.

Claudia Vogel

Es müend hunderti vo Lüüt gsi sii. Wenn ich d Auge zue mache gsehn ich si.

Äng. Sehr äng binenand stönd si. Eine hindere em andere und näbe dra grad wieder

öpper. Jede het es Bier i de Hand, vielleicht au zwöi. Well d Hälfti vom Becher leert

sowieso irgendwie irgendwo irgendeinisch us. D Lüüt drängled und schubsed und

kämpfed sich dur di`Mengi dure. Sie wänd no nöchher a d Musig oder a d Bar. D Luft

isch gschwängeret mit Gröch, nid nur vom Bier. Kafi. Schnaps und Kafi –Zwätschge.

Chlebrige Glühwiiduft. En Unmängi a Nuance i dem bunte unsichtbare Gmisch.

S durchdringende Fett vo de grosse Fritteuse isch d Kopfnote. Es paar matschigi

Pommes frites liged vertrimapled und einsam uf em Bode. I de Nachbarschaft

schwebed abgheite Fädere und glitzernde Paillette. Goldigi Fötzeli und natürlich die

obligatorische tuusig farbige Konfetti.

Ich han s Gfühl ich schmöcki sogar d Schminki wo alli uf em Gsicht verteilt gha händ.

De Gruch vo ungwäsnige Chleider, vo Mönsche wo scho lang nüme dusched

händ. Persone wo sit 4 Täg total übermüedet duurefired, De Alkohol Dunst strömt

eim förmlich entgäge. Es isch de gliiche Gruch wo im ene leere Zug no i de Abteil

hanged wenn vorher ganz vil Wintersportler nach em Apres Ski heigfahre sind . Das

Potpourri a Düft und Gstank wird uf dem chline enge Pltz zwösched de höche Hüser

festghalte, konserviert wie wenn sich de Platz selber nonig wett verabschide.

Aber de Platz isch komplett leer. Nur de Abfall isch no da. Alli Lüüt sind weg.

DFasnacht isch verbii.

Usser ich mach Auge zue und schnuufe ii.



swiss arts council
prohelvetia



UnBox Festival
x Feb 15-17, 2019
x Bangalore