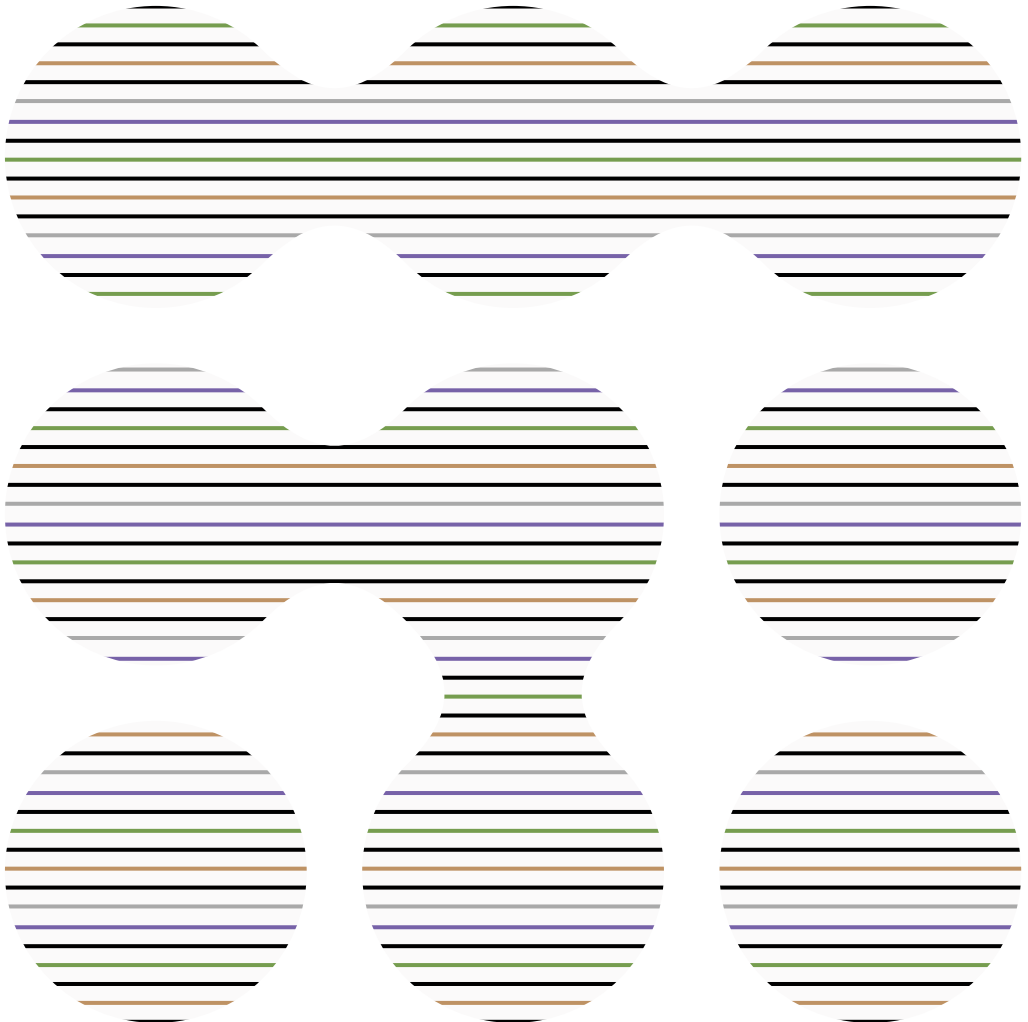




OLFACTORY GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Using Smellwalks for Olfactory Storytelling



GUIDELINES FOR USING SMELLWALKS FOR OLFACTORY STORYTELLING

This document is a resource for using smellwalks as a tool of olfactory storytelling in and around heritage institutes. Heritage professionals can use this guide to train themselves and each other to prepare for and conduct smellwalks.

Contents of this document include:

1. The essentials of conducting a smellwalk
2. Overview of what to do before, during and after a smellwalk
3. The do's and don'ts of smellwalking

1. THE ESSENTIALS OF CONDUCTING A SMELLWALK

Supply Checklist:

- Water resistant pens
- Pencils
- Clipboard
- Coloured markers
- Paper, documents, and devices (e.g. audio recorder)
to keep track of smellwalk encounters and thoughts

2. WHAT TO DO BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A SMELLWALK?

~ BEFORE ~

1. *Start by deciding on the goals of your smellwalk.* Have a clear understanding of what you want to achieve through the smellwalk and why. As a heritage institute, you can use smellwalks to help participants experience the space or the collection in a new way or raise awareness around the importance of the sense of smell when engaging with your collection.

2. *Decide on a location and gather participants for your smellwalk.* Establish contact with the community around the location of the smellwalk. As a heritage institution yourself, it may be contacting colleagues within your own institution to ensure accessibility to certain rooms. Communicating about your smellwalk through social media and other communication platforms is helpful for spreading the word. Keep the smellwalk group under 12 participants.
3. *Prepare for your smellwalk.* Gather supplies and plan a route. Research the location's history and functions throughout time. You may want to take a look at your institution's digital archive for information or ask your host institution for more information.
4. You may want to provide participants with smellwalk documentation. Kate McLean's [Smellfie Kit](#) provides an approach based on data collection via visual analysis while Victoria-Anne's document (OST Resource 4) provides data collection via sensory analogies and reflections on personal memory.

~ DURING ~

1. *Launch the smellwalk with an introductory 'speech.'* Explain the objective and process of the smellwalk to participants. It is important to also be open and ready for unexpected and spontaneous happenings.
2. *Guide the smellwalk and observe.* Appear both reliable but also give your participants space to discover the space on their own. Your role in the smellwalk is shaped by remaining both attentive while also allowing participants to shape their own experience.
3. *Wrap up the smellwalk and open up for feedback.* A short debrief offers more opportunities to reflect and check in with the participants. It also provides you with information on how to improve the format or content for future smellwalks.

~ AFTER ~

1. *Reflect on the smellwalk experience.* Directly following the smellwalk, take time to write down your first impressions and observations and discuss with your colleagues about how it went.
2. *Present smellwalk reflections.* Visitor reflections can be used creatively and in a wide range of formats, from watercolours to poetry, wordclouds to smell-mapping. This invites the public to think about the olfactory impressions of their surroundings.

3. THE DOS AND DON'TS OF SMELLWALKING

DO:

- Do bring the necessary materials, be it forms, pens, clipboards, audio-recording devices, odourants, and diffusion devices.
- Do bring water as smellwalks can be tiring for the body and induce olfactory fatigue. Drinking water can help cope with both.
- Do keep the number of participants for a smellwalk between 5-8 participants with a maximum of 12.
- If conducting the smellwalk in a public space, do inform the regular users of the place about what you are doing. This limits the risk of having them interrupting or distracting the smellwalking group.
- Do take notes of participant observations, environmental conditions, and sensory perceptions throughout the smellwalk.

DON'T:

- Don't wear perfume, as it might influence the participant's olfactory experience and relation with the smellscape of the place.
- Don't talk too much, for similar reasons as above. Olfaction can be easily influenced, partly due to a lack in cultural awareness and attention as well as lack of a specific vocabulary to describe those perceptions.
- Don't interfere with situations that arise spontaneously, even if participants start talking with each other.