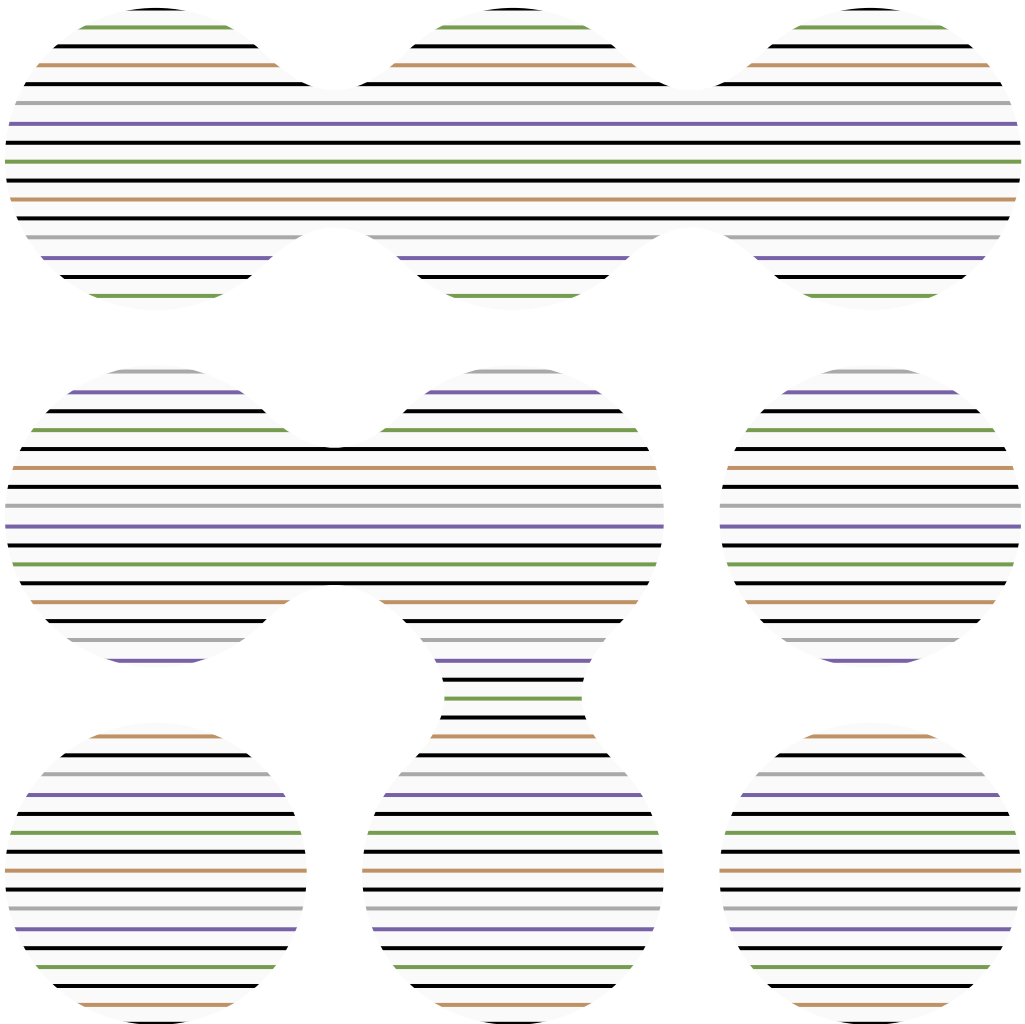




OLFACTORY STORYTELLING GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Evaluating Heritage Scent Creations



GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING HERITAGE SCENT CREATIONS

Heritage institutions are engaging more and more with scent designers to develop multisensory exhibitions and events. In the Heritage Scent Design Brief (OST Resource 6) and Heritage Scent Development Report (OST Resource 8) we provide a model for the development of heritage scents. But how do we evaluate these creations to ensure they communicate the desired message and have the desired impact on the audience? Based on past research, we propose three different evaluation schemes: an isolated evaluation, a contextualised evaluation, and a peer reviewed evaluation.

This document provides guidelines for evaluating heritage scent creations made for the purpose of olfactory storytelling in GLAMs.

Contents of this document include:

1. The essentials of conducting a scent evaluation
2. Instructions for evaluation scheme #1: isolated evaluation
3. Instructions for evaluation scheme #2: contextualised evaluation
4. Instructions for evaluation scheme #3: peer review

1. THE ESSENTIALS OF CONDUCTING A SCENT EVALUATION

Supply Checklist:

- Scented material to be evaluated
- Blotters
- Pen and paper
- Heritage Scent Design Brief
- Printed images or Powerpoint of the collection items
- Water (to neutralise the nose during smell sessions)

2. SCHEME #1: ISOLATED EVALUATION

Evaluation scheme #1 consists of individuals experiencing each creation *without any contextual information*. In this process, evaluators smell each creation and note their individual reactions and associations on paper. This is followed by a group discussion. This evaluation method helps to better understand possible initial reactions visitors may have when experiencing these creations.

Rate the following qualities:

INTENSITY (1 = VERY FAINT > 5 = VERY STRONG)

1 2 3 4 5

HEDONIC TONE (1 = VERY UNPLEASANT > 5 = VERY PLEASANT)

1 2 3 4 5

If the creation was the following, what would it be?

A COLOUR	
A SOUND OR MUSICAL COMPOSITION	
A SHAPE	
A TEXTURE	
A TIME (PERIOD) OR PLACE	
A PERSON	

3. SCHEME #2: CONTEXTUALISED EVALUATION

Evaluation scheme #2 consists of individuals experiencing each *scent creation with contextual information* (about the intended olfactory event and the images, objects, or spaces in and around where the smell will be presented). The scheme helps check connections between the scent and its projected context, and evaluates whether the creation is convincing and understandable.

Firstly, prepare a slide presentation or handout that displays the different objects presented in the event. You may also include other relevant information in the presentation (scent distribution method, total number of scents, intended audience, etc.). Then ask the group members to connect the smells to the images via the following steps:

1. Present the different objects of olfactory storytelling via Powerpoint or lay them out on a table.
2. Provide each evaluator with x number of blotters for x number of subjects presented and number the blotters accordingly (scent 1, scent 2, etc.).
3. Ask each evaluator to label each numbered blotter with their name.
4. For each scent, collect a fresh (and clean) blotter from each evaluator and dip it in the bottle of your choice.
5. For each scent, ask evaluators to sniff and match it to the artwork they believe fits the scent best.
6. Once all smells have been smelled and matched, open up for discussion.

We recommend that you and your evaluators take notes as you may find that this evaluation technique will produce unexpected links and associations between smells and the collection items. As a next step, you can invite evaluators to elaborate further, also providing reflection on the context in which the smells will be presented.

4. SCHEME #3: PEER REVIEW

Evaluation scheme #3 turns to curatorial, academic, and fragrance experts to peer review the heritage scent based on their own research and expertise. This method was developed for the evaluation of a recreation of a historical scent recipe, which was published in the [American Historical Review](#) (2022).

Provide the reviewers with the scent(s) and information about the creation process, including any research conducted (for example, via the *Heritage Scent Design Brief* and *Heritage Scent Development Report*). For peer reviews, we advise two sniffing sessions. If the scent is intended for a museum, the first sniffing session can attempt to imitate the expected context by sniffing the smell while viewing the artwork and reading the original text it is intended to accompany. The second sniffing session may consider the broader context of the planned olfactory event by thinking about the questions below.

Scent details

SCENT TITLE/SUBJECT OR ARTWORK:	
ACADEMIC AUTHORS/PARTNERS:	
CREATIVE AUTHORS/PARTNERS:	
FORMAT (ALCOHOL DILUTED):	

Reviewer details

REVIEWER:	
ROLE AND/OR EXPERTISE:	
DATE OF REVIEW:	

Review questions

What is the smell intended to convey and how successful is it in doing so?
Why or why not? (ex. What ‘character’ is the smell supposed to convey?
A material, object, place, nose, feeling?)

RESPONSE:

Does the scent advance our understanding of history and/or heritage (tangible or intangible – places or practices)? How does the scent add value to this understanding (that would not be possible through text or image alone)?

RESPONSE:

Does the overall composition and materials (e.g. the olfactory pyramid) of the scent make sense? Are there individual materials within the composition that you think should be heightened, that could be less prominent, that are missing, or that should not be there? Do you feel the essential elements of the heritage scent (materials depicted in a scene, smells that make up a smellscape, ingredients in a historical recipe) are captured?

RESPONSE:

Is the underlying research and methodology clear, well-documented, and convincing?

Thinking in terms of the processes which you are most familiar with (for example (art) historical research, close-reading, scent creation, heritage curation) could the research and methodology be improved or altered?

RESPONSE:

Please disclose any knowledge or personal connection related to the scent that may cause a conflict of interest or bias.

RESPONSE: