

Adedognin Abimbola (Benin)
Algorithmic Perfumery (Netherlands)
Dana El Masri (Canada)
Lakenda Wallace (USA)
Lula Curioca (Mexico)
Maki Ueda (Japan)
Niamh O'Connell (Ireland)
Ömer İpekçi (Turkey)
Spyros Drosopoulos (Netherlands)
Zhi'ang Chen (Singapore/UK)

TEN ENCOUNTERS

curated by Saskia Wilson-Brown of the Institute for Art and Olfaction
from October 9th to November 13th
at Olfactory Art Keller, 25 Henry Street, New York
Opening Reception: October 9th, 4pm to 8pm

The art of scent creating is an additive process. One scent is added to another. Once a scent is added, it can't be removed. If the result is not what the artist has hoped for, the mixture has to be discarded and the artists starts over. There are no scientific principles that govern what happens when a smell is added to another. Painters have color theory to guide them when mixing colors, but scent creators do not have a "smell theory", they use their intuitions and experiences and go through round after round of trial and error.

In most cases, mixing two smells results in a smell that is somewhere in between the two components or a simple combination of them. However, sometimes scent creators discover that from the mixture of two odors an entirely new odor gestalt emerges. A similar pattern is found when two humans meet. Most encounters leave no trace, some make a person's day slightly better or worse, but very few have repercussions that shape culture for centuries or even millennia.

For *Ten Encounters* ten artists from around the world were invited to explore encounters between two individuals that shaped culture to this day. The exhibiting artists created olfactory interpretations of the meeting of a snake queen and a wood seller, artificial intelligence and the last human on earth, a Dutch trader and a Japanese shogun, and seven other consequential encounters. Using their sense of smell, visitors to the gallery can participate in these important moments of human confluence.

Only 200 milliliters of each of the pieces will be produced to counter the perception of scents as infinitely reproducible, infinitely divisible, fungible commodities and establish works of scent art as unique objects of aesthetic appreciation.

The ten artists and their creations are:

Dana El Masri, a trained perfumer and interdisciplinary artist deeply rooted in Egyptian-Lebanese culture captured the moment when the god Amun and the pharaoh Ahmosi united to create the pharaoh Hatseputh. El Masri describes "*Ahmosi and Amun*" as an ancient chamber flooded with scent that denotes divine presence.

Spyros Drosopoulos, a self-trained perfumer and former neuroscientist, interpreted the mythical king Theseus defeating the minotaur in his underground labyrinth. Drosopoulos made "*Theseus and the Minotaur*" as vile as his ingredients allowed him to.

Lakenda Wallace is a storyteller and alchemist perfumer. Her "*Oshun and Ogun*" is inspired by the the goddess of fertility, beauty and love, Oshun, who successfully convinced the god of iron, Ogun, to leave his self-imposed forest exile and return to the city. Wallace created a passionate scent. The deeper you breathe, the deeper the rapture.

Ömer İpekçi, a self-taught Turkish perfumer with a background in illustration took his inspiration from the moment in which the poor wood seller Camasb stumbled upon a secret garden ruled by the snake queen Shahmaran. In his "*Shahmaran and Camasb*", İpekçi presents this scene viewed from the perspective of Camasb gazing at something marvelously alien with a mysterious intention behind it.

Niamh O'Connell, a botanical perfumer in Ireland brought the chivalric romance between the Cornish knight Tristan and the Irish princess Iseult to life in her "*Tristan and Iseult*". After Tristan and Iseult inadvertently consume a love potion, they start a self-destructive adulterous relationship.

The pioneering olfactory artist **Maki Ueda**, who has lived in Japan as well as in the Netherlands, let the meeting between Engelbert Kaempfer, a representative of the Netherlands and Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, a shogun of the Edo period inspire her for "*Tokugawa Tsunayoshi and Engelbert Kaempfer*". Ueda was inspired by the insatiable appetite for knowledge and love of learning the two men shared, which is reflected in their thoughtful conversations that have been diligently recorded by Kaempfer.

Zhi'ang Chen, a Singaporean medicinal chemist studying in London, drew inspiration from the meeting between the Chinese envoy Admiral Zheng He and Sultan Parameswara of Malacca at the turn of the 15th century, which eventually gave rise to the uniquely Southeast Asian Peranakan/Nonya culture. His "*Admiral Zheng He and the Sultan of Malacca*" is a colorful olfactory collision of the spices and teas exchanged during that encounter, as well as the tropical fruits and flowers found at the crossroads of the Spice Routes.

Lula Curioca is an artist and perfumer born in Mexico and raised in Spain who has explored ways to incorporate smells into objects and textiles. Curioca used the love between Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a Mexican nun, and a Spanish viceroy, Viceroy Lysi, as a starting point for creating "*Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and the Viceroy Lysi*". Curioca created an addictively human smell from another era.

Adedognin Abimbola is an entrepreneur who is passionate about innovation, music and humanity. He runs a Wine Bar and Jazz Club in the great city of Cotonou in Benin. "Fela Kuti and the unknown soldier" (which was created with help from Anahita Mekanik) is a memory of 1977 when Nigerian soldiers raided Kuti's commune in response to Kuti releasing music critical of the Nigeria's military juntas. "Fela Kuti and the unknown soldier" contrasts smells of music shows with those of raids.

Algorithmic Perfumery™ is a multisensory installation that integrates A.I., personal data and generative scent design. For "*The Last Human on Earth and an AI*" Algorithmic Perfumery™ (with machine input from Anahita Mekanik and Frederik Duerinck) tracked the encounter between the last human, and the AI that humanity left behind. The scent is AI's attempt to capture the scent of love as a final gesture to immortalize its creator.