



# BLENDS

**EXPLORATIONS OF  
MEMORY, IDENTITY, INTIMACY, ECOLOGY AND DANGER**

Margaux Crump

Jake Eshelman

Paul Head

Fiona Kane

Alina Fresquez Patrick

Matt Scott and Zack Adams

Lyndsey Walsh

CURATED BY GAYIL NALLS

March 23- April 29, 2023

OLFACTORY ART KELLER

25A Henry Street, NYC

[info@olfactoryartkeller.com](mailto:info@olfactoryartkeller.com)

# BLENDS

Explorations of Memory, Identity, Intimacy, Ecology, and Danger

Gayil Nalls, *Curator*

It is exciting to present artwork that explores and expresses powerful visual and olfactory ideas that assist in a deeper understanding of the critical role that the sense of smell and interpretation of odors plays in our lives.

Contemporary art that gives power to the sense of smell is an area that I helped pioneer and many have followed. Although Olfactory Art is nothing new historically, the work being made now reveals understandings and connections to the science of olfaction that underpin olfactory art's recognition, value, and aesthetics.

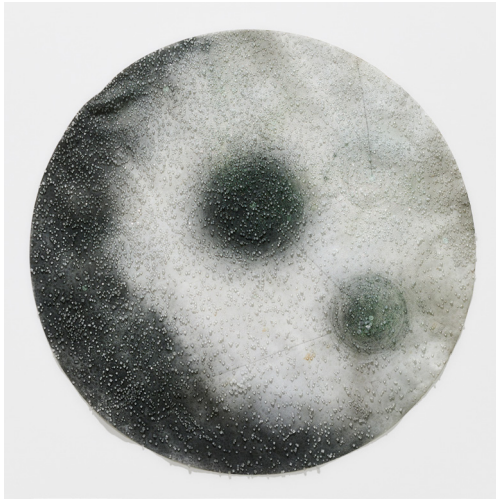
Where I was influenced by only a few artists such as Joseph Beuys, Wolfgang Laib and Mario Merz, who used materials that naturally smelled, today, creating olfactory sensation is a freedom enfolded into the work of many young artists who use a broad range of materials and substances. Their making of olfactory meaning takes an aesthetic experience to a greater reality, with smells that can be pleasant or loathsome, disturbing, or intimately revealing, drawing viewers deeper into conscious (and nonconscious) sensory-evoked realities.

The exhibition *BLENDS: Explorations of Memory, Identity, Intimacy, Ecology, and Danger*, brings together eight artists who I first got to know through their involvement with World Sensorium. They are all people that think critically and creatively about olfaction and use olfactory sensation to direct emotional outcomes important to their work. The contemplations of these artists bring us closer to the emotional significance the scientific findings redefining the importance of olfaction in recent years, along with the fact that we all live scented lives and carry-on scented communication.

Through different artistic approaches and representational hierarchy combined with scent, the physical qualities of photographs, drawings, sculptures, and performance, trace the telltale signs of disease, the self-sacrificing nature kin selection, and the importance of odor as an invisible navigation system. The works also explore how the sensation of odorant molecules are part of the cognitive framework of memory, relationships, perception of different places, and the unique experience of olfactory alchemy. Through olfaction, different properties and sensory modalities of artistic immersion and embodiment come into play.

The sense of smell is always active and has key evolutionary roles that are collectively experienced today. Olfactory art reminds us of our place within this chemical communication system and the web of all life. Some of these artworks are informative social fluids that bring on olfactory sensations and emotions that put us in touch with our evolutionary roots, reminding us that some natural aromatics can trigger preconditioned behavior.

My heartfelt thanks to these remarkable artists for their collaboration in making this exhibition and to Andreas Keller, for his commitment to showcasing and creating community around the olfactory arts.



***Spells for Protection IV, 2020***

Apotropaic Drawing with its Companion Apotropaic Scent

Dimensional Drawing: Salt minerals, plant smoke, graphite, pigments on silk

13 x 13 x .25 inches

19 x 19 x 1 5/8 inches framed



***Smells for Protection, Apotropaic Perfume***

Composed of oils and absolutes associated with protection magic.

Notes include bergamot, juniper berry, mugwort, lavender absolute, oakmoss, cypress

bioabsolute, birch tar, and salt.

Bottle 50 ml: 3 3/4 x 2 3/8 x 2 3/8 inches

**MARGAUX CRUMP**

No. IV is from a series the artist created entitled, "Spells for Protection." These dimensional drawings on silk are made with plants and minerals historically used for protection magic. She says the ritual process for the drawing's creation is a blend of the surrealist technique of fumage with the Scottish folk practice of saining, and is a collaboration between herself, the minerals, and the plants. In this work she used mugwort, juniper, and mistletoe stating, "I burn the plants and invite the plant smoke to make marks on the silk. I then respond to these marks by drawing with graphite and mica powder. The drawing is then submerged in a salt bath and the crystals grow into the silk in response to all our marks."

The companion "Smells for Protection" apotropaic scent is composed of plant oils and absolutes associated with cleansing, protection, purification, and energy magic. These plant essences, used since ancient civilizations, including the Chinese, Egyptians, and Romans, are now scientifically verified to have specific powerful pharmacological effects which have made them effective healing agents through the ages.

**Margaux Crump** (b.1989, USA) is an interdisciplinary artist exploring the entanglements between ecology, magic, and myth. Her work imagines an expanded web of relationships where we co-create alongside an endless array of different forms of consciousness: animals, plants, fungi, spirits, stones, light, and subatomic particles. She is currently investigating the phenomena of unseen worlds, from the microscopic to the parallel mythic realms that surround us. She holds a MFA in studio art from Washington University in St. Louis, MO, and a BA from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX. She is also an avid gardener.



## JAKE EHELMAN

Jake Eshelman made a perfume blend like the one he used on his hand and arms to meet the orchid bees in the rainforest of Costa Rica. He has said that “the original blend made the associated image possible. The image documents the orchid bees reaction to the fragrance when applied to human skin.” Since then, Jake has refined this fragrance to make it more “complex, nuanced, and comprehensive.” This version incorporates additional elements, including isolates that are known in scientific studies to appeal to Euglossini. He says, “My fragrance is intended to be worn as a greeting or offering to the orchid bees, such that one might be able to connect with them through a shared olfactory language. As such, it hinges on the aesthetic, ecological, and emotional connections we share with orchid bees.”



### **Jake Eshelman: An Offering**

Archival digital pigment print with accompanying solid fragrance

Unframed print: 13 ½" x 20 ¼" | Edition of 1

Exhibition photograph (framed): 14 ¼" x 21"

Custom solid fragrance: a Euglossini-inspired blend in beeswax including notes of eucalyptus, geraniol, benzyl acetate, clove absolute, vanilla absolute, and indole.

50mL | Edition of 1

**Jake Eshelman** (b. 1989, USA) is a photo-based artist and visual researcher exploring the complex relationships between people and other-than-human beings. Working to transcend the notion that humanity is somehow separate from—or superior to—the natural world, his work creates opportunities in which to (re)consider our ecological kinships. Through an intimate and intuitive documentary practice, his recent projects investigate how interspecies interactions in agriculture, conservation, and spirituality can illuminate new ways to address anthropocentrism, human chauvinism, and the unfolding implications behind the Enlightenment rationalization of nature. He is a Contributing Editor of *Ecological Thinking* at Plantings, the journal of the World Sensorium Conservancy and his current article is *Ecological Kinship Makes Scents: Orchid Bees, Fragrance, and the Myth of the Isolated Individual*.



***Joker, 2023***

Scent in handheld vessel, 3.8 x 1.5 inches

Essential oils, absolutes, and extract tinctures. The blend includes white wormwood, jasmine, tonka bean, tobacco, and numerous others.

“Smelling Without Expectation” Performance at OAK, March 26

**PAUL HEAD**

*Joker* is a blending the artist has been working on since he moved into his first apartment with no roommates, permitting him a new level of introspection. The inspiration for the scent derived from the Tarot, a fortune-telling card tradition, where the card known as the Joker, Jester, or Fool, carries the numerical value of zero and symbolizes Alpha and Omega, life and death, but importantly, also new beginnings. The Joker is an individualist entity guided by the natural forces and wisdom of nature and the universe. The interpretation of this card became significant to the artist and his exploration of duality in life—good and bad, positive, and negative, Yin and Yang. He utilized this exploration to contemplate the “mythic aspects of being human” and to create *Joker*, which he calls “a ritual of spontaneous appreciation for life’s unfolding mysteries.” Paul Head’s performance art plays a critical role in the exchange of his ideas on scent and smelling. His performance “Smelling Without Expectation” will be woven throughout the Artist Symposium: Sunday, April 23, 2:00-4:00 and includes instructions on how to bask in a smell.

**Paul Head** (b. 1991, USA) is a multidisciplinary artist based in New York. He creates olfactory artworks, often with performative happenings, and acts in numerous independent short films. He explores the sensuous, the wild, and the mythic aspects of being human. Paul graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts with a BFA in Film & Television.

*Old Dress Smell and Six Self Portraits in Dresses, 2022*



**Mom's Lace 1920's for Rehearsal Dinner, 2022**  
Unique 33mm color archival inkjet print, 8 x 12 inches  
Borderless frame



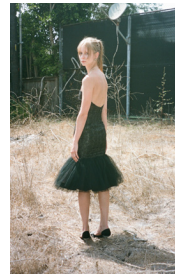
**Mom's Blue Velvet, 2022**  
Unique 33mm color archival inkjet print, 8 x 12 inches  
Borderless frame



**Old Dress Smell, 2022**  
Oil based perfume, Essential Oils  
Antique Perfume Bottle, 7 x 7 x 12 cm



**Nana's Silk Blue with Red Suede Shoes, 2022**  
Unique 33mm color archival inkjet print, 8 x 12 inches  
Borderless frame



**Nana's Black Tulle, 2022**  
Unique 33mm color archival inkjet print, 8 x 12 inches  
Borderless frame



**Nana's Made in Japan Iridescent Silk, 2022**  
Unique 33mm color archival inkjet print, 8 x 12 inches  
Borderless frame



**Mom's Green Tweed Gift, 2022**  
Unique 33mm color archival inkjet print, 8 x 12 inches  
Borderless frame

**FIONA KANE**

Fiona Kane depicts herself dressed in family heirloom dresses passed down to her from her mother and grandmother, taken in multiple locations in her hometown in coastal Southern California. She has said that "The documentation of wearing these dresses is essential to the preservation of memories that cross generations, embracing the power in gentle femininity of her family's matriarchs." Smell and identity are intrinsically linked and these images not only document memories but the artist's olfactory responsiveness to body odors of relatedness enmeshed in the fashion clothing of her mother and grandmother. The ideas that surround *smells of identity* opens the door to aesthetic experience that narrate facts about how mothers and their babies recognize each other's smell at birth. Genetics are the essence. Genetic members of families have common body odor characteristics in their personal odor prints.

"Repurposing clothing for the intention of fine art photography brings a new context to the clothing contrasted against the Southern California chaparral environment with overgrown and dried foliage, dust and rocks, and harsh architecture of cellphone towers and satellite dishes" the artist said of her aesthetic concerns. Interestingly, the *Old Dress Smell* paired with portraits brings physical olfactory dimensions to the photographic collection, not only as a translation of the smell of vintage and antique dresses that has been stored away for decades, but as a perfume that changes an emblem familial essence yet links to their relationship in terms of the preferred odor of familiarity and kin recognition.

**Fiona Kane** (b. 1998, USA) is an artist and filmmaker based in Brooklyn. She has studied at NYU Tisch, FAMU in Prague, CZ, SFAI, and she is a California State Arts Scholar for Film/Video. Originally from Southern California, Kane's work focuses on the preservation of memory and emotion through various landscapes, many of which are inspired by The West and coastal scenes.



**AI**  
6.5"x6.5"  
Archival photographic print



**Last Kiss**  
14.25"x14.25"  
Archival photographic print



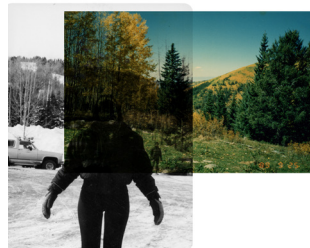
**Mom, Portrait in White Dress**  
9"x11"  
Archival photographic print



**Albuquerque, Years Ago**  
6.5"x6.5"  
Archival photographic print



**Río Grande**  
9"x9"  
Archival photographic print



**Tulip Street**  
9.5"x9.5"  
Archival photographic print

## ALINA FRESQUEZ PATRICK

Our sense of smell tells us much about different geographies and places in time. Alina Fresquez Patrick's works takes us from the *Río Grande* to *Albuquerque* and to the location of *Last Kiss*. The ecological understanding of place that we process through our olfactory system while walking across a landscape is encoded with that environment as part of our constructed reality. In these works, Patrick explores memory and familial attachment to place through scent and photographic collages. As part of the moments of encounters with each location, she has created a scent, a description or impression, of a place she occupied and held internally. Unlike the photographs, the unique chemical qualities of place are embodied physically and recreated from memory.

**Alina Fresquez Patrick** (b. 1999, USA) is a photographer and documentarian based in Brooklyn, New York. She received a BFA in Photography & Imaging and Political Science from New York University. Her work explores the impact of natural disasters, war, and displacement recently taking her to Ukraine and Cuba.



## MATT SCOTT AND ZACK ADAMS

Matt Scott and Zack Adams sought to explore the human process of maturation through olfaction- what we leave behind as we grow and how our fallible memory affects what we hold on to. In *Untitled (Room 1)*, each object, cast from discarded toys, personal artifacts, and other fleeting confrontations, has its own olfactory identification and place as an olfactory landmark.

All animals use olfaction to navigate. Olfactory identification and spatial memory are linked in the brain, which aids human navigation and recognition of place. Olfactory stimuli from familiar objects help build our cognitive maps and develop daily routines around a space. Scott and Adams' co-creation emerged from a long-term friendship and a curiosity regarding how our olfactory landmarks change as we grow. They say, "In maturing, certain concessions are made. Compounding losses give way to what we've grown into, leaving the past forgotten and us to shift in its absence. How do we account for the evolved self when what remains is a fraction of all that we have been? How are we to construct ourselves whole with so much left behind? Through olfaction, we recall more than only people, objects, and places. Scent evokes entire memories, forgotten instincts and waning desires- the feeling of how things were. These echoes return smudged, crude and misshapen, but present, nonetheless. *Untitled (Room 1)* constructs a physical space for our olfactory memories to reside."

**Scott and Adams** are both interdisciplinary artists.

**Matt Scott** (b. 1999, USA) has a degree from New York University. His oeuvre explores the notion of deviance, memory, and connotations in meaning.

**Zack Adams'** (b. 1999, USA) work is concentrated in experimental music and audio production. He is an academic with dual degrees in neuroscience and psychology from New York University.



***Untitled (Room 1)***, 2023  
Scents Suspended in Wax  
12 x 16 x 12 inches

## LYNDSEY WALSH



### **EAU DE PARFUM TMAU, 2022-Ongoing**

Fish and shellfish substances  
Vintage Glass Bottle, 2.5 x 1.5 x ¾ inches

“EAU DE PARFUM TMAU” is a smell composition based on the smell of the medical condition Trimethylaminuria (“Fish Odor Syndrome”). TMAU is caused by a genetic condition related to a mutation in the FMO<sub>3</sub> gene. This mutation causes the body’s metabolic processes to break down trimethylamine, which is a colorless amine produced by microbes in the gut that has a fishy or rotten fish-smelling odor. This condition causes people with this mutation to have a fishy body odor. In so-called “normal” metabolic processes, trimethylamine is broken down into a molecule that does not emit an odor. “EAU DE PARFUM TMAU” is an artistic attempt to recreate the smell of the genetic condition while critically reflecting on the ways we culturally and socially value particular genetic conditions and bodily traits.

Accompanying “EAU DE PARFUM TMAU” is a podcast episode “HORROR! / THE LEAKY BODY AND HORRIFIC OOZING” from the transdisciplinary research fellowship with the University of the Underground on Horror led by Agi Haines, produced by Ludovica Battista, Veronika Hanáková, and James Nola and featuring Agi Haines, Lyndsey Walsh, Dr. Andreas Meršin, and James Nola as the voice of Necro and Lyndsey Walsh as the voice of the Leaky Body Monster. “EAU DE PARFUM TMAU” is an artwork based on the research project “When Leaky Bodies Reek”, which was part of the University of the Underground’s Horror Program led by Agi Haines.

**Lyndsey Walsh** (b. 1994, USA) is an artist, designer, writer/editor, and lecturer based in Berlin, DE. Their work explores the instability surrounding the cultural and social aspects of disease, identity, the body, death, human and non-human relationships, and speculative narratives on the future. Currently, Walsh is a visiting scholar and the resident artist at the Department of Experimental Biophysics at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin in collaboration with the UniSysCat Cluster of Excellence, and they guest lecture at various institutions and universities.

## **Olfactory Art Keller**

25A Henry Street  
New York, NY 10002

Hours: Thursday to Sunday; 12pm to 6pm