Sarah-Maria Schober (Bern)

Mixing Scent – Making Race? Early Modern Perfumery and the Arts of Distance

The sense of smell and the idea of race have been intricately intertwined. Many early modern authors made openly racist comments about the smell of "others" or their supposed olfactory capabilities. While this is well known, this talk shifts attention to a processual perspective on race making, highlighting smell and race as material and embodied practices. What effects did racialized discourses connected to certain smells and substances have on people's ways of perfuming, and how did shifts in perfumery affect the making of race?

Focusing on the handling, procuring, and mixing of particular substances, such as civet, the glandular secretion of the civet cat, and the ways of smearing of scents onto bodies or objects, highlights perfumery's contributions and its paradoxes relating to a classification of the people of the world. Market shifts, from the use of paste at home to the consumption of ready-made liquid made by a professionalized perfumer for example, profoundly impacted notions and practices about nature and art, mixture, distance and abstraction in perfumery. These changes included the emergence of marketing and the gradual separation of perfume from medicine and food. The shifts paralleled and enabled a particular framework for understanding race in relation to "backward" or "impure" practices of body care – while not putting a stop to European "arts" of heavy perfuming. Some aspects of this framework are still to some degree build into current assumptions about the history of smell. Therefore, the talk ends with demonstrating that a focus on race making is also direly needed for critically reassessing our prevalent smellscapes of the Renaissance.

Aaron M. Hyman (Basel)
Smelling Clean in the Renaissance

The lack of critical vocabulary developed in period sources notoriously makes discussing early modern smell extremely difficult. Yet while people of the past did not always put words to smell in deeply descriptive ways, they nevertheless developed eloquent cultural practices around smell, its contexts of use or appreciation, objects used for its deployment, and its iconographies. This talk advocates for the use of modern perfumery terms and categories as heuristics for studying early modern smellscapes by mobilizing the notion of "clean smelling." Under this category, this talk organizes a broad range of visual and material culture that prompted audiences to think about the dividing lines between clean and dirty along with both where and when the idea of smelling (if not being) clean mattered most. Finally, this talk boomerangs back into modernity, asking how we might use this early modern exploration of smell and cleanliness to reappraise, in turn, seemingly well-known works of modern art.

On Musico-Olfactory Museology: How to Stage Smell in Relation to Sound, or a Case of 'Smound' at Kunstmuseum Den Haag

In *The Smell Culture Reader*, olfactory art historian Jim Drobnick warns against "olfactocentrism"—placing excessive emphasis on smell alone. This risk arises when focusing solely on the olfactory realm, or on any singular sense for that matter, though most academics traditionally operate ocularcentrically.

Due to a long-standing scholarly deficit, placing greater weight on the sense of smell is highly necessary. However, is it already possible to think and operate multisensorially within both the

academic and museological worlds? In reality, the senses are never isolated—neither phenomenologically, psychologically, nor neurologically—and we should avoid separating them historically as well.

Leonardo da Vinci, who also worked as a perfumer, once proposed a garden design where the song of birds would blend with the scent of citrus in an attempt to merge several sensory stimuli for aesthetic pleasure. But not until the 19th century, the concept of "Smound" was coined to describe an experience where scent alters the perception of sound, and vice versa or how a simultaneous stimulation leads to more than the sum of its parts.

In the 21st century, neurologists confirmed the existence of cells that react exclusively to the combination of an acoustic and an olfactory impulse. Numerous artists and composers had already understood this intuitively.

While not entirely focused on the Renaissance, this paper- or rather interactive multinsensory lecture - explores how we can transition toward a more multisensory approach—or specifically, an Acoustic/Musico-Olfactory Museology—on both a theoretical and a practical level.