

Stevie Famulari- *Scents of Memory*

The research I will be working on while in the Rosenquist residency explores the relationship of memories and scents. The projects include gathering stories and memories from people whom I would be interviewing, then creating scents based on those memories.

Scent is the shortest and strongest physical connection in the brain to recall an event or memory. The nerve connection of scent to the part of your brain which has memories is the shortest link of the five senses. Scent also has the strongest connections for new memories to form. To illustrate this point- while talking with a friend, she mentioned the scent of gardenia's brings her back to memories of her grandmother and being in her garden over thirty years ago- the scent will make her stop and *instantly* she is flooded with memories. Other scents from memories such as house fires, cologne, fresh foods, campfires, seawater, moldy basements or specific meals are all scents which can instantly bring memories to the surface of people of all ages.

This research and artwork is about creating the scents which hold those memories, and *to* hold the memories for a longer period. Different than a photograph which uses visual cues, the stronger sense of scent connected to memories and stories are explored. During the residency, interviewing people to hear their stories, then spending much of time to create the scents and bottle them up is done.

The creating of scent can be done in different ways for this research. The most basic form includes air scents trapped in fabrics (a fabric that smells of campfire). A fabric is placed in a space with the scent, and once the fabric absorbs the aroma it is placed in a sealed container.

The stronger form to hold scent is in liquid. This can be done in two different ways. The first process, in basic form, is through an evaporation process. If the item holding the scent (for example, food) has a liquid element in it (such as roasted lamb with a mint strawberry sauce), through dehydrating the food one can capture the liquid scent (and in this case flavor) in a distillation process. This process is done in food labs- such as is done in flavor and fragrance labs found at companies such as Firmenich through a machine called the evaporator. There are some restaurants which also use the machine for their recipes. The machine is commercially available for purchase. Also, through research, the process the machine does can be re-created through more traditional kitchen methods. Those kitchen methods would likely be the ones I using during the residency (options to use the machines at labs is also a possibility).

The second liquid process is similar to a dehumidifier principal. This would be used for gathering scents which are presently air based vapors (such as campfire or moldy basement). A dehumidifier can be placed in a space which is filled with the air bound scent. The liquid from the dehumidifier has particles of the scent in it. Alcohol can then be added to the water and full liquid concoction is frozen for a time period. After defrosting, the evaporated liquid (such as an ice cube that has gotten smaller while in the freezer for a month) has a higher concentration of the air bound particle held in the alcohol/water mixture. That liquid is then has the stronger aroma in it.

The scents, weather air or liquid are bottled with the series of many, many, bottles put on display for people to interact with. I have the imagery of a room filled with test tubes or glass flasks and vials of capped liquids and fabrics, with papers of the name of the person who's memory these are (or possibly the story in text from of the memory itself). There may also be tubes of scented palette cleansers (coffee is

an example) in the installation for use. People can walk through the display opening flasks of their memories to instantly be brought back to that time; or of others stories to appreciate their recollections; and also to create new memories with a fresh understanding of the effects of scent, memory, and stories.