

[Jump to Today](#)

SMELL

Prof. Jorge Otero-Pailos, Columbia University

Prof. Andreas Keller, Rockefeller University

Meeting Time: W 11:00AM-1:00PM / 300 Avery Hall

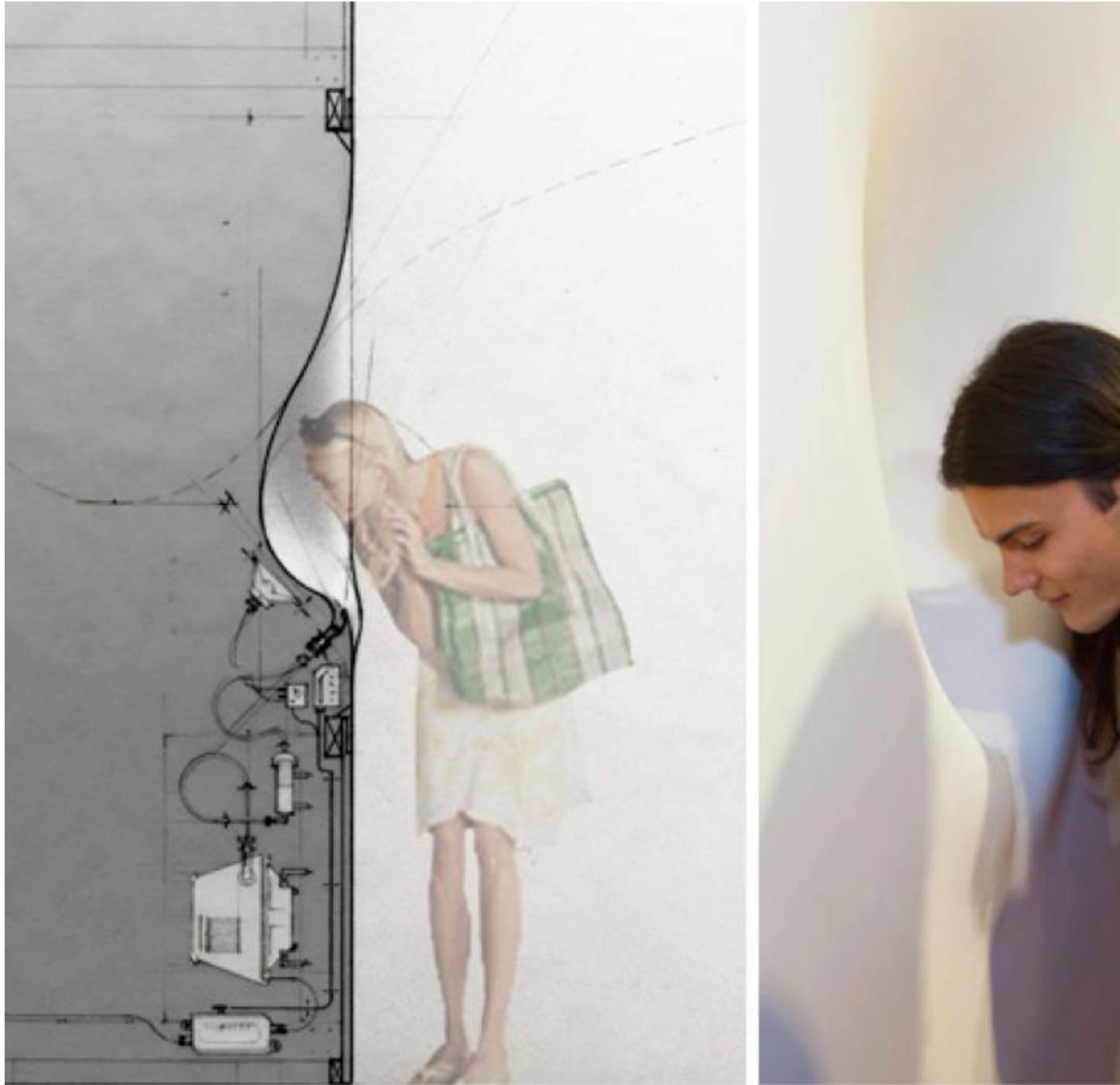


Image: Diller Scofidio + Renfro "The Art of Scent 1889-2012" exhibition at Museum of Art and Design (2012)

Course Description:

This hands-on seminar will explore recent experimental preservation practices and how they are pushing conventional definitions of preservation, architecture and art. In particular the class will focus on smell projects, and how they influence our perceptions of space, memory, and experiences of attraction and repulsion towards buildings. We will study the potential of smell to be used as an architectural material.

In recent years smell has become a new and expanding area of research and practice across the creative fields. Architects are designing smells for their buildings, retailers and hoteliers are commissioning perfumers to develop signature smells for their buildings, artists are creating smell installations and preservationists are reconstructing smells of historic buildings. The course will take stock of these contemporary developments and equip students with the tools to analyze and design architectural smells.

By focusing on smell, the course seeks to fill an important gap in the education of professionals working on the built environment, which has so far focused principally on the analysis of form, space, color and light. The course will consider smell as a building material, which can today be designed and manufactured. The introduction of every new building material has caused the development of new architectural systems—quarried stone revolutionized masonry construction systems millennia ago, and 19th century engineered steel led to the development of metallic construction, skyscrapers. What new architectural systems of design, and indeed of thought, could smell materials make possible?

We will collaborate with the JP Morgan Library and Museum in reconstructing the historic smell of the original McKim Mead and White library building.

Pre-requisites:

The course is open to GSAPP students in Historic Preservation, M.Arch, AAD, CCCP, Urban Planning, and Real Estate Development. There are no pre-requisites.

Learning Objectives:

Students will learn to analyze the components of smells, understand olfactory profiles, and the class will research how to apply this art and science to architecture.

Course Format:

The format of the class will alternate between seminar lectures, discussions and hands-on practical exercises in which we will analyze, design and construct architectural smells.

The class will collectively conceptualize and execute experimental preservation project. The goal is for the olfactory project to help re-organize the attention of visitors to a historic building.

We will begin by doing, making smells, in the first half of the semester and we will finish by thinking and analyzing our work towards the end of the semester. Depending on the manner of our doing, Jorge will choose and distribute additional readings to inform the discussions towards the end of the semester. Readings will likely include Koolhaas, Derrida, Deleuze, Agamben, Latour, Chakrabarti, Gadamer, Foucault, Lefebvre, Young and others.

Each student will research and write a short 1500 word paper on an experimental preservation case study by practices such as Sissel Tolaas, Jacques Herzog, Ernesto

Neto, Rachel Whiteread, José Damasceno, Jeremy Deller / Howard Giles, SVESMI, Andreas Angelidakis, David Gissen, Ines Weizman, Adam Lowe, Santiago Borja, Johanna Blakley, Alex Lehnerer, Anya Sirota, Thomas Demand, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Tacita Dean, OMA, FAT, and others.

Course Readings:

All course readings are provided as digital files in the "files" section of this course site.

Class Grade:

20% Building smell profile exercise

20% class presentation

10% individual contribution to group discussions

50% reconstructed smell and related research paper

Class Schedule:

JANUARY 18:

Session 1 – Introduction to Experimental Preservation

Presentation by Prof. Otero-Pailos

Required Reading:

Jorge Otero-Pailos, "Experimental Preservation," in Places Journal, (September 2016): <https://placesjournal.org/article/experimental-preservation> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

JANUARY 20, 4-8pm (OPTIONAL FRIDAY Field trip)

Exhibition Opening: "The Scent Project: Flacons, Perfume and Drawings for Villas in the Veneto" with works by Leonardo Opali, Anna Boothe and Frances Middendorf . Lecture by Luca Azzano Cantarutti at 4pm at the Tambaran Gallery 5 east 82nd Street, New York City.

JANUARY 25:

Session 2 – Introduction to Smell Perception.

Presentation by Prof. Keller

Required Reading:

Andreas Keller (2014) The Scented Museum. (pp. 167-176) in *The Multisensory Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory, and Space*

Köster, E. P. (2002). The specific characteristics of the sense of smell. *Olfaction, Taste, and Cognition*. C. Rouby, B. Schaal, D. Dubois, R. Gervais and A. Holley. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 27-44.

FEBRUARY 1:

Session 3 – Practicum: Smell Profiles and Smell Maps

Presentation by Prof. Keller

Class practicum will focus on training the nose to identify different smell percepts and learning associated smell descriptors.

Required Reading:

Andrew Dravnieks (1982). "Odor quality: semantically generated multidimensional profiles are stable." *Science* 218(4574): 799-801.

Porteous, J. D. (2006). Smellscape. in *The Smell Culture Reader* (pp. 89-106).

Sean Raspet, "Toward an Olfactory Language System," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

FEBRUARY 8:

Session 4 – Reconstructing Historic Architectural Smells

Presentation by Prof. Otero-Pailos

Required Reading:

Jorge Otero-Pailos, "An Olfactory Reconstruction of Philip Johnson's Glass House," in *AAFiles* 57 (2008): 40–45.

Jacques Herzog, "Material and Performance," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

Melanie Kiechle, "Preserving the Unpleasant: Sources, Methods, and Conjectures for Odors at Historic Sites," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

FEBRUARY 15:

Session 5 – Practicum: Building a Smell

Presentation by Prof. Keller

Students will try to create a target smell by mixing odorants

Required Reading:

Weiss, T., K. Snitz, et al. (2012). "Perceptual convergence of multi-component mixtures in olfaction implies an olfactory white." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(49): 19959-19964.

FEBRUARY 22

Session 6 – Field Visit

We will visit the historic JP Morgan Library building and we will analyze and describe the smell profile of the building. We will examine the changes made to the building over the years and recent preservation interventions, and interpret how they might have changed the smell profile of the building.

Required Reading:

David Karmon, "The Sacro Monte at Varalla and the Choreography of an Olfactory Landscape," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

MARCH 1:

Session 7 – Field Visit

International Flavors and Fragrances laboratory. Guest lecture by master perfumer Carlos Benaim.

Required Reading:

Roman Kaiser, "Headspace," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

MARCH 8:

Session 8 – Smell Art Installations in Architecture

Presentation by Prof. Otero-Pailos

Discussion of works by Sissel Tolaas, Raja'a Khalid and Ahmad Makia, Carsten Höller, Jacques Herzog, Ernesto Neto, and others.

Required Reading:

Stefanie Hessler and Rebecca Uchill, "Pattern Recognition. A Background for Carsten Höller's Smelling Dots (Portrait of Cedric Price), 2016," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

Raja'a Khalid and Ahmad Makia, "Olfactive Gulf and Atmospheric Hegemony," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

MARCH 15:

SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS

MARCH 22:

Session 9 – Guest lecture by Carlos Huber, founder and perfumer, Arquiste.

MAR 29:

Session 10 –Contemporary Smell Installations in Historical Perspective

Discussion led by Prof. Otero-Pailos

Required Reading:

Erik Wegerhoff, "Neue Sinnlichkeit: Postcritical Issues Regarding an Architecture of Sensuousness," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

Beata Labuhn, "Breathing a Moldy Air: Olfactory Experience, Aesthetics, and Ethics in the Writings of Ruskin and Riegl," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

Wulf Böer, "Synthetic Air," in *Future Anterior* 13, 2 (Winter 2016)

APRIL 5:

Session 11 – Cognitive Science of Smell

Presentation by Prof. Keller

Required Reading:

Ehrlichman, H. and L. Bastone (1992). Olfaction and Emotion (pp. 410-438) in *Science of Olfaction*

Rachel S. Herz (2012). Odor memory and the special role of associative learning (pp. 95-114) in *Olfactory Cognition*

APRIL 12:

Session 12 – Experimental Preservation as a critical lens

Thordis Arrhenius, “Monumental and Non-Monumental Strategies,” in *Experimental Preservation* (2016), 41-56.

Erik Fenstad Langdalen, “(Pre)served at the Table,” in *Experimental Preservation* (2016), 169-185.

APRIL 19:

Session 13- Student research paper presentations and discussion

APRIL 26:

Session 14- Student research paper presentations and discussion