

Love is Blind

How many times have we heard that “love is blind”? When we think about it in relation to smell, it takes on a different meaning. Does love have a scent? Smell is one of the few pathways that directly unlock our subconscious, and scientifically speaking, pheromones, those invisible chemical signals often called “love chemicals”, play a key role in attraction, allowing us to sense a potential partner and to perceive, almost instinctively, a kind of genetic compatibility.

In the world of chemosensory communication, these substances are produced by many animals and insects to attract the opposite sex, and there are hundreds of potential pheromones in humans. Their exact chemical composition and actions remain uncertain, yet smell continues to influence love and attraction in profound ways. It connects scents directly to the brain’s emotional and memory centers, particularly the limbic system and hippocampus, where emotion and recollection coexist.¹ Scientific research has shown that sleeping on a lover’s non-perfumed shirt can improve sleep quality,² and studies from the Weizmann Institute of Science revealed that humans often form friendships with people who share a similar body odour profile.³ These findings remind us how deeply smell is woven into the fabric of human connection and emotional memory.

The part of the brain that processes smells, the olfactory bulb, is directly connected to the limbic system, the center of emotions and memory. This connection allows smell to trigger intense feelings and vivid recollections in a way that no other sense can.⁴ The power of smell is intangible and undeniable, it can take you on a journey around the world or bring you back in an instant to your most fragile and hidden memories. It lives within us like an invisible thread, tying us to people, to places, to moments we thought were gone.

Marcel Proust expressed this beautifully in "*À la recherche du temps perdu*". In the famous madeleine scene, he describes how a simple scent can awaken an entire world of memory and emotion. What he evoked through literature, science later defined as "involuntary memory".⁵

For this exhibition, I created a scent based on a personal experience... It was love at first sight, a rare and almost inexplicable moment that imprinted itself in my senses and consciousness. The work, titled "Love is Blind", translates this memory into a scent that hit my nose, my mind, and my heart faster than light: the warmth of a body, the trace of perfume blending with the summer air, the first kiss by the sea, the salt in the air, the softness of evening light. It is my way of sharing an intimate fragment of my own experience, of transforming a private emotion into something others can smell.

The scent is contained in a glass form that I designed specifically for this work. I chose glass for its transparency, but also for what it teaches: the wisdom of fragility. It reminds us that true value, love, and beauty often exist in delicate balance. They cannot be controlled or held too tightly. They ask for gentleness, attention, and care, because the moment we try to possess them completely, they might break. The scent and the glass together speak about love, memory, and the invisible traces that remain after the moment has passed.

Text by Maria Nitulescu

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- 1 Herz, Rachel S., and Trygg Engen. "Psychophysiology of Odor Memory: The Role of the Limbic System." Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 45–47.
 - 2 Hofer, Marlise Kathleen. "The Smelly Truth: Evidence that Exposure to the Scent of a Romantic Partner Reduces Stress Reactivity and Improves Sleep Efficiency." PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2020.
 - 3 Ravreby, Inbal; Snitz, Kobi; Sobel, Noam. "Sniffing Out New Friends: Similar Body Odor May Contribute to Social Bonding Between Humans." "Science Advances" 8, no. 26 (2022).
 - 4 Herz, Rachel S. "The Scent of Desire: Discovering Our Enigmatic Sense of Smell." New York: HarperCollins, 2007.
 - 5 Proust, Marcel. "*À la recherche du temps perdu*: Du côté de chez Swann." Paris: Grasset, 1913 (Madeleine scene).