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# OLFACTORY ART AND THE POLITICAL IN AN AGE OF RESISTANCE

Edited by  
GWENN-AËL LYNN  
AND DEBRA RILEY PARR



# Olfactory Art and the Political in an Age of Resistance

This book claims a political value for olfactory artworks by situating them squarely in the contemporary moment of various forms of political resistance.

Each chapter presents the current research and art practices of an international group of artists and writers from the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, Thailand, Sweden, and the Netherlands. The book brings together new thinking on the potential for olfactory art to critique and produce modes of engagement that challenge the still-powerful hegemonic realities of the twenty-first century, particularly the dominance of vision as opposed to other sensory modalities.

The book will be of interest to scholars working in contemporary art, art history, visual culture, olfactory studies, performance studies, and politics of activism.

**Gwenn-Aël Lynn** is a transdisciplinary artist who builds interactive installations that combine scents, sound, and technology to pose questions about identity, culture, and the political.

**Debra Riley Parr** is Associate Professor in the Art and Art History Department at Columbia College Chicago. Her current research concerns olfactory art and design in contemporary culture.

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# Olfactory Art and the Political in an Age of Resistance

Edited by  
Gwenn-Aël Lynn and  
Debra Riley Parr

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The editors dedicate this book to the memory of Sabina Ott.

Gwenn-Aël Lynn dedicates this book to Christiane Barrier Lynn  
and James Earl Lynn.

Debra Riley Parr dedicates this book to her parents.



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# Contributors

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**Eleonora Edreva** is an artist, researcher, smeller, educator, collaborator, co-producer, worker, renter, and mischief-maker born in Bulgaria and currently living on the occupied Tiwa land now referred to as Albuquerque. Edreva strongly believes that

our senses contain skills and ways of knowing the world that systems of power have been devaluing for centuries as part of their ongoing efforts to disconnect people (especially people at the margins of power) from their bodies and capacities for pleasure and embodied learning. Their artistic work orients around the ideas that intentional sensory learning can bring people more fully into individual and collective strength, and that connection, ritual, and play are strategies for creating more abundant love and liberation as we attend to the unjust conditions of living under capitalism and white supremacy. To that end, they create relational, participatory, and play-based tools for navigating and engaging the world as our most whole selves, as well as actively orienting toward healing in our human, more-than-human, and land-based relationships. Edreva holds a BA in English from the University of Chicago and is currently working toward an MFA in Art & Ecology at the University of New Mexico.

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**Brian Goeltzenleuchter** is a post-media artist who employs interdisciplinary research in the creation of designed environments, scripted and improvised performances, images, and objects. Through an artistic practice that uses analog and digital technologies to mediate the senses of sight, sound, touch, and smell, Goeltzenleuchter's current work involves situations that explore the dynamics between individuals and the cities and institutions that shape those relationships. His artwork considers the way in which personal and cultural narratives can be expressed through the sense of smell. He earned his MFA in 2001 at the University of California, San Diego. From 2002 to 2008 he was Associate Professor and Director of MFA Studies in Art at Central Washington University. He has held residencies at the Institute for Art and Olfaction, Los Angeles; Banff Centre, Canada; Sculpture Space, New York; and Centrum Beeldende Kunst, The Netherlands. He is Research Fellow at the Institute for Public and Urban Affairs, San Diego State University. He also serves on the faculty of Eureka Institute for Translational Medicine, a nonprofit foundation with educational and research objectives in the field of International Translational Medicine.

**Hsuan L. Hsu** is a professor of English at the University of California, Davis and the author of *The Smell of Risk: Environmental Disparities and Olfactory Aesthetics*

(NYU Press, 2020) as well as several articles on race, environmental risk, and olfaction in literature and conceptual art.

**Dorothée King** is professor and head of the Arts and Design Education Department and the Learning Lab Arts and Design at Basel Academy for Art and Design. After studying art, design, and media in Denmark, Germany, and England, she earned her PhD from the College of Fine Arts at Berlin University of the Arts. There she served as a researcher and lecturer in the Graduate School and the Art Education Department. She has also lectured at Rhode Island School of Design; Providence College; the Interface Cultures program at the University for Art and Industrial Design Linz, Austria; and the Banff New Media Institute, Canada. She was a consultant for the TransArt Institute in New York and has been working as a freelance educator, communicator, and coach since 2000. Her transdisciplinary teaching reflects an ongoing interest in creating intersections in arts, media, making, and self-realization. Her areas of specialization and competence include ephemeral materials in modern and contemporary art, multisensory aesthetic experience, the histories and futures of global art school education, participatory initiatives, curatorial studies, and contemporary and modern art history.

**Viveka Kjellmer** is a senior lecturer in art history and visual studies at the University of Gothenburg. She has written about advertising and the image of scent, fashion exhibitions, and visual consumption. Her current research concerns costume, body, and identity, as well as olfactory communication and the agency of scent.

**Alanna Lynch** is a Canadian artist and independent researcher based in Berlin. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology (Queen's University), a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Concordia University), a Master of Library and Information Studies (McGill University), and a Master of Fine Arts (University of Gothenburg, Sweden). Her work is the result of transdisciplinary processes combining this formal background, additional studies in biology and textiles, and experiences in activism, with her own subjective, embodied experiences. She has exhibited and performed internationally. She is a founding member of Scent Club Berlin, an artist collective producing experiments and exhibitions around smell. She was awarded the Berlin Art Prize in 2018 and has been supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.

**Gwenn-Aël Lynn** is a transdisciplinary artist who builds interactive installations that combine scents, sound, and technology to pose questions about identity, culture, and the political. He also performs with food to investigate the tongue as the interface between language and the sense of taste. He situates his current work at the intersection of environmental activism and art. He has exhibited internationally in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

**Lauryn Mannigel** is a Berlin-based artist researcher holding an MA in Contemporary Art and New Media (Paris 8, FR). Inspired by narratives of empowerment and resistance, her experimental media practice is situated at the nodal intersection of art, science, and the humanities. Since 2005, she has been challenging the Western cultural dominance of visual epistemology by exploring the perception of the senses of smell, hearing, touch, and taste. Since 2016, she has been working on the series entitled *The Aesthetic and Political Potential of Body Scents*, which explores people's perceptual olfactory judgment of others' body scents. In this context,



she recently presented the following performative experiments: *Love Sweat Love* (2016) at Mediamatic (NL); *Eat Me* (2018) at *Creative innovation: Art Meets Science*, Wageningen University (NL); *Smell Feel Match* (2019) at Kunsthalle Rosstock (DE) and the experimental performance festival *VIVA! Art Action*, Montreal (CA); *I Smell a Rat* (2019) at the feminist artist-run space StudioXX, Montreal (CA); and the Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore (IN). For her new project which investigates the social perception of women's body scents in India, she collaborates with chemical ecologist Dr Shannon Olsson from the National Center for Biological Sciences (IN).

**Matt Morris** is an artist, writer, educator, and curator based in Chicago. His paintings, installations, and perfume-based projects have been exhibited throughout the United States and Europe. He is a contributor to *Artforum.com*, *Art Papers*, *Fragrantica.com*, *ARTnews*, *Flash Art*, *Newcity*, *Sculpture*, *The Seen* and *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly*; and his writing appears in numerous exhibition catalogs and artist monographs. He is a transplant from southern Louisiana who holds a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati and an MFA in Art Theory + Practice from Northwestern University, as well as a Certificate in Gender + Sexuality Studies. In 2017 he earned a Certification in Fairyology from Doreen Virtue, PhD. Morris is a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Clara Muller** is a French curator, critic, and art historian pursuing research on the politics of breathing in contemporary art, as well as on the diversity of practices using scent as a medium. An editor for the olfactory magazine *NEZ*—published twice a year in French, English, and Italian—she writes extensively about fragrance-related subjects and the presence of smells in the visual arts, literature, and cinema. She has contributed to various exhibition catalogs, artists' monographs, and academic publications, such as the anthology *Les Dispositifs olfactifs au musée* (2018), and has given several talks worldwide about the crossroads of art and olfaction. She holds degrees in Literature, Art History, and Curating from the Sorbonne, and completed her education as an exchange graduate student at New York University in 2018 and Columbia University in 2020.

**Pitchaya Ngamcharoen** is an artist based in Rotterdam. Her work focuses on shared living spaces, among humans, mice, ants, and other species, and how the sense of smell plays a crucial role in these spaces. Her research concerns the olfactory investigation of community formations and transmissions through acts of orientation, disorientation, marking territory, and being deterritorialized. She writes,

In Western society, hegemony of vision and hearing is evidential. To release myself from the despotic reign of the eyes, I refuse to give the visual a priority in my writing, however, never turning a blind eye. By bringing my nose to the forefront, I claim that smells play a crucial role in orienting oneself, claim the space in time (territory) and communities' formation and transmission. My artistic and life practice lie at the intersection of a cook and an artist, with a strong, constant stand for my belief in 'pluriversality,' that is the universal can only be plural, a world in which many worlds coexist.

**Debra Riley Parr** is Associate Professor in the Art and Art History Department at Columbia College Chicago. She teaches courses in the history and theory of modern and contemporary art and design. Her current research concerns olfactory art and design in contemporary culture. She has curated an exhibition on scent and poetry at the Poetry Foundation, published and presented several papers on scent, and conducted olfactory workshops designed to reveal the meaning and politics of scent in a predominantly visual culture.

**D Rosen** is an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose work is shown nationally and internationally. They operate from the position that questions of animality are not binary but rather a tangle of ecologies and richly complicated identities, framed by culture. Recent projects include a brutalist web zine titled *A Trace of Fashioned Violence* ([fashionedviolence.com](http://fashionedviolence.com)), made with the support of the Nordic Summer University in collaboration with Ruth K. Burke, KT Duffy, Ishan Chakrabarti, Catherine Feliz, J. Kent, Kassy / Kasem Kydd, Yvette Mayorga, D. Rosen, Falak Vasa, and Kat Zagaria (Aalborg, Denmark). In 2020, Rosen will be collaborating with Marcela Torres on a project that centralizes touch at Recess (Brooklyn, NY) and exhibiting with Soo Shin and Catherine Sullivan at Chicago Manual Style in a show curated by Ruslana Lichtzier (Chicago, IL).



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# Introduction

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Despite the fact that many artists have been working with scents for over a century, olfactory art is not as well-known as other forms of art, given the persistent dominance of visual experience, not to mention the obstacles contemporary artists face in exhibiting works that exude odors into an exhibition space. Nonetheless, as curator and critic Jim Drobnick notes in *The Smell Culture Reader*, artists haven't waited for permission to investigate odors, and "fragrant art works, in fact, have appeared in such numbers that it is now possible to conduct investigations into their unique characteristics" (Drobnick 2006, 328). This collection of essays begins to take on that work, building on the scholarship and art practices of the past.

Olfactory art demands a consideration of the interdisciplinary ground out of which it emerges. In this introduction we briefly sketch out a section of this ground as it appears to us now, recognizing that our project is not to write a history of olfactory art but to present contemporary international research and art projects directed toward understanding and realizing its political power and potential for resistance. We also offer in this introduction a definition of the key terms that have shaped this project: "olfactory art," "the political," and "resistance."

## Olfactory Art: A Definition

We define olfactory art as art that utilizes scent as its primary, or intentional, medium. That is, olfactory art uses olfactory materials—herbs, flowers, perfumes, molecules, and other redolent substances—that can be experienced primarily through the olfactory system, inhaled and smelled. This emphasis on the materiality of olfactory art is critical to our understanding of works that resist received forms of representation, which for us brings forward questions about the political. There are artworks that have a smell to them that may not necessarily fall into the category of olfactory art—but are important precedents to the contemporary turn toward scent.

## *Premises for a Needed Olfactory Art History*

As evident in these essays, the discourse on smell serves as a shared platform for artists working with odors and for scholars writing about olfactory art. This discourse ranges across fields, including sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, literature, perfumery, and environmental studies. Jacques Vignaud's book *Sentir*, published in 1982, establishes a precedent for an interdisciplinary discussion of scent, and notably, begins with a critique of Kant's and Hegel's denigration of the sense of smell. The work of the

Centre for Sensory Studies established at Concordia University, Montreal, in 1988 sets a critical bar for the emerging field of olfactory art and its history (Concordia n.d.). Among numerable publications by the Centre's faculty, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* by Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott lays out the cultural import, from sociological and anthropological perspectives, of the historically overlooked sense of smell. Jim Drobnick extends this scholarship with an overview of the discourse on the sense of smell in his introduction to *The Smell Culture Reader*. Drobnick notes the importance of Alain Corbin's *The Foul and the Fragrant*, with its focus on the "profound influence of odors upon major social, political and cultural events during France's modernization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Drobnick 2006, 3). The preface to the book's section on "Volatile Art" acknowledges the "nascent formation of an olfactory aesthetics and counterpolitics" (Drobnick 2006, 6). Here, Drobnick locates the mid-1980s as the "watershed moment" for publications on the sense of smell, which is not surprising given the impact of postmodern turns away from hegemonic formations, from the *grand récits* as described by Francois Lyotard (1984). An under-researched aspect of the sensorium, the olfactory presents an opportunity for artists to resist the dominant grand narrative of the visual as well as historically important aesthetic categories such as Kant's theory of disinterestedness and Hegel's "privileging of autonomy" (Drobnick 2006, 328). Drobnick's essay "Towards an Olfactory Art History" also lays the groundwork for a future history of olfactory art by analyzing the references to smell in the writings of artists prior to the 1980s, considering in this essay those of Post-Impressionist painter Paul Gauguin. Chantal Jaquet's *Philosophie de l'Odorat*, published in 2015, constitutes an attempt at delineating a philosophy of olfaction. Of particular interest to us, the book contains two sections delving into olfactory aesthetics and contemporary olfactory art (Jaquet 2015).

Any overview of the history and practice of olfactory art also needs to acknowledge generations of perfumers, too numerous to mention individually here, and their considerable expertise about scent and its chemical composition, not to mention their works' wide influence on contemporary interests in the body and questions of gender. Edmond Roudnitska's *L'ésthétique en question*, published in 1977, stands out as being the first book written by a perfumer attempting to bridge the craft of perfumery and art. The éditions Frédérique Malle follow suit by presenting themselves as a publishing house for perfume "authors," recognized by the trade as historically significant. Also an important resource for anyone working with fragrance, France's Osmothèque is arguably the world's most extensive perfume archive. Founded in 1990 by Jean Kerléo, Jean Claude Ellena, and several other well-known perfumers, it preserves perfumes gathered from the past two millennia by reproducing their documented formulas; for more recent fragrances of the past three hundred years, the actual perfume is preserved in airtight, lightproof, and temperature-controlled vaults. Based in Versailles with conference centers in New York City and Paris, Osmothèque offers thematic public lectures that feature selected perfumes presented on test strips.

We must however acknowledge that this collection of essays does not engage directly with perfumes produced by the perfume industry.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, our definition does not exclude perfumery as an art form, especially when it is a material employed by artists. In the value system we are building, for a smell to be of any interest to us, it must also possess a political component and potential for resistance, and in some instances, perfume can elicit such content. However, as Constance Classen once wrote, "there is a whole world of vital olfactory imagery and meaning which cannot be, and

is not meant to be, encompassed in a perfume bottle” (Classen 1998, 151). These practices are evidenced in exhibitions such as *Odorama* in 2003, and as part of the *Soirées Nomades* [nomadic evenings] at the Fondation Cartier in Paris, France; *Odor Limits*, curated by DisplayCult (Jim Drobnick and Jennifer Fisher) at the Esther M. Klein Gallery in Philadelphia in 2008; *Volatile! Scent and Poetry*, curated by Debra Riley Parr at the Poetry Foundation in Chicago in 2015; *There’s something in the air! – Scent in Art*, curated by Caro Verbeek at Villa Rot in Belgium in 2015; and almost concurrently, *Belle Haleine–The Scent of Art*, curated by Annja Müller-Alsbach at the Museum Tinguely in Basel, Switzerland. The latter exhibition was extensive and offered important institutional recognition of olfactory art. In a space spanning more than 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>, it featured international artists working with scent from the art historical canon, as well as contemporary artists from the last 30 years.

### *Olfactory Art: A Needed History, Yet to Be Written*

The history of olfactory art is yet to be written. Two publications have begun outlining that history from a Eurocentric perspective. In 2011, Denys Riout published in the *Cahiers National du Museum National d’Art Moderne*: “Art et Olfaction: Des Evocations Visuelles à une Présence Réelle.” A couple of years later, Ashraf Osman offered another preliminary history of twentieth-century olfactory art in a seminar paper written for the postgraduate curatorial program at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. In Riout’s words, “the plastic arts have a particular aptitude at expanding their empire by inventing new techniques and annexing other arts.”<sup>2</sup> In this case, he is speaking of annexing perfumery techniques. Neither essay pretends to present an exhaustive history of olfactory art, but rather, to quote Riout again, each begins “mapping some of the force lines that underlie the emergence of an artistic olfactory-scape”<sup>3</sup> (Riout 2011, 2).

This mapping includes Marcel Duchamp’s *Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette* (1921)—which gave its name to the Museum Tinguely exhibition—the Surrealist exposition of 1938 curated by Duchamp, where surrealist Wolfgang Paalen “carpeted the floor with oak leaves, ferns and grasses, a water-filled pond with water lilies and reeds and the atmosphere was pervaded with the ‘scents of Brazil:’ the aroma of roasting coffee” (Osman 2013, 5). Another point on this map is Kurt Schwitters’s *Merzbau*, which, according to photographic documentation, would have included smelly organic material (Riout 2011). More recent forays into scent include *Fluxus* and *Arte Povera*, as well as a pioneering aromatic diffuser designed in 1970 by the French painter Gerard Titus-Carmel. Riout and Osman venture into more contemporary artifacts that would be too numerous to list here.

We would, however, like to mention several olfactory works from the 1990s that these authors do not include, which, coupled with that decade’s scientific and technological innovations, usher in twenty-first-century olfactory art: Laurie Palmer’s *Scent* (1990), exhibited in *The Body* at the Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago in 1991; Clara Ursitti’s *Self-portrait in Scent, Sketch no 1* (1994), shown at the Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow, and Aberdeen City Art Gallery, Scotland; and Oswaldo Macia’s *Conversation Asphalt and Salt* (1996), presented at the Clove Gallery in London, England.

In an important non-European contribution to the field, Gaudêncio Fidelis curated *Smell as a Criterion*. This exhibition was the olfactory component of the Mercosul



Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2015. A survey of modern and contemporary Latin American artists working with olfaction, it included artists such as Oswaldo Maciá, Ernesto Neto, Hélio Oiticia, Lygia Pape, and many others.

## The Political

For us, the most compelling unique characteristic of olfactory art lies in its political potential. We operate with a distinction between the political and politics. Politics constitutes the strategies deployed by individuals, political parties, and governments to obtain power; by contrast, the political is an inquiry into how to be together, how to co-exist. If politics is about governing, then the political is the philosophy of politics, as originally founded by Plato in his dialogue *The Statesman* (Πολιτικός, *Politikós* in the original text). However, closer to us in time, Jean-Luc Nancy offers a nuanced understanding of this difference by stating (in his *Communauté Désœuvrée* from 1986) that the political is the space for the contestation of the very basis of power: “the political designates not the organization of society but the disposition of community as such.” Many of the contributors to this volume engage with this contestation of power in overt or subtle ways. In order to make a distinction between politics and a philosophical engagement with the definition of politics, Jean-Luc Nancy broke French grammatical rules by switching the gender of *la politique* [politics] to *le politique* [the political]). His translators, in order to render this distinction in English, turned what is commonly accepted as a modifier, “political,” into a noun, “the political.”

Western representative democracies are one of several possible political forms, and they align themselves with visibility. In her essay, “Archive: Performance Remains,” performance studies theorist Rebecca Schneider argues that in Western culture, artifacts must remain visible in order to be considered valuable.<sup>4</sup> From that perspective, scents, much like performance art, pose a serious problem because they are transient, and do not remain visible, if they ever were. Schneider points out the “ocular hegemony” of the artifact. The artifact and the archive are valuable because they are “permanently” visible. Schneider contests the ocular hegemony of the archive on the basis that performative practices do remain, “[do] leave residue in the body and the memory of its practitioners, and viewers” (Schneider 2001, 102). Those remnants are intangible, and therefore a challenge to the hegemonic visual. Western culture denigrates the sense of smell, precisely because it cannot be archived, because it is intangible. Hence, Schneider's work indicates a clear relationship between power and the sense of sight. Other authors such as Jim Drobnick in his *Smell Culture Reader* (2006) and Jacques Vignaud in *Sentir* (1982) similarly discuss visual hegemony. For us, this visual hegemony leads to the political problem of representation.

Under a hegemonic visual regime, the question of representation emerges at the intersection of the olfactory and the political. While the practice of political representation may be well understood, given the particulars of olfactory art we feel the term “representation” must be carefully analyzed and contextualized. When one smells something, the scent enters the body through the nose and lungs and limbic system of the brain, becoming a body–mind experience. Smelling is, thus, an unmediated sensation, an embodied experience. The olfactory constitutes a completely different scenario from the visual depiction of something, where symbolizing or representing mediates the experience.

Hence, scents cannot be said to “represent” in the same way that images can.<sup>5</sup> The notion of representation is rooted in the discourse and the ideology of visibility. Questions

arise: how can multiple identities with multiple locations be represented? How can a multi-racial, multicultural, non-gender-conforming society represent itself? The recent political landscape has revealed the deep inadequacies of the politics of representation. Many voices have denounced a political crisis of representation over the years.<sup>6</sup> One of the possible solutions to this conundrum, perhaps, is to no longer worry so much about representing, but instead focus on how to foster participation and direct engagement.

## Resistance

Resistance, a word often heard in relation to the political, specifies a particular positioning in opposition to regimes of power, be they aesthetic, national, gendered, or racial. What exactly do we mean by the last part of our title, *An Age of Resistance*? We could point to Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in which he analyzes the effects of reproductive technologies on art and optical experience, not just of the modernist period but on all art. Benjamin's method informs our thinking here, but we also recognize our personal reactions to the current global political climate as a factor in shaping a rhetoric of resistance. We want to situate olfactory art as a form of resistance in our current moment, but like Benjamin with his historical survey of the modes of reproduction, we wish to acknowledge that the history of resistance has a long arc, dotted by moments that may contribute to any contemporary acts of resistance. Resistance studies scholars make the case for "the temporal aspect of resistance" as an analytical category (Baaz, Lilja, Schulz, and Vinthagen 2016, 10). In their analysis, Mikael Baaz et al. find that most resistance scholarship focuses on spatial relationships, particularly when studying civil society-based resistance, but fail to account for temporal relations "to people of the past as well as the future" (Baaz et al. 2016, 11). This failure is certainly true when dealing with climate change resistance, as our actions condition our descendants' future world. Baaz et al. have found that some resistance strategies create multiple temporalities (i.e. creating alternative futures), and queer time and space as ways to resist nihilistic agendas—for instance fascist nihilism—and bridge the future with the now while fostering empathy for the future when dealing with climate change. Olfactory experience obviously also has a temporal aspect to it, with scents unfolding over time and constantly shifting in their chemical compositions. We find this shared relationship to time suggestive and warranting further thought and analysis. For us, it prompts speculation that olfaction may be particularly suited to acts of resistance.

Methodologically, we choose to embrace a fluid notion of time rather than using firm boundaries such as particular dates to frame what we mean by "an age of resistance." We acknowledge that for us the notion of "an age of resistance" functions like a cursor in time that can slide in many directions depending on the olfactory topic. For instance, Futurist dinners, which had olfactory components, could be located at one point, while the olfactory references in poetic texts or the fragrant qualities of installations and performances may occupy overlapping or different situations of resistance. The questions then become, how does olfactory art resist in any specific age, and is there something particular about our own contemporary age of resistance that affords us a vantage point, is there something now that demands more thinking about the possible relations of olfactory art and resistance? What are the various olfactory forms of resistance? And more broadly, how does olfactory art take up its position in an age of resistance, alongside many other acts of resistance?

Baaz et al. caution, however, “that it is important not to dichotomize resisters and dominators since that would mean ignoring the multiple systems of hierarchy and that individuals can be simultaneously powerful and powerless within different systems” (Baaz et al. 2016, 6). This suggestion echoes French theorist Gilles Deleuze who, during a lecture, on March 17, 1987 (Deleuze 1987), on the “Society of Control” at the FEMIS (a film school in Paris), drew important distinctions between art and communication, insisting that art is implicitly an act of resistance unlike communication, which is, more often than not, propaganda, and therefore complicit with power. Furthermore, by extension, we acknowledge that much of the art of the twentieth century could be considered to be forms of resistance, and indeed the very formation of art history as a field proceeds from a theory of dialectical swings from one generation to the next in terms of style and other concerns. Following Deleuze, we say that if art constitutes an act of resistance, then olfactory art is also an act of resistance, with a difference, or an intensity, since it already operates within the sphere of art, but at the margins. More specifically, as it has been established elsewhere (Vignaud 1982; Nancy 2002, 146; Drobnick 2006), olfaction opposes the power of visual hegemony.

In thinking through these forms of resistance, we find this observation by Baaz et al. useful:

Resistance could then, to summarize, be understood as a response to power from below—a subaltern practice that could challenge, negotiate, and undermine power, or such a practice performed on behalf of and/or in solidarity with a subaltern position (proxy resistance). Irrespective of intent or interest, we view resistance as (i) an act, (ii) performed by someone upholding a subaltern position or someone acting on behalf of and/or in solidarity with someone in a subaltern position, and (iii) (most often) responding to power.

(Baaz et al. 2016, 6)

This analysis of resistance in relation to power begs the following question: does olfactory art occupy a subaltern position? Are artists producing olfactory art situated in a subaltern position? If so, is it because of the olfactory’s position in relation to the visually hegemonic regime we live under? Is it because of its conspicuous absence from the market as soon as it leaves the perfumery domain, except, perhaps in the art market valuation of Ernesto Neto’s scented work? Is this absence from the art market, at least for now, its political strength, thus enabling olfactory art to avoid cooptation? Will olfactory art lose its capacity to resist if it becomes subsumed into a commodity?

We see resistance on the rise in a variety of arenas, including within the art industry, where there is a long tradition of artists situating their practice in opposition to the art market, to the hegemony of the visual, and to the commodification of art. We see olfactory art in a constructive, expansive role, although we are all admiration at oppositional practices such as the Sister Serpents stink bombs and Clara Ursitti’s *Poison* action.

## Methodologies

Echoing our fluid definition of time in our section on resistance, we view the field of olfactory studies as having, at least at this moment, porous and blurry boundaries. It is fundamentally interdisciplinary, traversing many fields that intersect and overlap. We are therefore interested in various methodologies, including the phenomenological