the art of smell mapping // kate mclean
Our most precious moments of travel are taken home not through our luggage, not through our purchases, not through our cameras... but through our senses. –Mendiratta, 2010

Smell sources: Online research – Wyatt, C (2003), personal recollections, field trip visit, Facebook requests to friends who lived, live or visited.
Limited guidance notes embedded in exhibit

Antique perfume bottles on mirrored shelving to recreate ambiance of a Parisian Parfumeur
Parisian Perfumes: rain, urine, red wine, bread, thick sizzling steaks, cellars, cheese, strong coffee, drains, flowers, Gauloises, paints and painters, parquet flooring, perfume.

Liquids scents: alcohol and distilled water as base with oil

Gaseous scents: “trapped” into black velvet inside plastic bags and swiftly bottled.

Authenticity is important.
Video illustrates willingness of participants to take smell the unknown and to contemplate the questions and their responses. Event took place Oct/Nov 2010.

1. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLiUC2eCG8s
A collection of over 500 “snotes”
1. The most written-about smell was that of Gauloises!
2. Musty cellars encourages recollections of personal locations/spaces
3. Urine made people recall universally known locations
4. Strong cheese evoked specified emotions
5. The smell of recently smoked Gauloises cigarettes elicited unspecified emotions
6. Coffee evoked stories
7. Coffee made people recall an activity
8. Perfume conjured memories of people
9. Wooden floors brought an era or an age to mind
10. Wine made people think of an event
11. Drains prompted recollections of object
Axes of interest: location, range, intensity & direction
Thinking of smell as a visual.
Edinburgh Smell Map refined over four months. Interviews with locals about senses in Edinburgh yielded the following as starting points. Rejections included vomit, alkaloid manufacturing site. Smells never found include the biscuit factory.

- **Sea, sand, beach**
- **Brewery malt fumes**
- **Vaults & underground streets**
- **Boys toilets in primary schools**
- **Fish & chip shops**
- **Penguins at the zoo**
- **Cherry blossom**
- **Newly-cut grass**
- **Coffee**
Smells of Auld Reekie on a very breezy day in 2011

Auld Reekie emits a plethora of scents and smells; some particular to Edinburgh, some ubiquitous city aromas. It is the smell combination, and how they are distributed by the prevailing south-westerly winds that make them city-specific. Coloured dots indicate the point of origin of the scents, the contour lines show where they blow to in the wind.
Smells evoked nostalgic memories of Edinburgh’s former brewing industry amongst locals. Visitors commented on the vaults and underground cellars.
Deep in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, a summer odor lurks. Identified as arising from 284 Broome Street what is it coming from?

the art of smell mapping // kate mclean

janelafferty1 Dec 7, 2011 12:21 AM
Happy Tamonts Brewery, Eggy Glasgow Underground, Yummy salt and vinger waffs from Mr Chips Sauchiehall street, Overpowering perfume from Lush shops, Aviation fumes from Glasgow airport, Yummy curry waffs from Ashoka - Ashton lane to include a few!
Reply Delete

Kate McLean Dec 7, 2011 06:29 AM
Thanks Jane. The Lush smell is totally overpowering - it hit me the other day and I knew what it was before I knew it was there!
Reply Delete

miriam70 Dec 8, 2011 06:09 PM
The smell of rotting meat from the bins of Halal Butchers on the Southside
Reply Delete

Kate McLean Dec 8, 2011 06:10 PM
Thanks you Miriam - I'll be sure to check them out
Reply Delete

Bruce Dec 8, 2011 06:35 PM
This comment has been removed by the author.

Bruce Dec 8, 2011 06:39 PM
I heard the piece on Radio Scotland this afternoon about your city smells project and it really struck a chord with me about the evocative nature of smells and their affinity with other memories. The damp earthy smell of the underground has always been a very "Glasgow" smell for me and an odour I could happily absorb all day and every day. In some ways it creates a very comforting feeling. Maybe it reminds me of being on the underground as a youngster with my mother!
Reply Delete

Kate McLean Dec 8, 2011 06:41 PM
Bruce - that's fantastic - exactly the type of story that makes the map so evocative. The Glasgow subway smell is in...
Reply Delete
Creative recording of smell data collection includes watercolour, sketch maps, lists, collage.
the art of smell mapping // kate mclean

Subway
River Clyde at low tide
Lorne (square) sausage
Hot bovril at the footy
carbolic soap
diesel fumes
building dust
wet moss
fast food outlets
perfume
the art of smell mapping // kate mclean
the art of smell mapping  //  kate mclean
the art of smell mapping // kate mclean
the art of smell mapping // kate mclean
Glasgow’s scents reflect the pride of the people of the city and their ability to renew, regenerate and reinvent themselves and their buildings. The larger dots represent the source of the smell as the smaller dots show its range and intensity. Glasgow’s prevailing south-westerly wind causes the scents to drift away to the north-east.
the art of smell mapping // kate mclean