



Odeuropa project by Dr. Cecilia Bembibre

We perceive hundreds of smells every day. Some of them can be considered part of our intangible cultural heritage; not only for their own value, but through their connections to historic objects or spaces, traditions or communities. In this talk, I will present the first framework to identify, analyse and document smells of cultural significance to preserve them for future generations.

Through our study of the smell of the heritage library at St Paul's Cathedral and the aroma of a historic English country house, we will share the process of preserving the chemical and sensory qualities of a scented space or object.

In addition, we will discuss the challenges of identifying, documenting and preserving the significance of the smell in connection to its source, in a way that enables it to be accessed by future generations. Olfactory heritage science is a still emerging but rapidly developing field of study, connecting tangible and intangible heritage. To end the presentation, we will outline some ideas for future work, including how museum professionals can engage with this exciting new area of heritage through conservation and interpretation practice.