

This essay argues that to arrive at a proper understanding of the aesthetic and cognitive potential of smell, we must look outside the western tradition to those traditions where the power of smell does not carry all the baggage, all the disqualifications that Kant and Freud, and even Proust, saddled it with. The cases of Indian perfumery, the Chinese incense clock, and the Japanese incense ceremony known as *kōdō*, which involves “listening to the incense” (*ko wo kiku*), are presented by way of example. This essay also seeks to recover the original meaning of the term “aesthetic,” which Baumgarten defined as the science of grasping “the unity in multiplicity of sensible qualities.”

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