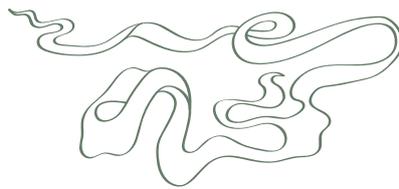


A World Without Smell

A visual exploration of an olfactory issue



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Art and Design
2019

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design.

Abstract

A world where smell doesn't exist. This is the reality for some people, including myself, who lack the ability to smell. However, in our culture, the sense of smell is undervalued, overshadowed by the visual. There are few words to describe smell, and there is a similarly small visual vocabulary for alluding to this highly elusive sense. Through the use of illustrated narrative, this research project aims to create more nuanced ways of visualising smell, as well as communicating and highlighting the effects of losing it. The culmination of this research project comes in the form of a graphic novel called *Quincala*, which imagines a world where most people are unaware of smell. The illustrations, therefore, both convey a narrative and create a way of visualising a sense that most of the characters cannot "see". The narrative itself follows the protagonist, Drew's discovery of this new sense and shows her transforming the way she perceives the world. Drew's journey is thus reflective of my own auto-ethnographic journey through this research project.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kauri', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Kauri Finlay

October 8, 2019

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors Peter Gilderdale and Caroline Powley. Their insightful guidance, knowledge, and encouragement has been phenomenal throughout this research project.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their endless patience and support.

Introduction

A world where smell doesn't exist. Some people, including myself, are unable to access the olfactory dimension. Medically, having no sense of smell is called Anosmia. The sense of smell is one of the least valued of the senses, even though it is ubiquitous. Through this project, I explore the role of the sense of smell in our lives and how one's life is affected by being without it. Through the use of illustrated narrative, I explored what it means to be unable to access a sensory dimension. Furthermore, I visualised my imagined interpretation of smell. To explain the development of this project, the exegesis has been divided into five chapters: contextual review, design process, and reflection. The first chapter provides historical, theoretical and artistic perspectives surrounding the sense of smell. The second chapter explains the methodologies and methods employed in the design process. The third chapter discusses the design processes undertaken in the development of this project. The fourth chapter includes critical commentary of design decisions that were made. The final chapter presents the reflection and conclusion of my research journey.

Quincala is set in a world where most people cannot smell. Their lives there differ in many ways from our current world – people are not bothered by stench, everyone has guide dogs that detect harmful smells, gas and smoke detectors are purchased by the dozen, personal hygiene is not so rigorous, music becomes more important, and supermarkets are organised by the five basic tastes. Yet, smell is present, and the book gives smell visual agency, as it weaves its way into the plot, thereby allowing me to explore my research question:

How can the inability to access a sensory dimension be visualised, through illustrated narrative, to convey the effects of living without your sense of smell?

Chapter 1: Contextual Review

1.1 The Sense of Smell

The sense of smell has long been one of the least valued senses, forever living in the shadow of the visual. The nose is a powerful tool that has the ability to conjure memories, influence emotions, give flavour to food, and it is also a statement of who one is.¹ Historically, the sense of smell has been on a journey, both positive and negative. In the past, the people of the ancient world enjoyed aromas in ways we cannot imagine. Their lives were richly scented. The rituals involving smell were expansive – perfumed dinner parties, perfumed food, perfumed walls and floors, complete olfactory wardrobes – to name but a few.² The cities and towns of the ancient world offered a richer mixture of odours and scents than in our modern world. This provided people with the ability to conceptualise their environments by smell. During the enlightenment period, there was a shift towards a “civilised and humane society which prioritised the noble senses of sight and hearing”.³ The senses of smell and touch were seen as feminine or “witchlike”, while sight and hearing were considered the rational masculine senses.⁴ Freud suggested that when humans developed a standing posture, sight came to replace smell as the dominant sense.⁵ Over time, eye replaced nose and stench was conquered. Our modern society lacks olfactory diversity as odours are suppressed and deodorised. We go to great lengths to mask odours. Paolo Pelosi even proposed that the ability to smell is a luxury and not a necessity as it is not vital for survival and reproduction.⁶

Noses, the facilitators of smelling, take centre stage on the human face. However, the sense of smell has found itself undervalued. This is not to say that it is more important than any of the other senses, but could it not be considered of equal importance? Perhaps it is not until a person loses their ability to smell, as I have, that they begin to truly appreciate it. Scientific research surrounding the subject of the loss of a sense of smell is slowly increasing; however, to the best of my knowledge, the visual representations of this loss are very few and far between. The documentary, *Anosmia*, is the most closely aligned research project to my own. It compellingly portrays what it is like to live in an odourless world.⁷ The director, Jacob LaMendola, lost his sense of smell when he was a child.

1. Synott, Anthony. “A Sociology of Smell”. *Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology* 28, no. 4 (1991): 438.
2. Classen, Constance., Howes, David., Synott, Anthony. *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*. London: Routledge, 1994, 13.
3. Henshaw, Victoria. *Urban Smellscapes Understanding and Designing City Smell environments*. New York: Routledge, 2013, 10.
4. *Ibid*, 10.
5. Synott, Anthony, 440.
6. Pelosi, Paolo. *On the Scent A Journey Through the Science of Smell*: Oxford University Press, 2016, 16.
7. “Anosmia”. Directed by Jacob LaMendola. France, 2012.

The senses merge and intertwine to create our own individual, unique perceptions of the world. These senses are commonly separated into five basic sensory groups: smell, hearing, taste, touch, and sight (although there are in fact more human senses).⁸ However, each sense does not operate independently. The senses mutually affect one another. There are many examples of interaction between senses, such as the relationship between smell and music and the way specific odour qualities are linked to different musical instruments.⁹ Furthermore, by reducing one sense, others heighten to make up for the loss. For example, in a dark room, you will become more reliant on your sense of touch, hearing and possibly smell. So, if you cannot smell, how do the other senses counteract this loss? This will be discussed more fully in the following chapter; however, put simply, all our senses help us to “see” the world. Barbara Apel, a former fine jewellery designer who is blind, explained that smell, touch, hearing, and taste are all ways in which we “see” the world.¹⁰ She proposed that “each is an option – some use one best, others have strength in another”.¹¹ This project has many contradicting and conflicting elements in relation to the senses. Although its focus is on highlighting the importance of the sense of smell, or the lack thereof, it is executed visually. The visual can be used effectively to cater to our other senses such as touch. The textures of places can be captured by visual means,¹² so my project aims to show that illustration can do the same for smell. The senses function as a collective. Therefore, I intend to show that it is possible to speak across them.

8. Lupton, Ellen., Lipps, Andrea. *The Senses : Design Beyond Vision*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2018.
9. Sell, Charles S. *Chemistry and the Sense of Smell*. New Jersey, United States: Wiley, 2014, 251.
10. Lupton, Ellen., Lipps, Andrea., 188.
11. *Ibid.*, 188.
12. Sparkes, Andrew C. *Seeking the Senses in Physical Culture*. Taylor & Francis, 2017, 123.

1.2 Anosmia

Anosmia is the condition in which an individual's sense of smell is lost, whether it be totally or partially.¹³ I categorised what I consider to be the three most affected aspects of an anosmic's life, which relate to people, food and environments.

Every individual has their own olfactory wardrobe – this is made up of your own natural body odour, or the perfume you apply. Smell can unconsciously affect cognitive judgement. For example, odour can affect your judgement of a person's physical attractiveness.¹⁴ I gather that the shared smell between two people is also a very intimate experience. For an anosmic, this level of connection does not exist. Furthermore, your own personal body odour becomes a constant worry. Others around you are accessing information about yourself that you do not know. Scientist, Dr Karl L. Wuensch, gained a unique perspective on the olfactory sense when he lost and recovered his sense of smell. Wuensch was asked what smell he missed most and he said the smell of people.¹⁵ A study of patients with olfactory defects discovered that people who cannot smell or have a weaker sense of smell tend to be anti-social.¹⁶ Smell is a form of information about another individual, so without it you are missing a communication channel.

Smell is responsible for much of the pleasure we get from eating. Taste and smell are intimately connected as they combine to create flavour. Nearly 80% of flavours from food come from smells in the nasal cavity.¹⁷ Most people have experienced a loss of flavour in food when experiencing a cold. An anosmic can only detect the basic tastes of sweet, sour, umami and bitter. People with anosmia enhance their eating experiences by adding more spices, salt and pepper, condiments or experiencing the texture of the food. The "best before" dates also become more crucial as detection of spoilt food can be an issue without your sense of smell.

13. Pelosi, Paolo, 16.

14. Sell, Charles S., 251.

15. Choi, Nak-Eon., Han, Jung H. *How Flavor Works*. 1 ed. *The Science of Taste and Aroma*. New Jersey, United States: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015, 151.

16. *Ibid*, 151.

17. *Ibid*, 151.

Smell is also a survival device that allows us to identify danger through olfaction.¹⁸ During sleep, our sense of smell is dormant, which is why fire alarms are installed near bedrooms. For an anosmic, their sense of smell is constantly dormant, so they are in danger of missing crucial warning signs. The boundaries of an environment also differ. An anosmic's experience is bounded by what they can see and hear, whereas an olfactory-enabled person can use smell to reach beyond these boundaries. Essentially, the olfactory-enabled are able to "see" through walls. Smell also increases your temporal horizon between past and present. Places have characteristic odours that, through memory associations, help an individual to identify and remember them.¹⁹

18. Pelosi, Paolo, 6.
19. Henshaw, Victoria, 36.

1.3 Visualising Smell

The sense of smell is often described as the most mysterious or the least understood of our senses.²⁰ It is invisible in the sense that you cannot see smell. It is ambiguous in the sense that it is difficult to express and communicate about it. It is an involuntary sense and it cannot be turned off or controlled. The sense of smell is thus a “highly elusive phenomenon”²¹ In Western language, smell is described entirely in euphemisms. When we describe a smell, according to Charles Sell, “it is always in relation to other things that elicit a similar mental impression”.²² Compared to the other senses, which all have their own vocabulary, smell stands alone. The sense of smell has no dedicated set of words to describe odours. However, some other cultures, such as hunter-gatherer societies, have lexicons of verbs of olfaction that are used to describe a variety of odours.²³ For example, the Jahai, a group of hunter-gatherers who live off the land in the forests of Malaysia, have over a dozen basic smell words.²⁴ In our ocular-centric Western world, we are less reliant on our sense of smell and consequently do not feel that words that describe odours are a necessity. Sissel Tolaas, a scent designer, artist and researcher, has reacted to this absence of smell vocabulary.²⁵ Tolaas has created the Nasalo Lexicon, a dictionary of dedicated smell words, (fig. 1). Quincala, the title of my book, is a fantasy word from the Nasalo lexicon, which means “smelly” or “stinking”.²⁶

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the author due to copyright issues

Figure 1. Tolaas, Sissel. 2011. Nasalo Lexicon.

20. Sell, Charles S, 19.
21. Classen, Constance., Howes, David., Synott, Anthony, 10.
22. Sell, Charles S, 19.
23. Majid, Asifa., Burenhuit, Niclas. “Odors Are Expressible in Language, as Long as You Speak the Right Language.” *Cognition* 130, no. 2 (2014): 267.
24. Ibid, 267.
25. Lupton, Ellen., Lipps, Andrea, 110.
26. Tolaas, Sissel. “An Alphabet

Given this lack of linguistic precision, visualising the sense of smell is a challenging and relatively uncharted area of exploration. If we consider the typical visualisation of smell, images of wafty plumes of air predominate. Cartoons typically depict smell as being a powerful stream of air that literally lifts you off the ground and pulls you to the source (fig. 2). This is the “follow your nose” notion. But there are some alternative approaches. Kate McLean created *Smellmap: Amsterdam*, which is a series of artworks that explores a person’s interpretation of place through their sense of smell. These artworks are intended to momentarily place greater importance on the olfactory over the visual.²⁷ McLean also creates smell sketches, which translate her experience with different odours into paintings of varying shapes, textures, and colours (fig. 3). From a scientific perspective, there are examples of a clear depiction of an odour. A lab in Colorado created a smellscape, which visualised odour in the form of a spectacular underwater blaze (fig. 4). However, I intend to show that there is potential to visualise smell while taking into consideration more than just its physical navigation through an environment. The emotions and experiences associated with a smell also need to be considered when illustratively visualising it. However, such visualisation will always be subjective. The way every individual person perceives the world differs. Therefore, the challenge is developing a visual language for smell which will, in some ways, bridge the inconsistencies of everyone’s perceptions.

27. McLean, Kate. “Smellmap: Amsterdam – Olfactory Art and Smell Visualization”. *MIT Press Journals* 50, no. 1 (2017): 92.

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Figure 2. Disney, 1941. *The Little Whirlwind*.

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Figure 3. McLean, Kate. 2014. *Smell Sketches*

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Figure 4. Gill, Brian. 2016. *What a smell looks like*.

Chapter 2: Methodology & Methods

My inability to smell is what triggered my investigation into what it means to be unable to access a sensory dimension. Autoethnographic research became my guiding methodology for exploring this area. Through unpacking my own personal experience with anosmia, I was able to gain a greater understanding of this area of focus. The autoethnographic framework requires the researcher to gather personal experiences as data to describe, analyse and understand cultural experience in a written format.²⁸

Although initially I planned to use only autoethnographic research, I realised there were a few issues with this chosen methodology. My research project is an illustrated narrative rather than a written format. Autoethnography is appropriate for the research phase of my project as it allows me to analyse and interpret my own personal experiences with anosmia. However, it falls short in regards to experimentation, development and synthesis of my project. Therefore, a mixed methodology approach was adapted, using both autoethnography and practice-based action research.

The final creative form of my project is a graphic novel; the traditional action research framework has been adapted to work within a graphic novel context. Action research requires an iterative cycle of planning > acting > observing > reflecting.²⁹ It is suggested that at the end of a single cycle, a final form is created, tested, reflected and revised, which leads you to begin the process again. However, in the development of a graphic novel, the process functions in stages, where you develop a concept, write out the story, design your characters, storyboard, and finally, illustrate your final panels. I proposed that my iterative cycles would operate in macrocycles within each stage (fig. 5). The stages were categorised as, conceptual exploration, plot development, rhythm and flow, and final illustrations. The visualisation of smell developed alongside these stages.

It is human nature to understand the world through narratives. Narratives are found in every human culture around the world and most of us are introduced to narratives very early in childhood.³⁰ Narrative helps us to make sense and meaning of our experiences. Here, the use

28. Chang, Heewon. *Autoethnography as Method*. Vol. 1: Routledge, 2008.

29. Edwards, Claudia., Willis, Jerry W. *Action Research: Models, Methods, and Examples*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2014.

30. Thomas, Bronwen. *Narrative the basics*. London ; New York: Routledge 2015, 15.

of a fictional narrative acts as a safety barrier behind which I can share my unique perception of the world. The idea that we make sense of the world through narratives is reinforced by the philosopher, Marta Taffala. She is also anosmic and explored her own journey with the inability to smell through a written fictional narrative.³¹ The decision to create an illustrated narrative as my final artefact, rather than some kind of exploratory artwork, could perhaps be considered limiting. However, the French literary movement, Oulipo, believed that implementing formal constraints heightened creativity.³² Methodologically, the constraints of working within the visual narrative form are intended to force me to explore interesting and unexpected avenues of visualisation. My methods for doing this were a sensory journal, visual journal, scripting, immersion and storyboarding. These are, however, so embedded in my design process that I have chosen to discuss them in the following chapter.

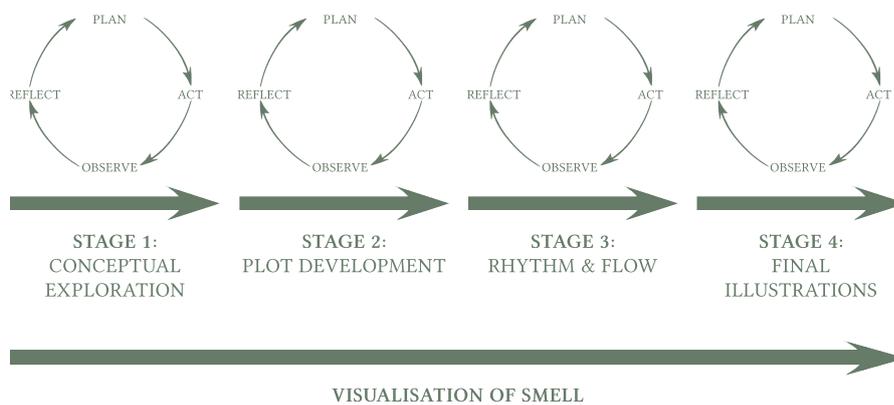


Figure 5. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Diagram of my iterative cycles*.

31. Taffala, Marta. "A World without the Olfactory Dimension". *The Anatomical Record* 296, no. 9 (2013): 1290.
32. Kurt, James. "The Beginning of Oulipo? An Attempt to Rediscover a Movement". *Textual Practice* 29, no. 5 (2015): 885-903.

Chapter 3: Design Process

3.1 Study of Self

Autoethnographic research can be conducted in different ways, but I chose to use a “sensory journal”. Journaling is an established method and other researchers utilised visual journals;³³ however, I proposed a journal that would explore my sensory reactions to the world. The sensory journal became my tool for understanding my sensory experiences in domestic environments. I would sit down with my watercolour paints, a pen and my journal and document my experiences. During each session, I illustrated a scene from the environment and while doing so, I became attuned to all that was happening around me. This forced me to spend an extended period of time in each environment. Initially, I was attempting to dismantle my sensory experiences into sight, touch, taste, sound, and trying to abstract outwards to smell (fig. 6). I was anticipating that this would assist me in understanding my unique perception of the world, and the role of each of my senses. I documented the sounds, sights, feelings, and when appropriate, tastes, that I was experiencing. However, as my research project developed, the sensory journal became less formatted. It also became a place where I could document and explore my second-hand interactions with smell, how my other senses counteracted missing a sense, and my evolving perception of my anosmia.

The inability to access a sensory dimension of information heightens and enhances the importance of the senses you do have. Through my sensory journal, I discovered that for me, touch and sound act as substitutes for smell. Touch delivers “full-bodied impressions of places and things”.³⁴ Touch is important for all humans no matter what their sensory capabilities are. Touch allows me to connect with people and environments in a way that sight does not. It brings me closer to my surroundings. Through touch, I am able to develop a level of intimacy with both people and place that the olfactory-enabled might achieve through smell. Additionally, while eating, the texture of food is a huge part of the enjoyment of eating (as highlighted previously). In *Quincala*, the main character Drew’s love of rice derives from my own love of its texture. Sound shares many similar qualities to smell in relation to both

33. Crouch, Christopher., Pearce, Jane. *Doing Research in Design*. London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012, 82.

34. Lupton, Ellen., Lipps, Andrea, 38.

memory and atmosphere. During one of my sensory journal sessions, I was sitting in a café noting down the sensory experiences occurring around me when I heard a song playing that I recognised (fig. 7). This brought a memory to the forefront of my mind. Smell similarly has the ability to transport a person to a past event, bringing “the experience to the present through its associated smellscape”³⁵ This associative power of smell can be seen in fictional literature when describing recollections triggered by odours. I discovered that sound also has the ability to take you back in time. Without my sense of smell, the sounds I hear act as my bridge to past events. Sound is also akin to smell as it is capable of generating an atmosphere and creates the sensation of being enveloped.

Through this research project, my perception of anosmia has evolved. The sensory journal, in conjunction with a deeper understanding of my condition, altered my perspective. Originally, my perspective of anosmia was highly negative. I felt that I was missing something and saw my inability to smell as a loss. Now I recognise that it is just a difference – my own unique way of “seeing” the world. The work I was producing began to reflect my outlook on anosmia. I had been creating illustrations that appeared dull and lifeless. It became imperative for me to transform my perspective and remind myself that the effects of anosmia are not all negative. When I am experiencing an environment, it can be both less beautiful and less ugly without a sense of smell.

35. Henshaw, Victoria, 36.



Figure 6. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Pages from my sensory journal.

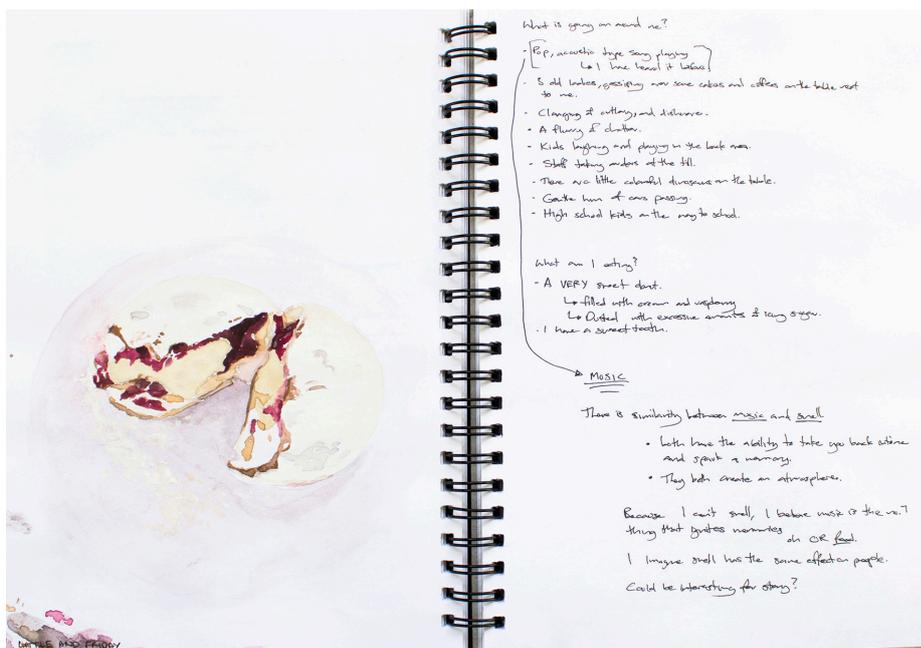


Figure 7. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Pages from my sensory journal.

3.2 Creative Practice

Conceptual Exploration

The conceptual exploration of my narrative began by venturing down many different avenues. The main method used in conceptual exploration was a reflective journal. A reflective journal is an “off-loading” device where I can analyse, reflect and expand on ideas.³⁶ It created transparency in the research process and I was able to explore various different concepts at one time. Two of the more developed avenues I explored were *The Girl in the Bubble* and *The Smell Store*.

Concept 1: The Girl in the Bubble

Marta Taffala explained that living without a sense of smell can make you to feel like a distant spectator, experiencing the world from behind glass. This description led me to explore the concept of *The Girl in the Bubble* (fig. 8 and 9). *The Girl in the Bubble* was essentially a character design experiment that aimed to visualise the disconnection felt by those who are anosmic. The girl lives in her own world, physically separated from the rest of the world by a space-like helmet. Having developed this concept, upon reflection, I realised that the helmet was problematic as it also inhibited her other senses and not just smell.



Figure 8. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *The Girl in the Bubble*.

36. Gray, Carole., Malins, Julian. *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design*. England: Routledge, 2004, 58.



Figure 9. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *The Girl in the Bubble* Digital Illustration.

Concept 2: The Smell Store

The Smell Store explored visualising smell as a tangible object. In the visual novella (*In A Sense*) *Lost & Found*,³⁸ Roman Muradov explores the theme of loss by following the protagonist's journey to find her stolen innocence (fig. 10). Muradov gives form to the quality of innocence by treating it as a tangible object. *The Smell Store* is a storyline concept that explored the possibility of a society that revolved around the sense of smell (fig. 11). In the fictional store, everyday scents would be sold, such as bacon frying, after rain, and freshly baked bread. It is a stripped back store, which is solely focused on smell. Influence for this concept derived from the rigorous smell rituals of the ancient world.³⁹ However, this concept was also dismissed after I became aware that a store similar to this already exists, which would give the narrative unintended associations.

Figure 10. Muradov, Roman. 2014. (*In a Sense*) *Lost and Found*.

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Figure 11. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *The Smell Store*.

38. Muradov, Roman. (*In a Sense*) *Lost and Found*. London: Nobrow Ltd, 2014.
39. Classen, Constance., Howes, David., Synott, Anthony, 13.

Although the concepts were not developed further into my final book, these initial iterations were instrumental in guiding me towards my final concept. After analysing, and reflecting on these concepts, it became apparent that it was time to return to the planning stage of the cycle. At the core of my research question lay the issue of how you communicate absence. This led to an exploration involving subtraction in which stereotypical representations of smell were subtracted from an image, leaving only blank white space where the smell should be (fig. 12). This was a derivative of Jhan Jhuang-Syuan's work, *The Sense of Loss* (fig. 13). Jhan Jhuang-Syuan's work features white areas that represent the sense of deprivation and loss. The subtracted smell forms in my graphic novel are influenced by this concept.

Furthermore, after unpacking my research data, three key focal points emerged – the invisible ambiguous nature of smell, how an anosmic world feels complete, and the subtle effects of anosmia. Subsequently, I developed the concept of a parallel world where the ability to smell is a rare capability. *Figure 14* shows an early visual exploration of a world without smell, with the advertisement of a gas detector being subtly integrated into the scene.

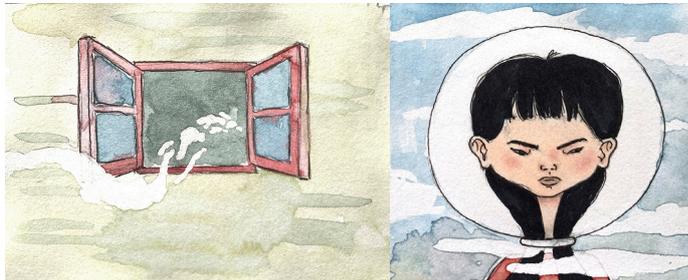


Figure 12. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimenting with subtracted smell forms*.

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Figure 13. Jhuang-Syuan, Jhan. 2014. *The Sense of Loss*.



Figure 14. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Early digital illustration of a world without smell.*

Plot Development

Developing an engaging plot required many iterative cycles. Scripting was the main method of plot development I utilised (fig. 15). Scripting is a method used by graphic novel and comic artists in order to efficiently and effectively convey the story.⁴⁰ Typically, a “writer” will create a script that will communicate the story to the “artist”. In this instance, I am both the writer and the artist. Consequently, scripting was a tool that allowed partially formed ideas to be expressed and then reflected on. Through iteration, a final narrative was developed.

The narrative I developed is based on the traditional three-act structure used in films.⁴¹ The first act sets the scene for the story, introduces the protagonist and the secondary character, and sets up the dramatic premise. The second act develops that story and presents the characters with a conflict. In the third act, the mystery is solved.

The narrative is intended to be read with the reader being unaware of the context of the story. The first act of the narrative could be mistaken for a slice-of-life view of our current world. You must look closely – the effects and differences of a world without smell are very subtle. For example, Drew’s guide dog informing her that her milk is off or Drew travelling on a busy train being unbothered by the stench of the man next to her. To an unknowing eye, you would not know if someone is anosmic. It is not until the reader is confronted with the circus flyer for “The Girl with the 5th Sense” that they begin to get an inkling for what is going on.

40. Kneece, Mark. *The Art of Comic Book Writing*. SCAD, 2015.

41. Brutsch, Matthias. “The Three-Act Structure: Myth or Magical Formula?” *Journal of Screenwriting* 6, no. 3 (2015), 302.

Act I

The first act of the narrative introduces the reader to the protagonist, Drew, and her world without smell. It is intended to help the reader gain an insight into Drew's world. It then disrupts the pattern of Drew's existence by introducing a circus performer named Esther who, very unusually for Drew's world, is able to smell. Paolo Pelosi explained that the human ability to smell is not necessary for survival and reproduction. Consequently, olfactory defects are becoming more commonplace.⁴² This theory provided the starting point for a narrative set in a world where humans slowly adapted into beings who no longer have a sense of smell – everyone is nose blind. Based on a foundation of research and personal experience, I imagined all the ways in which the world would be different if no one could smell (fig. 16). The most important were selected. These included smell guide dogs, gas and smoke detectors being more crucial, supermarkets organised by the five basic tastes, and less rigorous personal hygiene regimes. In this world, stench is free to flourish.



Figure 16. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Idea generation for a world without smell.*

42. Pelosi, Paolo, 16.

My research had highlighted that the words other people use to discuss smell are what makes an anosmic aware of their shortcoming. Therefore, the seamless introduction of a character who could smell was crucial to the narrative. Through scripting, I explored ways to create such a character. The concept selected for further development was a circus coming to town to disrupt the residents' peaceful existence. The town where Drew lives is a seaside village reminiscent of Devonport – the place where I grew up. A circus arriving here creates quite an impression, especially when its feature act is Esther, The Girl with the 5th Sense.

The circus itself is intended to put the sense of smell on a pedestal. Traditionally, the circus features spectacles of human abilities and skill.⁴³ From an anosmic perspective, the sense of smell is remarkable. Turning the ability to smell into a circus act allows the reader to momentarily perceive the world through an anosmic's eyes. As a result, the underappreciated sense of smell has its moment to shine – shaping it into something to be admired. There is also a nostalgic element to the circus with most of us having childhood memories of going to the circus.

Act II

The second act sets the trajectory of the narrative. One possible trajectory I considered was the olfactory-enabled character discovering something strange or sinister about the anosmic character (fig. 17). This might be something that has gone undiscovered due to it being hidden from sight and was only unearthed because of the smell. I envisioned this discovery would be made right at the end of the narrative and left unresolved. However, due to the three-act structure of narratives, it seemed unwise to have an unresolved conflict. The final trajectory of the second act follows Drew and Esther's developing friendship and the discovery of a mysterious smell.

Shortly following Drew's experience witnessing Esther perform, the two characters have their first encounter. The narrative follows their developing friendship and the discoveries they make about their unique individual perceptions of the world. This second act of the narrative has two key scenes – the underwater scene and the smell discovery scene. In the underwater scene, Drew and Esther go swimming. Although a seemingly regular activity, this scene is crucial to the narrative. Humans do not belong underwater and their sensorium's interpretation of an

43. McPherson, Douglas. *Circus Mania The Ultimate Book For Anyone Who Dreamed of Running Away to the Circus*. London, United Kingdom: Peter Owen Publishers, 2012.

environment differs greatly underwater.⁴⁴ Without additional apparatus, the only sense that functions well underwater is touch. The underwater scene signals a sense of equality between Drew and Esther's sensory abilities – they are both out of their depths and neither can smell. Prior to this scene, their narratives unfold in parallel, but separately. Following this scene, they start to appear in the same panels. The smell discovery scene follows Drew and Esther as they unearth the source of a mysterious odour. On one of Drew and Esther's walks, Esther detects an odour creeping out from under a door on the side of an old building. A couple of days later, Esther encounters the odour again. They venture down a dark hallway and they must rely on each other and their senses other than sight. The journey to the smell source is intended to be symbolic of the way we sense the world together and are not lone entities.

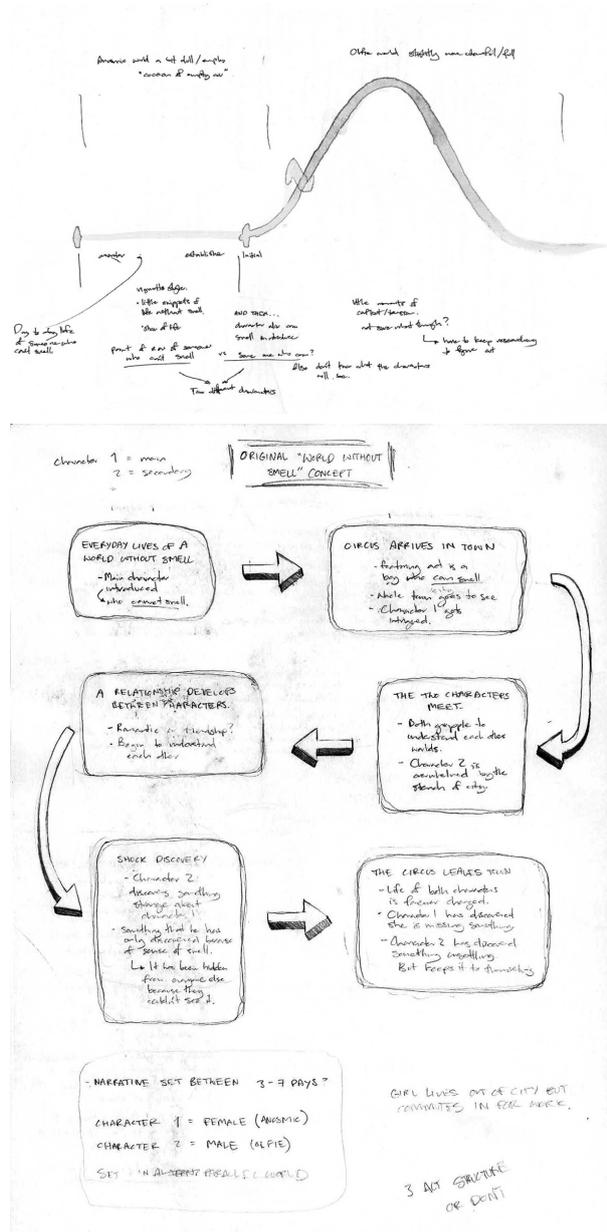


Figure 17. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Early narrative development page from my visual journal.

44. Merchant, Stephanie. "The Body and the Senses: Visual Methods, Videography and the Submarine Sensorium". *Body & Society* 17, no. 1 (2011): 57.

Act III

The third act remained unfinished for a long time, while I tested various scenarios. It was important that this act worked effectively as it is the culmination of preceding events, where the smell source is finally revealed. Originally, due to preconceptions around smell, I could only envision morbid explanations for the odour that Esther encounters. However, I eventually realised that this was too obvious, and also played into my negative associations around anosmia. Therefore, I intentionally presented the door that suppresses the odour in an ominous way to mislead the reader. Instead, I made the smell source a room full of scented candles – a lighthouse of smell. When Drew and Esther step into the room, they are engulfed by the beauty and warmth in the room. Although what led them to the room was the smell, reaching the lighthouse of smell involved a multisensory journey. A person with an impaired sense is not necessarily incomplete or flawed. Instead, their other senses make up for the loss and fill the void. In the lighthouse of smell, they find a book called *Quincala*. The book contains an entire vocabulary of smell words – a book of smell. The lighthouse of smell hints at a religious community called *Quincala*, who through the use of odour, lure other olfactory-enabled people. Fragrance of incense are deeply ingrained in church rituals as, for many, they signify the presence of a god.⁴⁵

45. Robinson, Katelynn. *The Sense of Smell in the Middle Ages*. Studies in Medieval History and Culture. London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019, 1.

Visualising of Smell

Smell curls, plumes, winds and disperses in the air. Christophe Laudamiel, a French perfumer, describes smell as an architectural form.⁴⁶ It envelops and surrounds us. Smell manoeuvres and disperses through the air around us. Odour molecules are swept around in the current of the turbulent, flow of air. Scientist discovered that “odours creep, moving less like a puff of cumulus cloud and more like the rolling coils of thick cigar smoke”.⁴⁷ This allows us to understand the way in which an odour moves through the air, but is less helpful in regards to colour associations and the visual forms of smell – which are subjective.

Immersion

My exploration into the visualisation of smell began with immersion. The sensory journal was the tool that assisted this immersion phase. It not only provided me with a place to understand my sensory experiences, but it also allowed me to form an understanding of how I perceive the sense of smell. I began to imagine the odours that could potentially be smelt around me, and I visualised this through the use of watercolour paint (fig. 18). My visualisation of smell then evolved into focusing on my inability to access a sensory dimension (fig. 19). I visualised myself in the centre with my other senses, with a barrier surrounding me that wouldn't let odours in. As the documentation in my sensory journal advanced, I began to explore analogies between my senses – for example smell and taste, which are intimately entangled and intertwine to create flavour. They are both chemo-sensations and are equally evasive and difficult to visualise.⁴⁸ I experimented with visualising taste, a sense I do have, to help me to visualise smell (fig. 20 and 21). I created forms with watercolour and assigned colours to each taste. Coloured taste is a form of synaesthesia.⁴⁹

46. Lupton, Ellen., Lipps, Andrea, 114.

47. Ibid, 115.

48. Choi, Nak-Eon., Han, Jung H.

49. Cytowic, Richard E, 67.



Figure 18. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Sensory Journal*.



Figure 19. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Sensory Journal*.

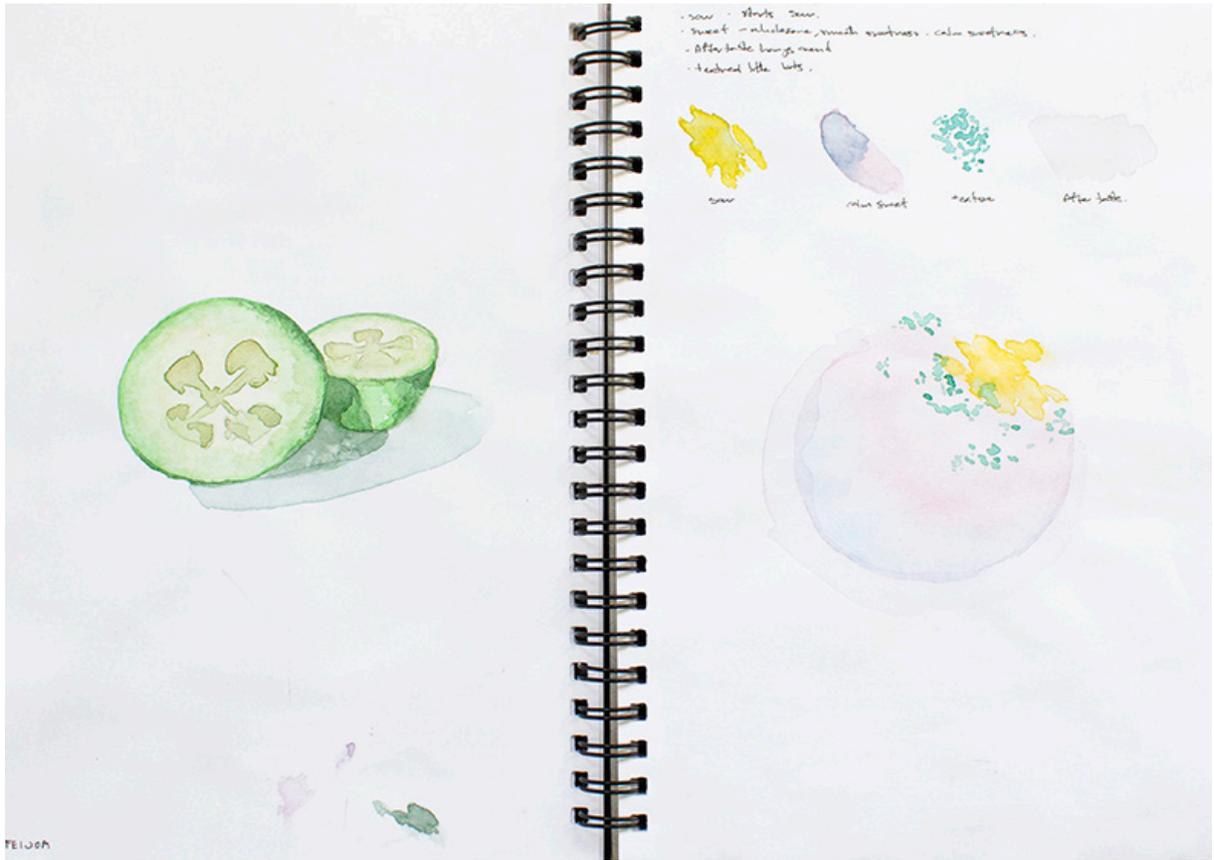


Figure 20. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Visualising the taste of a feijoa.



Figure 21. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Visualising the taste of tea.

Layers of Smell

Although the visualisation of smell is the key component in this project, developing the narrative was also important. Therefore, I began to explore the visualisation of smell in a graphic novel format. I focused on how the inability to access the sense of smell could be visualised. The exploration first took the form of a basic sequence of panels with “smell information” featured behind them (fig. 22). This communicated how the character could not access a level of information even though she was surrounded by it. The panel borders acted as a physical barrier. To push this idea further, I introduced layers (fig. 23). Smell seemed like a layered phenomenon. Layers would give the reader the ability to remove the layer of smell information and see how the world differs for an anosmic. I also explored visualising the different perspectives of the two characters in my narrative. For example, their parallel perspectives of the same environment (fig. 24 and 25). My analogy of sound and smell is reflected here with Drew relying on her sense of hearing and Esther relying on her sense of smell. The foldaway experimentation (fig. 26) visualised how odours are just out of Drew’s reach and are impossible for her to access. Layers were an effective communication tool; however, it became apparent that due to practical concerns, this approach would not work for the final graphic novel. The page turn of a transparent layer requires the image on this layer to work for both pages either side of it. This would make the graphic novel overly complicated and possibly withdraw from the focus – the smell.

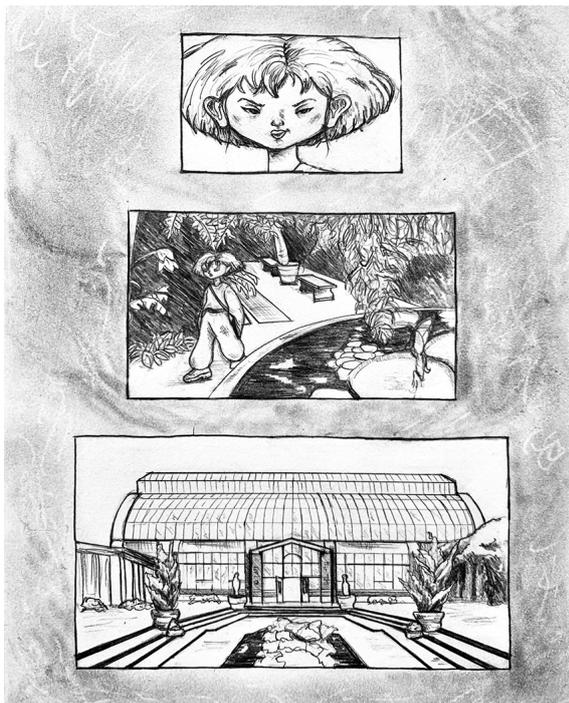


Figure 22. Finlay, Kauri. 2019.
Experimentation with visualising the unattainable odours.

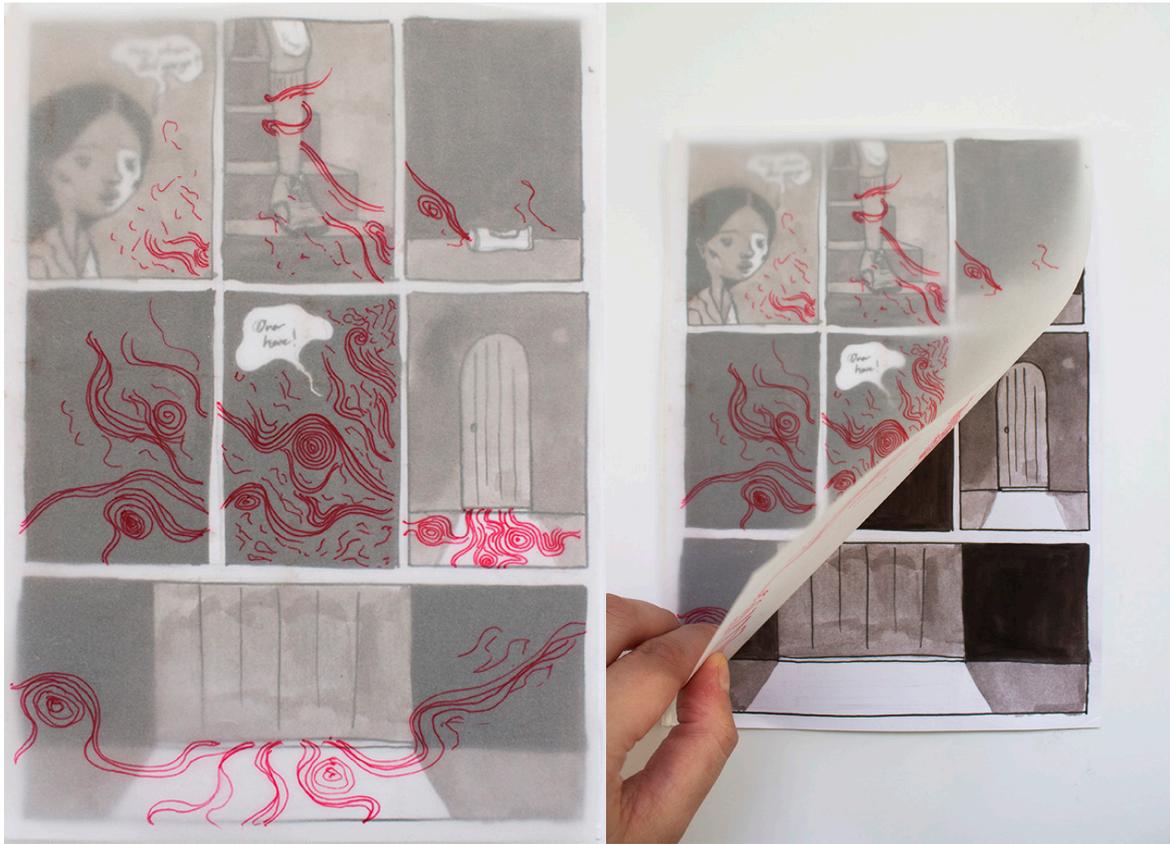


Figure 23. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimentation with smell layers.*



Figure 24. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimentation with parallel perspectives.*

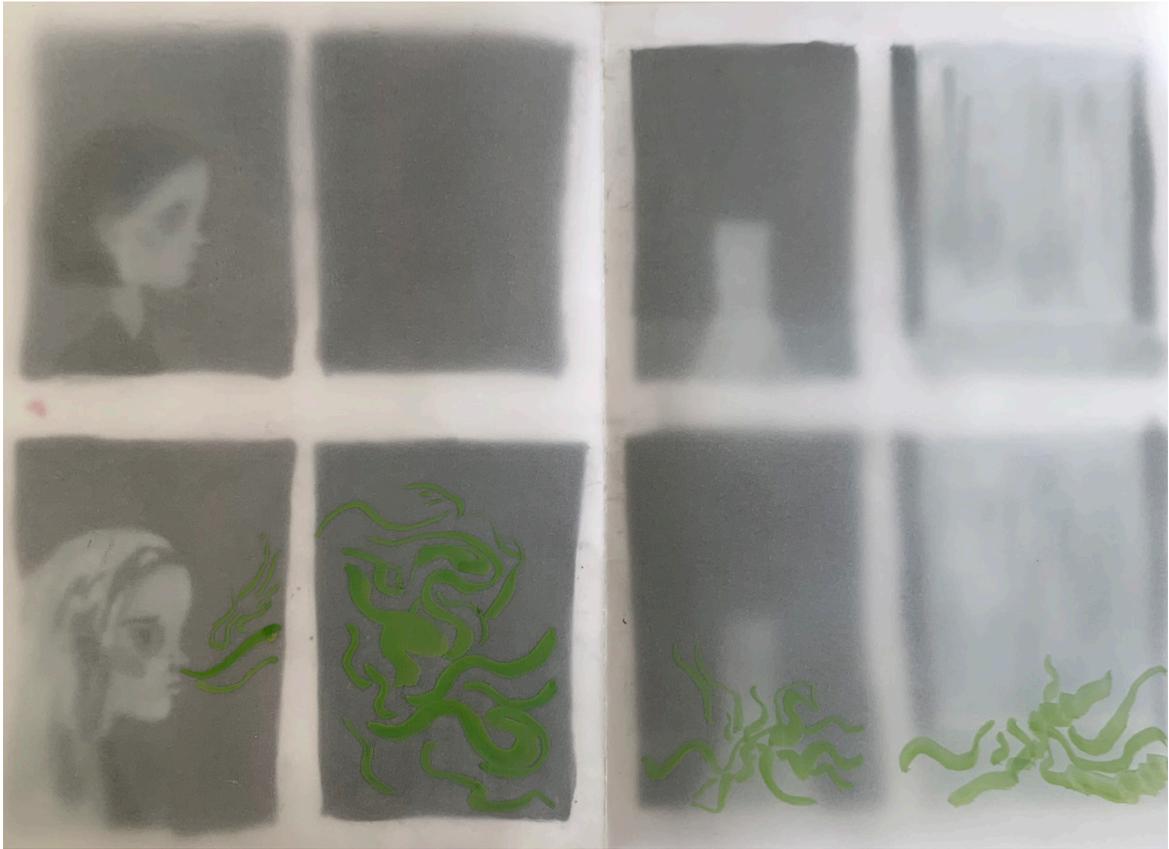


Figure 25. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimentation with parallel perspectives.*



Figure 26. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimentation with smell layers.*

Smell as a Character

"Filaments of smells are like tentacles that stretch and extend before they buckle and fold on top of one another".

- Ellen Lupton, and Andrea Lipps. p.115

Discovering this description of smell was a turning point for me and changed my perception of smell. Smell began to take on a personality – a lively, personified form. I imagined smell being bold, layered tendrils with varying shapes, sizes and colours (fig. 27), rather than being a wafty cloud of air (fig. 28). Layering digital illustration over traditional was another interesting line of exploration (fig. 29 and 30). Their different qualities evoked the way that smell became fabricated and disconnected from the environment, something that in turn evokes my disconnection with this sense.



Figure 27. Finlay, Kauri. 2019.
Visualisation of smell as tendrils.



Figure 28. Finlay, Kauri. 2019.
Wafty smell visualisation.

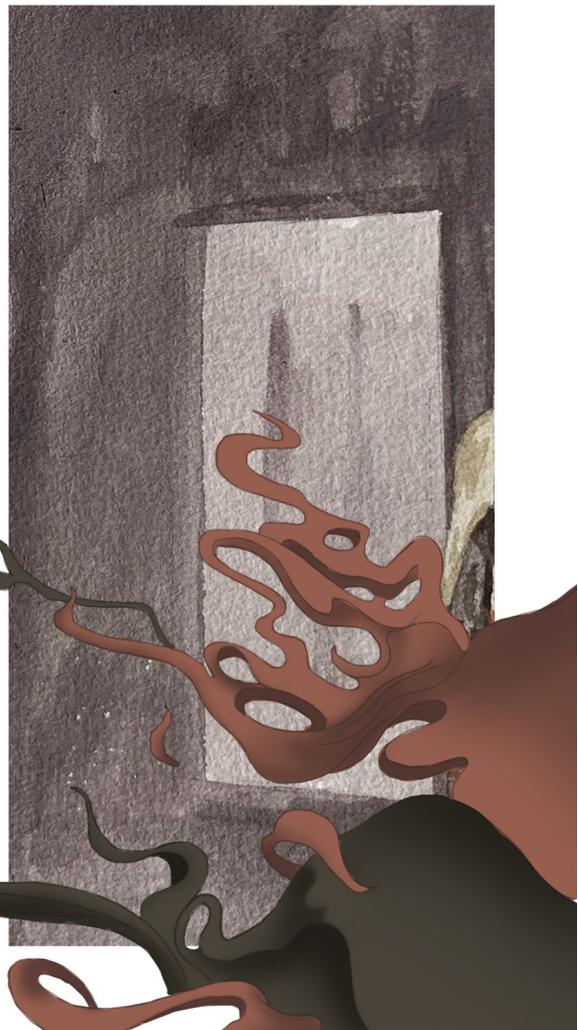


Figure 29. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimentation with digital smell layers over watercolour illustration.*



Figure 30. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experimentation with printed digital smell layers over watercolour illustration.*

Final Visualisation

My final visualisation of smell sees it as its own character in my narrative. This visualisation of smell retains all the qualities of smell – layered, fluid, moving – while bringing in my own subjective view. Smell weaves and winds its way through the panels and becomes an instrumental part of telling the story. The smell tendrils can also be seen entwining with one another throughout the narrative. Tim Ingold has a theory of line and how every living being is a line or a bundle of lines.⁵⁰ In life, these lines tangle with one another and connect each of us. My visualisation of smell explores this concept – smell, and all our senses, are lines that intertwine and connect us. I want to convey that smell is bold and powerful. It varies in colour depending on the smell sources and no two forms are the same. I developed a “smellwheel” (fig. 31) in which I designated a colour for each smell source. The smell sources are broadly categorised as nature, emissions, waste, fragrance and food, and I associate colours with each. The illustrative techniques applied to the visualisation of smell vary depending on the strength of the imagined smell. This aspect of visualisation becomes quite intuitive. For example, in figure 32, I visualised how I imagine the smell process to work. With each consecutive panel, the strength and depth of the odours smelt increases. Additionally, both soft and hard lines can be seen. I imagined different odour strengths and the way they mesh and entangle with one another. They are each their own individual beings but they mesh together to create a whole sensory experience. In addition, the dialogue balloons have the same quality as the smell visualisations. This alludes to my discovery that smell and sound are similar.



Figure 31. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *My smellwheel*.

50. Ingold, Tim. *The Life of Lines*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015, 3.



Figure 32. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *A page from Quincala*.

At the beginning of the narrative, the smell can be seen in the background of the panels to indicate that Drew is unaware of the existence of smell and it is completely out of her reach. As Drew is introduced to Esther, the odours begin to creep into her world. However, they are subtracted from the panels, leaving only blank forms (fig. 33). Drew knows of their existence but they are still inaccessible: a sensory dimension that is beyond her grasp. There are moments in the narrative where the odours breach the borders of the panels but only in Esther's panels. The odours are a part of Esther's world but not Drew's. Through my visualisation of smell, I aimed to create a visual language for this previously "hidden sense".⁵¹ After developing this visual language for smell, there were still issues around how the illustrations and the smell visualisation worked together. This required many iterations to successfully convey both the narrative and the smell.



Figure 33. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Experiments exploring the progression of the smell through a narrative sequence.*

51. Moore, Paul. A. *The Hidden Power of Smell: How Chemicals Influence Our Lives and Behaviour.* United States: Springer, 2015, 12.

Rhythm & Flow

Storyboards were an essential component of developing the rhythm and flow of my narrative. Storyboards are a visual storytelling language.⁵² The focus of storyboards is communication, not the technical skill of the drawing. Therefore, the illustrations were very loose and only contained the necessary details. The early storyboards were highly experimental and explored various compositional elements. The final storyboard was prototyped into a book format to ensure the story read well compositionally.

The narrative I created is what is termed an “illustrated story”.⁵³ This style of graphic storytelling allows the reader time to dwell on the art alone.⁵⁴ This is intended to create a greater immersive, intimate experience for the reader. A graphic novel that does this well is Ben Gijsemans’s, *Hubert*⁵⁵ (fig. 34). The story follows Hubert, a solitary man whose everyday routine consists of visiting art galleries and painting in his apartment. Gijsemans has managed to create a beautiful narrative in which nothing much happens, yet it is nonetheless engaging. By focusing on the small details, it forces the viewer to look closely at each of the illustrations – looking for small subtleties. Similar to Hubert, my narrative is intended to draw you in, while also keeping you at a distance. Additionally, Gijsemans creates a visually engaging rhythm by using repetition and negative space throughout the narrative.

Figure 34. Gijsemans, Ben. 2016.
Hubert.

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the author due to copyright issues

- 52. Jew, Anson. *Professional Storyboarding*. 1 ed. *Rules of Thumb*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012, 14.
- 53. Eisner, Will. *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*. New York: W.W Norton, 2008, 33.
- 54. Ibid, 33.
- 55. Gijsemans, Ben. *Hubert*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2016.

Panel transitions are a fundamental aspect of sequential art and Scott McLeod categorises them into six different types – action-to-action, subject-to-subject, scene-to-scene, aspect-to-aspect, and non-sequitur.⁵⁶ The panel transition that features heavily in my narrative is aspect-to-aspect. In Japanese manga, aspect-to-aspect panel transitions are an integral part of the narrative.⁵⁷ They focus on establishing an idea, mood or sense of place. In Inio Asano's, *Goodnight Punpun*, evidence of the aspect-to-aspect transition can be seen (fig. 35). Asano has communicated the relationship between two characters by focusing on various fragments. The aspect-to-aspect transition is used particularly heavily in the beginning of my narrative when we are first introduced to Drew.

"For in Japan, more than anywhere else, comics are an art of intervals".

- McCloud, 1993, p.81

Figure 35.
Asano, Inio.
2007. *Goodnight
Punpun*.

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the author due to copyright issues

56. McCloud, Scott.
*Understanding Comics:
The Invisible Art*. New York:
Harper Collins, 1993.

57. Johnson-Woods, Toni.
*Manga An Anthology
of Global and Cultural
Perspectives*. London, United
Kingdom: Bloomsbury
Academic & Professional,
2010, 195.

During the early storyboards, compositionally, there was no flow from page to page (fig. 36). It required many iterations to develop a storyboard that had a successful rhythm and flow. Initially, I was thinking of each of my panels as individual illustrations, rather than a collective composition. I was also restricting myself to a rigid format similar to what I had done in my previous graphic novel, *Kenta* (fig. 37). I analysed the works of various manga artists such as Inio Asano, Katsuhiko Otomo, and Hayao Miyazaki. This allowed me to become more experimental with my panel compositions – experimenting with a variety of frame sizes and shapes, and elements that breached the border of the panels (fig. 38).

In the early stages of development, I experimented with the space between panels. However, a fixed and relatively considerable distance between each panel would allow space for the smell to roam. The final grid format used is a 3x3 system of 3 rows and 3 columns. The panels vary in size within this grid format. This grid format is loosely based on Gijsemans's, *Hubert*.⁵⁸ After developing this grid system, I blocked out the panels in watercolour to refine the rhythm and flow of the narrative (fig. 39). After experimenting with different compositions, I prototyped my final storyboard in a book format (fig. 40).



Figure 36. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Early Storyboard of Quincala*.



Figure 37. Finlay, Kauri. 2017. *Kenta*.

58. Gijsemans, Ben.

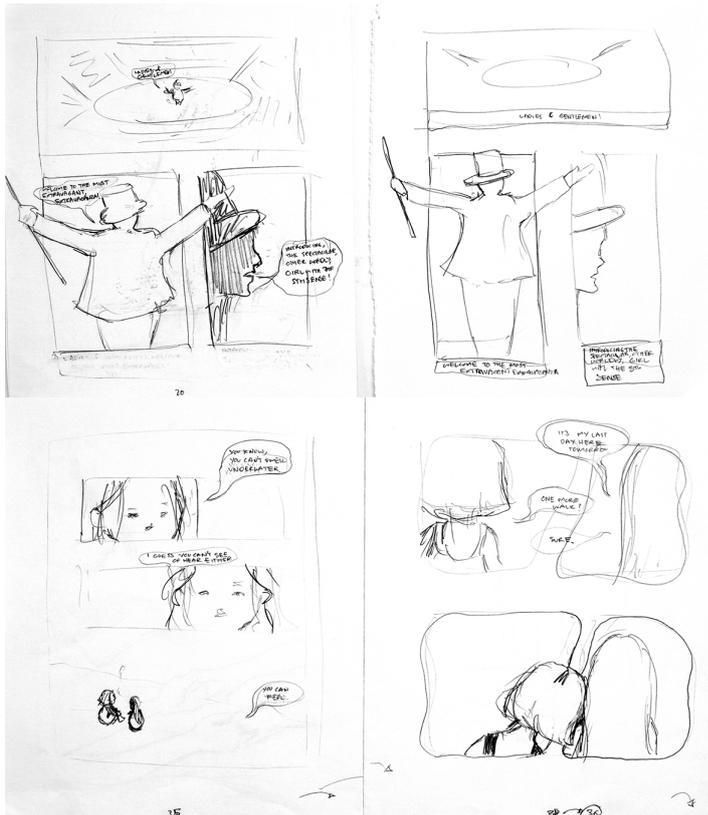


Figure 38. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Storyboard exploration.

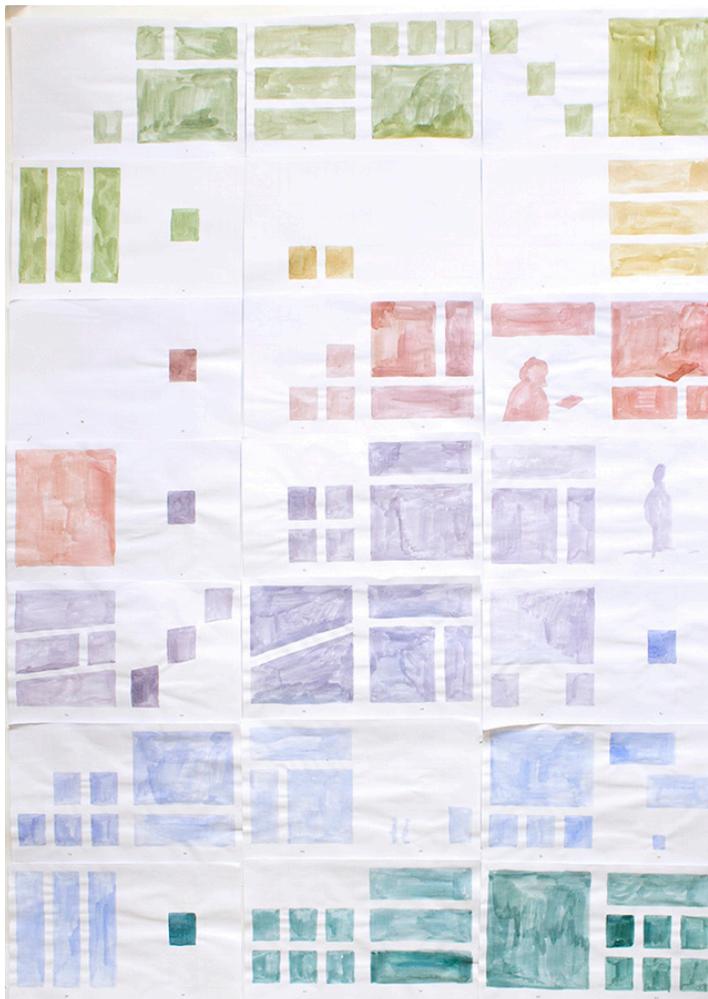


Figure 39. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Developing a rhythm and flow.

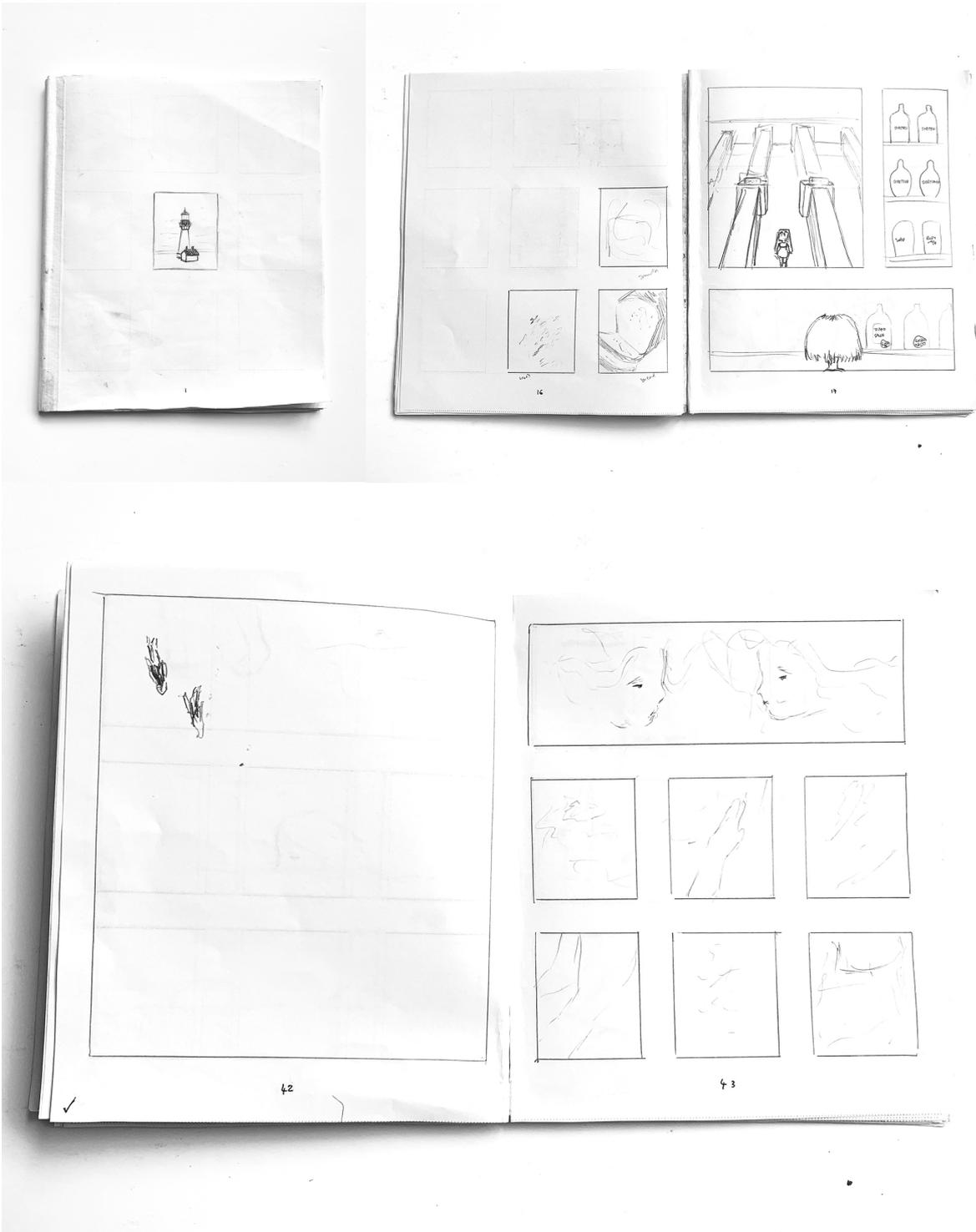


Figure 40. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Final storyboards prototyped into a book format.*

The narrative is broken up by “vignettes” (fig. 41). These provide a small impression of the setting where the following scene takes place. The vignettes also provide the reader with a momentary break from the busier pages in the narrative. The subsequent page features a set of panels containing textures from the setting. To begin with, there is only one texture panel and slowly throughout the narrative they accumulate. This communicates the notion that touch is an instrumental part of an anosmic’s life and throughout Drew’s journey, she begins to realise the importance of her other senses.

The world of smell and the world of Drew are separated by the panel borders. Drew’s world is neatly contained within the panels. The first time we see an element of illustration escaping the panel borders is when Drew picks up the circus flyer. This symbolises the unfamiliar, otherworldly nature of the circus and the Girl with the 5th Sense. Furthermore, the two characters are never featured within the same panel until the underwater scene. Drew and Esther felt as though they belonged in different worlds; however, during the underwater scene they see themselves as being united. Once they emerge from the water, Drew is illustrated leaning on Esther’s shoulder, breaking the panel borders. This is intended to communicate the shift in their perspectives.



Figure 41. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Vignette of Drew's home.*

Chapter 4: Critical Commentary

4.1 Character Design

The character design portion of this graphic novel went beyond just the type of character design done in traditional graphic novels. The visualisation of smell became central to the character design portion of my work since, as it can be seen in the “visualisation of smell” section above, I was essentially creating a character for smell.

Drew

My narrative revolves around a character called Drew (fig.42). Drew is an introverted but curious young adult who lives in a world where no one can smell. She lives in a lighthouse on the waterfront with her Bloodhound called Olfie. Drew works in the city at the fish market and likes to limit her interaction with people to the workplace. She loves to listen to music and is rarely seen without her headphones in. Her favourite food texture is rice. In the early iterations of Drew, I explored various facial structures, hair styles, clothing and body shapes (fig. 43). From the outset, I had an image of a dopey, sad-eyed girl who was very ordinary looking (fig. 44). Originally, Drew had very dark hair (fig. 45); however, I decided that to counteract her overall dull image she needed a vibrant hair colour.



Figure 42. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Drew*.



Figure 43. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Character design of Drew.



Drew?

She is a solitary young adult
 She doesn't have any connections with others.

She's on internet, and also doesn't know how to socialize well.

Lack of connections

She has a terrible memory for things that happened more than a couple of months ago.

She loves to listen to music.

Everyone in the town listens to music. All the time.

Everyone has headphones on.

The music has gotten so loud. All the stores blast music to try get people to come in.

Everyone is anti-social, is their own world. No desire to interact.

Set of reflects the current state, where everyone is a their phones.

But is that an extreme?
 Interesting concept.

Food is a scary thing
 no one goes out to eat

But if they start enjoy food, what is the point of spending money to eat out.

Figure 44. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. Character design of Drew.



Figure 45. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Initial visualisation of Drew.*

Esther

The secondary character in the narrative is Esther (fig. 46). Esther comes to Drew's town with the circus as the featuring act of The Girl with the 5th Sense (fig. 47). Esther is the rare exception of a human with the ability to smell. This is due to her upbringing in a hunter-gatherer society. Esther joined the circus as she wanted the opportunity to use her talent to travel the world. She can look intimidating with her witchlike attire, but she is in fact very friendly. She also carries around a plague mask just in case the stench of environments or people become overwhelming (fig. 48). Through my research, I discovered that historically the sense of smell is considered feminine and witchlike.⁵⁹ I wanted to embed this history into my narrative through the olfactory-enabled character. Although the secondary character was initially anticipated to be male (fig. 49), a female character would play on this stereotype. Furthermore, she would act as a direct olfactory-enabled equivalent of Drew. The historical stereotype of smell is also the reasoning behind Esther being presented as a witch in the circus act.



Figure 46. Finlay, Kauri.
2019. *Esther*

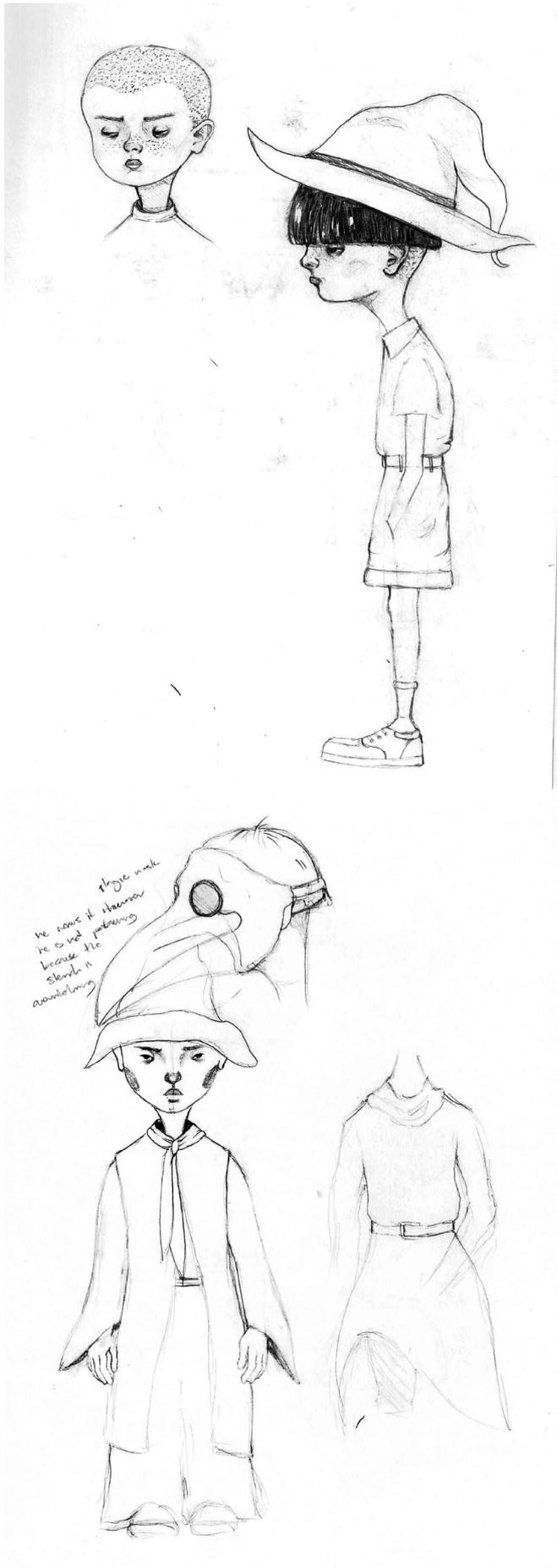


Figure 47. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Esther ready for the show.*



Figure 48. Finlay, Kauri. 2019. *Esther in her everyday attire*.

Figure 49. Finlay, Kauri.
2019. Character design of a
male character.



4.2 Illustrative style

The washy, and at times undefined, qualities of my chosen media of watercolour are reflective of my journey and relationship with smell. Watercolour was used in my sensory journal as it was a medium in which I could intuitively visualise my sensory experiences. The unpredictable nature of watercolour appealed to me as well as the variety of affects that could be achieved. It also forced me to veer away from my preferred highly detailed imagery. After experimenting with digital watercolour methods, I discovered that I could also use them to achieve a realistic watercolour effect.

The level of detail within the illustrations varies depending on the importance of smell in that particular scene. In the scenes where the smell is most important, unnecessary details were discarded. Through the removing of detail from specific panels, the smell is able to take centre stage.

The style used to illustrate the characters intentionally evolves during the smell discovery scene. This journey through the dark sees the illustrative style become more fluid, and loose -mimicking the style used to visualise smell. This indicates that Drew and Esther are becoming more attuned to their dark environment. Together, they use their senses other than sight to guide them through the dark.

Although I was unable to incorporate physical textural elements throughout the graphic novel, I communicated texture through my illustrations. The digital watercolour technique used evoked a sense of textural depth. As briefly mentioned in chapter one, the visual is capable of capturing texture.⁶⁰

To begin with, the illustrations were going to be executed traditionally while the smell would be done digitally. However, to integrate the smell into the composition of the page and achieve a cohesive image, the main portion of *Quincala* was created using digital illustration. Photoshop and a Wacom tablet were used for the illustrations. The exception is the vignettes and texture panels. These illustrations were done using traditional watercolour techniques.

60. Sparkes, Andrew C, 123.

4.3 Colour & Texture

The colours used throughout *Quincala* originate from the smellwheel I developed. The smell and the illustrations are intended to be closely interlinked and connected. The use of a completely different colour palette to the one used for the smells could create a sense of disconnection. The vibrancy of the feature colour, orange, also increases throughout *Quincala*. At the beginning, the colours of the illustrations appear dull while the smell seems lively. As the narrative develops, the two worlds become more aligned. This change in colour gradient is also reflective of the change in my mindset towards my anosmia. Throughout this research journey, my perspective has altered and I no longer see my inability as a hugely negative condition.

Texture has been considered when selecting the materials used in the construction of *Quincala*. *Quincala* is printed on textured paper, which is reminiscent of watercolour paper. The cover also uses a linen, sage-coloured material with an embossed emblem. These material qualities enhance the sensory experience for the reader. Effectively, it is reiterating the importance of the sense of touch.

Chapter 5: Reflection & Conclusion

5.1 Reflection

One of the difficulties I faced in this research project was balancing my role as illustrator and researcher. The illustrator within wanted to create a graphic novel that contained panels of beautiful illustrations and an engaging narrative. The researcher within reminded me that, although illustration and narrative is important, the driving force of this project was visualising smell and the inability to access it. At times, I believe I let the illustrator prevail over the researcher. This is particularly evident in my initial final illustrations in which the smell was not considered in the composition.

Creating a graphic novel also proved to be an immense task that I was underprepared for. With little to no graphic novel development or execution experience, I dove into the deep end. Typically, in the development of a graphic novel, there would be a scripter, illustrator, colourist, and a letterer. Executing all this within a small time frame while also considering the research component of the project meant I wasn't able to get a highly refined graphic novel. In the future, scripting and lettering are two areas I would like to develop. *Quincala*, in an ideal world, would have a greater depth in acts two and three. Act two would develop the characters' relationships further. This would help the reader to establish an emotional connection with the characters. Act three would progress further after the discovery of the book of smell and the reader would gain insight into the Quincala community.

The visualisation of the sense of smell is ever evolving as there is no exact or correct method or technique. This is the beauty of exploring a relatively unexplored area. The creative possibilities are endless. The visual language I developed for the sense of smell is just one possibility. I captured the weaving, fluid, layered nature of odours while also considering colour associations. However, my visual language could be further iterated to incorporate texture within each smell category. Furthermore, the smell categories could be expanded.

Most importantly, through this research project, I saw an internal shift within myself. I had entered into this project with a fixed, negative mindset about my inability to smell. Unintentionally, this mindset was mirrored in the illustrations I was producing at the outset of the project. The anosmic world that I was portraying was dark, dull and eerie. It was brought to my attention that no two people sense or perceive the world the same. Therefore, rather than regarding my inability to smell as a “loss”, I began to regard it as a “difference”. The sense of smell will always be an additional lens I wish I had to see the world; however, I am fortunate to have my other lenses to make up for the missing one. Drew’s journey in *Quincala* is reflective of my own autoethnographic journey and reflects my shift in perspective.

5.2 Conclusion

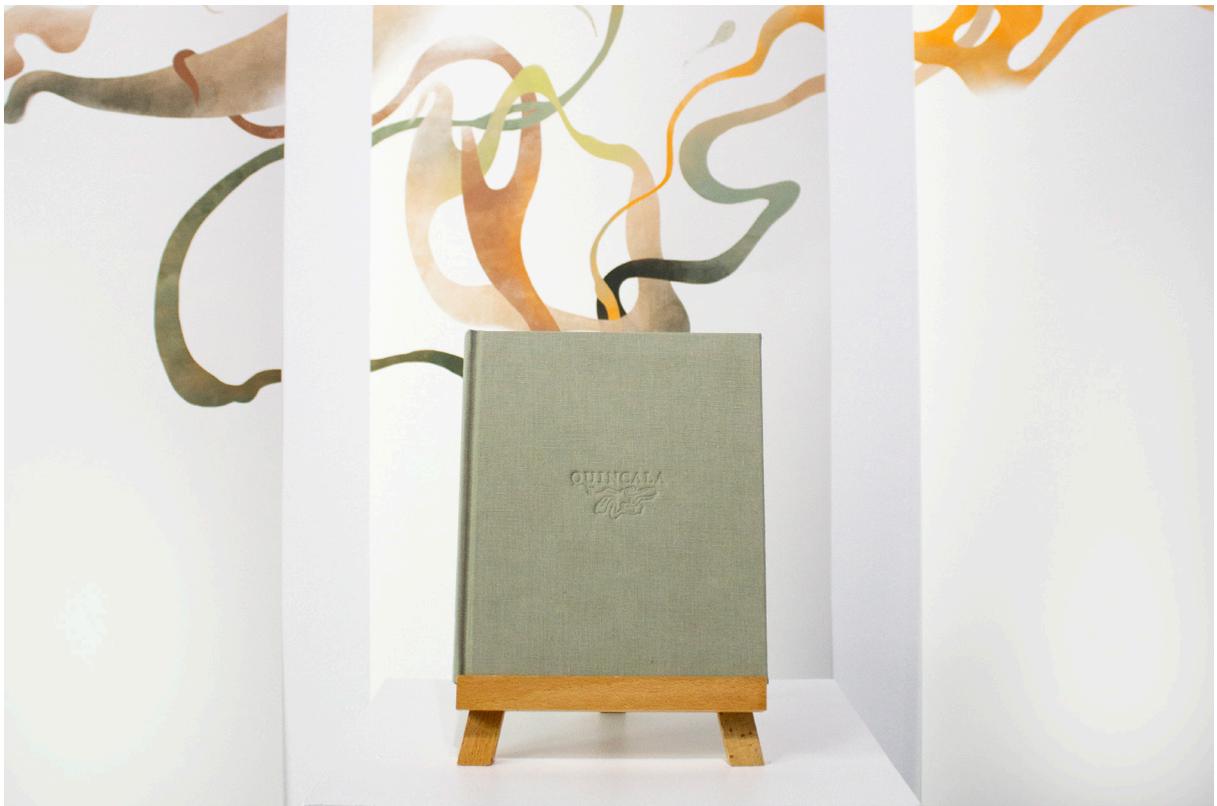
This research project has explored the visualisation of the inability to access the sensory dimension of smell through a graphic novel format. In chapter one, I discussed the theoretical and historical underpinnings of my research of the sense of smell. Chapter two outlined the mixed methodology approach of autoethnography and practice-based action research used in the design process. In chapter three, the design process was revealed and categorised into stages – study of self, conceptual exploration, plot development, visualising the sense of smell, rhythm and flow. Chapter four delved into the reasoning behind the character, illustration, colour, and texture design decisions.

The aim of *Quincala* is to visualise the unseen sense of smell and refocus sensory perception by momentarily bringing the sense of smell to the forefront. By doing so, the effects of living without a sense of smell are able to be conveyed. *Quincala* highlights the importance of becoming more attuned to your own sensory capabilities. In our visually dominant Western world, focusing on the other senses can be both refreshing and revelatory.

Appendix

This research project was exhibited in the AD19 Postgraduate Exhibition at the St Paul St Gallery. The *Quincala* book was exhibited on a plinth with three long prints hanging behind it. The prints featured smell visualisations extracted directly from *Quincala*. I communicated the concept that smell cannot be contained by allowing the smell to travel across the three prints. Furthermore, the compositional design of the smell visualisations creates the illusion that the smell is escaping from the book.















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