

Shivangi Pande

Anosmic Designer

IIIT Jabalpur

I can't smell; Can you design smell?

They say that a great experience can only be experienced if it is derived from reality but what happens when storytellers weave words to create visuals, sounds, tastes, touch and even smell? Why is the experience of mere sentences in a book so rich that people consider the remake of books in more multi-modal experiences such as cinema 'garbage'?

Similar to enhanced experiences by reading, we notice how certain colours trigger emotions, like the red of anger and green of envy, how universally a butterfly is a sign of beauty and metamorphosis but a cockroach the sign of dirt and disgust. Companies choose certain symbols to depict their brand value, blue is reliable for banks and purple linked to royalty. We may observe that everything has layers to it and in some way or another is interlinked in creating experiences.

We have seen the cinematic genius in visual harmony, concerts with auditory harmony, culinary master chefs of taste and even textures for the blind to read but what about the sense of smell?

If the sense of touch can define words, stories and emotions in a blind man, what can we do for someone who can't smell? How might we design the experiences linked to that of smell for an anosmic person?

