

Fragrance Free

at the RMG and Tangled Art + Disability

ongoing, collective effort and learning in appreciation and humble recognition of bodily complexity, permeability, and vulnerability, as well as the interdependent nature of our survival, our thrival

OR

fragrance-free sculpture piece (in which we imagine and co-create toxicant-free access and fragrance-freedom as a fragile, dynamic, invisible sculpture co-created by the efforts of everyone who is present and everyone who maintains this space)

by Aislinn Thomas

ongoing, collective effort is Aislinn Thomas' contribution to the exhibition *Undeliverable*. The project seeks to support the RMG and Tangled Art + Disability to uphold the gallery's fragrance-free policies, imagining it as an invisible sculpture created by the labour and attention of all those who are present. The hope is that this collective effort makes possible the participation of people who encounter barriers from common toxicants that are present in so many public, private, and commercial spaces.

What follows is a resource intended to help you co-create this sculpture and point of access alongside the other visitors, staff, volunteers, artists, and community members at RMG and Tangled Art + Disability. Please reach out if you need support or have any questions.

This resource is based on a text by mia susan amir.

We are trying to make this gallery space as accessible as possible for community members, staff, and artists. This includes upholding our Fragrance-Free policy to ensure that people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), and others who react to fragrances, are able to be present at the gallery without injury or illness. This is a living project that would not be possible without your help. We ask for and sincerely appreciate your participation, and we welcome your questions and feedback.

If you are new to creating fragrance-free access, cultivating these practices can require time, effort, and economic resources. It can be difficult to give up fragrance even temporarily because of the important roles it plays in many of our lives. If you encounter barriers to helping us create fragrance-free access, please contact: Leila Timmins, Senior Curator at the RMG: ltimmins@rmg.on.ca or Sean Lee, Director of Programming at Tangled Art + Disability: sean@tangledarts.org. We will work with you to make your participation possible.

Thank You!

Like many access measures, creating fragrance-free access requires collective and ongoing effort. Unlike many access measures, this effort is required of everybody who is present—not just an access coordinator or a department within an institution. We deeply appreciate the work that you are doing to make this space as accessible as possible.

What is Multiple Chemical Sensitivity?

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (also known as Toxicant Induced Loss of Tolerance, Environmental Sensitivity, and Idiopathic Environmental Intolerance) is a medical condition that effects multiple organ systems. Exposure to fragrances, petrochemicals, smoke and other everyday toxicants cause short and long-term symptoms for those with MCS including: headache, migraine, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, respiratory distress, muscle pain, dermatitis, cognitive impairment and more. These symptoms can last for hours, days, or even weeks after exposure, and can further sensitize a person.

Please help us to make the gallery as fragrance-free as possible by taking the following steps:

- Please do not use cologne, perfume, essential oils, air fresheners, diffusers, or scented body and hair care products (including deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, soap, body wash, hair gel or mousse, make-up, cream, and lotion). Please also avoid bug spray and scented sunscreen before coming to the gallery, and while in the gallery.
- If you have used any of these products in the days or weeks before visiting the gallery, please bathe with unscented products before your visit.
- If you use scented laundry products (detergent, fabric softener, dryer sheets), perfumes, colognes, essential oils, or air fresheners, you will need to wash these fragrances out of your clothes using unscented detergent. It can help to add (or pre-soak your clothing in) vinegar, baking soda, or washing soda. Laundry products are created to be persistent, so it may take multiple washes to remove fragrance. Airing out your clothes may help.
- Residue from fragranced products may linger on jackets, scarves, and other clothing, as well as hairbrushes, combs, etc. so these items will also need to be washed if you are using them.
- Products labelled "natural" or "green" are not necessarily fragrance-free or free of harmful chemicals. Even products labelled "scent-free" may contain masking fragrance. Please read the ingredients list on product labels to ensure that no fragrance, parfum, essential oils, or masking fragrance is present. [1]

Further Resources

Fragrance Free Femme of Colour Genius, by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha.

Scent Free at the AMC, by adrienne maree brown, on loving fragrance yet choosing to be fragrance free in public space.

Nova Scotia Health Authority Scent Free Resource Binder, a list of fragrance-free personal care and cleaning products.

Nova Scotia Health Authority Scent Free Information, how to prepare to enter a fragrance-free space.

About MCS and Environmental Sensitivities.

1 From the Environmental Working Group: The word "fragrance" or "parfum" on the product label represents an undisclosed mixture of various scent chemicals and ingredients used as fragrance dispersants such as diethyl phthalate. Fragrance mixes have been associated with allergies, dermatitis, respiratory distress and potential effects on the reproductive system.



The
Robert
McLaughlin
Gallery

