



**Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania**  
**Faculty of Letters || Department of English**  
**Faculty of Arts || Department of Fine Arts**  
**and Painting**



**Invite you to**

**The International Conference**

# **SCENTS AND SENSIBILITIES**

## **ADORNING THE BODY, SCENTING THE SOUL**



**Interdisciplinary Explorations of Perfume and Jewellery**  
**across Literature, Arts, Psychology and the Media**

**Galati, 26-28 February 2026**

**The English Department of the Faculty of Letters** is pleased to announce the second edition of its international conference, now entitled *Scents and Sensibilities: Adorning the Body, Scenting the Soul. Interdisciplinary Explorations of Perfume and Jewellery across Literature, Art, Psychology, and the Media*. The event will take place in a hybrid format (online and onsite) between 26–28 February 2026. Building upon the success of *The Olfactory Story of Perfume in Literature, Psychology, and the Arts* (2024), this conference seeks to expand the interdisciplinary dialogue on the sensory, symbolic, and aesthetic dimensions of olfaction and ornamentation.

Through an interdisciplinary lens, the conference is conceived as a forum for scholars, artists, and practitioners to explore the cultural, psychological, aesthetic, and semiotic roles of perfume and jewellery as vehicles of self-expression, storytelling, and embodied identity. Participants are invited to examine how scent and ornament have functioned as cultural texts, psychological markers, and artistic motifs across diverse media, historical periods, and social contexts.

In an age where sensory engagement is increasingly shaped by the hyper-visual logics of digital media and the immersive soundscapes of contemporary communication, the olfactory dimension – often relegated to the periphery in Western epistemologies of perception – demands renewed critical attention. As scholars in fields ranging from anthropology to neuroscience have shown, scent operates within a liminal space between corporeality and cognition. It bypasses the cerebral filters that regulate sight and sound to engage directly with the limbic system, the neural centre of memory and emotion (Herz, 2004). This immediacy, famously illustrated in Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, highlights the “Proustian phenomenon” – scent’s uncanny ability to collapse time and evoke affective, often involuntary recollections of people, places and moments. Yet, precisely because of its ephemerality – its resistance to capture, containment and commodification – scent remains a fugitive presence in materialist frameworks, even as it continues to shape affective landscapes and narrative memory.

Jewellery, by contrast, presents a material and visual durability that may seem at odds with scent’s fleeting nature. However, its cultural meanings are far from fixed. Drawing on theoretical insights from Roland Barthes and Pierre Bourdieu to Daniel Miller’s concept of “humble materiality,” jewellery emerges not simply as a decorative object, but as a socially charged medium – an interface between the personal and the political, the intimate and the performative. Through lenses of material culture (Miller, 2005), the anthropology of adornment (Levi-Strauss, 1963; Turner, 1980), and gender studies, ornamentation can be understood as a silent language of memory, desire, grief, resistance and transformation. Whether in the form of mourning brooches, heirloom rings, ritual pendants, or the curated digital aesthetics of contemporary influencers, jewellery acts as a powerful site for the inscription of identity, emotion and belonging.

Together, perfume and jewellery offer a compelling invitation to reconsider how the senses mediate our cultural scripts – how the fugitive materiality of scent and the enduring symbolism of adornment shape our understanding of gender, status, memory and affect. These elements call for a multisensory, transdisciplinary

methodology – one that privileges embodiment, aesthetics, and narrative as vital forms of knowledge production.

From Cleopatra's scented sails to D.H. Lawrence's *The Odour of Chrysanthemums*, from the black enamelled relics of Victorian mourning jewellery to the rhinestone-coded identities of TikTok and Instagram culture, olfactory and ornamental signifiers have long structured how we communicate who we are, how we feel, and what we remember. This conference seeks to reflect on the intimate and symbolic power of what we wear and what we smell, encouraging scholarly and creative dialogue across temporal, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries.

**We warmly welcome academic papers, artist talks, roundtable proposals, and performative presentations** that address – but are not limited to – the following topics:

- ✓ **The Scented Text:** Perfume in literature as metaphor, motif, or narrative trigger
- ✓ **Jewellery and Narrative:** Symbolic economies of adornment in fiction, drama, and poetry
- ✓ **The Poetics and Politics of Adornment:** Cross-cultural explorations of jewellery and scent
- ✓ **Aesthetics of Sensory Memory:** Olfactory and tactile memory in psychology and life writing
- ✓ **Perfume and the Psyche:** Intersections with psychoanalysis, affect theory, and trauma studies
- ✓ **Adornment and Identity:** Gendered, classed, and racialised semiotics of jewellery and scent
- ✓ **The Sacred and the Scented:** Ritual, transcendence, and the role of the sensory in spiritual experience
- ✓ **Perfume in the Visual Arts:** Representations of scent in painting, sculpture, and film
- ✓ **Media and Marketing:** Perfume and jewellery in branding, celebrity culture, and digital influence
- ✓ **Material Culture and Museology:** Curating scent and adornment in archives, exhibitions, and heritage institutions
- ✓ **Eco-Aesthetics and Sustainability:** Ethical concerns in the creation and consumption of scent and jewellery
- ✓ **Fashion and Digital Identities:** Fragrance, ornamentation, and self-presentation in contemporary media

We particularly encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural approaches, collaborations between scholars and practitioners, and proposals centering underrepresented voices or traditions. Contributions may include academic papers, artistic explorations, work-in-progress sessions, or sensory-based formats.

### **Focus Areas**

Submissions are invited from a range of disciplines, including but not limited to:

- ✓ **Literature** (including comparative, historical, and interdisciplinary approaches)
- ✓ **Linguistics & Stylistics** (olfactory and sensory imagery in language and poetics)
- ✓ **Translation Studies** (translating scent, affect, and sensory experience)
- ✓ **Media and Film Studies** (sensory aesthetics in film, television, and digital media)

- ✓ **Visual and Performing Arts** (scent and ornament in painting, photography, music, and design)
- ✓ **Cultural History and Social Studies** (ritual, symbolic, and historical roles of perfume and jewellery)
- ✓ **Psychology and Affective Studies** (cognitive, emotional, and therapeutic dimensions)

This conference offers a unique opportunity for vibrant interdisciplinary exchange, bringing together scholars, practitioners, and creatives from diverse fields. Through interactive sessions, panel discussions, and networking events, participants will engage deeply with the multifaceted olfactory narratives that permeate literature, psychology, media, and the arts.

Whether you are a literary scholar, psychologist, media analyst, or artist, your perspectives are vital to illuminating how scent and adornment shape identity, memory, and cultural expression across time and space.

Join us in celebrating the sensory and intellectual richness of perfume and jewellery, exploring their enduring resonance in shaping human experience and creative expression.

We warmly welcome your submissions and look forward to your valuable contributions.

### **Submission Guidelines**

We invite proposals for 20-minute presentations. Please send a 300-word abstract and a 150-word biographical note to [perfume.conference@gmail.com](mailto:perfume.conference@gmail.com)/[lidia.necula@ugal.ro](mailto:lidia.necula@ugal.ro) by **15 January 2026**.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **20 January 2026**.

We also welcome:

- ✓ Thematic panel proposals (3–4 speakers)
- ✓ Alternative formats such as:
- ✓ Performative lectures
- ✓ Multimedia displays
- ✓ Experiential or sensory-based workshops

A selection of peer-reviewed and revised papers will be considered for publication in an **edited volume** or **special issue** with an academic publisher.

We look forward to exploring how we scent, sense, and signify the world – together.

**With anticipation,**

*The Organising Team*

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Lidia Mihaela Necula