

Olfactory Notes for *Time Capsule for Essex Street Market*

Early morning Christine bakes cornbread. She loves the smell of baked goods. Pain d'Avignon, Kouign Amann, Croissants and Baguettes blend into one fluffy and floury aroma. Breakfast time, nods Saxelby Cheesemongers. Daniel's favorite Tra La La muffin is Sweet Potato Ginger, but it is not available everyday. He knows which pastries are baking by a whiff of the oven's balmy fragrance. 9:00 AM Peasant Stock sautéed veggies aroma waft over to Davidovich Bakery and Tina inhales it in with a smile as she serves bagels over the wooden countertop. [Ni] Japanese Delicacies serves vegan bento boxes but also likes the hints of smoked fish that waxes and wanes throughout the day from the neighboring stall. The ceiling is an open metal grate so the seafood and deep fried Puebla Mexican food simmers into the bakery during takeout traffic jams. Meandering between the stalls olfactory terrains shift as produce change. Lu at Nordic Preserves Fish and Wildlife Company matter of factly states that folks of different cultural backgrounds perceive scents differently. Bacalao. Butter. Steaming Soup. Delicious. Bacalao. Butter. Steaming Soup. Blah. Stomach juices churn over Arancini Bros Rice Balls: Chicken Marsala BBQ Mushroom Taleggio Nutella. New Star Fish Market across the passageway tosses in a briny oceanic touch. Felix keeps Rainbo's Fish almost scentless. Jay's family is from the Caribbean and he is used to working in markets so the fish smell doesn't bother him. For others, the lack of ventilation is an odorous weight. "When they cook bacon over there I burn incense to clear my air." Three-quarter centuries worth of food molecules and human animal presence tenaciously occupy the space. In a traditional market, boundaries are permeable, fluid and pourous. Too much for some, perhaps. Smell can appetize, uplift, repulse and/or oppress. There is no escape. Take a breather. Delve in. Immerse. Exhale. Inhale a handful of fresh cilantro, the mind awakens, for sure I am near Luna Brothers' produce stand hovering over mangoes and Goya beans. Essex Farm: All Spices Nutmeg Ginger Vanilla Yoghurt Liberte Mandarin Orange Blossom Chocolate Mousse Local Honey. La Tiendita: Cupcakes Handmade Aprons Cookies Brownies Girl-Power Bars Granola Gingerbread Baby Pies. Swooning for Boubouki's moist pear cake. "I never get tired of coffee. My mother started giving it to me since I was six. After working at Porto Rico Importing Co. I have another cup at home. A lighter dose, of course. Do you prefer dark or light roast?" French Peruvian coffee beans are earthy. Formaggio Kitchen is overflowing with cheese, reminiscent of Émile Zola's *The Belly of Paris*, but Rachel really doesn't smell anything. When you are around food all day you get noseblind. "The smell?" Barber of Aminova pauses and then flashes a big smile, "Smells VERY GOOD." After endless conversations you forget who you have spoken with, however, the lingering tastes of each interaction blends into one giant cocktail to be savoured.