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## Culture Lust on Twitter

RT @FM949sd: GIVING OUT FREE COACHELLA TICKETS. join FM94/9 for a RAOK from 1-2pm today in mission valley: <http://tinyurl.com/cdwlf5> about 5 hours ago

RT@OldGlobe: BREAKING NEWS: Michael Hollinger, the playwright of OPUS will be here next Tuesday to speak before the show at 5:30 PM. about 6 hours ago

Brüno is Sacha Baron Cohen's follow-up to Borat – join his MeinSpace. can't wait. <http://is.gd/rtzu> about 6 hours ago

Oceanside Museum of Art's Environmental Fragrance, conceptual art style <http://is.gd/rDXP> about 7 hours ago

Brian Goeltzenleuchter on These Days in 10min to talk art and the wellness fragrance he created for Oceanside Museum of Art. So interesting. about 8 hours ago



## Oceanside Museum of Art Gets Its Own Fragrance

April 08, 2009 | Filed under: [Visual Arts](#)  
By Angela Carone



Institutional Wellbeing, on view through August 9th at Oceanside Museum of Art.

A Google search on scent yields multiple quizzes formulated to determine one's signature scent. I took one. After answering multiple choice questions like "What's your favorite after school activity?" (cooking/art classes) and "What kind of dress do you like to wear to school dances?" (flowy, the options were limited), it was determined that my signature scent is "Woody." The explanation: "Woody scents from nature are best for you and help you feel more relaxed during the day!" Strangely enough, that's pretty close to the mark. [The Oceanside Museum of Art](#) got seemingly more reliable results when they asked conceptual artist [Brian Goeltzenleuchter](#) to create an OMA scent, one that would have healing and equilibrium-inducing powers.

Last year, OMA [quadrupled its space](#) and added a new central pavilion designed by [Frederick Fischer](#). According to Teri Sowell, Director of Exhibitions at OMA, all the new space left the staff a little off balance. Everyone had a new office and, with so much space, they didn't bump into each other as often. She was explaining this to Goeltzenleuchter, who she's been wanting to work with since he graduated with an MFA from UCSD, where Sowell taught. "Brian said to me, 'you know I'm very good at acclimating people who work in cultural institutions to their environment.'" Brian's solution? [Institutional Wellbeing](#), an installation now on view at the museum, that has an OMA signature scent as its centerpiece.

Brian conducts a research process to develop the scent, cribbing from scientific methods, infomercial aesthetics, corporate speak, and [applied kinesiology](#). He carries test tubes, conducts questionnaires, wears a lab coat, and manufactures a slick set, reminiscent of a "sexed-up" doctor's office. The whole process is so orchestrated, with the infomercial aesthetics just so, it almost seems real, especially to those being tested.

## About



*Culture Lust* is a blog about the latest ideas stirring in the creative world, hosted by

Angela Carone. As arts and culture producer for KPBS Radio's [These Days](#), she's constantly reading, watching, hearing and evaluating the books, movies, music, articles, performers, plays, and cultural phenomena that cross her desk.

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In OMA's case, Brian conducted his testing with the staff, the Board of Trustees, and patrons. Sowell said at first she wrote the whole thing off as Brian's performance art. But once he started asking her in-depth questions about working in the museum, all the while holding scents at her solar plexus and gauging her muscle resistance, well, she started to buy into the whole thing.



Brian performing scent testing.

I asked Brian about his own investment in the performance. Is he sincere in creating these healing scents? He admitted buying into it as he does it, but for him it's more about being ironic in a really rigorous way. "It harkens back to a discourse that used irony before entertainment co-opted it. If you privilege that early tradition of irony, than you pursue this whole thing seriously." And because of his sincerity, Brian gets results. Throughout the research, staff and board members divulge revealing and personal information as they succumb to the construct. Brian says, referring to the detailed research and slick set design, "I'm not giving the participants a cheap version of this experience, which really helps them buy into it."

It turns out, *Institutional Wellbeing* is just one "product" Brian offers consumers. He is President of a company called [Contraposto Home Decor](#), which he's been running for over a decade. There he sells, among other things, a genre series of environmental fragrances based on historical art movements. There's one for Cubism, Impressionism, and Expressionism. The latter is described as "our most passionate aroma, (it) exudes a full-bodied fragrance of Cassia, Clove and Chinese Ginger. This blend, like a Van Gogh painting invigorates the ambience of any room."

Obviously, Brian is having a lot of fun with consumer trends, especially the commodification of art. Visit any museum gift shop today and you can find a chotchkie version of the artistic greats; a calendar, puzzle, clock, or action figure awaits your purchase. You can display these items in your home and elevate your domestic persona with some high culture, all for less than \$50. It's certainly more affordable than [this method](#). In the case of *Institutional Wellbeing*, the experience, from research to packaging, embodies the idea, the kernel of conceptual art, but that doesn't mean you can't purchase it too (part of his commentary). The OMA fragrance is for sale in the museum gift shop. What does it smell like? You'll have to go to the exhibit to find out.

You can learn more about *Institutional Wellbeing* and Brian's art (there's so much more to say!) by listening to this *These Days* interview (coming soon) with Brian and

Teri Sowell. *Institutional Wellbeing* will be on view through August 9th at the Oceanside Museum of Art. Also, on April 30th from 7:00-9:00 p.m. there will be a "Fragrance Forum" with artist Brian Goeltzenleuchter, fragrance expert Jan Moran, art critic Richard Gleaves and psychologist Dr. David Peterzell. "Fragrance Forum" is \$5 and complimentary for OMA members.

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