



Alexandra Bachand

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🕒 [October 1, 2019](#) [📁 Alumni](#)

Perfumer and Olfactory Artist Class of '97

Has a smell ever plunged you head first into an old memory? Perhaps your favourite picnic spot as a child, or the familiar perfume of a loved one? Playing on the power of our olfactory sense, it could be said that Alexandra Bachand is a bit of an expert in this field. An independent perfumer and olfactory artist, both of which are rare professions in Canada and around the world, Bachand is the in-house perfumer of the artistic perfume house called La Grange du Parfumeur, which she co-founded with her husband in 2015. There she formulates, composes and fabricates in her own laboratory; "the process usually takes me a year or two. In one formula, there are about 30-50 ingredients." Being that there is no formal perfumery training offered in Canada, Bachand studied and graduated from the Perfumery Art School in England.

Her journey to perfuming has been anything but typical. Having studied Fine Arts at Bishop's, she says, "chemistry wasn't my gateway, it was through the arts." Bachand remembers the smells of the paints and solvents swirling in the air of the Molson Arts building, and to this day, "these smells will still plunge me right back to that time. It was a very important learning period in my life." A love of history plays another huge role in Bachand's life, having felt right at home studying within the walls of Bishop's historic buildings. These two interests have married together perfectly in her work as an olfactory artist, where she creates olfactory art installations, combining visuals and scent to provide an immersive narrative for a public, and, "bring people back to different eras in time."

Her latest project on the Italian Renaissance has brought back many memories of Bishop's. "It was a period in my art history classes that marked me. I was so in love with everything that was Italian art." At the time, Bachand had the idea of composing something inspired by the Renaissance Era; a dream she kept for many years. This year, after an artistic director approached her with a project proposal to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Leonardo Da Vinci's death, her excitement peaked. Travelling to Italy, she went on the hunt for the fragrances of Mona Lisa's life. Bachand recalls that during her university studies, she "took a class about women in western art that made a huge impact on my life. It all came back in this particular piece as it captures the woman behind the art; Lisa Gherardini."

Coincidentally, Bachand had recently returned to Bishop's to show her children where she had gone to university. "I was really emotional because I was on this little journey connecting the dots," Bachand laughs. "It's amazing when intuition and the creative process finally find their way over the years, completing their own circle, and everything comes together. Bishops provided me with a springboard into artistic learning in the most beautiful way, and I'm really proud of it."

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