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film knowledge in full width

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## The Scent of Decay Sample Set

The ***Scent of Decay Sample Set*** was created to make the odours of the film archive accessible outside of the storage vaults. It was compiled by media preservationist David Pfluger who holds a PhD in chemistry. It contains a selection of 10 samples representing the most important odours the archivist comes across when dealing with historical motion picture materials. The set can be used as a reference for teaching and is an aid to professionals to understand the source of the odours they encounter.

Regular exposure to compounds connected with the decay of motion picture film should be avoided. Mostly being plastics in decay, they are chemicals which may have an effect on our health or the environment. Entering a vault or opening a can we make an instant assessment of the condition and composition of the content through our nose. An educated nose helps to analyse a reel and facilitates the decision on the actions which need to be taken. It also delivers indirect testimony of age and origin of film materials and thus can be a vital addition to their metadata.

Decaying film materials are not always at hand when teaching about the decay of plastics involved or may be too fragile or bulky to transport. The *Scent of Decay Sample Set* is a handy and instructive tool when teaching about the composition and fragility of our motion picture heritage.

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Dokumentation in deutscher Sprache auf Anfrage.  
Documentation en français sur demande.



The *Scent of Decay Sample Set* contains:

Film materials in decay:

Cellulose Acetate Film (VS)

Cellulose Nitrate Film (not combustible)

Cellulose Acetate Butyrate Film

Historical Cellulose Acetate Film (no VS)

Reference Samples:

Acetic Acid (5% in water)

Triphenyl Phosphate

Camphor

Cellulose Acetate Butyrate

Unprocessed Motion Picture Film

Historical Film Preservative

