

# eclectic

A fashion photograph of two women in gothic or steampunk-inspired attire. The woman on the left wears a black top hat, a black jacket with a large white bow at the collar, and has a long braid. She has a black, beaded mustache on her upper lip. The woman on the right wears a black cape over a white shirt and has black lace or beaded decorations around her eyes. They are both looking towards the camera against a plain grey background.

COCOROSIE / DU BLONDE / CAKES DA KILLA /  
VETEMENTS / TIGRAN AVETISYAN /  
YOSHI SODEOKA / GORSAD / JOANA VASCONCELOS /  
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# An Illuminum World of my Own: A Shop with No Products in Sight

By Jessica Cooper

Somewhere on Dover Street, around the corner from the highbrow Mayfair filled with shopaholics frantically shopping the luxe fashion houses of Burberry, Prada, and Dolce&Gabbana, there lies a fairy tale grotto filled with tranquillity and effortless calm. Upon entering, I feel that all time has stood still. Suddenly, I am not filled with my shopper's impulse.



Here I am. I have stumbled into Illuminum's perfumery boutique in London, except it's unlike any other boutique in Mayfair. More than a store, Illuminum is a sanctuary.

Before I can even enter, I must remove my shoes and slip on a pair of soft, white slippers. The grey carpet beneath my feet is thick and lush, but the walls are what take my breath away. The whole room has been coated with a grey, volcanic ash imported from the slopes of Mount Vesuvius in Naples. Angrily trowelled on the wall, it is almost primate-like in its essence, yet it's unusually soothing. This space is pure luxury, enclosing and enveloping me in a womb-like sense of privacy – a far cry from the madness mere steps away, outside on the street.

Briefly disrupting my semi-hypnotic state, a soft-spoken sales assistant asks me whether I would like to have some green tea and offers a delicate ball of matcha teacake. And then it was back again to my purpose. What was I here for? Perfume. Except, there's one thing missing: the perfume. Where are the elegant bottles that often sway my opinion of the perfume I want to buy, regardless of its scent? Where are the counters and pushy sales assistants?

Instead, suspended by only a thread, are 37 irregularly shaped glass "bubbles," each enclosing an unnamed, evocative Illuminum scent just waiting to be uncorked and discovered. All I'm tasked with now is to explore this playground of perfumes. I find myself uncorking every bubble from its place to find one that calls to me. After all, the Illuminum boutique encourages you to select a fragrance that beckons your pure instincts and subconscious, like a perfumed siren.

Illuminum's fragrances awaken the hedonist within to incite feelings and memories associated with particular scents. While wandering around, I find myself saying: "This smells of something familiar. From my childhood, but I don't quite remember." I am immediately struck by how amazing it is that a scent can trigger certain forgotten thoughts from the subconscious, as memories I have forgotten are suddenly remembered.

In this room with no colour, these haute couture scents explode with colour and life, making the room alive. Illuminum has created a multi-sensory space where people can purchase fragrances while shattering our preconceived expectations of the "buying experience."

The creator of this romantic grotto of fragrance is Sicilian architect Antonio Cardillo, who received global recognition for his love of sensual forms and use of natural materials. Cardillo is the second artist invited by Illuminum to transform their boutique, as part of their ongoing collaboration with artists and architects.

Throughout the year, Illuminum's boutique will be reincarnated through the eye of their next chosen collaborator (as they say, nothing good lasts forever) as Illuminum continues with their quest for challenging the boundaries of scent and perfumery through a spectrum of olfactory-based relaxations.

"Colour as a Narrative" is the second of Illuminum creative collaborations at Illuminum London Gallery on Dover Street. October will see the next project in the Illuminum series.