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## New Perfume Review: AEDES DE VENUSTAS PÉLARGONIUM (Nathalie Feisthauer) 2017 + Still Life In Scent Draw



Nathalie Feisthauer of LABscent (*digitalized MC*)

**Pélargonium** by **AEDES DE VENUSTAS** which launched at **Esxence 2017**, is Creative Directors' Karl Bradl and Robert Gerstner eighth fragrant offering since starting their eponymous collection in 2002.

Pélargonium was brought to life as a strikingly elegant and lively perfume by mega-talent **Nathalie Feisthauer**, who is also the first woman perfumer for the brand and a true olfactive artist. In the new Pélargonium fragrance the perfumer, perhaps fascinated by the interplay of light and shadow, has employed techniques similar to Chiaroscuro and Tenebrism in painting this perfume.



*Still Life with Flowers* by Willem van Aelst, 1665.

The profile of the new Pélargonium fragrance evokes the work of 17<sup>th</sup> century "still life" painters; Dutch Masters such as Jan Steen, Johannes Vermeer, Willem van Aelst and Hans Bollongier, who were busy creating their art, even as the first Pelargoniums were arriving in Europe from Africa.



*Egyptian Geranium photo Aedes de Venustas©*

Pelargonium – often referred to as Egyptian geranium (not to be confused with the window box variety), yields one of the most versatile essences in perfumery. The leaves and stems of the plant have a fresh rosy fragrance, hence the vernacular name, "rose geranium". The oil, distilled from the leaves rather than the flowers, has been used since the late 19th century, as one of the key elements of the masculine fougère. Nathalie Feisthauer has taken the idea of the fougère and created a modern perfume that features the eponymous Pelargonium, stylized and composed with a surprising twist. Just as the Dutch Masters infused their "still life" paintings with implied, often mysterious, symbolism, Nathalie transforms an olfactory image of Pelargonium into a study of light shadow- an extraordinary perfume that is much more complex than a typical soliflore.



*The Painter's Studio – Michiel van Musscher*

With my first spritz of Pélargonium I step out of the modern world and into a vision of a 17th century painter's loft, an artist's studio with a vast expanse of louvered skylights, all facing north, gathering and focusing the softness

and delicacy of the cool, afternoon light. Paintings, in various stages of completion, rest on easels. I can see (and sense) how the interaction between light and shadow, creates an impression of three dimensional form, depth and perspective.



*William Kalf 1653, Still Life with Drinking-Horn detail*

The palpable illusion created on canvas (and in perfume) is everything. In the foreground of the Pélargonium fragrance painting I can smell the scent of light, flooding and highlighting the sparkling leaf. The perfume's initial olfactory image includes a bright, almost zingy lemon pepper, sweetened with the vegetal sugars of carrot and the crisp, herbal, spicy, every so slightly rosy qualities of the succulent geranium. Two "shades" of citrus (Thalo Yellow Green and Cadmium Orange), and touches of two "colors" of pepper (Sepia hue and Deep Napthal Red) grace the opening of the fragrance. As Pélargonium develops, the peppery edge of the golden citrus melds with facets of green cardamom, breathy orris, arid clary sage and the vague honeyed smoke of guaiac wood, creating an arresting swirl of dusty gun powder (sans the sulfur) shot through with flashes of bergamot. This middle ground gives a stylized, fanciful, surprising twist to what would otherwise develop as a photorealistic Pelargonium.



*Floral Still Life, Hans Bollongier*

After about an hour the semi-focused shadow is suffused and rounded with suggestions of amber, sweet woods, resinous elemi and musk. I linger in the darker heart of the image for five hours or more. As the fragrance dries down, the earthy qualities of vetiver, moss and cedar (in colors of Raw Umber, Sap Green and Van Dyck Brown) add even more depth, dimension and shadow to the background of this elegant fragrance painting. The sillage follows the perspective as the vivacious, invigorating foreground retreats into the fading light and, after six hours,

withdraws and disappears into the deepening shadows. If Pélargonium could be a visual "still life", perhaps it would be by Hans Bollongier – the artist who created deceptively "literal" works of art that convey messages of stylized emotion and occult elegance. In creating **AEDES DE VENUSTAS Pélargonium** Nathalie Feisthauer uses her fabulous fragrance palette to paint a unique, fascinating and sophisticated "still life" in scent.

Notes: *Bergamot, mandarin, clary sage, black pepper, Sichuan pepper, cardamom, Egyptian geranium, orris, carrot seed, elemi resin, cedarwood, vetiver, guaiac wood, musk and moss.*

-Gail Gross, Editor

Art Direction: Michelyn Camen, Editor-in- Chief



*PÉLARGONIUM Eau De Parfum*

Thanks to the generosity of AEDES DE VENUSTAS and Francois Dusquesne of BEAUTY ENTERPRISES we have 5 samples of Pélargonium Eau de Parfum for five **registered readers** worldwide (be sure to **register** or your comment will not count). To be eligible, tell us what appeals to you about Pélargonium based on Gail's review, where you live and your favorite perfume from AEDES DE VENUSTAS or Nathalie Feisthauer. Draw closes 5/29/2017

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