

Medical Humanities: Death and Epistemological Communication Through Graphic Language



Authors:

**Workshop developed by researcher
Palmar Alvarez-Blanco in collaboration
with artist Josune Urrutia Asua.**



Constelación
de los Comunes

Workshop Objectives

This workshop took place at the end of the course “*Death and Dying under Capitalism*” developed and taught by Palmar Alvarez-Blanco. Through this collective exercise, the goal was to provoke questions, uncover dilemmas, and reflect together on the systemic and social challenges that still need to be addressed to ensure that everyone can experience illness and death with dignity.

The course consisted of 21 university students from various disciplines. Over the course of a week, we created a fanzine to explore, analyze, and shed light on ten key questions from the course. The aim was to conceptualize an *Ars Moriendi* – *Ars Vivendi* for the 21st century, specifically designed for individuals living within the capitalist system in Western societies, particularly in the United States.

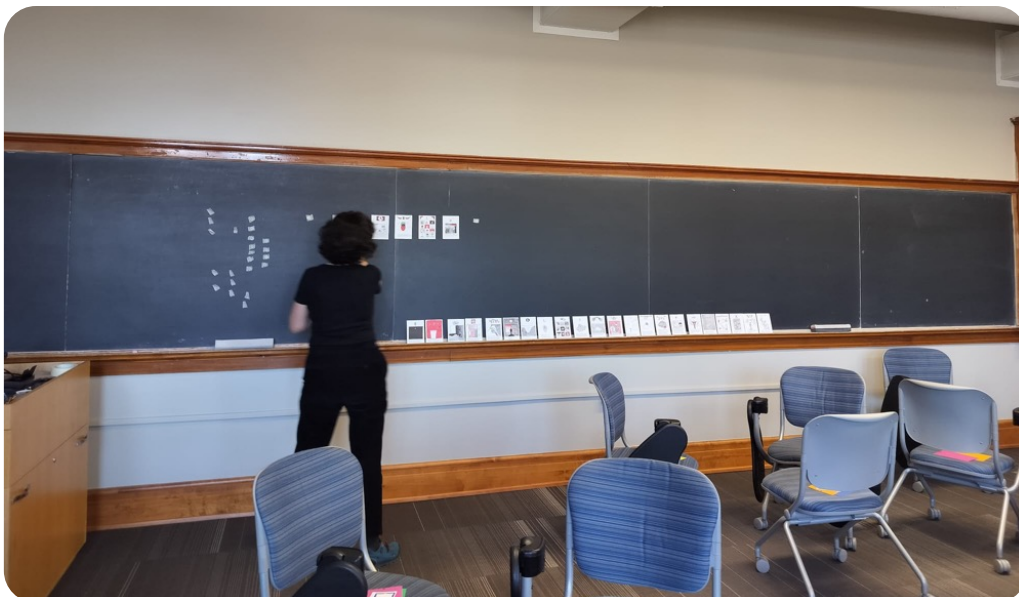
Duration

The workshop took place during regular class hours (a total of four hours), and throughout the week, there were office hours with Josune, allowing students to work individually or in pairs on their projects.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

First Class (1 hour)

- Introduction of the artist, Josune Urrutia.
- Explanation of Josune’s background and her use of art as a tool for processing illness.
- Overview of the workshop and methodological approach (format, materials, and dynamics).
- Initial drawing exercises.
- Assignment of pairs and topics.



Assignment: Individual Work on the “Ficha”

- Reflect on the assigned topic by grounding it in a personal experience.
- Consider what you have learned about the topic (refer to the list of suggested materials).
- Connect this information to your biography, community, or country.
- Each person should come prepared on Monday with an idea of what information they plan to include in their “ficha” and which letters (at least two) they would like to represent with that information.
- Use the “ficha” provided by Josune to write and draw. (Don’t worry if you don’t know how to draw—it’s not the most important part. Sketches or doodles are perfectly fine.)

Topics Assigned to Each Pair:

1. NECROCAPITALISM
2. DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS
3. LIVING WILL
4. WHERE? WHERE DO WE DIE, AND WITH WHOM? HOW DO WE DECIDE WHERE TO DIE? EXISTING OPTIONS.
5. HOW AND WHEN? HOW AND WHEN DO WE DIE?
6. EUTHANASIA & ASSISTED SUICIDE
7. RITES OF PASSAGE
8. ETHICAL DILEMMAS
9. ANTHROPOCENE – ANTHROPOCENTRISM – THE AGE OF MULTISPECIES COEXISTENCE
10. ARS MORIENDI – ARS VIVENDI



Second Class (1 hour 20 minutes)

We work in pairs to decide which letters we will illustrate and what content we will include.

Objectives:

Beyond just informing, we aim to propose, suggest, and inspire action. For example, our work should:

- Spark curiosity.
- Encourage questioning and deeper conversations.
- Motivate discussions in spaces where these topics need to be addressed.
- Inspire distribution in relevant centers.

Pair Work & Negotiation:

- Define the information we want to represent and share. **(20 minutes)**
- Listen to Josune for tips on visually representing our ideas. **(10 minutes)**
- Work on our ficha: Organize the information and divide the tasks. **(20 minutes)**
- Plan our next steps: Schedule office hours with Josune to refine our ideas before finalizing them in Wednesday's class.

Assignment:

Continue working on the ficha that will be published in the *fanzine*. Final version due on Thursday.



- We will work on the credits and the endpapers (introductory and closing pages of the fanzine). We draw elements—imagined, simple, iconic, suggestive, poetic, or realistic—that we associate with “death.”
- We will draw a self-portrait with our name handwritten to add to the credits.
- Collection of all this material to incorporate it into the fanzine.

Assignment:

We work on finishing the file with our partner

Fourth Class (1 hour)

- Present the fanzine and discuss it as a group.
- Collective reflection on the process.
- Group brainstorming on what to do with the fanzine moving forward.
- Closing of the workshop with acknowledgments and thanks.



