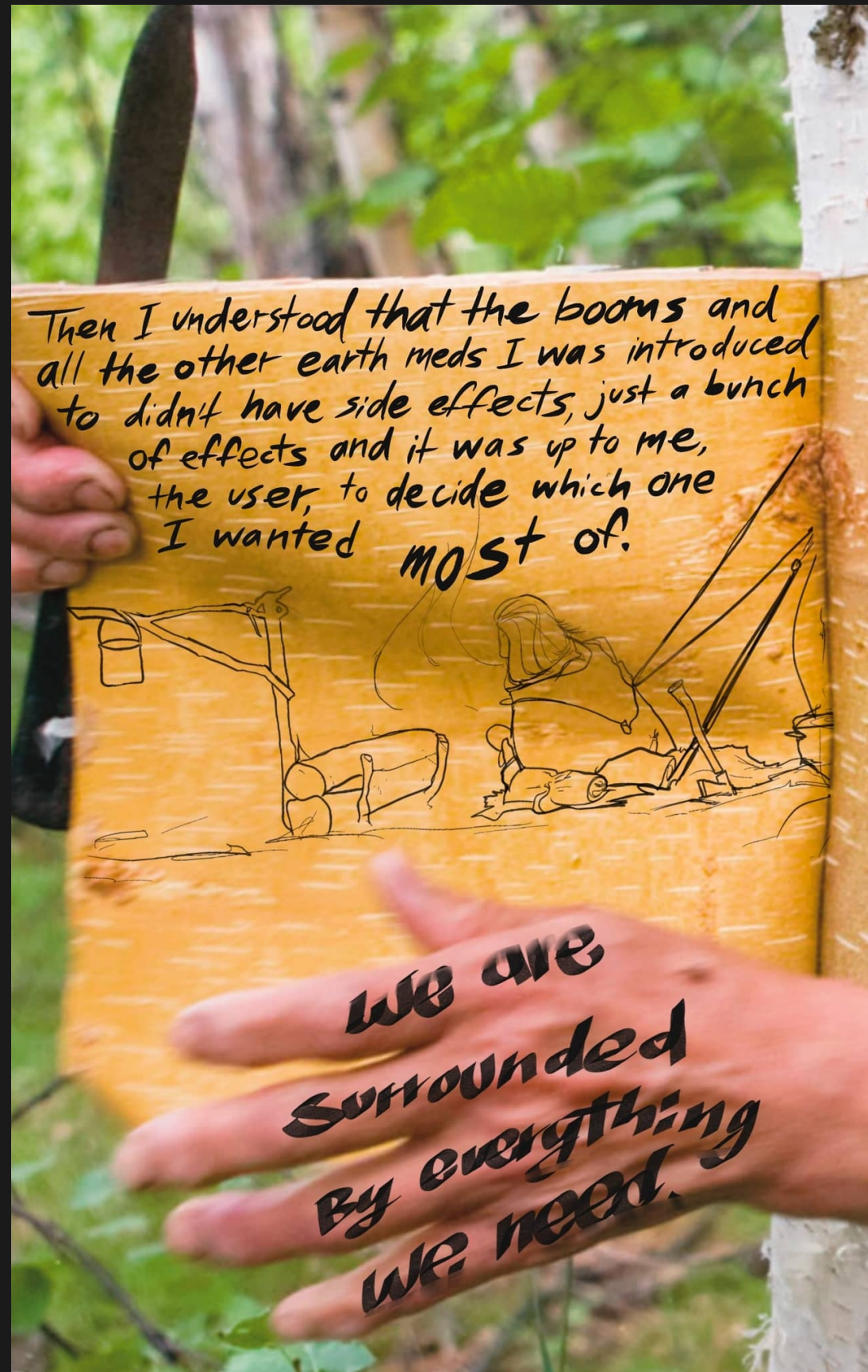


The Guide: A Journey Through Holistic Healing



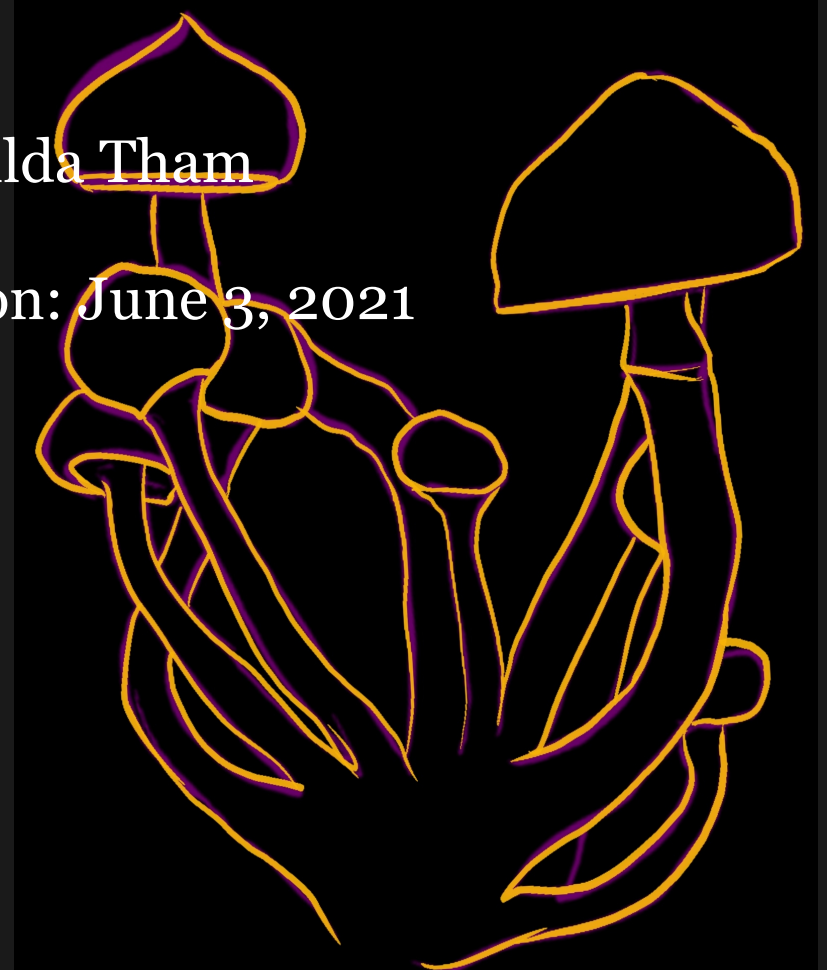
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Master of Arts in Design

Design + Change
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Abstract

The Graphic Journalism genre is emerging with influences from war reportage with authors like Joe Sacco. I would like to address and report the “War on Drugs” from small first hand experiences, personal connections, and a genuine deep desire to see the healthcare and justice system change.

The war on Drugs started in the 1970s during Richard Nixon’s term in the U.S. Presidency. Nixon’s influence to launch the “War on Drugs” campaign began shortly after two congressmen released a report on the growing heroin epidemic that affected hundreds to thousands of servicemen who fought in the Vietnam War, who used heroin to treat PTSD. Nixon launched unfair disconnected political policy and passed laws that disproportionately targeted those against him and his values (minorities, specifically African Americans and anyone belonging to the counterculture “subwhite”).

The War on Drugs movement started as a way to outcast and control minorities through unrealistic and systemically racist and oppressive laws. As the movement evolved so did its focus, the War on Drugs eventually metamorphosed into the “War on Class”, or a war against the economically disadvantaged.

The War on Drugs has done way more harm than good and immediate action needs to be taken to begin to restart drug policy in America and within the World. The incomparable Billie Holiday, world renowned jazz singer and creator of “Strange Fruit” once said “I need help. Not jail time.” Shortly after her arrest for heroin possession in 1947. In my opinion, these famous words that Billie Holiday shared during the day of her arrest should be the leading quote in the much needed movement against the criminalization of drug abuse victims.

Not only does the War on Drugs disproportionately disenfranchise black and brown communities, it makes researching the benefits of any type of narcotic that was not fully understood nearly impossible.

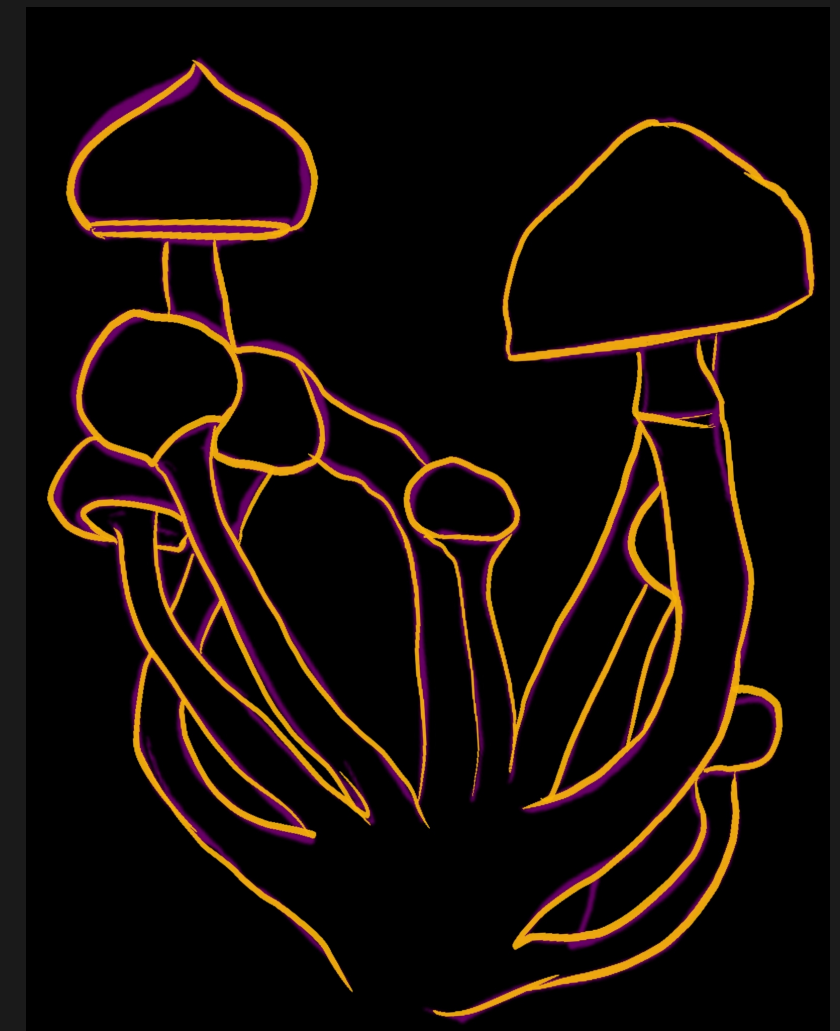
My goal is to reverse the taboos that currently exist throughout our society with a graphic novel/ zine aimed at high school students. I believe that future generations can benefit from natural hallucinogens and other forms of holistic medicines in a safe way that doesn’t involve them having to access illegal avenues of receiving narcotics in order to remedy their pain. Afterall, there is a far greater risk in taking street narcotics due to one’s ability to use an incorrect dosage according to their size and bodily chemistry which can ultimately lead to an overdose and street narcotics may include an unknown amount of ingredients, some of which include fentanyl, a synthetic product of prohibition that is cheaper than heroin, but far more powerful. Fentanyl is used pharmacologically in anesthesia and neuroleptanalgesia and can be extremely harmful to the mind and body.

I believe extremely deadly drugs like fentanyl would never exist if it wasn’t for the War on Drugs and its consistent agenda to demonize the usage of all narcotics without exploring the benefits of holistic medicines like hallucinogens and regulating the usage of these medicines through legalization, supervision, FDA regulation, and accessibility within the U.S, Healthcare System.

KEYWORDS War on Drugs, Hallucinogens, Narcotics, Healthcare System, U.S./North America

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Introduction

In comparison to graphic journalists like Joe Sacco, I do not have the same first hand in depth war reportage experiences, but I do have friends who unfortunately passed away due to opioid addictions. I also have friends and associates whom still struggle with opioid addiction and overdose scares to this day. The purpose of choosing the graphic novel medium is to tell a story, my story. Because I still believe “in the power of grand stories to move people and to inspire them to change the world.” (Adam Curtis). According to artists like Alan Moore stories can’t be described in words and are best described in comics and graphic novels. Like they say, a picture can be worth a thousand words and many times speed up the storytelling process. I believe visual narration has the potential to be more impactful and invite a wider audience than say a novel, which is why I chose to address opioid addictions and the pharmaceutical crises through visual art that any reader can interpret and understand. Visual narration helps me to express my thoughts, beliefs, and ideals more clearly. More importantly, visual narration makes it easier for me to emphasize the importance of alternative options for treating addiction, pain, and serious illnesses.

My graphic novel will present a world where care for the body through medication is not the default but a last resort option. I would like to analyze superficial treatments through a more critical lens by first addressing that many pharmaceutical companies are dedicated to treating the symptoms rather than discovering and evaluating the root causes of different diseases and illnesses. Based on my beliefs, the pharmaceutical companies' sole purpose is to profit from sickness, disease, and illness. These companies literally prey on the weak and take full advantage of the poor and undereducated. With that being said, the well-being of patients and overall human health is not at the forefront of big pharmaceutical companies' purpose, vision, or mission.

Therefore, I would like to explore the ethics of “care” within public policy to understand the intentions behind westernized medicine and healing practices. Furthermore, I would like to research recovery rates and returning illnesses of patients using natural medicines and practices in comparison to those who depend on westernized medicines to cure them. If my predictions are accurate, my research will reveal to the world that western medicine and traditional addiction treatments are not their only options nor the most appropriate option. If the powers that be could truly see both sides of the story they could make more informed decisions before demonizing and illegalizing drugs or in my opinion holistic remedies. For example, acupuncture is used as an alternative and holistic practice for addiction treatments. Acupuncture not only fights pain experienced by patients, but it presents absolutely no side effects or further addictions.

Though I am very strong in my opinions and more of a holistic user myself, the sole purpose of my research is not to dismiss or demonize western medicines and practices but to create a world where natural and traditional medicines are both used harmoniously. To ensure that health and care for all humans are the priority and at the forefront of public policy and the health profession.

In my world, western medicine exists but only as an option not the only option. In other words, my graphic novel will critique the modern standard approaches to medicine and care while contradicting the “witch hunt” on natural healing and medicine.

Within my graphic novel, I plan to explore the different elements of matters of care, speculative ethics, sustainability, and critiquing norms through design. I want to work with care of design, understanding our minds and bodies and then caring for those same minds and bodies.

Many of my professional and personal goals align with that of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which include but are not limited to: Good Health, Quality Education, Clean Water, and Sanitation. My project coincides with the “Good Health” global goals of the United Nations. My project will address what care looks like in public policy. It will critique the norm of prescription drugs and western medicine. This project will illustrate “symptom management” of Western medicine norms and explore how our society approaches healing practices. I would like to explore, research, understand, and respectfully adopt holistic traditions and medicines created and practiced by indigenous tribes from the Amazon basin in South America, Native Americans/First Nations People in the United States, and the Sami people of Scandinavia. I want to illustrate how the intimate knowledge of healing practices created and accumulated over thousands of years are often dismissed and replaced with technology without consideration of the repercussions on people, culture, and the environment. I want to discuss the counter concept of capitalism within healthcare, which is holistic healing.

I want to fully maximize my time in order to find a long term solution to the healthcare and opioid crisis in the U.S. and then translate those findings through a visual platform e.g. graphic novel, storytelling, and exhibits. Finding long term solutions that treat the root cause of the illness is crucial and has been throughout history not a quick band-aid solution that intends to turn a quick profit and leaves a slew of lifelong side effects due to negligence and lack of compassion. It is time for the U.S. Healthcare system to prioritize lifelong benefits for the body instead.


Indigenous cultures around the world deems it normal to give people time to heal. More importantly, a healthy work life balance and nutritional diet is prioritized and taken seriously in comparison to that of the average North American. In American society work is prioritized over all else including family, health, and life in general. Work translates to money and unconsciously higher stress levels which is liable to diminish one’s quality of life as well as their mental and physical health. At some point, U.S. Americans need to have a conversation about the long term effects of stress and bodily abuse. As it is common for unhealthy lifestyles to repeat itself throughout familial generations. Moreover, diseases and illnesses can be inherited, which contributes to this detrimental cycle of opioid abuse and an ever failing healthcare system.

Let’s use antidepressants and pain medication for example. Why not just let the body naturally heal by taking the necessary time off to rest? Most Americans and the U.S. do not have this luxury due to the pressure to produce and work. In North America time is money, so to take time off due to sickness or illness sounds like an unacceptable excuse to many employers and major corporations. Like a former boss once told me “You don’t get paid to sit at home, so unless you are bleeding to death or suffering from a few broken bones, you need to get to work because soon you will not have a job”. Based on that statement alone, it is easy for one to see how health culture within the United States is quite negative, on a daily basis people are encouraged to keep working as long as possible to the point that their health is completely compromised, especially during COVID times for minority and undocumented groups. Sweden, on the other hand, is one of those countries that I believe provides a fair amount of vacation time for its citizens. For example, men are awarded paternity leave during pregnancy. However, in the United States this is completely frowned upon and nearly impossible to be awarded. It is common for North American women to be laid off or permanently removed from their positions during the process of requesting maternity leave. In addition, if an American citizen were to use all of their paid time off and not return to work before that time expired, in most cases they would be deemed as lazy and not invested in their work. At some point, this culture of work, stress, and no time off has to be addressed and remedied as it is killing American people everyday and increasing their use of illegal narcotics and an overall unhealthy lifestyle.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

This project was created for young people unaware of holistic healing practices. My intention is to open the minds of people when considering natural medicines and remedies. I want to spread awareness of the myriad of health options available to them. I want people to understand that westernized medicines and practices are not the only way. I want to educate communities and denounce the misinformation and demonization that haunts natural medicines and practices to this day. In my opinion, all drugs are not bad and should not be illegal though I do believe that they should be FDA approved and used in moderation with some supervision, if necessary. God created the resources that inhabit this earth for a reason, I do not believe that he made any mistakes when doing that, therefore it is time for us to explore and ask the most important questions of “why”, “how”, and “what”. Why do these natural hallucinogens grow from the earth? What are their benefits? How should they be used? What should these natural medicines be used with? What can these natural medicines contribute to our society? What should we know about these natural hallucinogens? How can we safely and properly test these natural medicines on the human body? How can these natural medicines contribute to science and the healthcare system as a whole? I believe that spreading awareness and educating our youth makes room for necessary research, informed decisions, and reformation of laws, practices, and the entire U.S. Healthcare System. “Good decisions require the people making them to be critically informed” (Thorpe, Anne. Fry, Tony). My graphic novel is a theoretical art form of a world that thrives on work, stress, opioid addictions, and control. As a result, depression, fatigue, anxiety, and frustration haunts a young man eventually leading him to flee his community in order to pursue a new way of life. This new way of life embraces a new way of life that includes holistic herbs, natural medicines, exercise, a balanced diet and mindset. The young man is impressed by his ability to function and properly navigate life after adopting a holistic way of healing and living that he returns back to his community and shares what he has learned and consumed. This theoretical framework is one that I would like to adopt within my own community, and this can only be created once we open our minds up to different ways of healing and being.

The United States healthcare system has an irrational methodological approach to healing and care. Many large pharmaceutical companies only focus is to gain profit and deny responsibility. It seems like for every one pill you take there are 15 unwarranted side effects. In my opinion, this is due to the healthcare systems unreasonable principles and intentions to treat the symptom rather than the cause of the illness, sickness, or disease. This absolutely has to stop or we will continue to see the continuous decline in the American health and health practices.




Within my graphic novel I aim to create a world where the methodological approach to healing and care prioritizes the preservation of the human population. The underlying principles of my work entail self care, informed research, and an exploration of medical options. I want to be clear that I am not against western medicine therefore, my argument is not to replace western medicine with holistic practices, eastern medicine, and psychoactive drugs. My analytical approach argues that people need to see a world where westernized medicine and holistic healing practices can live harmoniously, for the betterment of humankind. I believe that westernized medicine and holistic healing practices should both be taken seriously and patients should have confidence that their doctor made the most sound and informed decision on how to treat their illness whether it be with a more westernized or more holistic approach. In all, I believe that all humankind should receive the best medical care for them, not the cheapest/ most affordable option and certainly not the whatever option is available that is intended to make pharmaceutical companies the most amount of money. My analytical approach is to provide all peoples with the best medical options to suit their individual needs, while keeping in mind the long term effects.

Public opinion plays a large role in getting laws passed, or allowing research to be funded, and allowing new methods to be introduced. So I think this project and I, as a design agent, can take this small step in swaying, convincing, and shedding new light on things that need to be said and need to be illustrated. Politicians will adjust their opinion to get votes; even if they don't believe the facts, they will lobby for what will keep them in office. So, in a way, we can use greed to our advantage for a greater purpose. The Media creates scare stories for viewers and publicity. Behind every drug scare story, there is an exaggeration, explanation, or other side that credits, or explains why this terrible thing happened. Yes, drugs are a huge part of the opioid crisis in America, but it is not the only reason. For example, in major celebrity deaths, the media can report that there were traces of a specific drug found in the blood of the corpse, and you might think that could have been weeks prior to the incident. A number of other factors can determine why this thing happened such as heart attacks, strokes, and other underlying health conditions.

Or for example when George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer in 2020 the fact that he had Fentanyl and methamphetamine in his system was brought up as a key discussion point in several reportings as if it was relevant to his case or his unjustifiable murder.

Journalists should not mold public opinion and should be aware of how much influence they have. They also want to sell newspapers and profit from controversy. It's crazy how quickly public opinion can change based on one story. If a celebrity agrees or disagrees with something, it can have a massive influence. This shouldn't be the case. Maybe in some small way, graphic novels can sway the opinion in a positive direction.



Contextual Analyses

Care is everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (Jean Tronto). "That world includes our bodies, ourselves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Matters of care, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa).

Care and Matters of Care continue to be a worldwide problem, but I am choosing to focus specifically on the U.S. Healthcare System as I have a little over 30 years of personal experience navigating through the United States Healthcare System. More importantly, the U.S. is commonly deemed as one of the worst places for opioid addictions. The opioid crisis' mere existence, and origins is unique to the US Healthcare and Justice systems. Due to North America's capitalistic way of life and cultural tendency to exploit minority, undocumented, economically disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Moreover, the U.S. has a unique history and nearly an obsession with demonizing drugs, making them illegal, and then using the media to create hysteria around natural herbs, hallucinogens, and other holistic medicines in order to control and outcast minority groups. An example of this is the discrimination experienced by the Japanese population living in the US between the 1940's and 50's. During this specific time Japanese people were demonized for their usage of opium. The Japanese population in the U.S. were declared as lazy, unintelligent, violent, rapists. Extreme accusations of drug abuse within communities of color and the demonization of minority populations still exist today. "They are not our friend, believe me," ...They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Former U.S. President, Donald J. Trump). "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best,...They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people " (Former U.S. President, Donald J. Trump). Obviously, these types of statements are a detriment to the image of minority groups and America as a whole, but as it relates to my topic of student these inappropriate statements have strongly influenced the miseducation of medicine within the U.S. Healthcare System.

Process

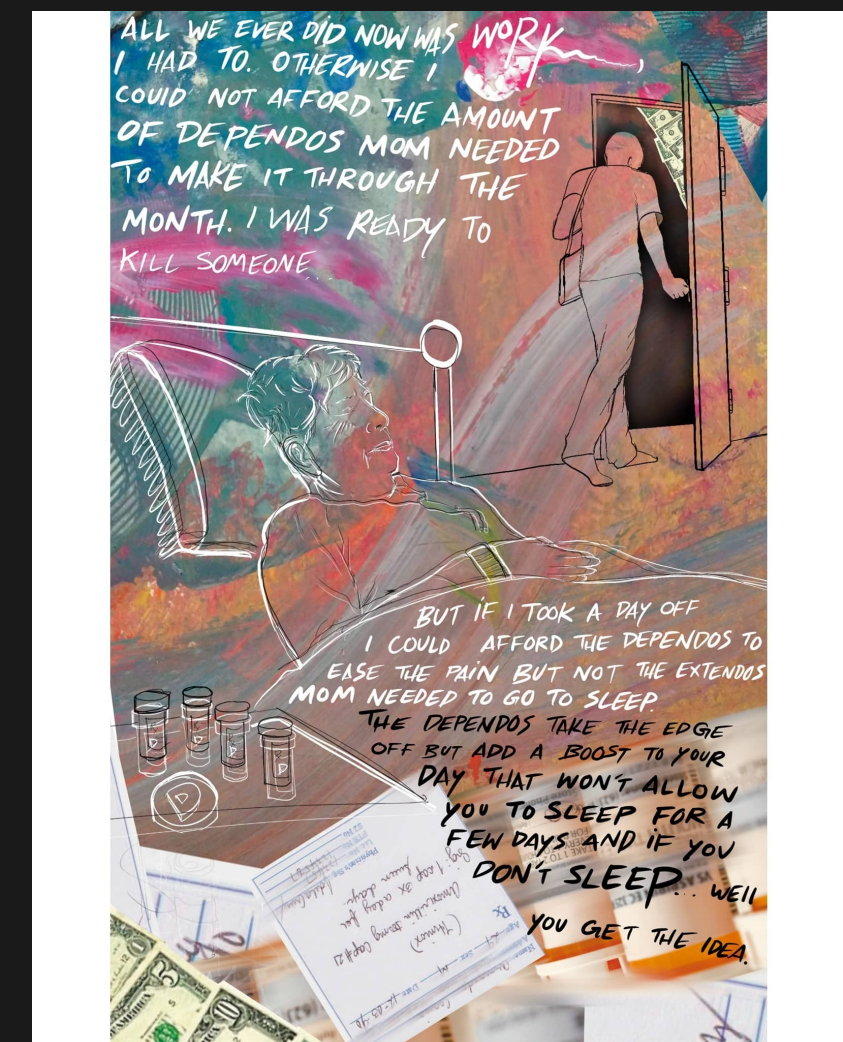
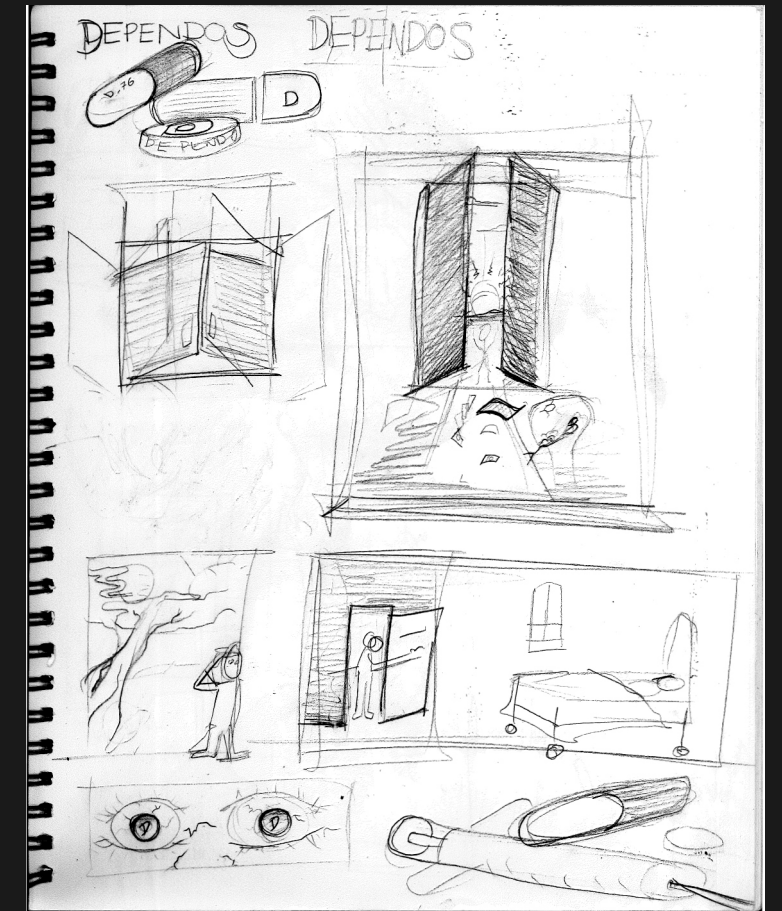
Initially, I wanted to propose a universe where holistic drugs were legal, where the foundation of the story would show the transition of the time of Prohibition to when holistic healing is legalized. Allowing me to highlight the benefits and defects of both westernized and holistic healing practices. In my initial process I considered the first chapter to be some sort of series that explored the legalization of holistic medicines and how that would change the course of our world's history. I pondered upon a few questions: what would happen to religion, politics and society as a whole? This thought process led me down a complicated hole and motivated me to shift my focus a bit.

I started on a path to make the book about holistic treatment in general, but found it was too broad to get something done in this amount of time so I focused on psilocybin and tried to think of it as the first part in a greater series I can continue on later. There are several hallucinogens that have therapeutic benefits when taken responsibly like LSD, Ketamine, Ayahuasca. I choose to focus on psilocybin because to me it feels like more of a universal drug that transcends groups of peoples and eras of time and naturally grows in different parts of the world.

I plan to tell a story about the implementation of holistic healing through images, design, and storytelling. I want to use comics to try to give the reader the same experience I got when I found out these terrible facts and what I experienced first hand. A photo can do that also but a visual narrative can, in a different way, build setting. I chose the medium of a graphic novel because of its ability to capture the reader's attention, especially youth. Choosing a graphic novel medium provided me the artistic flexibility to quickly develop a story, which includes a plot, a setting, a climax, and a resolution. I believe that choosing the graphic novel granted me the opportunity to make a controversial and political topic more palatable and digestible for all audiences.

“Thinking of the open page as looking into a memory” -Joe Sacco. Chris Ware says “Comics really are a collage of images, a collage of different versions of the same story.” Visual art and comics are powerful. For example, the New York Times banned them because of media outcry over the illustrated Benjamin Netanyahu. They were afraid of the power of the cartoon.

There are a lot of similarities between my work, my design, and my academic references. What I think differs, between me and them, is the way I choose to tell my story. Discoveries are being made by me of how and what I want to say and why it's important. My process is research. Find out why I choose a topic. Find out what I want to say and why I want to say it. Finding out who I want to say it to helps me design the comic. Also by asking people questions, creating storyboards, listening to experts and doctors in medicine, helps me create an impactful story. “Escobar is here important in that he aligns himself alongside critiques of colonialism. He draws heavily on Foucauldian notions of power/ knowledge and Said's work on Orientalism to make the point that what is needed is a different regime of truth other than the ones in place. What that might be he does not offer clear clues on, and this is the space where post-development critiques have repeatedly faulted” Gibson-Graham (2001, 1996, p. 22.)

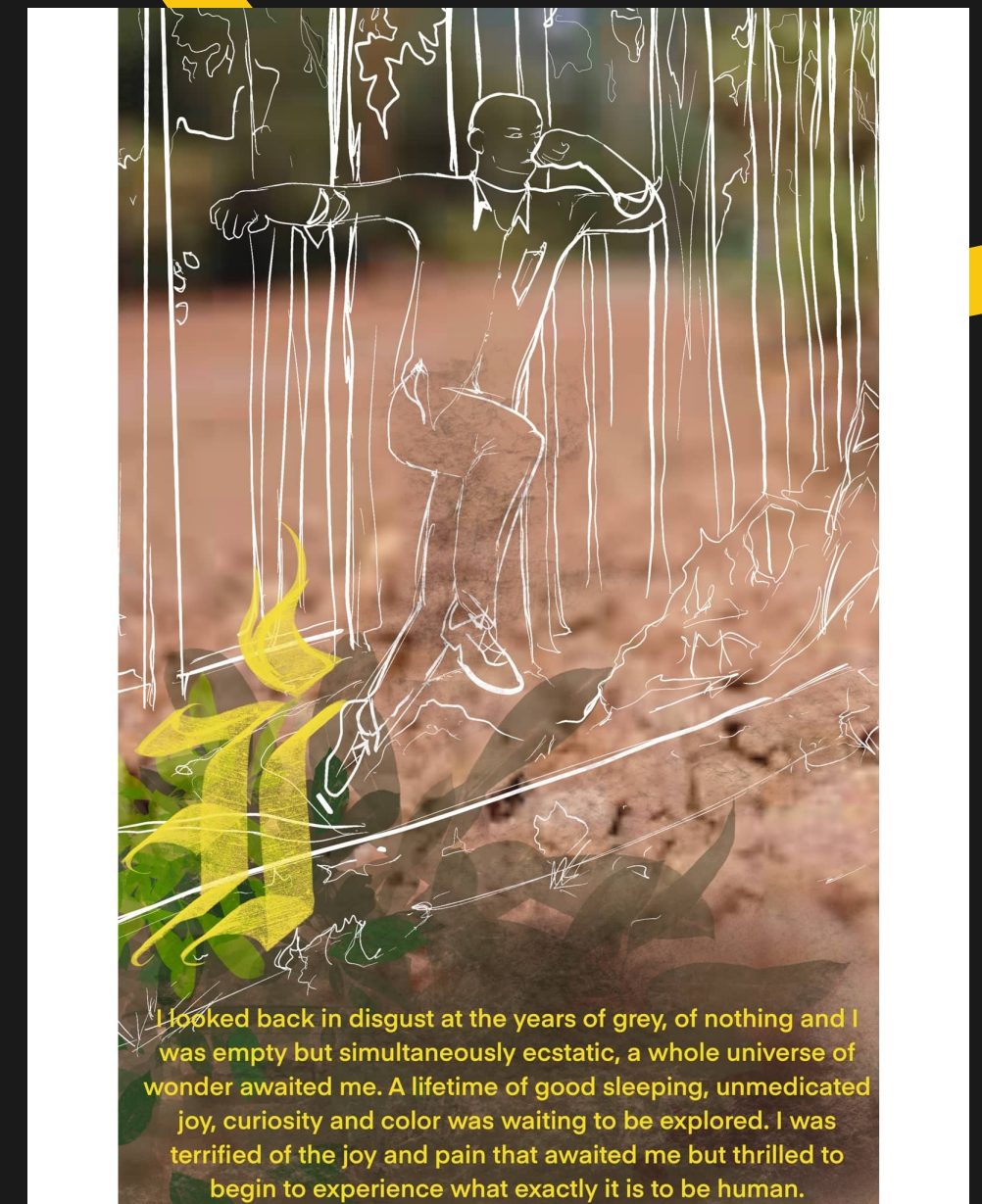


Motivation

After doing some public arts projects here in Sweden as well as most of my art career, I was turned off due individual expectations, which can many times dilute artistic ideals and creativity.

I thought trying to describe my vision was difficult to do in Chicago with native speakers, but then I came to Sweden and experienced both language and cultural barriers. Every project I felt like I was just being held back, restricted and never felt like I fully could do a completely successful project. With that being said, I wanted to do something that didn't really have to rely on convincing anyone else or asking permission or meeting a certain criteria and just do a project that had some meaning.

This graphic novel had personal meaning to me due to the many friends and loved ones that I have lost due to opioid addictions. I felt that this story, this topic, is one that needs to be addressed as I would hate to see this major issue continue to affect my friends and other youth today. In all, this graphic novel and project is bigger than me and any art that I have created in the past.





Design Project

My graphic novel tells a story of a young man's journey of breaking free from a society plagued with addiction, depression, anxiety, repetition, and work. This society is controlled by an oppressive ruler who profits from large manufacturing companies and mass drugging with an opiod called Dependo. After questioning everyday life and "the way things are" the young man decides to break free by fleeing his community and while on his journey meets a Healer who was forced into hiding by the ruler. The Healer is outcasted due to his natural ways of life and holistic healing practices.

Reluctant to trust, the young man questions the Healer's daily practices and mindset as they are unfamiliar and foreign to the young man's life experiences. After the young man decides to put his guard down and become more open to the teachings and practices of the Healer, he begins to notice major differences in his mind and body. The young man begins to feel energetic, awake, rejuvenated, and alive. After the young man is completely healed of Dependo addiction and lack of life's purpose. He decides to return back to his community with the Holistic Healing Booklet and intention to educate the people. After implementing holistic medicines, practices, and tips from the booklet the people start to feel and do better, eventually leading to the overthrowing of the ruler.

My graphic novel demonstrates a world with a more holistic approach to life by criticizing westernized modern approaches to medicine and care while contradicting the demonization of holistic healing otherwise known as the "witch hunt" through writing, imagery and storytelling.



Synopsis

I set out to explore how sequential art can be a medium of change. Through my graphic novel I have presented a world where care for the body via medicine is the number one priority rather than a vehicle for financial gain and profit. My artwork aims to analyze superficial treatments that focus on the symptoms rather than the causes of illness and disease through a critical artistic lens.

Challenges

The U.S. Healthcare System is a depressing topic to begin with whether I am personally connected to it or not. Trying not to allow my personal connection to the subject take over the process and not letting my emotions take over, during the creation and execution of this project was very challenging, especially as an artist.

Another challenge that I faced while creating this graphic novel is avoiding indigeneity. First, I thought maybe I should adopt or use influences from an indigenous community that at least is in the same country as where my family originated from, like the Sami,. but then I realized even if my grandmother is from an area where Sami lived at one point that doesn't really give me the right to talk about it either, so I choose to go with something that is universal and more general , in a kind of science fiction near future style, this way I can focus on the creative part and not feel constrained from worrying about coming off as orientalist. Like the white lady in EAT, PRAY, LOVE. Lastly, I have never written a graphic novel, therefore it is unfamiliar territory and was a rather challenging medium for me to tackle.

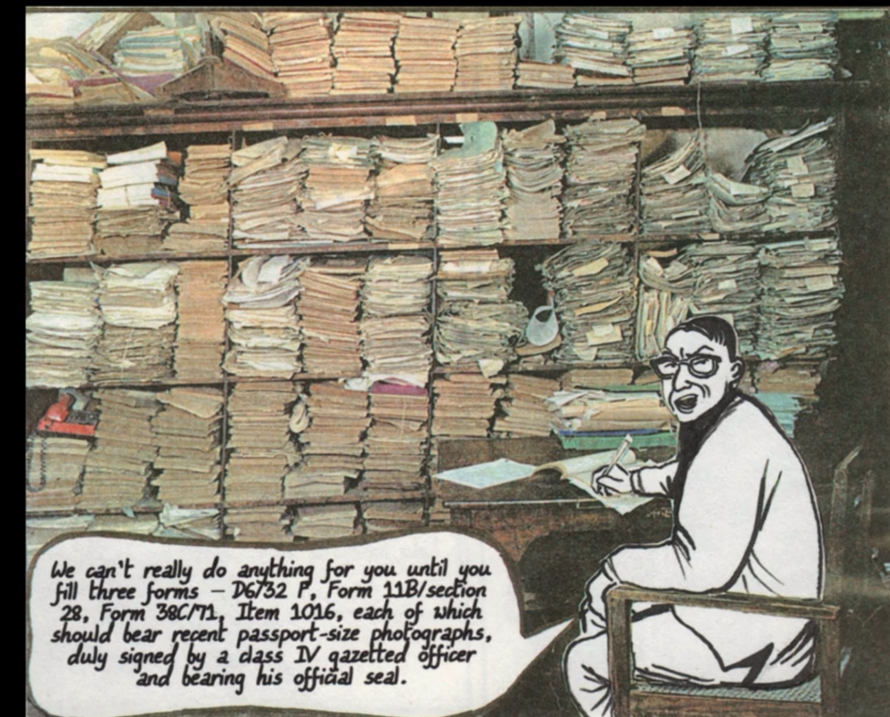


Tutorial Feedback

Abishek encouraged me not to be literally and metaphorically confined to the box format of traditional comics or held back by a medium I am unfamiliar with. Abishek encouraged me to approach my graphic novel as I would approach a mural or painting. This feedback helped me to think more freely and not feel so constrained, or that I had to deliver what people believed a graphic novel should or shouldn't be.

My sessions with my external tutor, graphic novelist, Sarnath Banerjee influenced me to not only draw with pencil and ink but to create with brush and collage and to think of the blank page as a canvas that will accept any medium. Banarjee's sometimes surreal perspective guided me into approaching comics as a Surreal filmmaker would. For example, Alejandro Jodorowsky; his work reminded me that the Genre of Graphic Novels is just that "a genre", a general guide, a sign in the corner of the book store. An old arrow shaped sign telling you that the beach is somewhere that way and it's up to you to explore and find out exactly how to get there. At the end of the day, as an artist it is your work and can be approached in any manner you see fit. Whether that be a more classic children's story book approach or a more painterly collage approach.

Anthony Wagner was a great help in giving me the guidance and confidence to write fiction throughout the 2019-2020 school year.



Big Pharma and the COVID Vaccine

The War on Drugs, Big Pharma's role in healthcare, and more recently Big Pharma's role in the Covid Vaccine; these real world topics eclipse and hold more weight than any fabricated story a science fiction author could produce. So I tried to show a real world scenario in a somewhat exaggerated different world to reflect what is happening in ours. Invite readers to approach something in a slightly new light to gain a new perspective on it. A world similar to our world but not our world. "Good science fiction is able to deconstruct our world. It holds a mirror to us and you see in that world the relevant messages of our own." - Watchmen Documentary

The advent of covid has created a dangerously high increase in overdoses. One of the best weapons in the fight against drug addiction is human connection. Addiction is an isolating trap that thrives on loneliness, we are more isolated now than ever. Deaths due to overdose of drugs like heroin, and fentanyl have increased heavily since the pandemic began. 2020 held a 20% increase in overdose deaths and the highest total deaths in US history. According to the center for disease control, 81,003 died due to overdoses in a 12 month period ending in June 2020.

Some have been blinded by the pharmaceutical industry's quick response with Covid vaccines forgetting that companies like "Purdue Pharma pleaded guilty to criminal charges" in 2020 for the sale of OxyContin. - Financial Times. However While the world struggles with covid Big Pharma companies are more concerned with patents than with providing their tools and knowledge to help ease the pandemic. Depending on major corporations for our well being is clearly no longer an option.

People have neglected, deflected, and ignored many issues that lie right in front of them, but due to COVID restrictions, stay in orders, and constant shutdowns people are forced to see what they really are and who they really are. Nowadays it seems as though the common prescription is mandatory mirror time to sit with yourself and reflect on who you really are. How can people be expected to deliver their best when they don't know who they are? This is a time for healing, self care and issues like addiction, escapism. These past almost two years have forced people to confront their demons.

It is believed that developing mindfulness can fight harmful diseases especially addiction and depression, and I believe holistic drugs like psilocybin can guide people to achieving this mindfulness. Combining therapy with Micro Dosing can help one achieve these levels of being comfortable in your own mind and body enough that you don't easily fall into cycles and traps of depression and addiction.

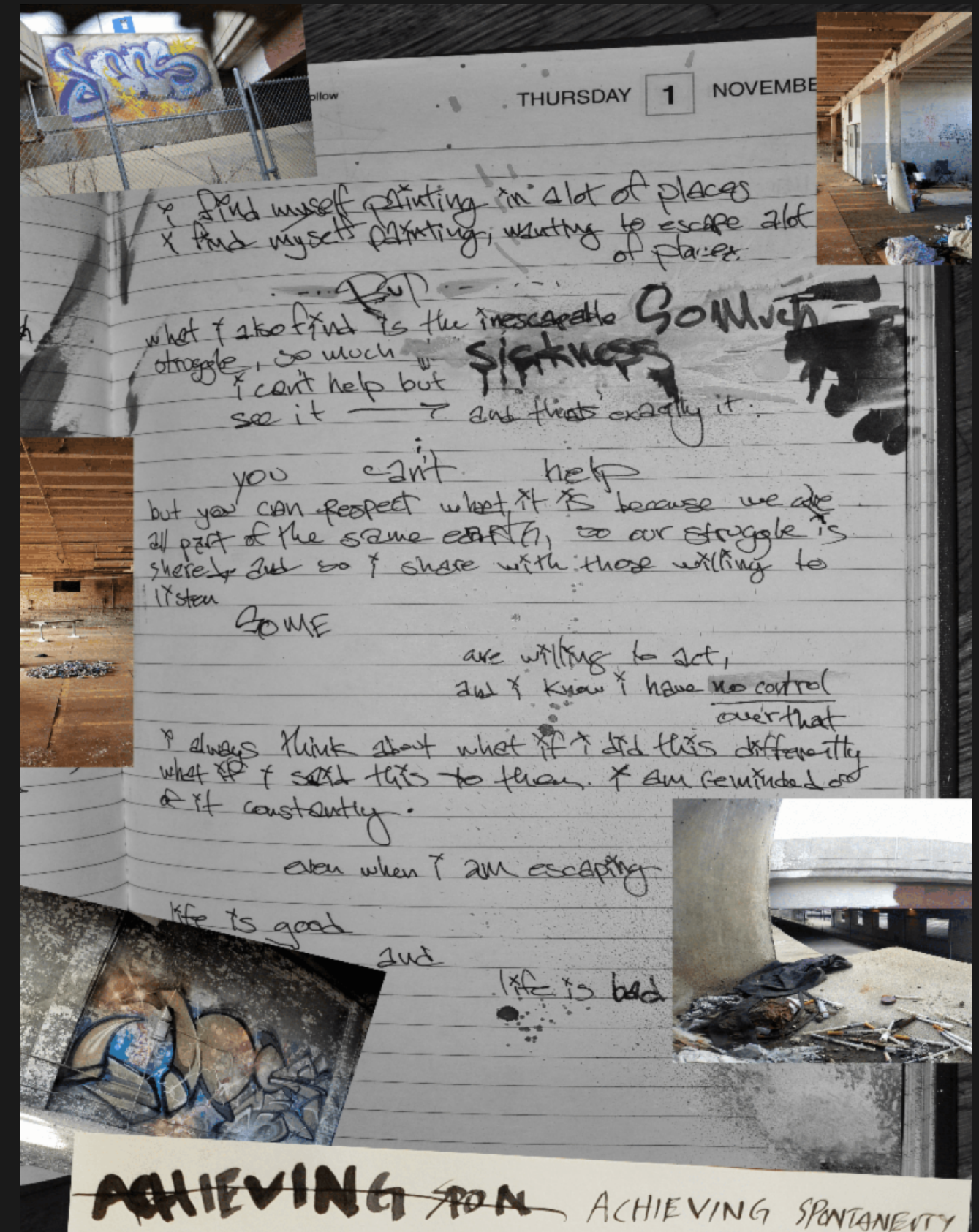
Moving Forward

In the future, I would like to collaborate with people who suffer from substance use disorders (SUD) in the creation process, so that they can tell their personal stories through illustration and visual display of artwork. The victim's voice is one that isn't always heard. I believe that giving SUD victims a stage to express themselves would greatly benefit people coming from all walks of life.

In a performative writing assignment in a previous module I asked fellow artists and writers to spontaneously write about norms in society that they would like to deconstruct and then using any medium they choose, decorate the page. I asked them to try to do it spontaneously because I felt it allowed for the most honest uninterrupted work to be created. I was happy with the results and planned to explore that in this project.

I decided to focus on my graphic novel because I did not want to stray too far from the goal I originally set out to make. Now that I have what is closer to a finished product I can better explain to participants what the goal is with a visual aid. I can show what I wanted to say and how I choose to say it and hopefully it will inspire them to create.

I would like to gather the short stories and present them together like Renga, the "linked-verse poetry in which two or more poets supplied alternating sections of a poem." Also gaining influence from Akira Kurosawa's Dreams, a "magical realist film of eight vignettes, inspired by actual dreams that Kurosawa claimed to have," I would like to present them in this manner. A collection of different stories that have their own unique styles, stories presented together relating to a common topic in some way or the other told from different author's viewpoints, like the Animatrix.



Conclusion

Awareness and discussion are the first steps to change & I feel I can realistically play a role in sustainable change through art. I have developed a very deep appreciation for the storyteller since creating this graphic novel, whether it is an author or movie director, because it is very difficult to create artwork that is intentional, impactful, entertaining and visually pleasing. This project has given me much perspective on ways I can facilitate art while contributing my visual skills. The invitation to create a + Change project will forever affect how I approach anything I create moving forward.

Overall, the Design + Change program at Linnaeus University has taught me the importance of creating art bigger than oneself. As a young artist in Chicago, my main focus was creating art that was visually pleasing to the eye. Chicago is a city that is full of art and different artists so it is important that your art looks good, so that it can stand out and actually be recognized. Within the Design + Change program I have learned how to implement meaning and intentionality behind the artwork that I create which I believe will help me to stand out as an artist, rising professional, and family man.

Moving forward, I want to be able to share this gift to other young artists like myself and express to them that it is ok to have passionate, meaningful, and emotional artwork. Especially for young males, whose cultural norms tell them that it is not ok to feel or to have emotions or to simply be moved by someone or something. I guess if I was to sum up the Design + Change program into one phrase, it would be called “The Artistic Movement” and that is exactly what I want my art to demonstrate in the future “a movement” for social, economical, and racial equality.

The Exhibition

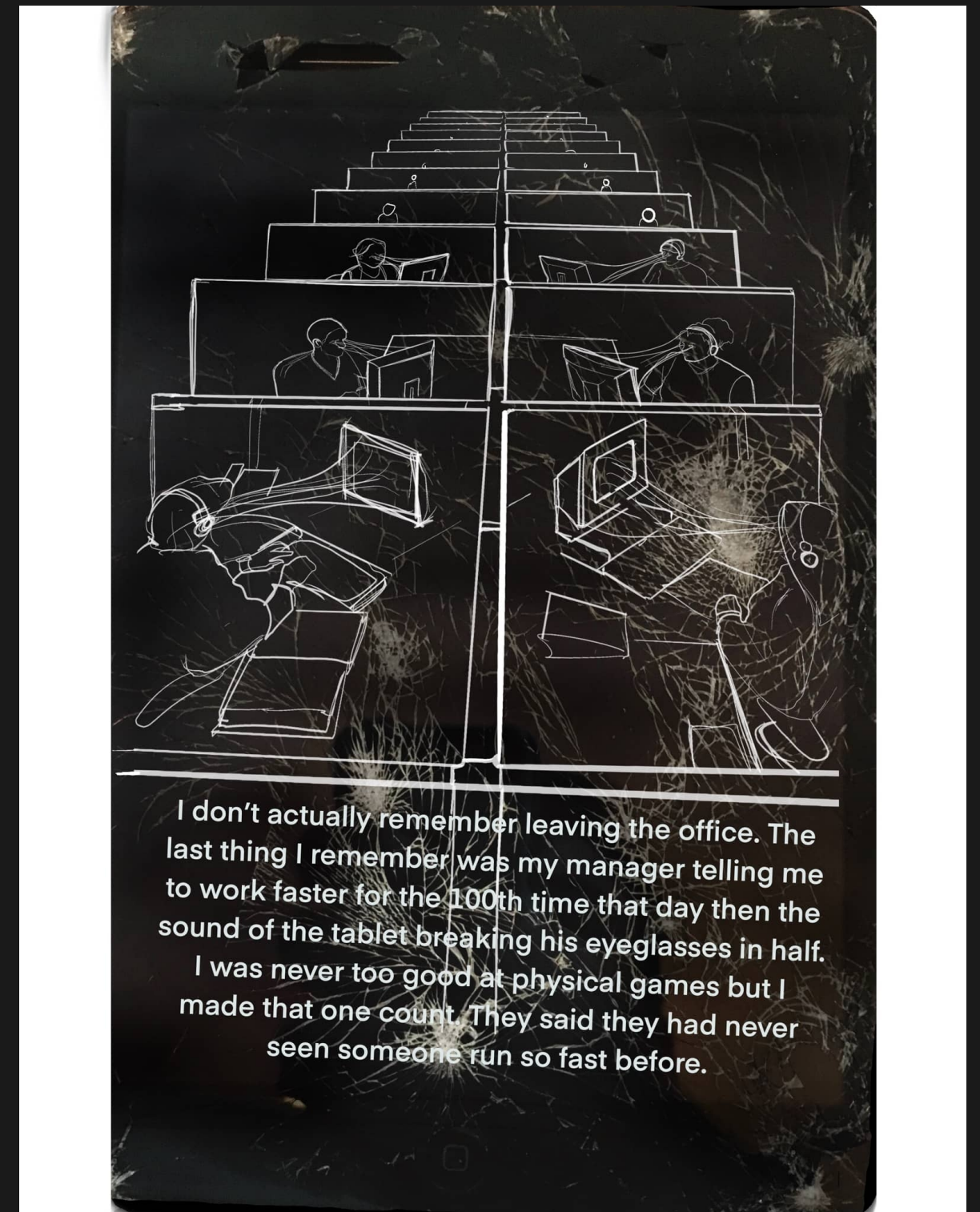
Displaying an exhibition on a wordpress site and not in a physical space was a challenge.

I wanted to try something I never have so I went with a format that kind of forces you to look at it closely, instead of a traditional gallery, click on thumbnail approach. The scroll down of the full screen in your face format gave me the feel of a comic in a digital form, I think the fake page flipping gallery format would not look right. The scroll down option looks good both on a phone and a laptop/ pc whereas the page flipping format only looks good on a laptop/pc. I was not able to achieve it exactly as I wanted to but I was aiming for the pages to overlap so when it is viewed on a phone or a PC it seems like one continuous scroll with each page interweaving into the next.

I was able to achieve this in my performative writing which can be seen in the Project Book. Also this is what I want to expand on as I mentioned in the Moving Forward section.

I received some good feedback but not as much you may expect when exhibiting in a physical space with a vernissage. In hindsight I could have focused on the fact that this project would be experienced primarily digitally and focused on the interweaving scrolling method of viewing the project.

I feel like I could have pursued printing and distributing a small number of the project to get a feel for it. It is always good to see your product in the physical form and to see how it compares to the digital.



Key Points of Context

Big Pharma = Big Capitalism

Exposing :

- Lack of proper addiction treatment/ healthcare
- It's too expensive
- It's too exclusive
- Big Pharma's hand in opioid crisis
- Making pills super addictive, which makes people dependent. They are cut off. Then turn to heroin
- Doctors encouraged to overprescribe
- Construction of manufactured symptoms
- In cahoots with psychology
- Big Pharma and healthcare system's main motivation is greed
- Big Pharma Greed and Covid Vaccine
- Covid's effect on opioid/ heroin addicts (Dangerously high increase in overdoses)
- The appearance of fentanyl and how and why it is here. It is a product of the war on Drugs. Why it's a threat and why everyone should be aware of it.



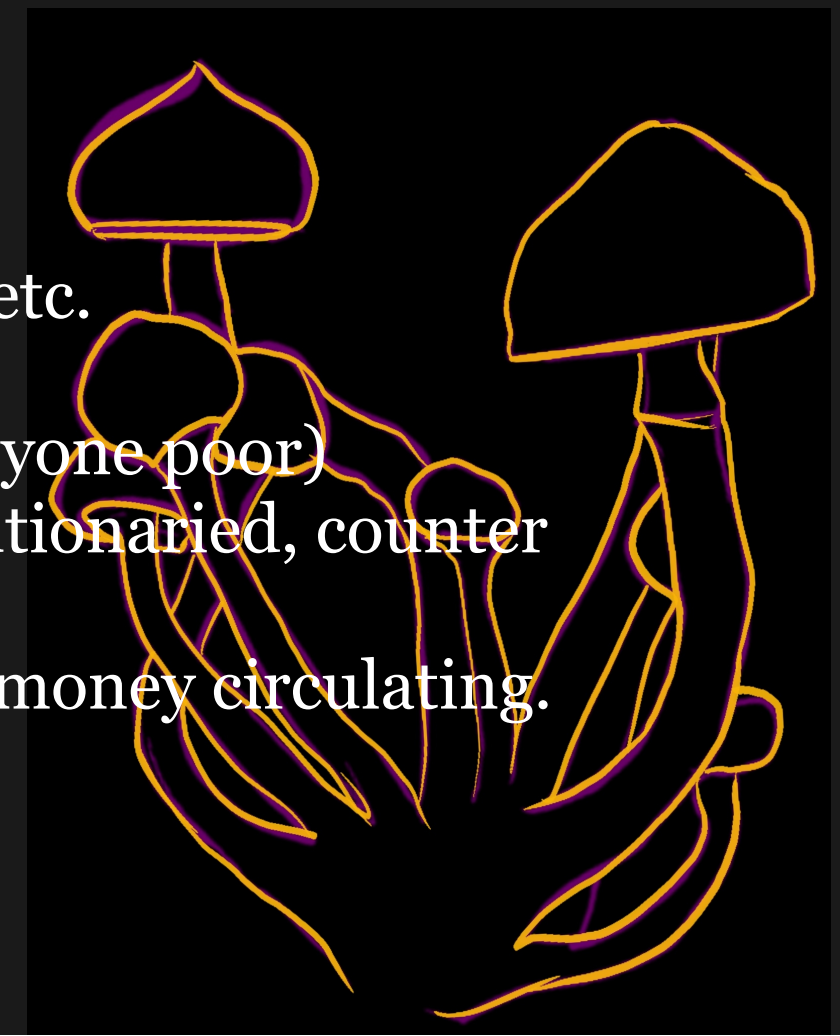
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War on Drugs = War on Class

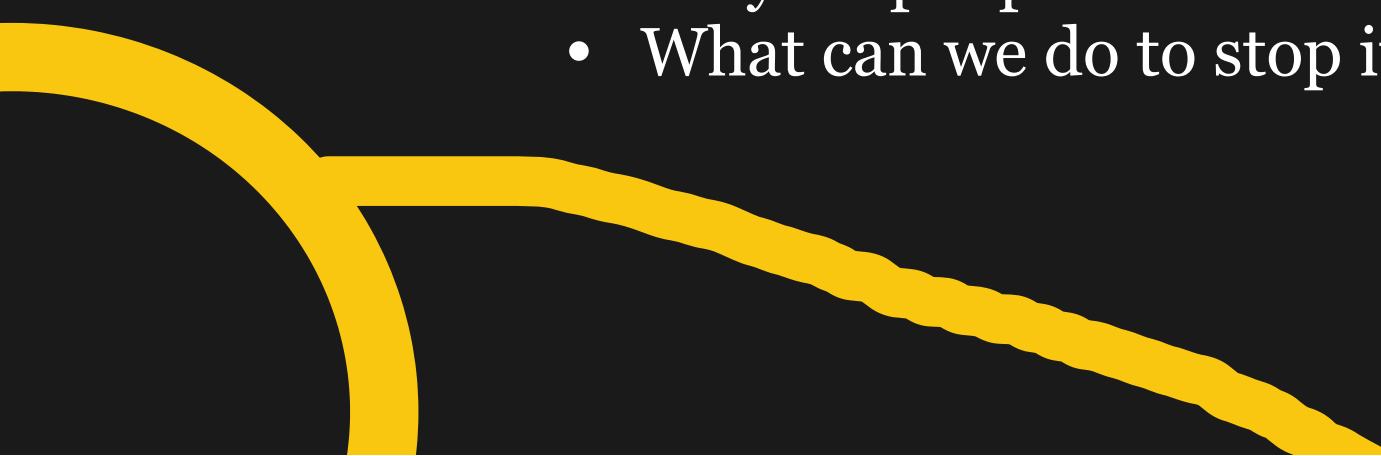
- The shady origins of the "War on Drugs" throughout history
 - Was never about drugs, It's about control. Controlling people, money etc.
 - Started as a war on minorities (japanese, Mexicans, Blacks)
- Evolved to war on class, especially the bottom 15% (factory workers, anyone poor)
- Used to physically and mentally control minorities, poor people, revolutionaries, counter culture etc.
- It's about keeping police, the justice and prison system busy by keeping money circulating.
- Why does it do more harm than good?
- Why the General Public has no Idea what is going on,



Care

- The counter concept of capitalism
- Putting genuine thought behind something
- Understanding ourselves first before helping others
- Caring for ourselves
- Focusing more on people than on Medicine
- Focusing on progress not on profit
- Taking our time
- Not rushing to find a solution
- Caring-Not at the cost of others

Care In:

- Regulating Big Pharma
 - Politics/Policy
 - Prison/Justice system
 - Government
 - New Law Making Process
 - Abolishing old laws
 - Freeing prisoners jailed for these crimes
 - Medical Education
 - Holding Doctors Accountable for unlawful prescriptions
 - Why do people use these drugs?/ Why are people in pain (physical and mental)?
 - What can we do to stop it, not profit off it?
- 

Holistic Healing and Addiction Treatment

- Therapy/Art Therapy
- Human Connection
- Spiritual Awareness
- Exercise/ Yoga
- Getting outdoors/ being in nature/ absorbing sunlight
- Breathing Exercise
- Psychoactive Drugs/ Microdosing
- Proper Addiction treatment in prison system

Combining Holistic Healing & Western Medicine, Technology and Science

- Option to choose between the two
- Implementing best of both practices together

Awareness and Education

- Spreading awareness
- Properly archiving important knowledge and skills
- A more in depth honest education including holistic to pharmaceuticals, the side effects of these and gaining a better knowledge of dosage
- Thorough education and training for doctors



Glossary/Key Terms

Care- “everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair ‘our world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible.” (Jean Tronto)

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) - A more caring way to refer to a person addicted to drugs.

Sequential Art- art forms that uses images deployed in a specific order for the purpose of graphic storytelling. Comics, Comic Books, Graphic Novels, Anime, Zines, Collage

Holistic Healing - Practice of health and wellness that considers the entire person and all of the internal and external factors affecting them. Balance is the key to holistic healing.

Wellness - the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of “holistic” health.

Opioid- Opioids are substances that act on opioid receptors to produce morphine-like effects. Medically they are primarily used for pain relief, including anesthesia. - Wikipedia

Fentanyl- Fentanyl, also spelled fentanil, is a powerful opioid used as a pain medication and together with other medications for anesthesia. It is also used as a recreational drug, sometimes mixed with heroin, methamphetamine, or cocaine.- Wikipedia

Methadone clinic -a clinic which has been established for the dispensing of medications used in the treatment of opiate dependence.

Hallucinogens aka Psychedelics- I choose to use the word Hallucinogen because I feel the classification and word psychedelic has been co-opted by mainstream media and associated with the negative sides of the 1960's counter culture.

- A [psychoactive agent](#) that often or ordinarily causes [hallucinations](#), [perceptual](#) anomalies, and other substantial subjective changes in [thought](#), [emotion](#), and [consciousness](#) that are not typically experienced to such degrees with other drug classifications. - Wikipedia

as healing for mental health, alcohol and drug abuse.
a diverse group of drugs that alter a person's awareness of their surroundings as well as their own thoughts and feelings. - drugabuse.gov

Micro-dosing- Microdosing psychedelics is the practice of consuming very low, sub-hallucinogenic doses of a psychedelic substance, such as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) or psilocybin-containing mushrooms - biomedcentral.com

Psilocybin Mushrooms- An informal group of [fungi](#) that contain [psilocybin](#) which turns into [psilocin](#) upon ingestion. -Wikipedia

Psilocin- a [substituted tryptamine alkaloid](#) and a [serotonergic psychedelic substance](#). -Wikipedia

Mental Health- "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" - World Health Organization

PTSD - Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. - mayoclinic.org/

ADHD - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a mental health disorder that can cause above-normal levels of hyperactive and impulsive behaviors. People with ADHD may also have trouble focusing their attention on a single task or sitting still for long periods of time. - healthline.com

Ontology - The philosophical study of being (how the world works). Care for our environment. Learning to look at the world in a new perspective.

Divination - To be inspired by a god. The practice of seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means.

Priestess/ Sear/ Shaman/ Healer - Elders or wise men or women thought to have been able to communicate with higher beings and heal and guide people. I choose to use the word Healer in my project because it is not directly associated with a religion or indigenous peoples.

Curanderos - Healer/ Traditional native healer

Chiric Sanango - A flowering shrub used to treat ailments ranging from arthritis to cancer.

Fiserv waited to release the vaccine until Trump left so that he couldn't claim it.
Fiserv- big pharma makes "Opioids m and m's". Also make men's erection pills
Makes Suboxone- (gets u off of opiods)
Biontech / Pfizer

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgHEGMakxQA&t=1328s>

Methadone clinic -a clinic which has been established for the dispensing of medications used in the treatment of opiate dependence.

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