

DEATH: LIFE'S GREATEST MYSTERY



FIELD.
MUSEUM

DEATH: LIFE'S GREATEST MYSTERY

Exhibition Details

Size: 7,500 ft² (700 m²)

Ceiling Height: 12 ft (3.66 m)

Tour: Fall 2023 – Fall 2028

Curators:

Gary Feinman, Ph.D.

MacArthur Curator of Mesoamerican, Central American, and East Asian Anthropology
Field Museum

Ryan Williams, Ph.D.

Associate Curator, Department of Anthropology
Field Museum

Dr. Luis Muro Ynoñán

Anthropology Postdoctoral Scientist
Field Museum



*Ch'ruwáan ts'ruwa ts'ruwa
back to the world of the living
Los ofrendas invitan a los seres
queridos a regresar al mundo
de los vivos*

*This ofrenda is dedicated to my family, originally from
La Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala, Mexico.
Their memory will forever live in our hearts.
La foto de mi padre es la única en color porque él es quien
la tomé, pero después él me dio. Su memoria quedará en
mi corazón y siempre será un recuerdo que me ayudará a
avanzar en mi vida y a ser feliz.*

—Norma Rios Sierra, la artista

WITH THANKS TO:
Caldemina "Pito" Sierra
Dagoberto Sierra Uru
Diosdado Sierra Uru
Pedro and Carmen Sierra
María and Cristina Medina

*En honor a los difuntos ofrendas
de flores y velas que los seres
queridos les hacen para que
puedan regresar al mundo de
los vivos.*

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Features

- 100 objects and specimens from Anthropology, Zoology, Geology, and Botany collections
- 5 replications, including reconstructions of a whale fall diorama and a tardigrade replica at 4,000 times its actual size
- 6 digital and sensory interactive elements
- Exhibition does not contain human remains





Cultural and biological perspectives hold possible answers to big questions about death and life.

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

Consider your own “big questions” about death as you explore natural and cultural responses to life’s inevitable conclusion.

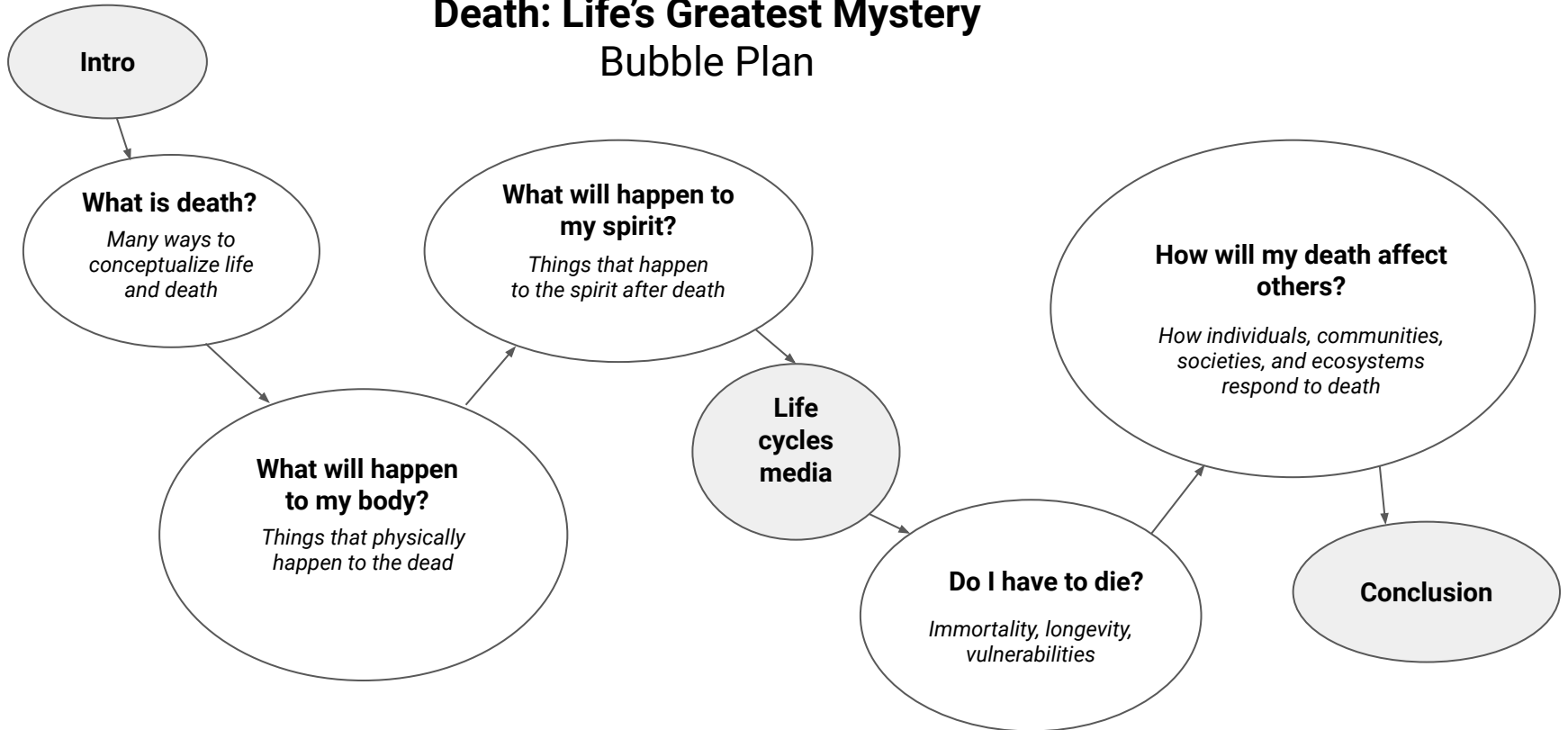
Exhibition Summary

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

Through artifacts, specimens, interactives, and immersive media experiences, discover amazing animal adaptations for survival and learn how various cultures commemorate life. Reflect on death as part of the cycle of life, and leave with a profound new understanding of life's most universal experience.

Death: Life's Greatest Mystery

Bubble Plan



Visitor Goals

Sensory/Motor

Visitors will

- Encounter stories organized around the big questions about death we all face
- Feel a sense of harmony and quietude as they visit affective-learning spaces that center and calm visitors between galleries
- Investigate objects from multiple perspectives
- Explore immersive, multi-sensory experiences such as ancient burials, celebrations of ancestors, or the body of a whale on the seafloor
- Be invited to discuss and reflect on death with facilitators or with their visiting group

Affective

Visitors will feel

- Like this is a safe and comfortable space for engaging with difficult or taboo subjects
- That the tone of the exhibition is respectful, but positive, with moments of humor

Cognitive

Visitors will know/learn

- Death is not finite: the matter and meaning of dead individuals carries on after death
- Since everything and everyone eventually dies, dealing with death is universal
- Life, death, growth, and decay are cyclically connected
- Death disrupts social networks, and people meet this challenge with rituals, customs, and traditions that help cope with loss
- It is important to acknowledge and plan for death

Before I die I want to Make a difference

Before I die I want to _____

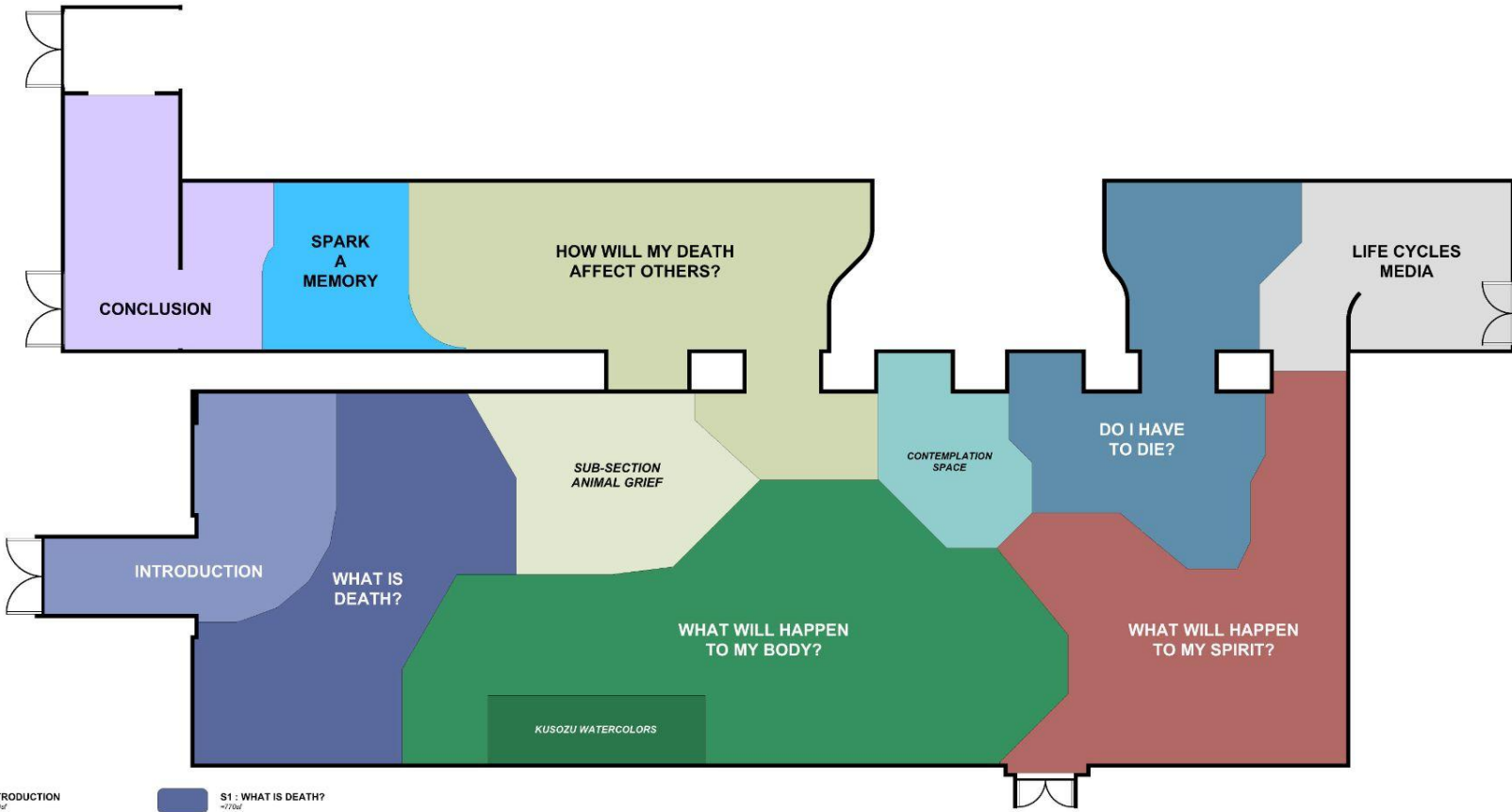
Before I die I want to Eat an entire pie

Before I die I want to eat the world cuisine,

Before I die I want to TRAVEL THE WHOLE WORLD

Before I die I want to COMPLETE MY BUCKETLISTS.

Before I die I want to change someone's life for the better



INTRODUCTION
~400d

CONCLUSION
~450d

LIFE CYCLES MEDIA
~430d

CONTEMPLATION SPACE
~210d

SPARK A MEMORY
~270d

S1 : WHAT IS DEATH?
~770d

S2 : WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BODY?
~1580d

S3 : WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY SPIRIT?
~950d

S4 : HOW WILL MY DEATH AFFECT OTHERS?
~1470d

S4 : ANIMAL GRIEF
~420d

S5 : DO I HAVE TO DIE?
~760d

Introduction

WHAT
WILL
HAPPEN
TO MY
BODY?

¿QUÉ LE
PASARÁ
A MI
CUERPO?

WHAT
WILL
HAPPEN
TO MY
SPIRIT?

¿QUÉ LE
PASARÁ
A MI
ESPÍRITU?

DO I
HAVE TO
DIE?

¿TENGO
QUE
MORIR?

HOW
WILL MY
DEATH
AFFECT
OTHERS?

¿CÓMO
AFECTARÁ
MI MUERTE
A LOS
DEMÁS?

WHAT IS
DEATH?

¿QUÉ ES LA MUERTE?

There is no one answer.

There are different theories about what happens when we die. Some people believe that we go to a place called heaven or hell. Others think that we are reborn as a new person. Some people think that we are nothing at all. The truth is that we don't know for sure.

No hay una respuesta única.

Hay muchas teorías sobre lo que sucede cuando morimos. Algunas personas creen que vamos a un lugar llamado cielo o infierno. Otras piensan que somos reencarnados como una nueva persona. Algunas personas creen que simplemente no somos nada. La verdad es que no sabemos con certeza.



What is death?

"I go to
seek a Great
Perhaps."

-François Rabelais

"Me voy en busca
del gran quizás".

-François Rabelais

"To die will be
an awfully big
adventure."

-J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

"Morir será la
más grande
de todas las
aventuras".

-J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

"Death is only
the beginning."

-Imhotep, *The Mummy*

"La muerte
es apenas el
comienzo".

-Imhotep, *La Momia*

WHAT IS
DEATH?
¿ES LA MUERTE?

Imhotep, *The Mummy*

Imhotep, *The Mummy*



WHAT IS DEATH?

If a flatworm is cut in half and both parts become new worms, did it ever die? If a person's brain stops functioning but their other organs are still working, are they dead? Challenge what you "know" about death.

WHAT IS DEATH?

What is death?

SECTION ELEMENTS

Biological deaths

- Whale fall replica
- Immersive diorama
- Real whale bone from the deep sea
- Video from a ROV visiting a whale fall

Social deaths

- Goat skull shrine prop
- Capacocha figures
- Miniature ceramic vessels

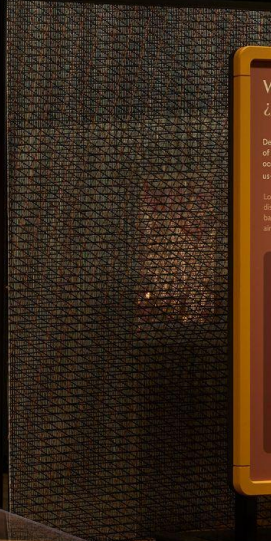
Spiritual deaths

- Adam and Eve blouse panel
- Reclining Buddha

Poll interactive: Dead or Alive?



What will happen to my body?



**You probably won't
be a fossil**
Probablemente no te
convertirás en fósil

This slab contains more than 20 fossilized paleontologists. It was found in the same area as the bones shown above. These bones were a rich source of fossils during a time when the area was a shallow sea. Over millions of years, flowing water filled the area with sand and silt, which eventually covered the entire area of the fossil.

Identified bones and fossils
The bones shown here are from a variety of animals, including a deer, a pig, and a bird. They are all from the same time period and were found in the same area.



How long it takes to become a fossil
It can take a long time for an animal to become a fossil. It can take thousands of years for the bones to be buried in the ground and then millions of years for the ground to turn into rock.

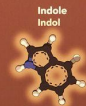
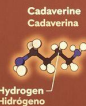
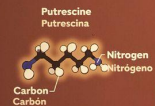
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What do dead bodies smell like?

¿A qué huelen los cadáveres?

Decaying human bodies give off a unique set of scents, caused when bacteria—which usually occupy our skin, gut, and even the air around us—begin breaking down tissues.

Los cuerpos en descomposición desprenden distintos olores que se originan cuando las bacterias—que viven en la piel, los intestinos y el aire—empiezan a descomponer el tejido muerto.



The distinctive rotting-fish odor of decaying bodies comes from two very similar compounds: **putrescine** and **cadaverine**. They're also responsible for the smell of bad breath, but you'll find them in an unexpected place—on the ingredient list of some perfumes.

El inconfundible olor a pescado podrido de los cuerpos en descomposición proviene de dos compuestos muy similares: la putrescina y la cadaverina. También, son responsables por el mal aliento, pero los encontrarás en un lugar inesperado: algunos perfumes.

Indole, with its mothball-like smell, is created when bacteria break down certain amino acids in an environment without oxygen—like inside the human gut. It's responsible for the sickly-sweet notes in the smell of bodily decay and, like putrescine and cadaverine, is an ingredient in some perfumes.

El indol, con su olor a naftalina, se crea cuando las bacterias descomponen ciertos aminoácidos en un ambiente sin oxígeno, como en el intestino humano. Da los notes dulces empalagosos del cuerpo en descomposición y, como la putrescina y la cadaverina, es un ingrediente de algunos perfumes.

Please smell... if you're sure you want to.
Huele... solo si estás seguro.





Panel Illustration on the Persistence of Life
El agua
Buddhist theme: water is considered life's
essence.



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Statue di Hathor
Le statue di Hathor sono
colonnine di sostegno per
il soffitto delle tombe
della Valle dei Re. Sono
realizzate in calcare
bianco e hanno la
forma di una vacca
con i corni di vacca
e il disco solare tra
di loro.

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Informational panel with text and images, likely describing the object in the display case.

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ALL MOST COMMON OF THE WILLOWERS
WILLOWERS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

Species	Characteristics
Slender Willow	...
...	...
...	...
...	...

WILLOWERS IN

Informational panel with text and images, likely describing the tree root specimen.

ALL ABOUT CREMATION, AS TOLD BY CHICKENS TODO SOBRE LA CREMACIÓN, SEGÚN LOS POLLOS



Cremation

This is a chicken after traditional **cremation**, a process of high-temperature incineration. In most funeral homes or crematoriums, a body is burned for about 90 minutes at a temperature of 1,400–2,100 °F (760–1,150 °C). Then, dry bone fragments are processed and mixed with the rest of the ashes to create fine, sandy-textured **cremains**.

Este es un pollo después de una **cremación** tradicional: un proceso de incineración a altas temperaturas. En la mayoría de las funerarias o crematorios, un cuerpo es quemado durante 90 minutos a una temperatura de 1,400–2,100 °F (760–1,150 °C). Después, los fragmentos de hueso seco se procesan y mezclan con el resto de las cenizas para crear unas **cenizas mortuorias** finas y con textura de arena.



Alkaline Hydrolysis

This is a chicken after **alkaline hydrolysis**, a method of chemical cremation also known as water cremation. It uses a mixture of water, heat, pressure, and a lye-like substance to **dissolve** a body's tissues. It's a popular cremation method because of its **low environmental footprint**, but it isn't legal in every US state.

Este es un pollo después de una **hidrólisis alcalina**, método de cremación química también conocido como cremación con agua. Se usa una mezcla de agua, calor, presión y una sustancia semejante a la lejía para **dissolver** los tejidos de un cuerpo. Es un método de cremación popular debido a su **reducida huella ambiental**, pero no es legal en todos los estados de EE. UU.



Promession

This is an approximation of a chicken after **promession**, an experimental process where the body is **freeze-dried** using liquid nitrogen, then **vibrated** at high frequency to produce powdered remains. Promession is still a **theoretical** procedure and not currently available as a body disposal method.

Esta es una aproximación a lo que es un pollo después de una **promesión**, proceso experimental donde el cuerpo es liofilizado con nitrógeno líquido y después **expuesto a vibraciones** de alta frecuencia para producir restos pulverizados. La **promesión** aún es un procedimiento teórico y actualmente no está disponible como método para deshacerse de un cuerpo.



Cremains Diamond

What happens to cremains? Some are kept in **urns**. Some people scatter them at a significant place. But by separating out the carbon and exposing it to a high-temperature, high-pressure environment, **cremains** can also be turned into **diamonds**.

¿Qué pasa con las cenizas mortuorias? Algunas se guardan en **urnas**. Algunas personas las esparcen en algún lugar significativo. Pero al separar el carbono y exponerlo a un ambiente de altas temperaturas y alta presión, las cenizas mortuorias también pueden convertirse en **diamantes**.

Lab-created diamond, from animal cremains
Created by iStock.com
©K. Giese-Wilge, iStock.com/istock

Diamante creado en laboratorio a partir de las cenizas de un animal
Creado por iStock.com
©K. Giese-Wilge, iStock.com/istock





SWEET NOT ALWAYS

HOW DO YOU
WANT TO BE
A GOOD PERSON?
SOME OF US
PREPARE
TO SUFFER FOR
OUR BELIEFS

WHAT WILL
HAPPEN
TO THE SPIRIT
OF THE SHAMAN
IN THE FUTURE?

THE SHAMAN
IS A PERSON
WHO IS
ABLE TO
COMMUNICATE
WITH THE
SPIRITS OF
THE NATURAL
WORLD

THE SHAMAN
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In Ghana, your coffin carries both your body and your legacy.

En Ghana, el ataúd contiene el cuerpo de la persona y su legado.

Overseas families have the duty to bury their loved ones in their home country. In Ghana, the coffin is a symbol of the person's life and legacy. The coffin is a symbol of the person's life and legacy. The coffin is a symbol of the person's life and legacy.

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Ghana: a symbol of life and legacy.



A traditional Ghanaian funeral ceremony.



Ghana: a symbol of life and legacy.



Ghana: a symbol of life and legacy.



Ghana: a symbol of life and legacy.



The Chancay family preserved and communally buried their dead
Esta familia chancay preservó y enterró en comunidad a sus muertos

At this point in time, the Chancay people lived in villages along the coast of Peru. In the generations of dead ancestors were buried in a rectangular, surrounded by mats of food, chicha (corn beer), and other offerings. Bodies were wrapped in blankets and adorned with fabric bands. The preserved, individual bodies of the deceased, the bundled bodies often remained with grave-robbed bodies.

Hasta el día de hoy, el pueblo Chancay vive en aldeas a lo largo de la costa de Perú. En las generaciones de sus ancestros fueron enterrados en tumbas con hechas con la colchonera de comida, chicha (cerveza de maíz) y otros ofrecimientos. Los cuerpos de los muertos fueron envueltos en mantas y adornados con cintas de tela para preservar a sus ancestros. Delante al entierro, en muchas ocasiones, los cuerpos embalsamados se han conservado hasta el día de hoy.

Chancay Burial Mummies
 Preserved and communally buried



WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BODY?

Investigate the natural processes and human interventions that transform bodies after death. See a fossil slab that reveals how remains can be preserved over millions of years. Consider a recreated Chancay burial chamber from ancient Peru, and discover the wide range of treatments people today choose for their remains, from green burials to gemstones made from cremains.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BODY?

What will happen to my body?

SECTION ELEMENTS

Undergo a natural process

Decompose

- Kusozu watercolors (x10)
- Decomposition smell interactive

Reuse

- Black-backed jackal
- American giant millipede
- Stony coral

Fossilize

- *Leptomeryx* bone bed



WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BODY?

What will happen to my body?

SECTION ELEMENTS

Be transformed

- Cremated chickens
- Green burial display
- Chevra kadisha heirlooms
- Cremains gemstone

Be physically preserved

- Chancay burial reproduction
- Cuchimilco figure
- Canopic jars and animal mummies
- Contemporary embalming tools
- Islamic burial traditions

Have a resting place

- Ghanaian canoe-shaped coffin
- New Orleans jazz funerals

Poll interactive: How do you want to be laid to rest?



What will happen to my spirit?



"How can the dead be truly dead when they still live in the souls of those who are left behind?"

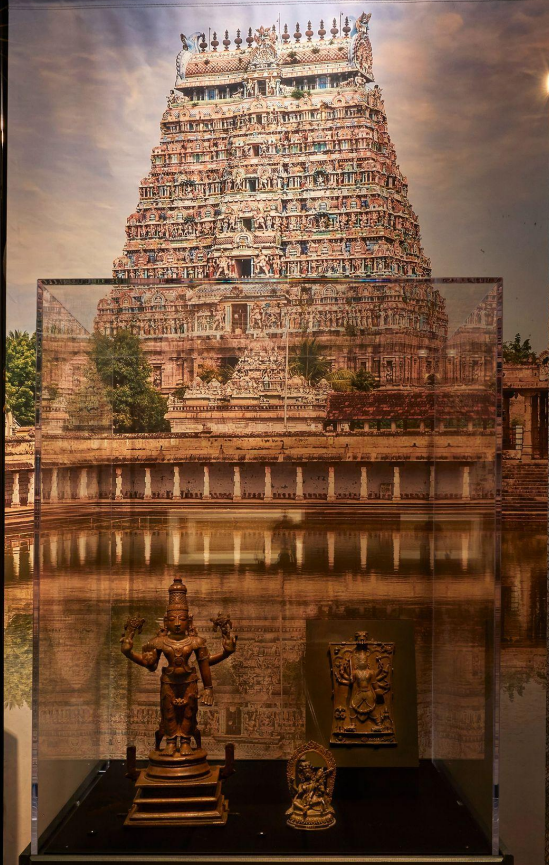
¿Cómo pueden los muertos estar realmente muertos cuando aun sigan vivos en las almas de aquellos que dejaron atrás?

How can the dead be truly dead when they still live in the souls of those who are left behind?

How can the dead be truly dead when they still live in the souls of those who are left behind?

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY SPIRIT?
*Your spirit might entice
 something else.*

¿QUÉ LE PASARÁ A MI ESPIRITO?
*Tu espíritu
 podría dar vida
 a algo más.*

Hindu reincarnation provides another chance at enlightenment
 La reencarnación hindú ofrece otra oportunidad para alcanzar la iluminación

Después de la muerte, el alma sigue viajando por el mundo físico durante un período de tiempo limitado. Después de esto, el alma puede ser reencarnada en un cuerpo humano o animal. El ciclo de la vida y la muerte se repite una y otra vez hasta que el alma alcanza la iluminación.

1. Reincarnation
 El ciclo de la vida y la muerte se repite una y otra vez hasta que el alma alcanza la iluminación.

2. Karma
 El karma es el resultado de las acciones que una persona realiza durante su vida. El karma determina el tipo de cuerpo que una persona tendrá en su próxima vida.

3. Enlightenment
 La iluminación es el estado de liberación del ciclo de la vida y la muerte. Una persona puede alcanzar la iluminación a través de la práctica de la meditación y el yoga.

4. Hinduism and Karma
 El karma es un concepto central en el hinduismo. El karma determina el tipo de cuerpo que una persona tendrá en su próxima vida.

5. Hinduism and Reincarnation
 La reencarnación es un concepto central en el hinduismo. El alma sigue viajando por el mundo físico durante un período de tiempo limitado después de la muerte.

6. Hinduism and Enlightenment
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Most ancient Egyptians were buried with items to take to the afterlife.

La mayoría de los egipcios antiguos eran enterrados con objetos para llevar consigo al más allá.

According to the most recent data from the 19th century, the total number of objects buried with the deceased in Egypt was estimated to be around 100,000. This number is based on the discovery of the famous 'Tomb of Tutankhamun' in 1922, which contained over 5,000 objects. The number of objects buried with the deceased in Egypt was estimated to be around 100,000. This number is based on the discovery of the famous 'Tomb of Tutankhamun' in 1922, which contained over 5,000 objects.



1. Scarab beetle
The scarab beetle was a symbol of rebirth and life. It was believed that the scarab beetle could pull the sun across the sky. The scarab beetle was also used as a symbol of protection and defense.

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WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY SPIRIT?
Your spirit might go somewhere else.

¿DÓNDE LE VASARÁ A MI ESPÍRITO?
Tu espíritu podría ir a otra parte.



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2. Papyrus scroll
The papyrus scroll was a symbol of life and rebirth. It was believed that the papyrus scroll could help the deceased to live again in the afterlife. The papyrus scroll was also used as a symbol of protection and defense.

3. Scarab beetle
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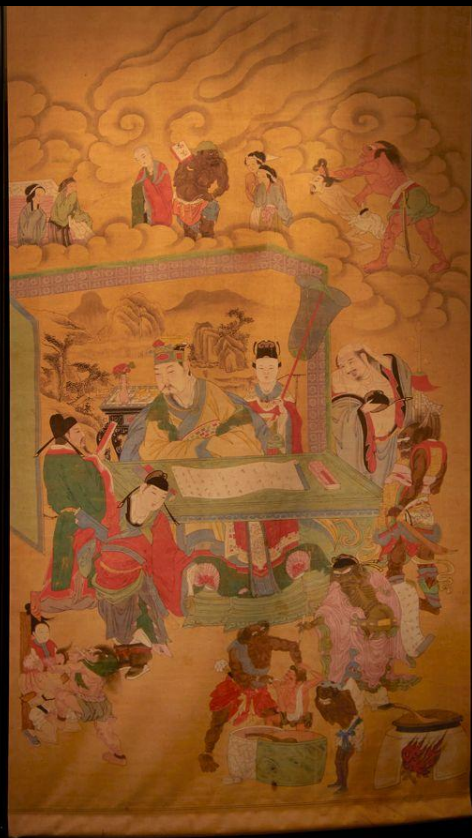
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Strada per i pupazzi
di tutti i paesi e di
tutte le epoche
L'arte del pupazzo
è un'attività che
ha accompagnato
l'umanità fin dal
primo teatro
e che ha trovato
in questo secolo
nuovi spazi di
sviluppo
L'arte del pupazzo
è un'attività che
ha accompagnato
l'umanità fin dal
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e che ha trovato
in questo secolo
nuovi spazi di
sviluppo



**Indagini, documenti, e altre
fonti di ricerca**
L'arte del pupazzo
è un'attività che
ha accompagnato
l'umanità fin dal
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e che ha trovato
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WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY SPIRIT?

Questions about the afterlife have been explored by nearly every culture and religion. View depictions of ghosts and spirits from around the world, inspect miniature objects and figures that were meant for use in the afterlife, and experience a colorful and intricate presentation of a Chinese drama, “The Courts of Hell.”

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY SPIRIT?

What will happen to my spirit?

SECTION ELEMENTS

Remain on Earth

- Yurei ghost scroll

Go somewhere else

- Stone girdle
- Egyptian Book of the Dead
- Mummiform shabtis
- Egyptian model house
- “Courts of Hell” masks and figures

Enliven something else

- Statues of Hindu gods
- Haitian ritual flags
- Moche pottery



Do I have to die?

"No one really knows why they are alive until they know what they'd die for."

-Martin Luther King Jr.

"Nadie sabe realmente por qué está vivo hasta que no descubre por qué moriría."

-Martin Luther King Jr.

There are many ways to go to be immortal.

Hay muchas maneras de ir a ser inmortal.



There are many ways to go to be immortal.

DO I
HAVE TO DIE?
¿TENGO QUE
MORIR?



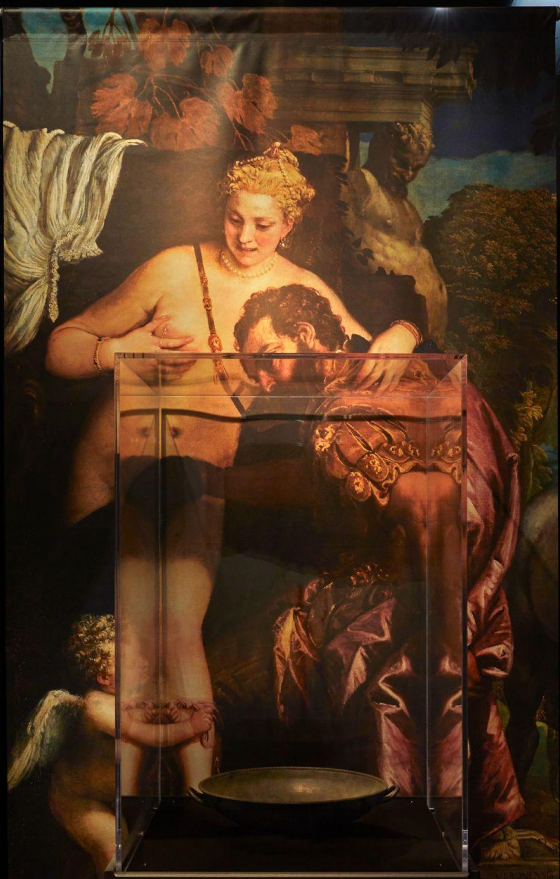
Throughout time, both humans and animals have had impressive strategies for lengthening their lifespans. But, sooner or later, we all reach the end of our time on Earth. For most animals, lifespan is a product of **evolution or immediate circumstances**—but for humans, **when we die** has much more to do with **whose lives our society values most**.

A lo largo de los tiempos, humanos y animales han aplicado estrategias impresionantes para alargar su tiempo de vida. Pero, tarde o temprano, **todos llegamos al fin** de nuestro tiempo en la Tierra. Para la mayoría de los animales, su tiempo de vida es producto de la **evolución o las circunstancias inmediatas**; pero para los humanos, el **cuándo morimos** tiene mucho más que ver con **cuáles vidas valora más nuestra sociedad**.





Textual information displayed on a vertical panel, likely describing the forest scene or related environmental data.



To human gods and goddesses, human calls, man of iron, or even
Para los dioses y los diosas humanos, la llama calificada a veces
we are made of iron

Textual information, likely a translation or commentary related to the exhibit's theme.



Textual information, likely a translation or commentary related to the exhibit's theme.



Tardigrada
Milnesium tardigradum
 Proporción al tamaño real: 1000x

**TARDIGRADES:
 THE MOST RESILIENT CREATURES
 ON EARTH**

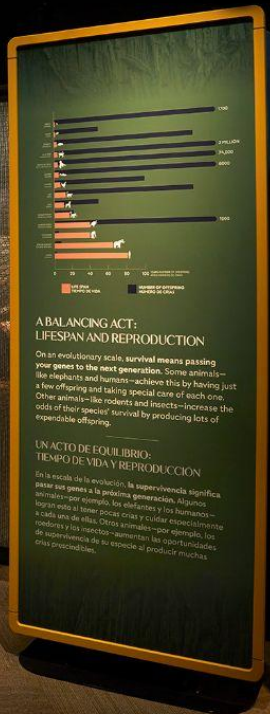
The 1,200 species in the tardigrade phylum on the planet's surface know by name—they can survive desiccation and starvation and have been found alive in sediments, the deep sea, and even outer space. In real life, they're about 0.50 inches (0.8 mm) long—the width of two human hairs.



**LOS TARDIGRADOS:
 LAS CREATURAS MÁS RESILIENTES
 DE LA TIERRA**

Las 1.200 especies de los tardigrados que habitan la superficie del planeta son conocidas por su capacidad para sobrevivir a la deshidratación y el hambre, y se han encontrado vivas en sedimentos, en el fondo del océano y en el espacio exterior. En la vida real, miden unos 0,5 milímetros de largo, el ancho de dos cabellos humanos.

Actualmente se sabe lo suficiente para producirlos en laboratorio.
 La tardigrada más conocida es el "tardigrado de agua dulce".





**Different species evolve
different lifespans**
*Diferentes especies
evolucionan con diferentes
tiempos de vida*

1 Lifespan and parental care are correlated.
Like humans, Andean minkies (1) spend a lot of time nurturing and protecting their babies, which in turn increases their survival. In contrast, (2) Andean condors invest little time in their young, so their adult birds might produce thousands of eggs, but only a few survive.

El tiempo de vida y el cuidado parental están correlacionados.
Al igual que los humanos, los minkies andinos (1) dedican mucho tiempo a criar y proteger a sus crías, lo que aumenta su supervivencia. En contraste, (2) los cóndores andinos invierten poco tiempo en sus crías, por lo que sus aves adultas podrían producir miles de huevos, pero solo unos pocos sobreviven.

2 Alligators conserve energy.
Alligators conserve energy by staying in the water and eating only once a day. (3) In contrast, (4) humans eat three times a day and have a long lifespan.

2 Los aligatros conservan energía.
Los aligatros conservan energía al permanecer en el agua y comer solo una vez al día. (3) En contraste, (4) los humanos comen tres veces al día y tienen una larga vida.

3 Humans conserve energy.
Humans conserve energy by eating only once a day. (5) In contrast, (6) humans eat three times a day and have a long lifespan.

3 Los humanos conservan energía.
Los humanos conservan energía al comer solo una vez al día. (5) En contraste, (6) los humanos comen tres veces al día y tienen una larga vida.

Life on land is very hard.
Terrestrial animals (5) are made up of many parts, so they have to eat a lot of food to stay alive. (6) In contrast, (7) humans eat three times a day and have a long lifespan.

Vida en tierra es muy difícil.
Los animales terrestres (5) están hechos de muchas partes, por lo que tienen que comer mucha comida para sobrevivir. (6) En contraste, (7) los humanos comen tres veces al día y tienen una larga vida.

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Do you want to live forever? Learn how people in China and ancient Greece have thought about immortality, and witness how animals prolong their lifespans with wild adaptations—like a lungfish entering suspended animation or a tokay gecko regrowing its tail.

DO I HAVE TO DIE?

Do I have to die?

SECTION ELEMENTS

Concepts of immortality

- Mars and Venus basin reproduction
- Lingzhi fungus and tray
- Rhino horn cup
- Daoist immortal figure

You should try to be more like animals

- Howler monkey
- Virginia opossum
- Alligator snapping turtle
- Termite queen and workers
- Mayflies
- Giant tardigrade replication
- Starfish, lizard, and lungfish specimens



How will my death affect others?

HOW WILL MY DEATH AFFECT OTHERS?

¿CÓMO VA A AFECTAR MI MUERTE A LOS DEMÁS?

When we die, we live on in the memories of people who have known us. A death can challenge or disrupt relationships, but it can also bring people together—to grieve, mourn, celebrate, remember, or be inspired. Well past the end of their time on Earth, the dead influence the lives of individuals, communities, and sometimes entire societies.

Cuando morimos, vivimos en los recuerdos de las personas que nos han conocido. Una muerte puede desafiar o interrumpir las relaciones, pero también puede unir a las personas para llorar, hacer el duelo, celebrar, recordar o inspirarse. Mucho más allá del final de su tiempo en la Tierra, los muertos influyen en la vida de las personas, las comunidades y, a veces, en sociedades enteras.



HOW WILL MY DEATH AFFECT OTHERS?
Your death will likely be
important to individuals close
to you—and the community
you come from.

¿CÓMO VA A AFECTAR MI MUERTE A LOS DEMÁS?
Si moro, probablemente
seré importante para las
personas cercanas a mí
y para la comunidad de
donde yo vivía.



Some animals grieve

Some animals are so socially connected that they mourn when a friend, relative, or family member dies. They may hold a funeral, or they may simply sit in silence for days, or weeks. They may even cry.

They grieve because they care. In these animals, love that the dead can no longer respond to them. Do they understand that death is permanent?

Algunos animales pasan por un duelo

Algunos animales están tan socialmente conectados que lloran cuando un amigo, familiar o miembro de su familia muere. Pueden hacer un funeral, o simplemente se sientan en silencio por días o semanas. Pueden incluso llorar.

Ellos lloran porque les importa. En estos animales, el amor que el difunto ya no puede responderles. ¿Entienden que la muerte es permanente?

How do you think the world was reacting to the tragedy of the crash? How do you think the world was reacting to the tragedy of the crash? How do you think the world was reacting to the tragedy of the crash?

Informational panel with text and images.

Informational panel with text and images.

Everyday remembrances of fallen cyclists around the world

Over time, bicycles passed into and played a role in everyday life. The bicycle has been used in a variety of ways. They are thought to have the first appearance in the early 1800s. Some have been used for recreation, while others have been used for work or transport.

Commemoraciones diarias de ciclistas fallecidos en todo el mundo

Los bicicletas han pasado de ser un simple medio de transporte a ser un símbolo de vida. Se han utilizado de muchas maneras. Se cree que aparecieron por primera vez en el siglo XIX. Algunas se han usado para recreación, mientras que otras se han usado para el trabajo o el transporte.

Informational panel with text and images.

Informational panel with text and images.



**Living with
Ancestry** is an
ongoing conversation
with their ancestors

Available in print form
at www.ancestry.com

Living with Ancestry is an ongoing conversation with their ancestors. This exhibit explores the ways in which people connect with their past through various means, including artifacts, stories, and traditions. The exhibit is designed to be interactive and educational, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of their own heritage and the heritage of others.

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Death—and memories of the dead—shape the lives of the living. Meet the surprising variety of animals that grieve. Examine a replication of one of the earliest deliberate human burials, and understand how rituals help people cope with loss, individually and collectively. Encounter a Day of the Dead ofrenda, where loved ones are welcomed back into the world of the living. “Spark a Memory” of a loved one who has passed and share what you would like to do before you die...or after.

HOW WILL MY DEATH AFFECT OTHERS?

How will my death affect others?

SECTION ELEMENTS

How people respond at different scales

- Ofrenda recreation
- Day of the Dead figures
- Oaxacan incense burner and effigy figure
- Colima dog
- Nazca and Wari musical instruments
- Moche drummer figure
- Haida mortuary and memorial poles
- Ibeji figures
- A Chicago Beit Azza, or House of Mourning

How people respond at different scales

- Hopewell artifacts
- Memorial architecture photos

Spark a Memory interactive



On the Haida Gwaii archipelago, poles like these communicate the lineages and histories of their owners

En el archipiélago de Haida Gwaii, postes como estos comunican el linaje y las historias de sus dueños

This slender representation of a Haida ancestor depicts a man named Haida Gwaii. The figure's features are carved in a stylized manner, with a prominent nose and a wide, open mouth. The pole is painted with black, red, and white pigments.

Este es un modelo del ancestro más reciente del pueblo Haida Gwaii. El rostro muestra rasgos que se ven en los miembros de la tribu Haida Gwaii. El rostro está pintado con pigmentos de negro, rojo y blanco.

This is a model of a pole raised by Chief Haida Gwaii. It is a slender representation of a Haida ancestor, with a prominent nose and a wide, open mouth. The pole is painted with black, red, and white pigments.

Este es un modelo de un poste levantado por el jefe Haida Gwaii. Es una representación del ancestro más reciente del pueblo Haida Gwaii. El rostro está pintado con pigmentos de negro, rojo y blanco.

This pole is a memorial for a Haida ancestor. It is a slender representation of a Haida ancestor, with a prominent nose and a wide, open mouth. The pole is painted with black, red, and white pigments.

Este poste es un monumento para un ancestro Haida. Es una representación del ancestro más reciente del pueblo Haida Gwaii. El rostro está pintado con pigmentos de negro, rojo y blanco.

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**Many of us carry
memories of loved
ones who have passed.**

**Place your hand here to
spark a memory.**

The sound of their laugh

Their special recipe

The color of their eyes

The smell of their hair

Their favorite chair in the living room

The ring they always wore

The walks you used to take together

Their place at the dinner table

That signature dance move

The story they told over and over

The dream they shared



Many of us carry memories of loved ones who have passed.

The sound of their laugh

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Their favorite chair in the living room

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The walks you used to take together

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Their signature dance move

The story they told over and over

The dream they shared

Place your hand
here to spark
a memory.



Coloca tu mano
aquí para generar
un recuerdo.

Muchos de nosotros llevamos recuerdos de seres queridos que han fallecido.

El sonido de su risa

Su receta especial

El color de sus ojos

El olor de su cabello

Su sillón favorito de la sala

El anillo que siempre tenía puesto

Las caminatas que solían dar juntos

Su lugar en la mesa para sentarse a comer

Ese paso de baile que lo caracterizaba

La historia que contaba una y otra vez

El sueño que nos contó

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

SECTION ELEMENTS

How to prepare for your death

- Prepare an Advance Directive
- Create a Life File
- Consider organ or body donation
- *Before I Die* participatory art
- *After I Die* participatory art



DEATH: LIFE'S GREATEST MYSTERY

This exhibition was organized by the Field Museum.

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