

Ars Moriendi

created by John Sanborn
with Sarah Cecilia Bukowski and Lali Wilde
programming by Sanjeev Pillutla

an Augmented Reality Ghost Story



[play documentation of *Ars Moriendi*](#)

October 31st - November 3, 2025
Ideal Glass Studios
9 W 8th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

Ars Moriendi

Created by John Sanborn
with Lali Wilde and Sarah Cecilia Bukowski

Ars Moriendi is an Augmented Reality installation that allows we, the living, to share intimacies with two ghosts. The work employs pre-placed electronic triggers, called “instances”, which reveal the multiple layers of this character study of two lost souls. Invisible to the unaided eye, but appearing as graphic icons when using a custom AR app to scan the rooms of The Mansion. Approaching each instance activates a proximity sensor, which launches a paired video clip on viewers’ mobile devices so they see, hear and interact with 46 instances of ghostly presence.

As an AR ghost story, the delight of discovery is a key element in experiencing the fragments from the lives of two ghosts, Norma (Sarah Cecilia Bukowsky) and Maria (Lali Wilde) whose confessional and enigmatic comments about their after-life are chilling, soulful and funny. As a user determined experience, the free-form time base and nonlinear aspect of encountering Norma and Maria encourage visitors to wonder what’s next; a blood curdling scream or a heartfelt confession. As a meditation on the fragility of our humanity, the work forces us to confront our greatest fear (death) and appreciate the advice and gallows humor of two quirky characters, whose insight is that getting through life was a picnic compared with getting through death.

The work was exhibited on the second-floor Mansion of Ideal Glass Studios, premiering on Halloween 2025, and was designed expressly for the location. Programming of the app (available for iOS devices in the Apple Store) was done by Sanjeev Pillutla, using the Unity game engine to locate the instances using a single point of orientation. The AI generated icons that indicate the location of the 46 triggers were distributed across three rooms and a garden at Ideal Glass Studios, in an intricate but inscrutable puzzle. Future exhibitions of ***Ars Moriendi*** can be customized by venue, and bespoke iterations can be created using unique variations on the app code.

The otherworldly and ghostly appearances of Norma and Maria were created using three AI “sandboxes” which allowed Sanborn to experiment with transformational distortions, where the blend of living and decayed could be at once shocking and silly. As a metaphor for being “between worlds” the characters glow with a mix of glamor and horror as they teasingly address the inevitable.

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The poetic texts are written by Sanborn and his decades long collaborator, Sarah Cecilia Bukowski, and Sanborn's collaborator on two previous AR projects (shown in Milan and Frankfurt), Lali Wilde. Bukowski is a dancer, writer and performance artist, Wilde is an animator, composer, performance artist. Their soulful presence brings a whimsical element of humanism to the tale of Norma and Maria.

The soundtrack for *Ars Moriendi*, plays in a loop in the spaces of the exhibition; a moody cloud of majestic reverence, and sounds of wind, the sea, chimes, the rustle of fabrics and foot falls. This layered presence was composed by Lali Wilde.



Sarah Cecilia Bukowski as Norma

Lali Wilde as Maria

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The first image shows what the location looks like without using the *Ars Moriendi* app to scan the room. It appears empty, as the triggers are not represented by either visible image or QR code.

The middle image is how the location appears using the AR app, revealing small “instance” icons to indicate where to trigger the 46 video clips

The last image is what happens when the viewer approaches each instance, where proximity launches a paired clip, which plays with sync sound.

[play documentation of *Ars Moriendi*](#)

[Play a screen recording of the *Ars Moriendi* app](#)































The *Ars Moriendi* augmented reality app



“Solo Cup” image Trigger



Norma dishes about how “the dead like to party”

Cuban Fine Arts/Ed Steinberg
Ideal Glass Studios/Willard Morgan
presents

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[play documentation of *Ars Moriendi*](#)

[play Lali Wilde's view of *Ars Moriendi*](#)

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an AR Ghost Story | Pop Up Exhibition 2025
October 31st | 5pm to midnight
November 1 | 1pm to 7pm
November 2 | 1pm to 7pm
November 3 | 1pm to 7pm