



What do we understand as Covid Exit?

The chosen theme for 2020's Madrid Gráfica is the **New Normal**, while **Covid Exit**, the inspiring slogan, provides the required content and textual backdrop of the exhibited posters.

Coronavirus has left hundreds of thousands of deaths and numerous essential questions that require answers.

The serious human and health crisis brought about by coronavirus and the forced interruption of all economic and social activities across the world has put governments, institutions, scientists and businesses up against the ropes. It has served as a global wake-up call that has left in its wake, along with millions of infections and hundreds of thousands of deaths, numerous essential questions that require answers and that affect most of the great certainties around which our political life, our economic activity and our society itself are organised.

Recovering the lost normal means entering into a period of change.

But, like all crises, it also provides an opportunity. Recovering the lost normal means entering into a period of change. A time in which we must redefine which part of our life and our social organisation will recover and which part we are at risk of losing or should consciously revise.

Sociologists, thinkers, politicians, economists, scientists... and also designers are now reflecting on the weaknesses revealed by the pandemic, as well as the open opportunities.

Addressing social fracture is a priority.

Recovering our own conscience with a vision that is more in sync as a human species is urgent, as is revising our priorities and addressing problems and concerns to get through this crisis. Social fracture was one of the worst consequences of the 2008 economic crisis and austerity was the only exit door. But now, the pandemic and its economic effects are going to worsen that fracture if short- and medium-term solutions are not provided.

Society should not go from daily claps for our *coronaheroes* throughout the emergency to forgetfulness and a return to insecurity in the new normal.



The invisible people have shown that they are the essential cogs of society in this crisis.

As the French geographer Christophe Guilluy says, “During the crisis, the invisible people, those who were nothing yesterday, have shown that they are, in fact, the essential cogs of society.

Now, our so-called information society, with global technological capacities that are incomparable to any other stage in our history, has been unable to halt the waves of disinformation, conspiracy theories and denial of facts in the face of scientific evidence. In some cases, these were issued from the very centres of power, which has made it difficult to articulate practical methods for dealing with serious problems.

Conspiracy theories and disinformation can make the future more dangerous.

According to the American philosopher Jaron Lanier, “Absurd conspiracy theories, disinformation and systematic denial of facts from Social Media and other massive systems can make the future more dysfunctional and dangerous.”

After this long period of forced confinement, with the daily and dramatic presence of illness and fear, the exit from the crisis needs to move towards a recovery of trust in ourselves and our ability to recover.

Humanity has demonstrated that it has the ability to recover from tragedies.

As Sanjay Sarma, vice president of Open Learning in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology says, “Humanity has shown time and time again that it has the ability to recover from tragedies. Inventiveness and agility define the new technological society.”

Dealing with everyday life after Covid-19 requires a dose of self-criticism and hope in equal measure.

In the words of the filmmaker Isabel Coixet, “This is a time in which it is necessary to reinvent oneself, to be more creative than ever before...”



The need of research and investment in talent, innovation and design has become especially evident.

Research, investment in talent, innovation and design have always been necessary, but now this need has become especially evident.

Cristina Garmendia, ex-minister of Science and Innovation and president of the Fundación Cotec, writes this about the “new normal”: “The pandemic has made clear the relationship between R&D&I and public health. At first, everybody looked at the health system. Now they are starting to look at the scientific and technological system. It is only logical that this attention will bring a great investment in knowledge.”

Covid is the time of designers.

Graphic design is a profession with a clear social function. But in special times, the graphic must demonstrate the importance of best communication practices. Posters, specifically, are a powerful tool to transmit messages efficiently and memorably. As Steven Heller, the North American writer and essayist who specialises in graphic design, says: “Posters have always played a role in public health emergencies, in times of war or epidemics.”

This pandemic that we have experienced and are still experiencing has brought about hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of infections, all because of a silent virus that was previously unknown to the world of medicine. But during this time, some professionals, such as healthcare workers, have become the protagonists and heroes of the fight. Their self-sacrifice has been essential in saving many lives at the worst times. Other professionals, such as police officers, supermarket cashiers and delivery workers, to name but a few, have also contributed to helping society as a whole get through this crisis.



Streets and social networks full of messages of inspiration and encouragement.

Designers now have an important social task to fulfil. They must fill the streets and social networks with messages of inspiration, encouragement and responsibility. They must use design to recover urban, cultural and social life, as well as the economic pulse of society, which is essential for achieving full recovery.

Design must contribute to recover urban, cultural and to achieve full recovery of the economic pulse of society.

We need posters that transmit detailed messages, from different points of view, but with one common theme and slogan: **“Covid Exit”**. We want posters that have a deep impact, that replace long arguments with simple and powerful messages, that use emotion, a sense of humour and graphic energy to make you think. Messages that touch the eye, brain and heart all at the same time.