



Axel Gouala
Portfolio 2025

***Visual interference and hybrid correspondence:
objects transform and yet remain the same through the artist's irony***

Sculptor, designer, and engraver, Axel Gouala loves to use heterogeneous materials and techniques in his practice, giving life to creations that trigger a profound empathy in the viewer. Gouala's art starts from everyday life to lead us into a world made of possibilities, rarefied and full of symbols. The result is pieces that challenge conventions, inviting the audience to reflect on their essence; creations that convey messages full of meaning without putting aside irony and lightness. "An important component that runs through my work," says the artist, "is the desire to share ideas through mockery". Having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Strasbourg, Gouala's education was imbued with a deep bond with artisanal traditions. "I do not hesitate to refer to crafting but I have no intention of creating a dichotomy between artisanal and industrial practice". Indeed, these two souls coexist in his work which is often guided by the materials themselves, by their shapes and peculiarities, transforming both the aesthetic aspect and the practical function of the objects. The artist's creative process is divided into different phases. "I am moved by a creative gaze that contaminates the objects that surround me; I let myself be inspired by them as if they were my lifelong companions." Gouala tries to extract the object from its specific context, focusing on the most generic and often standardized characteristics, those which, as he states, "the observer keeps in his mind" as the most relevant peculiarities from an aesthetic point of view. Gouala's work immerses us in an ephemeral and fantastic universe in which every element is reinterpreted and decontextualized. The wave is no longer in the sea just like the mountain is no longer in the range: through apparently simple interventions, the objects are profoundly modified while remaining completely recognizable. In Totem-Voyage, in a process similar to that of collage, a vacuum cleaner is transformed into a palm tree and the visual interferences between the two objects lead the audience's minds in very different directions, away from the objects' physicality if not for their location in space. "I enjoy exacerbating these links by applying them in hybrid drawings and sculptures in which worlds mix and where integrity merges." The artist emphasizes that his reference to everyday life does not simply aim to highlight its dramatic nature but rather to dismantle its predefined conventions and transform appearances through a playful artistic gesture. In his intent there is no pretense of outlining an exhaustive representation of human life: rather, Gouala directs his art to mirror everyday life, the anxieties and stress that permeate us all.

Sofia Di Gravio
InsideArt Magazine 129#
October 2023



photo : exhibition view, Materials and Motions, Galleria Eugenia Delfini, 2025



Lingua, concrete, 31,5 × 90,7 × 40 cm, 2025



Banana Gloves

ceramic
7 × 15 × 26,6 cm & 6,3 × 10,4 × 26,3 cm
2023



Clic

ceramic
6,9 × 11 × 22,5 cm
2023



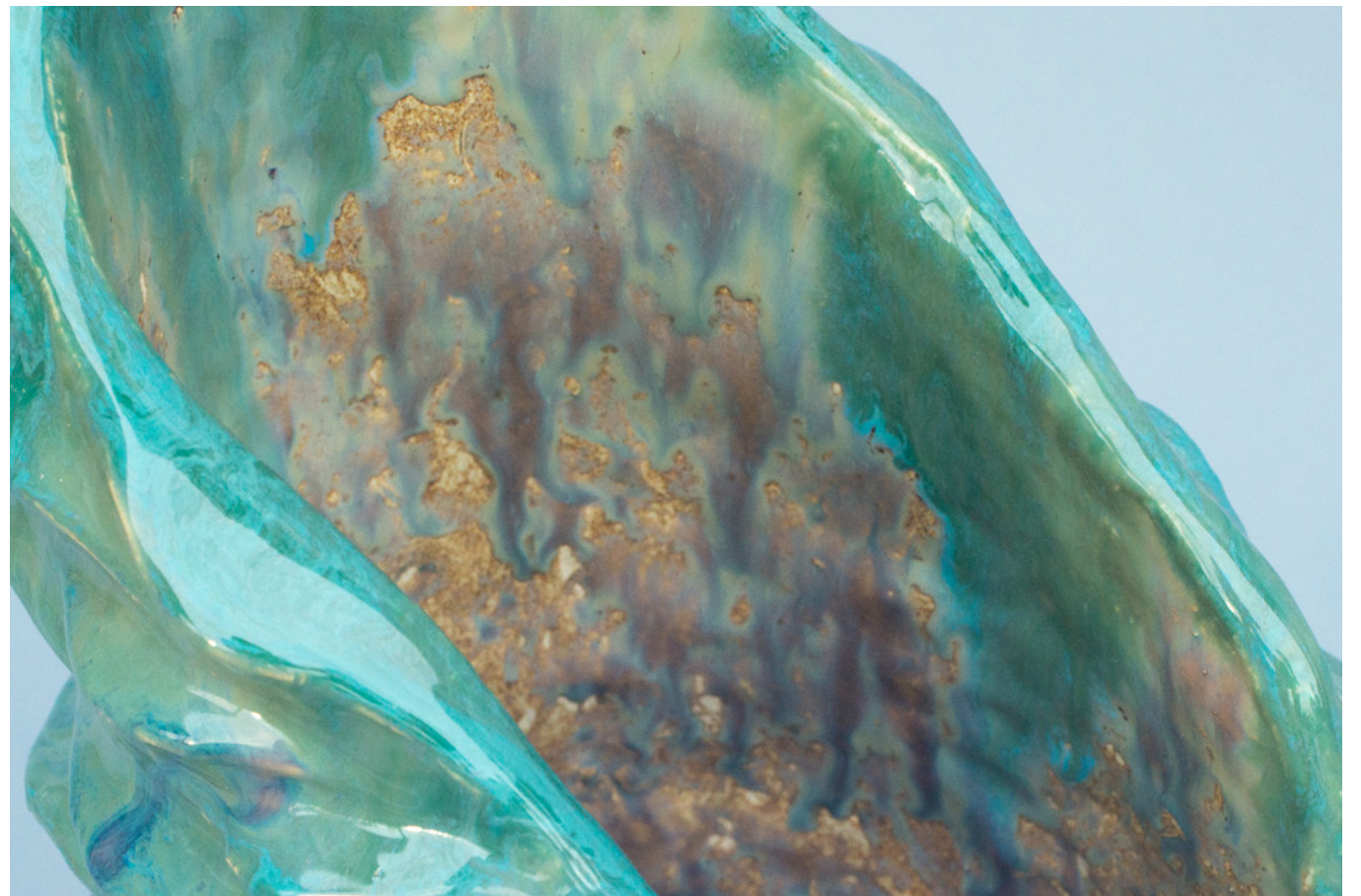
L'Ogre

monotype on paper Hahnemühle
49,4 × 34,2 cm printed on a 70 × 50 cm sheet
2023

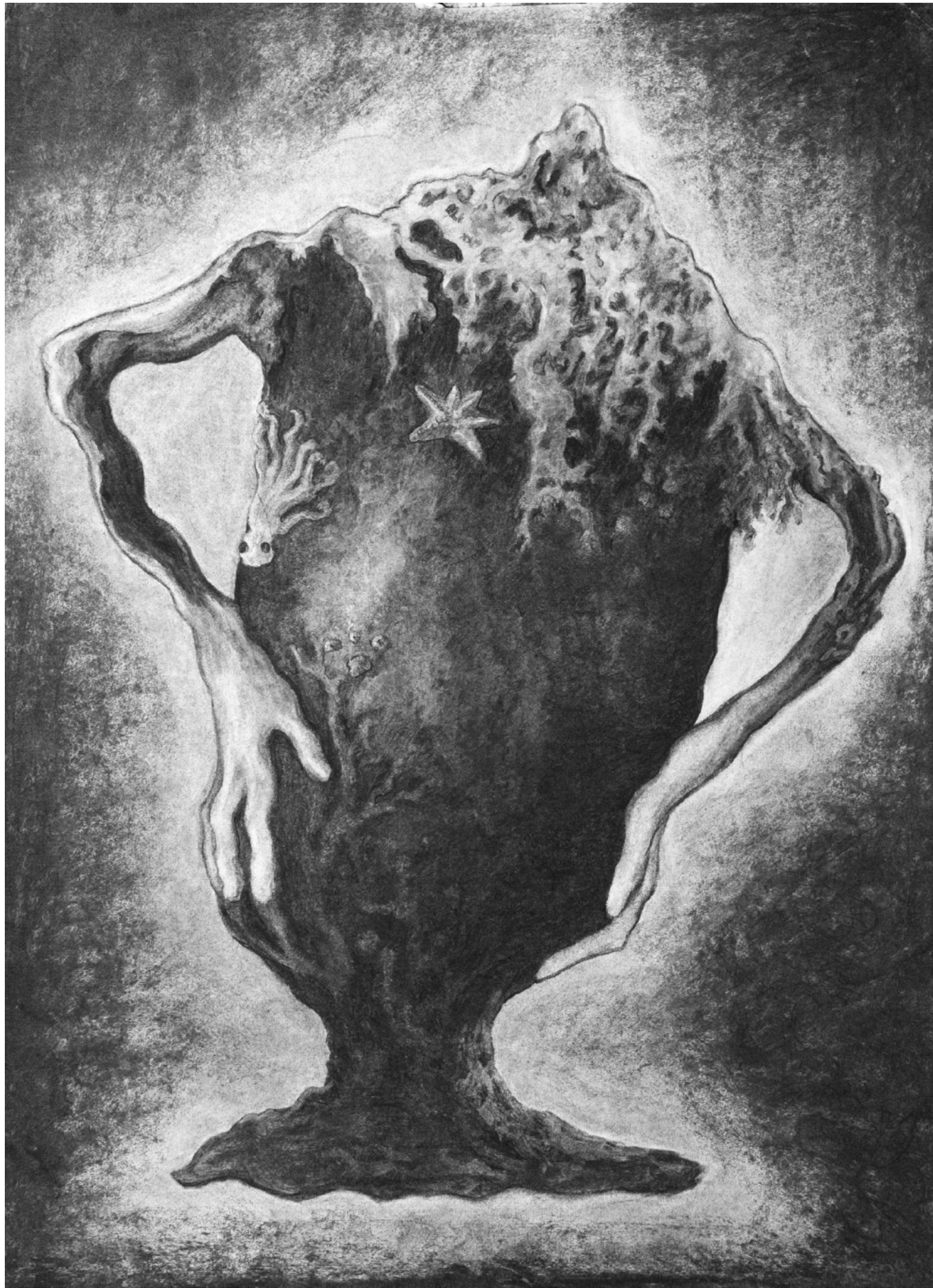


L'Oste

monotype on paper Hahnemühle
32,5 × 24,5 cm printed on a 50 × 35 cm sheet
2023



Stipe (2), ceramic, 49,6 × 24 × 23,6 cm, 2023



Le Vase Aquatique (2), charcoal on paper, 90 × 65 cm, 2023



Estate, charcoal on paper, 244 × 150 cm, 2023



Stipe (1)

ceramic
 23,5 × 27 × 21,3 cm
 2023





Falaise (4) - Cathédrale, bricks, 225 × 301 × 138 cm, 2022

Metamorphic Parody

Hidden behind the three thick roots of the Aristotelian poetic genres' family tree; the tragedy, comedy and the epic, one finds their often-forgotten sibling, the parody.

Scarcely addressed by Aristotle himself, at least in the surviving literature, the French literary critic Gérard Genette sat out to reclaim the parody into the literary fold with his 1982 seminal work *Palimpsests: La Littérature au second degré*. Genette presupposes two modes of production that engenders parody, namely imitation and transformation, and it is the latter which seems to best describe the process behind Axel Gouala's metamorphic sculptural objects. Where Ulysses recalls the Odyssey, or plaster copies their marble originals, Gouala humorously transforms materials much more familiar to the denizens of the 21st century: Plungers playing palms, palms playing coatracks, a mop turned snake slithering away from its bucket. It is precisely the intimacy with which we greet these familiar materials and made-to-be-held design objects that makes the viewing of Gouala's works an almost haptic affair.

Here, one may paraphrase Walter Benjamin's *Einbahnstraße* (1928), that reading a text compared to copying it, is what flying over a landscape is to walking its streets. Gouala's transformative copying not only echoes the metaphor, but seemingly translates it into the literal in his exhibit *Copyshop, Atlas Mnemosyne*. For the polystyrene onto which Gouala has carved details from classical cast copies found in the Bode Museum and the Neues Museum, was collected from the streets by the artist, and subsequently returned to them in the window-display on Künstlerhaus Bethanien's ground floor. Since one must only have unpacked a television or stereo set to judge the weight and feel of the polystyrene replica, or what it would take to snap it in half for that matter, curious passersby walking down Kottbusser Straße during the latter months of 2020 were themselves invited to tactilely take part in an unfolding copying and transformation of classical sculpture and philistine design – freed from the vantage of the museum.

Gustav Elgin

Be Magazine #28
Berlin
October 2021



Copyshop, Atlas Mnemosyne

Sculpted polystyrene packaging
165,5 × 140 × 140 cm
2020



MIS, Extrait d'un Paysage-Écriture, stainless steel, 350 × 246 × 177 cm, 2023

Unidentified Domestic Object (translated from french)

Axel Gouala comes from a dual culture that pushes him to take a dual view of things. The innocuous objects he presents in the exhibition are removed not only from their context of use but also from their setting. These installations reveal how much our minds associate an object with a universe and how fragile and superficial this determination is. By isolating objects, slightly repurposing them, or associating them differently, Axel Gouala opens new pages, glimpses new worlds in which work and travel coexist, bourgeois and exotic clichés blend, ethnic motifs and impersonal objects merge.

Sandrine Wymann

Director and head curator of La Kunsthalle, CAC
Mulhouse
November 2018

Le Grand Tour / Totem-Voyages

«In my serie of work Le Grand Tour / Totem-Voyages I am trying to bring romanticism back in the fitness room, to make Dresden closer to Miami, to use any object with wheels to really move. Some pieces are inspired by personal story, other not. I am interested by our spaces of work and leisure that are everywhere and nowhere : a palm tree or an office chair belong to two stereotypic places. They could be in any country and are two icons of a global world. Each one need the other to exist : we accept to suffer at work to go in holidays. Work is where space and time are controlled by rules, holidays is supposed to be the opposite. I am merging this two ruled spaces creating new lives for these objects, giving them a second chance to be better.»

Axel Gouala

Artline Kunstmagazin
Basel
November 2018



Totem-Voyage 10, Palmo

mixed materials
123 × 99 × 89,7 cm
2020



photo : Philipp Hänger / Kunsthalle Basel. Installation view, *A Tooth for an Eye*, Kunsthalle Basel, Bâle, 2018 ©



The Snake
a.k.a. the geat_escape

mixed materials
71 × 45 × 245 cm
2020



Totem-Voyage 12, Aspiration Vacances

mixed materials
267 × 63,5 × 120 cm
2020

Totem-Voyage 07

mixed materials
207 × 103 × 110 cm
2018

GROUPSHOWS (SÉLECTION)

<i>Materials and Motions</i> curated by Eugenia Delfini	2025
<i>Lezioni di Resistenza</i> curated by pianobi & spazio Y	2024
<i>Talent Prize 2023</i> curated by Inside Art	2023
<i>Panorama</i> curated by collectif CRIC	2023
<i>Deep Moments</i> curated by Kiki Seiler-Michalitsi	2022
<i>Nos Îles</i> curated by Marie Terrieux	2022
<i>Looking at the Black Bird</i> curated by Nelly Kuch	2021
<i>Im Wartesaal der Zeit</i> curated by Michael Babics	2021
<i>We Proudly Present</i> curated by Kiki Seiler	2021
<i>Świat wyszedł z orbit</i> curated by Aleksandra Wałaszek	2021
<i>Brave New World Order</i> curated by Kevin Mulhen	2021
<i>Ne Télétravaillez Jamais</i> A. Gouala, M. Gyger, J.Li & A. Sparta	2021
<i>Full Ornamental</i> A. Gouala, P.-L. Peny	2021
<i>Nothing Compares</i> curated by Open Windows	2020
<i>Regionale 21, Le Monde Après</i> curated by Atelier Mondial	2020
<i>Selest'art, 23rd Biennale of Selestat</i> curated by Jury de la Biennale	2019
<i>À Base de Pipiping-Pong</i> curated by des artistes	2019
<i>A Tooth for and Eye</i> curated by E. Filipovic, R. Wagner & C. Vogt	2018
<i>O.D.N.I. / U.D.O.</i> curated by Sandrine Wymann	2018
<i>Good News</i> curated by Katrin Neidermeier	2018
<i>Klischee / CLICHE</i> curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2018
<i>Eternal Applications</i> curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2018
<i>FAIL. / Verfehlt</i> curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2017
<i>April Dapsilis #2</i> curated by A.V. Hoey, avec prêts du FRAC Alsace	2017
<i>Biennale Européenne de la Jeune Création Mulhouse 015</i> curated by Ville de Mulhouse	2015
<i>Faux Lumes</i> curated by Option Objet	2014

Galleria Eugenia Delfini Rome – IT
Offlc1na (officina 11) Rome – IT
Mattatoio Roma Rome – IT
Garage Coop Strasbourg – FR
Kunst-Raum Reihen Riehen – CH
Fondation François Schneider Wattwiller – FR
Kunstverein Freiburg Freiburg-im Breisgau – DE
Kunsthalle Palazzo Liestal – CH
Kunst Raum Reihen Riehen – CH
Forma Otwarta Oleśnica – PL
Casino Luxembourg & Rotondes Luxembourg Ville– LU
Cité Internationale des Arts Paris Paris – FR
Bastion XIV Strasbourg – FR
Kunstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin – DE
Salon Mondial, Fond. C. Merian Basel – CH
Biennale d'Art de Selestat Selestat – FR
Bastion XIV Strasbourg – FR
Kunshtalle de Bâle Basel – CH
La Kunsthalle Mulhouse – FR
Kunstverein Stapflehus Weil-am-Rhein – DE
Alte Feuerwache Galerie, Kunstverein Dresden – DE
C. Rockefeller Art Center Dresden – DE
Alte Feuerwache Galerie Kunstverein Dresden – DE
Le Point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Parc des Expositions Mulhouse – FR
C.E.A.A.C. Strasbourg – FR

EDUCATION

<i>Diplôme National d'Expression Plastique</i> Art- MFA - degré master	2014	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
<i>Biennio</i> Art - Erasmus - Sculpture et Gravure	2013	Academia Belle Arti di Bologna Bologna – IT
<i>Diplôme National d'Art Plastique</i> Art - degré licence	2012	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
<i>DEUG</i> <i>Sciences Économiques et Scoiales, Antropologie</i>	2008	La Sorbonne Paris – FR

PUBLICATIONS&CATALOGUES (SELECTION RÉCENTE)

2025	<i>Lezioni di Resistenza</i> , catalog, graphic design by DITO Publishing, text of Isabella Vitale made out with the support of the City of Rome
2024	<i>Praba - Strasbourg, 10 ans de résidences artistiques</i> , Institut Français Prague, CEAAC, Meetfactory made with the support of la Fabrique des Résidences de l’Institut Français Paris
2023	Inside Art 129 #, article of Sofia Di Gravio, <i>Talent Prize 2023</i> , Premio Fondazione Cultura e Arte
2023	<i>FOOD</i> , the collective book, published by DITO Publishing, Roma - IT
2022	<i>CATS</i> , the collective book, published by DITO Publishing, Roma - IT
2021	<i>Be Magazine 28#</i> , catalog, text by Gustav Elgin, published by Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin – DE
2021	<i>Brave New World Order</i> , catalog, Rotondes and Casino Luxembourg – LU
2021	<i>1jour/ 1œuvre</i> , Strasbourg Culture, Eurométropole de Strasbourg – parution web– FR
2020	<i>Jabres-ausstellungen 2020/ 2021</i> , Artline, December 2020 – DE
2019	<i>Une idée de Nature</i> , Axel Gouala with Karin Graff, 23rd Biennale de Selestat, Selestat – FR
2019	<i>Axel Gouala Carte Blanche</i> , itw with Sophie Kauffenstein , Accélérateur de Particules, Garage Coop – FR
2018	<i>À Strasbourg, la culture c’est partout et tout le temps !</i> film, filmmaking by 128db, Strasbourg Culture – FR



photo : Clic, detail, exhibition view, Materials and Motions, Galleria Eugenia Delfini, 2025

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