

PRESS KIT



la Biennale di Venezia

**16. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura**
Eventi Collaterali

RCCR

CATALONIA IN VENICE

**DREAM
AND
NATURE**



©Photo: Hisao Suzuki

RCR. Dream and Nature **Catalonia in Venice**

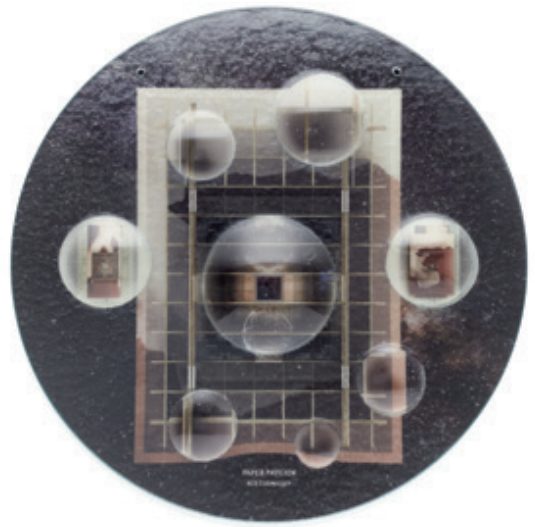
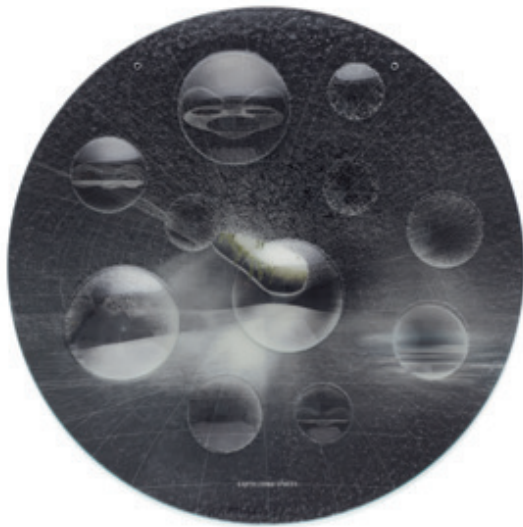
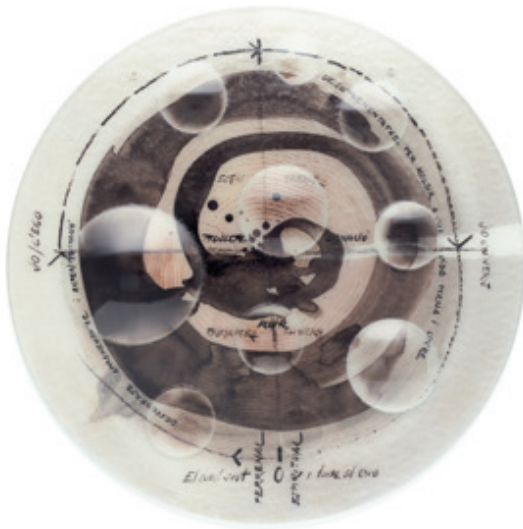
Collateral Event of the 16. *Mostra Internazionale di Architettura.* ***La Biennale di Venezia.***

The **Institut Ramon Llull** presents as Collateral Event ***RCR. Dream and Nature_Catalonia in Venice***, a project about the architecture firm, RCR Arquitectes - recipients of the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2017 - for the 16th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, that will run from May 26th to November 25th, 2018.

The project, which will represent Catalonia in the Biennale Architettura 2018 as Collateral Event and which is curated by journalist Pati Nunez and architect Estel Ortega along with RCR Arquitectes, reveals an unknown side of Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta: their most intimate universe. These three architects have created a space to research and rethink man's relationship to the world, located in the La Vila estate in the Bianya Valley (Girona), and it's in this landscape that their project for 16th International Architecture Exhibition is based.

In the words of RCR Arquitectes: "In Venice we will present our dream, unknown and unpublished up until now. It's a key moment in the development of this project, and it's through architecture that the birth of a utopia under construction that unveils our interior world is being represented." The intention is that "those who visit the space at the Biennale will feel an immense draw to get to know La Vila and to perceive the force of nature, a force that can change you. Our aim is that entering into *The Dream* becomes a highly sensorial experience."

In the words of Pati Nunez, co-curator of the project: "We're suggesting experimenting with new formats applied to the dissemination of architecture. There are no models or blueprints at the exhibition. The dream in the title refers to the most intimate side of Rafael, Carme and Ramon because their way of understanding the world is what forms the basis their architecture." Estel Ortega the co-curator reaffirms that "the museography is intentional; it's part of the project and its trajectory is not linear. The idea is to provoke the feeling of being inside a dream. You could say it's like a cave of lights and liquid movement, an immaterial space that allows each person to construct their own unique experience, just like in a dream."



©Photo: Anna Bosch

The Project

To access a secret, ambiguous place, and before getting to the dream, you must first cross over an initial phase: the **Threshold**. This is to give the visitor the feeling of entering little by little into a dematerialized space where they don't know exactly where they are, as if falling into a light sleep. It's an intermediary space, dynamic, where the content refers to RCR's previous work and it constitutes a presentation and a summary of their trajectory.

Then the **Dream** arrives: a more profound state of sleep. A cave of lights and movement, with a fragmented and mysterious spatial conception, where material from the La Vila project is presented exclusively. La Vila as destination and means, like an unfinished construction and a life's work. And this interpretation of RCR's intimate world, its strength and sensuality, is taken to the extreme so that the visitor can move as they like through the space and create their own unique experience. Just like in a dream.

All of these profound philosophical concepts are defined as the **Geography of Dreams**, and they are presented through a series of magnifying glasses that distort reality, that both reflect and fragment the world, that bring you closer and yet further away, in a sort of game that confuses, surprises, envelops, and, lastly, compels the visitor to reflect.

This is RCR's intention, to bring the La Vila experience to Venice - a utopia under construction, so that its mark is imprinted onto everyone.

About the Parallel Program

The objective of the parallel program, ***NEW FORMATS: DREAM AND NATURE***, is to offer other visions of the RCR universe from people and practices that act as filters and that allow us glimpses into other points of view, and which can also involve the largest number of people.

This program has two projects: a series of talks and a university program in which eight schools in Catalonia have sent proposals that respond to a question raised by the curators: What do we learn from Nature? Five proposals from each participating school have been chosen and they will be on display on the exhibition screen. The participating schools are: BAU, Elisava, La Salle (Ramon Llull University), ETSA Barcelona (Polytechnic University of Catalonia), ETSA Vallès (UPC), University of Girona, School of Architecture (International University of Catalonia), and the Rovira Virgili University.

Three talks have been scheduled on May 24th and 25th in Venice: on May 24th, *Creating Knowledge. New Ways of Communicating ART and ARCHITECTURE*, with Eva Franch (director of the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York and the new director of the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London), and Pedro Gadanho (director of MAAT (Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology) in Lisbon, and moderated by Pati Nunez; on May 25th, *Architecture Criticism*, with Glenn Murcutt (Founder of the Architecture Foundation Australia, and recipient of the Pritzker Prize in 2002), Juhani Pallasmaa (Finnish architect, honorable member of the SAFA, AIA and RIBA), and William J.R. Curtis (famous, award-winning architectural historian), and presented by Estel Ortega; and the closing conference, *RCR. Dream and Nature*, presented by William J.R. Curtis and RCR Architects. The parallel activities will take place at the warehouse adjacent to Cantieri Navali. They will be open to the public and can be streamed live from the Architect's Association of Catalonia (COAC) headquarters in Barcelona.

About the Book

Actar Publishers has edited a book to supplement the exhibition that offers a more detailed and profound view into the La Vila project. It is a publication that complies the unique closed universe of RCR Arquitectes: a vision of human beings, of nature and of life in general that transcends mere architecture.

About the 16.Mostra Internazionale di Architettura

La Biennale di Venezia will take place between May 26th and November 25th, 2018, (May 23rd-25th will be the preview for professionals) at the Giardini, Arsenale, and other locations in Venice. This year's exhibition is titled *Freespace*, and it is curated by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara.

RCR. Dream and Nature

Catalonia in Venice

ACCESSING THE UNIVERSAL THROUGH THE INTIMATE

The RCR studio was awarded the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2017. In the light of this international recognition, and at a moment when their professional sphere is more public than ever, we present an exhibition that introduces Rafael, Carme and Ramon's most intimate universe.

This is not an architecture exhibition. RCR has its own unique cosmogony: a vision of humans, of nature and life in general that transcends mere architecture. They are philosophers who intervene in reality with architectural tools. Like demiurges, they shape the world. And they do so with the conviction of speaking a universal language that they access through the local and real.

VENICE IS FOR DREAMERS

Since the first architecture exhibition in 1980, the Biennale has been a vital event in the sector. Art, film, music and theatre exhibitions had all been established, generating attention and interest in these disciplines. Venice captures the world's attention, and if there's one thing that unites all the Biennales, it's the essence with which they work: excitement, emotion and dreams.

The Biennale acts as a catalyst for all professionals who attend it. We pursue inspiration, dreams, and intuitions that transform into future projects in the coming months. We acquire knowledge that follows us wherever we go. That is why it's so fascinating (and such an exercise in generosity) that extremely sensitive minds like those of Rafael, Carme and Ramon are sharing their dreams and most enlightened aspirations.



©Photo: Hisao Suzuki

DREAM AND NATURE

Nature and history is the physical place that has been chosen to develop a space to conceive and experiment and to rethink man's relationship with the world. This physical space is located in the La Vila estate, in the Bianya Valley, surrounded by woods, water, farmland, country houses, etc. In this environment, research is not defined as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as having a direct relationship with what is being explored. It's a creative, experimental project, and one that is constantly evolving. Technological advances and innovation are applied on an experiential basis in this landscape. New realities are generated, like the *humanitacle*, a project about the synthesis of man and the built habitat in relation to the surroundings, nature and technology, and *la dona i l'home núvol* (cloud woman and cloud man), creative beings *par excellence* and creators of reality.

In Venice, for the first time ever, we are presenting the dreams of RCR. A utopia under construction.

Pati Nunez + Estel Ortega



© Photo: Eitel Ortega

Dream and Nature: The History of an Exhibition

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

For RCR, on the wings of architecture, dreams are revealed in a palpable way. That is their territory: between dreams and ideas, and their materialization in the real world.

For the first time, we are presenting them as contemporary thinkers with the ability to provide responses, from within architecture, to the world that surrounds them, and revealing the unique interior world that is the foundation of their creations and the origin of the architectural designs we are all familiar with today. And it is precisely at a time when they are more in the public eye than ever, having been awarded the Pritzker Prize (2017), that we are proposing an exhibition that reveals the most intimate universe inhabited by Rafael, Carme and Ramon.

And from that world of dreams, an unprecedented dream emerges. The dream of La Vila, the dream of architecture that is free, stripped bare, authentic, emotional and essential. The landscape of Olot as an experimental laboratory for architecture. La Vila implies discovering a new reality which, in the form of a cloud of fog, slowly reveals itself with space for ideas but also the landscape, images, drawings and words. It represents the search for an architecture that allows for building an entirely genuine world of unknown relationships and synergies, with the excitement of their discovery.

With all of this, the exhibition becomes a journey through an architecture that is contemplated and experienced – that is the unavoidable way of discovering and truly understanding RCR’s architecture: by feeling it. The traveler enters into a dream, slowly and serenely, and is softly absorbed into the furthest depths of that dream.

The journey is an experience. A sensory experience for everyone who takes part in it. Once all references to the exterior are removed (and through an entrance that is nearly hidden) the traveller is immersed into a dream, the material world disappears to make way for a sensory and emotional space that is liquid, immaterial.

To enter into a dream, you need a portal. When you cross the *Threshold*, it alters your perception of what is familiar. It is the transitional space leading into the deepest dream. Like in sleep, where the REM phase is preceded by a state of semi-consciousness, that is what is on display here. In that state, dynamic and floating images present the RCR universe, commenting on the complexity of how it is experienced, taking on its role as the space for presenting and summarizing their career up to the present.

From there, we enter the *Dream*. Gradually drawn into an immaterial space of movement, reflections, shadows, in a pleasurable and sensuous space, it is in this space of dreams where we come into contact with the design of La Vila, in order to discover it. It is a project for the future and the present: what is still to come, and what is currently taking shape. As such, it is displayed as a fragmented reality, where each individual will create his own narrative and arrive at her own perception.

We all dream. But how can a dream be given a form? How can we materialize a mental state that is immaterial?

Through the *Geography of Dreams*, La Vila is structured around three symbolic values: body, mind and soul. Symbolized by a circle, they evoke the search for balance and absolute harmony. In Japanese calligraphy, the circle (or *ensō*) symbolizes a moment when the mind is free to let the body and spirit create, absolute illumination, strength, elegance, the universe and the void. Only someone who is mentally and spiritually complete can draw a true *ensō*.

Thus, the circle becomes the basis for the language of this new dream.

La Vila is a project at a key moment in its genesis. It represents the birth of an idea, a philosophy, a built utopia. As such, we are witnessing the birth of a project that has only just fully entered the process of being defined and structured, and it is beginning to take shape. In that sense, it is shown as a fragmented, distorted reality, presented through the idea of a magnifying glass: *focus-blur*, *definition-distortion*, *unity-fragmentation*. Those properties make it ideal for constructing the language being sought.

At the same time, the circle evokes the value of a ritual where there can be no notion of a specific beginning or end. Its space is continuous and infinite. We imagine a non-physical space that will transport us to a mental space, made of sensory material: a volatile, crystalline and distorted skin that envelops us. A changing and dynamic atmosphere, where we feel abstracted from reality, but for that same reason connected to it. Freed from distractions. An essential space, a space of universal communication. We propose a space of action. Dynamic. Changing. Temporary. Like dreams.

This is a dream of nature. We are looking for a skin made from the same dream of nature as La Vila: its earth, its air, and the ideas that are hidden there. We want to present it using genuine language, like the *untranslatable words* that the Japanese tradition needed to invent to define concepts that could describe our connection to nature: experiences that are shared by everyone, universal, but which everyday language cannot express. To that end, a mosaic of magnifying glasses where the images seem distorted, with the goal of sparking unique and individual readings that are suggested by each individual's open interpretation.

In this way, an experience comes into being through the actions of the people experiencing it. Everyone who participates in the dream will take their own personal dream home with them.

We will bring the space of La Vila into a common dream, a shared dream.

In the end, there will be nothing left of the space, but the dream will be everywhere, for everyone and by everyone.

Pati Nunez + Estel Ortega

Biographies



©Photo: Albert Bertran

RCR Arquitectes

The brilliant trajectory of RCR Arquitectes, a creative architecture studio founded in 1988 in Olot by Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramon Vilalta, has been recognized with various national and international awards. The most recent was the Pritzker Prize 2017.

Since 2008 their headquarters can be found at the Barberí Space, an old artistic foundry.

Rafael Aranda (1961), Carme Pigem (1962) and Ramon Vilalta (1960) were awarded the first prize in a 1988 competition to design a lighthouse in Punta Aldea. In their proposal they reflected on the essence of typology. They attribute their early success to this prize, and since then they have participated in many important exhibitions, such as the III International Salon of Architecture in Paris in 1990; the Biennale Architettura in Venice in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2016; MoMA's On-Site: *New Architecture in Spain*, New York, 2006; *Global Ends* at the Toto Gallery in Tokyo, 2010; and *RCR Architects. Shared Creativity*, (Barcelona, 2015, Madrid, 2016, and Donostia, 2017).

Since 1989 Aranda, Pigem and Vilalta have been the architecture consultants at the Garrotxa Volcanic Zone Natural Park. They have given classes in urban design, landscape architecture, and design studies at the Vallés School of Architecture (ETSAV), and they have been jurors for the student projects at the ETSAV and ETSAB (Barcelona School of Architecture). In 2012 they started an international summer workshop at their Barberí laboratory. And in 2013 they created the RCR BUNKA Foundation to give back to society in the fields of architecture and landscape, and the arts and culture in general.

They have also received the Pritzker Architecture Prize 2017, the Médaille d'Or de l'Académie d'Architecture Française (2015); l'Officier and el Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the République Française (2014 and 2008); International Fellows by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA, 2012); Honorary Fellows by the American Institute of Architecture (AIA, 2010); and the National Award of Culture in Architecture from the Generalitat de Catalunya in 2005.

www.rcrarquitectes.es



Pati Nunez, co-curator

Pati Nunez (Barcelona 1976) is a journalist, cultural manager, curator, and a Communications and Strategies consultant. She is also the co-director of Open House Madrid, and the director of the Pati Nunez Agency, a communications and strategy consulting firm.

Nunez directed the PR strategy for the Spanish Pavilion in the last Biennale di Venezia, which won the Golden Lion award. She has curated various exhibitions and produced art and architecture films, such as *Hello Mrs. Hock*, by Jordi Bernadó, and *Remembering Coderch*, by Poldo Pomés. She collaborates on a regular basis with different communication outlets, gives seminars and conferences at various national universities (UPC Barcelona School of Architecture, Madrid UPM, Valencia UPV, School of Architecture at the International University of Catalonia), as well as international ones (University of Antwerp). She participates in international juries (Architectural Association Visiting School, HSE Graduate School of Urbanism, Moscow), and is the author of the book, “Remembering Coderch,” which was selected for the FAD awards 2017.

www.patinunezagency.com



Estel Ortega, co-curator

Estel Ortega (Barcelona, 1977) is an architect, university professor, and an expert in museography, and museology. She is an associate professor and the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB), and at the School of Architecture at the International University of Barcelona (UIC), and one of the founding partners and the director of Architecture Studio, 15515 Architecture and Cubus.

She has received the following awards, amongst others: three time winner of the National Awards for Ephemeral Architecture EMPORIA 2017 for the exhibitions, “Parallel Stories” (SILVER), “A Shared History, 100 years Roca and Communication” (SELECTED), and the “WOW!!! Installation, 100 years of Roca” (SELECTED); the AJAC X Award in the category of new construction and renovation in 2016 for her project A’Bodega; the First National Award of Architects EMPORIA 2016 in the category of fixed exhibitions for her exhibition “Chillida, entre les formes”. She has also worked on architectural projects in Spain, Portugal, Lebanon, the UK, Ghana and China, amongst other places. Over the past two years she has collaborated closely with RCR.

www.15515arquitectura.com

Parallel Program: Talks

NEW FORMATS: DREAM AND NATURE is a conversation cycle forming part of *RCR. Dream and Nature_Catalonia in Venice*. *NEW FORMATS* aims to reflect on new formats, based on various analyses of the curatorship, dissemination and critique of architecture.

Programme curated by Pati Núñez and RCR Arquitectes

May 24th

12pm

Creating knowledge. New ways of communicating ART and ARCHITECTURE

With the architects, EVA FRANCH and PEDRO GADANHO, moderated by PATI NUNEZ.

May 25th

4:00-5:30 pm

Architecture Criticism

With the architects, GLENN MURCUTT and JUHANI PALLASMAA, and the historian WILLIAM J.R. CURTIS, presented by ESTEL ORTEGA.

5:30-7:00 pm

RCR. Dream and Nature, closing conference with WILLIAM J.R. CURTIS and RCR ARQUITECTES.

Biographies

Eva Franch New York-based architect, since 2010 Franch has directed the *Storefront for Art and Architecture* gallery in NYC, and has just been named director of the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. In 2014, her project, *OfficeUs*, was selected for the US pavilion at the 14. Biennale di Architettura.

Pedro Gadanho After working for three years as the curator at the MoMA in New York, the Portuguese architect became the first director of the new Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT) in Lisbon, which was inaugurated in 2016.

Glenn Murcutt The highly acclaimed Australian architect, 2002 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize and currently Chair of the Jury for that prize. He has designed some of the most outstanding and sustainable buildings in his country, personally undertaking all of the associated tasks. Murcutt has received numerous awards, such as the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal (1992) and the Alvar Aalto Medal (1992). In addition, he has given lectures and master classes all over the world, founded the Architecture Foundation Australia and holds six honorary doctorates.

Juhani Pallasmaa Finnish architect and former dean at the Helsinki University of Technology. Pallasmaa was the director of the Museum of Finnish Architecture and of the Institute of Industrial Arts o Helsinki. He is a professor at various universities, including Washington University at St. Louis and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and he has given conferences around the world. He is also an honorary member of the SAFA, AIA and RIBA.

William J.R. Curtis Renowned British historian of modern architecture, critic, writer, painter, and photographer. One of his most famous works, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, was published in 1982 and has been re-edited numerous times since. Curtis has taught various courses related to art and architecture at universities in Europe, the USA, Asia, Latin America and Australia.

A Project that Counts on the Support of Businesses and Institutional Collaborations

Along with being one of the most important architecture and urban design events, La Biennale di Venezia is also an attractive opportunity for companies in the industrial and construction sector who value the Biennale as a first-rate event with international visibility. It also serves as a prestigious display window to showcase new, innovative construction materials to renowned international architects through the projects. And finally, the Biennale is a meeting point to promote the creation of new, international business opportunities.

In terms of the different collaborating companies, the project has counted on the participation of the **COAC** (Architect's Association of Catalonia) as a strategic collaborator. They will co-organize the parallel program with roundtable discussions about architecture with internationally renowned guest speakers. The project also has the support of **Cricursa**, a curved and laminated glass company who is a leader in their industry for creativity and innovation, and who is present in many of the most emblematic buildings around the world. They created custom-made magnifying glass pieces for the RCR exhibition.

The **Costa Brava Girona Tourist Board** are also sponsors of the project. They are dedicated to promoting culture as a differentiating feature, and advocate for culture to be seen as an added value for tourism. **Lamp**, a technical and architectural lighting company with an international presence, will provide the lighting for the exhibition. And finally, there is the **Olot City Council (Olot Culture)**, dedicated to promoting regional culture.

Further information about the companies:

COAC www.arquitectes.cat/

Cricursa www.cricursa.com

Costa Brava Girona Tourist Board www.ca.costabrava.org

Lamp www.lamp.es/ca/

Olot City Council www.olotcultura.cat



Institut Ramon Llull

The **Institut Ramon Llull** has produced and organized Catalonia's participation in the *Eventi Collaterali* of La Biennale di Venezia since 2009, and has been present at the *Biennale Architettura* since 2012.

With *RCR. Dream and Nature_ Catalonia in Venice* the Institut Ramon Llull is participating for the fourth time in the Mostra Internazionale di Architettura. In 2016 they presented *Aftermath_ Catalonia in Venice. Architecture beyond Architects*, curated by Jaume Prat and Jelena Prokopljevic along with the film director Isaki Lacuesta.

In 2017 they presented *Catalonia in Venice 2017_ La Venezia che non si vede*, created by Antoni Abad and curated by Mery Cuesta and Roc Parés, in their fifth appearance in the *Eventi Collaterali de la Biennial d'Art de Venècia*.

The Institut Ramon Llull is a consortium formed by the Government of Catalonia, the autonomous community of the Balearic Islands, and the Barcelona City Council, and it is dedicated to promoting the Catalan language and culture abroad. It works to give international visibility to writers and artists, to promote artistic and cultural exchanges, as well as giving Catalan language and literature courses at universities.

Practical Information

NEW FORMATS: DREAM AND NATURE

with the support of the COAC

May 24th

12 pm

*Creating knowledge. New ways of communicating
ART and ARCHITECTURE*

EVA FRANCH and PEDRO GADANHO.

Moderated by PATI NUNEZ (ENG)

May 25th

4 - 5:30 pm

Architecture Criticism: GLENN MURCUTT,
JUHANI PALLASMAA and WILLIAM J.R.
CURTIS. Presented by ESTEL ORTEGA (anglès)

5:30 - 7 pm

Closing conference: *RCR. Dream and Nature*
with WILLIAM J.R. CURTIS and RCR
ARQUITECTES (SP)

Press meeting

May 24th, 11 am

Opening

May 24th, 1 pm

Cocktail and appetizers to follow

RCR. Dream and Nature_Catalonia in Venice

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