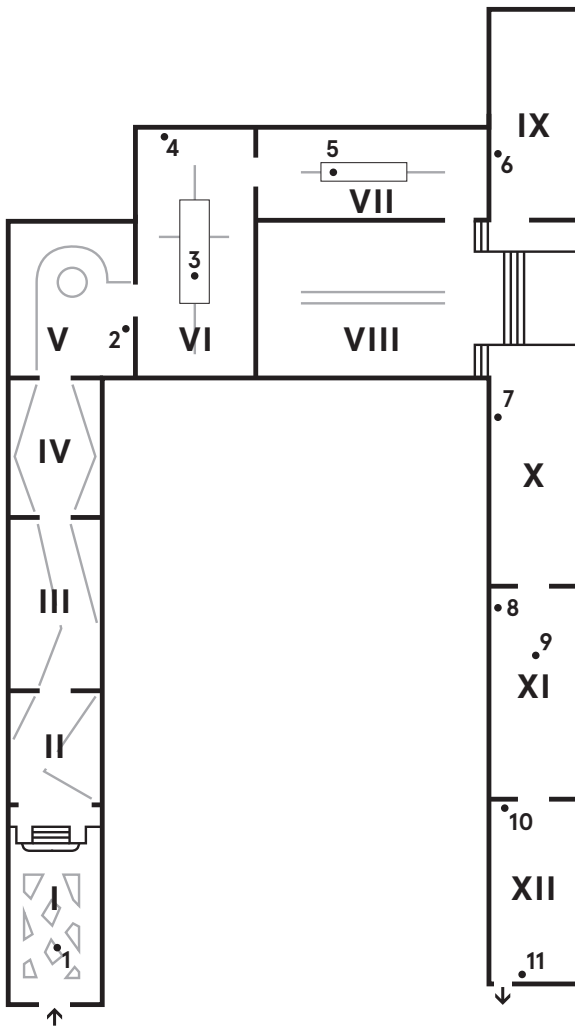


BO  
ZAR



1945 ————— 1968  
FACING THE FUTURE  
Art in Europe

.....  
EN



ROOMS I–III  
**PROLOGUE &  
 THE END OF WAR**

ROOMS IV–VI  
**MOURNING & MEMORY**

ROOMS VII–VIII  
**THE COLD WAR**

ROOM IX  
**NEW REALISMS**

ROOMS X–XI  
**NEW IDEALISMS**

ROOM XII  
**THE END OF UTOPIA?**

## THIS SUMMER AT BOZAR

Figurative or abstract? Mainstream or underground? Still or dynamic? Art represents its time. Artists are children of their time. This summer BOZAR assembles a collection of social and artistic benchmarks from 1945 onwards. In our public-access BOZAR STREET, a timeline takes visitors from the Yalta Conference in early 1945 up to the Prague Spring. From the processing of war traumas, through the renewed optimism of the fifties, to the revolts of 1968. Presenting the background against which the many art (r)evolutions presented in *Facing the Future* took place.

Between 1945 and 1968 geopolitical relationships changed. Our gaze turned to the universe and expanded our view of art: from *space art* and kinetic art to performance and conceptual art. Artists took an active part in the '68 revolts, occupying public spaces along with students and workers. Power to the imagination as well as the people! Today we see similar protest movements surfacing here and there: from Occupy Wall Street, Tahrir, Euro-maidan and Gezi to the Nuits debout.

How do artists, in and through their art, depict space and the changing times? This is the central question of the Summer of Photography, the biennial photography event that BOZAR has once again set in motion right across Brussels. In the Centre for Fine Arts alone, 8 exhibitions are being held. In *open spaces | secret places*, artists from the 1970s till now explore the relationship between man and environment: from historic, emotionally charged sites to imaginary spaces. *Dey your Lane! Lagos Variations* takes us to bustling Lagos, Africa's second largest city. In *After Scale Model: Dwelling in the Work of James Casebere*, James Casebere invokes spaciousness using photos of architectural models.

Art does not in itself change the world. Art does change our view of the world.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The exhibition *Facing the Future: Art in Europe 1945-1968* charts the progression of European art in the highly charged historical context of the period after the end of World War II. The exhibition maps the major developments across six chapters – focusing first on “The End of the War”, on “Mourning and Remembrance”, and “The Cold War”, before moving on to examine the developing dialectic of “New Realisms” and “New Idealisms”, and finally leading up to the question of “The End of Utopia?” in 1968. The exhibition aims to show the public a pan-European panorama of the art that went beyond the classic genres of the new post-war art, and challenged the repressed realities of persistent violence, while simultaneously developing idealistic visions of a future society. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, it is now possible to tell a different history of post-war art in Europe to the one that was previously fixed on the triumph of abstract expressionism and was intended to symbolize the freedom of the West, while Socialist Realism represented the conservatism of the communist East. Like the catchwords of Western and Eastern art, this model – which dominated art history for decades – was itself a product of the Cold War.

The exhibition features around 160 works by more than 150 European artists who established networks across Europe throughout the period from 1945 to 1968. On both sides of the Iron Curtain a fundamental renewal and expansion of art took place, which included all new art forms, from media art to conceptual art. Until now, however, in exhibitions such as *Westkunst* (Western Art) in 1981, the Eastern European art scene has been systematically ignored.

In an age characterized by the promise of limitless energy from nuclear power, by space travel and mass consumption, there was also a great sense of optimism about progress that spanned the ideological trenches and was shared by communists and social democrats in equal measure. At the same time, however, artists were being animated by the fear of a nuclear war.

With the May revolt in Paris against the authoritarian Fifth Republic of De Gaulle, the student disturbances in Milan, the August invasion of Warsaw Pact troops into Prague, the formation of terrorist organizations against the repression of the Nazi past and fascism, as well as America's war in Vietnam, the year of 1968 marked the end of all hopes for a democratic form of socialism, and with the dogmatic politicization of the student movement, it also brought to a close an extremely productive period for a playful, utopian, and activist form of art that sought to be a medium for creating new, liberating situations within the prevailing conditions, rather than simply creating art as an end in itself.

## ROOMS I–III

### Prologue & The End of the War

The first section of the exhibition shows works that arose at the height of the war, or immediately after the end of hostilities. They revolve around the cruelly revealed *conditio humana* and the failure of western-Christian culture.

The model of the sculpture *The Destroyed City* by Ossip Zadkine embodies the horror and despair of the civilian population under attack from the air. It is dedicated to Rotterdam, which was almost completely destroyed by an aerial bombardment from the *Luftwaffe* in 1940, and the sculpture is a symbol of collapse, escape, and indictment.

The visitor is met by Picasso's sketches for a personal "protect-and-resist" figure in the tradition of the good shepherd, who takes a stray lamb into his custody against its will. A painting by Picasso shows an ashen nude on a coffin-shaped divan, which is reminiscent of a corpse in the crematorium. Jean Fautrier addresses the extinction of human existence with his *Têtes d'otage* (Hostage Heads).

The Englishman Paul Nash and the German émigré Hans Richter assume the role of war reporters. Nash's *Battle of Britain* recalls the defensive battle against the German *Luftwaffe* for aerial supremacy over England in the style of an aesthetic of the sublime, which sublimates the terror into a dramatic marine and landscape painting. Hans Richter unfurled the Battle of Stalingrad like a movie, annotated by original quotations taken from the daily press. Max Beckmann confronts the winners and the losers in his painting, *Removal of the Sphinxes*. The painting is the émigré's thank you address to his host nation Holland and a hymn to his longed-for land of France.

# 1

## Georges Rouault

Homo homini lupus  
(The Hanged Man), 1944–1948



Georges Rouault began working on his painting *Homo homini lupus* (*Le pendu / The Hanged Man*) in German-occupied Paris in 1944. He had already used the same title when dealing with the theme – as a response to the First World War – within the context of his cycle of etchings *Miserere*. The print shows a skeleton with a uniform cap, which continues marching onwards, unmoved by the skulls on its path. In this cycle, Rouault was castigating the way that every human is inclined to avoid revealing what he is, preferring to hide behind a mask.

Against the background of his experience of the Second World War in France, Rouault again addressed the motif that “Man is wolf to Man”. His painting shows a man in short blue trousers and a white shirt hanging from a gallows, which delimits the top and the right-hand side of the image like a second frame. The background scene with a burning house and a red moon acts to reinforce the mood. The small format and the way that the title is painted onto the frame give the picture the character of a votive picture.

Rouault was closely related to the movement *Renouveau catholique* (Catholic Renewal), an offshoot of the political reaction against the Enlightenment and secularism (the separation of church and state), and sought a return to the original values of Catholicism.

## ROOMS IV–VI

### Mourning & Remembrance

Despite Europe being traumatised by the millions of deaths, the genocide of the European Jews, and the atomic bomb – which Stalingrad, Auschwitz and Hiroshima have come to embody – the attempt to cast a grieving look back at the terror that had just been experienced ran into resistance from society. For example, fixated as they were on progress and development, the communist parties of the Soviet Union and their allied countries obliged the artists within their sphere of influence to help to shape the future. Resistance to this ban on mourning came from Polish artists like Marek Oberländer or Andrzej Wróblewski, and from East German artists such as Willi Sitte and Werner Tübke.

The artists revived the traditional motifs of Christian iconography, such as the Crucifixion, the burial ground, and the *Pietà*. The existentialism of Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre and the absurd theatre of Samuel Beckett reacted to the failure of humanism and to the fragility of civilization. This existentialist mood expressed itself, in part, through the dominance of the colour black in both non-objective and figurative images.



## 2

### Armando

Black Barbed Wire on Black 1-62, 1962



During the German occupation, the Dutch painter Armando spent his youth living in the shadow of the Police Transit Camp of Amersfoort. His close relationship with this mysterious, forbidden place surrounded by barbed wire, provides the starting point for his artistic work. *Criminal Landscape* (1956) is the title he gave to a series of images with which he seeks to express how the beauty of nature has deceived us, since it has become the indifferent witness to so many crimes. To him, natural beauty is just as uncanny as the beauty of art. The painted skull *Tête Noire II* (Black Head II) presents his response.

In 1958 Armando became a member of the Dutch Informal Group, which rebelled against the subjectivism of the Informel with monochrome material images and objects made of metal and plastic. It was within this context in 1962 that Armando produced his object *Black Barbed Wire on Black 1-62*, which takes the barbed wire that he used to stand in front of as a boy in Amersfoort, and applies it like an informal sketch in superimposed lines on a black-painted panel / plate. At the end of the 1960s he found his way back to a form of painting reduced to a palette of black and white, a choice that is certainly related to his period of strict abstinence from painting, but one that also contributed to a fundamental renewal of his painting.

### 3

## Henry Moore



Falling Warrior, 1956–1957

The sculpture shows the moment in which the fatally wounded warrior is falling to the floor. He is trying to brace himself with his right hand and left foot. The bulky body still hangs suspended in the air in the second just before it will drop limp and lifeless to the ground. With his outstretched left hand, he holds his shield like a helmet behind his head to protect him from the impact against the ground. Moore is attempting here to express the dramatic moment between life and death.

What is striking is the contrast between the small head, the thin, fragile-looking legs, and the massive upper body. Like a skull, the head has only empty eye sockets. The war has wiped out all trace of individual facial features. The sculpture, which combines both abstraction and figuration, reveals surfaces that have been roughened up and others that are smoothly polished, organic and cubic.

With such ambivalences and ambiguities, Moore challenges observers to look more closely and to form their own idea of the figure in their heads. This warrior challenges the image of the harmless modernist with his sculptures of female body curves harmoniously embedded in park landscapes. Here we discover a dark artist, fascinated by psychoanalysis and influenced by the theory of the Surrealists, who shapes bodily forms that present themselves as injured and disfigured. The First World War, which Moore experienced in the Battle of Cambrai in 1917 in which his battalion was almost wiped out, and the totalitarian threat to England in the form of Hitler's Germany are inscribed in the eerie, claustrophobic styling of this figure.

# 4

## Gerhard Richter

Uncle Rudi, 1965



Gerhard Richter's *Uncle Rudi* (1965) is painted from a family album photograph of an impeccable looking officer who gave his life in the war for "Führer and Fatherland". The full-length painting in the tradition of an aristocratic portrait leaves it open as to whether this family member was a victim or a perpetrator in the Second World War. In 1967, Gerhard Richter made this painting available for an exhibition by the gallerist René Block entitled *Hommage à Lidice* (Homage to Lidice), which was intended to commemorate the extermination of the village of Lidice, 20 km northwest of Prague, and the shooting of the entire male population over 15 years of age as a reprisal for the assassination in 1942 of the Deputy *Reichsprotektor* of Bohemia and Moravia, Reinhard Tristan Heydrich.

## ROOMS VII–VIII

### The Cold War

The Cold War of the 1950s also took in the visual arts. Abstraction in painting and sculpture was seen as the authentic expression of artistic individuality and autonomy, while Socialist Realism represented the collective spirit of socialism. Under the leadership of the Soviet Union and with the help of Picasso's dove of peace, the world communist movement launched its peace congresses and World Festival of Youth. Paintings like *Constructeurs* (Builders) by Fernand Léger, a member of the French Communist Party, and *Peaceful Building Site* by Alexander Deineka in the Soviet Union were symbolic of the optimism for progress.

From Italy came Realismo, featuring artists such as Renato Guttuso and Gabriele Mucchi, who, with their exhibition in East Berlin in 1951, inspired the young painters of the DDR, such as Harald Metzkes, to pursue a critical form of art.

In 1958, K.O. Götz in Düsseldorf and Hans Grundig in Dresden addressed the theme of the fear of nuclear war in two triptychs. The West German painter Götz painted abstractly, and the East German Grundig in a figurative style.

Two competitions exemplify the way in which the arts were entrenched within the struggles for ideological hegemony between the hostile power blocs: the international competition for a Monument to the Unknown Political Prisoner, and the competition for a memorial in the concentration camp at Buchenwald. Comparing the two tendering procedures reveals the size of the gulf between very different artistic languages and ideologies that were drifting further and further apart in the Cold War.

# 5

## Reg Butler

Model for 'The Unknown  
Political Prisoner', 1951–1952



The First Prize was won by the young English sculptor Reg Butler. His design consisted of three elements: the use of a rock as a base, on which three female figures in bronze stand as witnesses and observers, some three metres tall, with a huge iron structure on three legs, reminiscent of a watchtower, protruding up into the sky. In the female figures in front of the empty cage, one can see the Three Marys at the empty grave of the risen Christ, which for the viewer embodies sympathy for the absent prisoner, who is ennobled and redeemed through his relation to the example of Christ.

The linear sculptures look a little like extensions of technical devices. Butler's "watchtower" is reminiscent of radio and radar installations and signifies the surveillance of prisoners, but at the same time the reciprocal monitoring and sounding out of the deeply distrusted enemy.

Butler was invited by the West Berlin Senate in 1957 to erect his monument on a pile of rubble above a bomb shelter at the sector boundary. Here, the 30-metre-high monument was intended to be widely visible in the eastern sector of Berlin, thereby giving it a clear propaganda role as a counter-monument to the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park, which featured the statue, also 30 metres high, of a Soviet soldier with a child, with the soldier's sword lowered over a demolished swastika. But in the end, it never happened.

# ROOM IX

## New Realisms

Even as Werner Haftmann was establishing in the catalogue for *documenta 2* in Kassel, in 1959, that art had become abstract, that notion was already been mocked by Jean Tinguely's *Méta-Matic* drawing machines, which were churning out variable spot images on a paper roll in the style of Tachism at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris — at the same time as the exhibition in Kassel.

On 27 October 1960, the art critic Pierre Restany used a manifesto to found the Nouveaux Réalistes group, whose works are all the result of a previous action, be it tearing up a poster (Hains, Villeglé, Dufrêne, Rotella, Vostell), collecting car wrecks (Arman), the packaging of objects and buildings (Christo), or the “fixing” of meals (the trap-paintings of Daniel Spoerri).

Gerhard Richter developed *Capitalist Realism* with Konrad Lueg and Sigmar Polke from the world of the advertising that was associated with the economic miracle of the West German *Wirtschaftswunder*. Lesser known are the contributions to pop art of Russian artists such as Yuri Pimenov, Oskar Rabin, Mikhail Roginsky, and Alexandr Zhdanov.

The Independent Group formed around Lawrence Alloway, Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London in the early 1950s, and would later become the nucleus of English pop art. Paolozzi's legendary lecture “Bunk!” in 1952 is considered to be the legendary birth of British Pop art, which was a European adoption of American mass culture before it had even found its way into the art of the United States.

# 6

## Eduardo Paolozzi

Dr Pepper, 1948



Paolozzi based his lecture “Bunk!” (1952) on the albums (scrap-books) into which he had pasted the images and advertising pages from the likes of *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *American Home*, and *Saturday Evening Post* that he had started to collect back in his days of studying sculpture in Paris in the period after the war. These pictures of affluence were largely transported into Western Europe via the U.S. Army stationed there, which served as a major agent for American consumer culture and lifestyle with its iconic packaging of the cigarettes and chewing gum that constituted a leading currency on the black markets. The contrast with the domestic austerity binge in England, but also in France and West Germany, could not be greater. Paolozzi recalls: “The fact that my friends and I were connected by a life in poverty, living in rented accommodation without refrigerators, cameras, and fashionable clothing, gave these lavish magazine images a particular spice.” The English architectural critic Reyner Banham (*Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, Praeger, 1960) found “paradise regained” in these magazines, after he and his generation had spent their youth “surviving the horrors and hardships of a six-year war”. Food, household appliances, comic books, cars, and Space determine the iconography of Paolozzi’s small-format collages, such as *Dr Pepper* (1948), and *Real Gold* (1949).

# ROOM IX

## New Idealisms

Expo 58 in Brussels, the first major World's Fair of the post-war period, became a symbol of ardent modernization, technological utopianism, and just hope for a better world. This age of scientific and technological achievement, nuclear power, space travel, and consumerism was permeated by unflagging optimism. Artists in both the West and in the East experimented with new forms of urban utopias, fantastic architecture, "immaterialization", and attempts to overcome the force of gravity.

Together with Yves Klein and Jean Tinguely, Lucio Fontana became the *spiritus rector* for a new generation of artists moved by a denial of the principles of Tachism, the artistic movement that dominated the 1950s and which aimed at the expression of the individual gesture. ZERO was the first post-war neo-avant-garde movement that managed to overcome national borders. The group was founded in Düsseldorf in 1958, by Otto Piene and Heinz Mack, who were later joined by Günther Uecker. Like-minded artists gathered around the activities of the ZERO magazine. New artistic groups such as G-58, Azimuth, and Nul spread to Antwerp, Milan and Amsterdam, and other cities that had not previously existed on the map of modern art. Zagreb became a centre for an international artistic movement known as Nove tendencije (New Tendencies), establishing "visual research" as the principle of art and propagating the demystification of art.

In the Soviet Union, the period in question coincided with a time of relative liberalization, the so-called "Thaw" period. During this time, some non-official artists, such as Yuri Zlotnikov, started to experiment with forms inspired by new scientific achievements. Artists from the Dvizhenie (Movement) group created kinetic art works developed under the influence of perception experiments, mathematics, or other exact sciences.



# 7

## Heinz Mack

Tele-Mack, 1968



The new European generation of ZERO artists sought to disentangle themselves from panel painting, to extend art into non-museum spaces, and to expand the range of art materials to the inclusion of actual movement, light, and chance as artistic media. Through their art, the German ZERO artists tried to bring new harmony to the relations between man, nature, and technology.

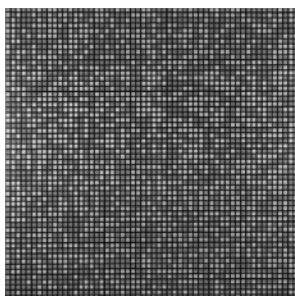
Heinz Mack became interested in the research of pure light and of intact natural spaces. In 1959, he started to develop his “Sahara Project”, and from 1962/63, he began to install artificial landscapes of his works in the deserts of Africa. This research led to the film *Tele-Mack* in 1968, which was shot close to the Tunisian oasis of Kebili, where Mack manipulated his art works for several days.

# 8

## François Morellet

Random Repartitions

(40% Blue, 40% Red,  
10% Green, 10% Orange), 1960

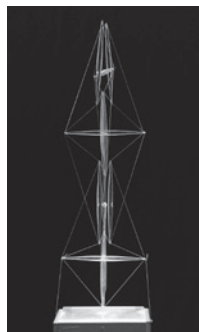


The artistic movement of New Tendencies pursued a more rationalistic approach and understood art as visual and scientific research. François Morellet followed certain rules that he set in advance in order to justify his choices and selections, and which sometimes included the intervention of chance as one of these pre-programmed elements. Together with other artists and theoreticians, he introduced the aspect of programming into the process of artistic creation. A lot of his works are titled with reference to mathematics. *Répartition aléatoire (40% bleu, 40% rouge, 10% vert, 10% orange)* suggests that it was created through a mathematical equation. Programming also referred to his research of neutrality and the elimination of any emotional artistic gesture, which guaranteed a rational procedure and structure in the work. In this sense, his understanding of programming in art is close to the ideas of the future “computer art”.

# 9

## Viacheslav Kolejchuk

Mast, 1966



Despite the Iron Curtain, the Russian collective Dvizhenie (Movement) was also invited to join the New Tendencies. From 1964 onwards, the artists of this collective, including Lev Nussberg, Franciso Infante-Arana, Viacheslav Kolejchuk, and others, created moving kinetic sculptures that were also realized in public spaces.

The trained architect Viacheslav Kolejchuk, born in 1941, created his works at the interface of artistic, scientific, and technological inventions. He joined the Dvizhenie group for a short period of time and founded his own artists' group, Mir (Peace), in 1968. Kolejchuk dealt experimentally and theoretically with the construction of form and with overcoming the material in kinetic works, and he developed paradoxical constructive and visual models. Among other influences, his knowledge of the self-erecting structures that were being widely used in space technology research at that time also played a major role in the development of his practice. His experimental structures from this period, including *Mast* (1966), are reminiscent of futuristic antennas or double-helix structures, and are held by the coupling of individual elements, without the use of glue or supports.

## ROOM XII

### The End of Utopia?

In the 1960s, the Situationist International around Guy Debord, the artists groups COBRA and SPUR, and the Vienna Actionists developed radical visions of the liberation of the individual from the constraints of being trapped in consumer society. They wanted to track down and exploit the unexpected on the path to a utopian society. They felt the desire to try and live the other life immediately, in the here and now. According to their vision, since there can be no rules, no finished concepts, and no fixed objectives, each group must set out to find its own way towards collectively finding out – by means of “drifting” (*la dérive*) – the opportunities that lay along the way in order to then realise them passionately and playfully. The liberation of art comes to represent the ideal path for the self-liberation of the people in all other areas of society.

In this sense, in the streets and on the barricades of the Paris May '68, despite the participation of the workers, the strikes, and the factory occupations, it was not a case of political or economic revolution, but of a cultural revolution – with the central slogan: “*L’imagination au pouvoir*” (“Imagination comes to power”).

Although Marcel Broodthaers also asked fundamental questions about the art system, he was sceptical about a superficial politicization of art and art institutions. He distrusted all forms of instrumentalization of the arts for ideological purposes and viewed art completely without illusions – “as a useless, apolitical and barely moral institution”.

# 10

## Heimrad Prem

Manifesto, 1960



Heimrad Prem's painting *Manifesto* from 1960 alludes to the establishment of the SPUR group in June 1957, and to its first manifesto in November 1958. The group members are sat at a rectangular table that takes up the entire surface of the painting. The observer has a bird's eye view of the table and the various papers, manifestos and leaflets lying on top of it. The members appear to be discussing a manifesto.

By positioning him at the centre of the table, Prem's painting *Manifesto* honours the friend and supporter of the SPUR group, Asger Jorn, who was a member of the international artist group COBRA until its dissolution in 1951. Together with the Frenchman Guy Debord, he was one of the founding members of the Situationist International, and it was thanks to his mediation that the SPUR group was accepted into the international association in 1958.

# 11

## Harald Metzkes

Bathers (Cain), 1968



In 1968, the painter Harald Metzkes from the GDR responded to the events in Prague with his painting *Bathers (Cain)*. The picture shows a naked man, clearly in a great deal of distress, with his arms folded across his chest, in a desolate landscape in which only a dead, barren tree can be seen. He has just emerged from a lake and is treading towards the viewer, with his eyes cast down toward the ground. With the biblical name of Cain, the painter is alluding to “brother nations” subjecting another “brother nation” to attack.

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