

**macLYON**

The Musée d'art contemporain devises its exhibitions programme to reflect current concerns and engages with the major debates that shape our society. As a place of exploration and experiment, the museum promotes new works, is committed to supporting new and emerging artists, and is an active participant in the dynamics of the art scene at both regional and international level.

Although it is not in the DNA of macLYON to take account of an artist's gender, but to be concerned above all with the work itself, it has become impossible to ignore the significant imbalance between male and female artists in the art world. In France, women didn't gain access to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris until the end of the nineteenth century, and discussion about the "place of the female artist" in art history only emerged in the second half of the twentieth century.

Since the early 2000s, the majority of students in art schools have been women, with nearly 65% of them graduating in art. But the fact remains that they are still under-represented in exhibitions and collections. It is essential that we examine the reasons for this disparity and that we re-evaluate current models of contemporary creation, the mechanisms of professional support, and the public display of artworks. It is not enough to look back with a critical and inclusive eye; we have to offer new perspectives.

This is why macLYON has decided to make an active commitment to giving greater visibility to women artists by devoting an entire season to their work around the theme of the moving image.

All three of the monographic exhibitions, featuring Delphine Balley, Jasmina Cibic and Christine Rebet, present new works (photographs, installations, paintings, and drawings) alongside their latest films, which macLYON has been involved in producing.

With a selection of videos, accompanied by photographs and objects from its collection, macLYON focuses on the performance works of Marina Abramović and Ulay, which explore

mental and physical limits within a framework of male/female dynamics.

The museum has also given carte blanche to a young artist, in the guise of a *Crossover* in which Héléne Hulak, a recent graduate of the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon, has responded to a selection of prints by Mel Ramos taken from the macLYON collections.

All in all, the programme for this season offers a wealth of encounters, workshops, performances and screenings, reflecting the issues addressed by the artists and providing the public for each exhibition with the opportunity to take an active part in the debate.

Isabelle Bertolotti,  
Director of macLYON

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# Crossover: H el ene Hulak × Mel Ramos

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## Hall

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The format of the exhibition *Crossover* is designed to create a dialogue between works from the macLYON collection and those of an emerging artist. This invitation to H el ene Hulak (b. 1990 in Paris), who graduated from the  cole nationale sup erieure des beaux-arts de Lyon in 2018, juxtaposes works by Mel Ramos (1935-2018) with hers, as a basis for exploring and comparing two approaches to the representation of the body and the construction of the gaze.

“Peekaboo” was an old Scottish dialect word for the game of hide-and-seek; “peek” has the same meaning as “peep”. Mel Ramos’s 2015 portfolio *Vintage Peek-A-Boo*, which entered the macLYON collection in 2016, is a series of prints depicting naked women, spied (“peeped at”) through a keyhole. The artist seems to be interrogating the ambiguity of representation, located, as it is, somewhere between the self-indulgence of fantasy and a critique of the intrusive gaze.

The way the female body is viewed, particularly in the media, is systematically deconstructed in H el ene Hulak’s work. She starts from banal imagery that promotes the erotic objectification of the body and the imposition of a way of seeing distorted by artificial, limiting, and caricatural canons. She sets about reinventing this image in order to create a “counter-representation.” Identification and *d etournement* as practised by H el ene Hulak are part of a strategy of deconstructing and critiquing the tools of domination wielded in our patriarchal societies. In order to liberate the female body from these artificial and oppressive canons, she uses the figure of the witch, caricature and distortion of these iconic images. She expresses these themes through a violent use of colour and artistic techniques that are abusively called “feminine”, such as sewing or knitting, which proliferate like spider webs. Stripped of the outdated codes of the representation of desire, the viewer’s gaze is confronted by the power of the liberated and reappropriated body.

Though the two artists’ approaches complement and contradict each other, the manner in which the philosophical and societal implications evolve produces

a stimulating confrontation. This, however, in no way relieves the spectator of their duty to interpret; as Marcel Duchamp said: “It is the viewer who makes the work of art”.

Curator: Matthieu Leli evre

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# Christine Rebet,

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## *Escapologie*

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### Level 1

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Fascinated by sleight of hand and the optical illusions used in the early days of cinema, Christine Rebet has entitled her exhibition *Escapologie: l’art de l’ vasion* [*Escapology: the art of escape*]. The exhibition features six animated films that vary in length from 3 to 8 minutes, including one previously unseen film, *Otolithe*. The scenography of the exhibition is conceived as a succession of immersive spaces which visitors are invited to enter. Each of these spaces is specifically designed for the film presented within it. Working drawings—those used in the creation of the animation—are on display there, along with paintings by the artist.

Drawing is at the heart of Christine Rebet’s artistic practice and her principal medium is animation, a hybrid medium in which repetition in the drawings produces the illusion of movement, to create what she calls her “paper films”. Animated film allows for many forms of experimentation, but the work involved is laborious. It can take as many as 3,500 hand drawn images for the artist, sometimes working with a team, to produce a film that lasts just over five minutes.

Whether it is in alluding to dictatorships of the early 20th century or to the upheavals currently unfolding in the Middle East, the artist interweaves the mechanisms of entertainment and propaganda, the power of the mass media and oppressive regimes. She brings an ambivalent fascination to bear on her exploration of the seductive power of illusionist techniques.

Curator: Marilou Laneuville

Born in 1971 in Lyon, Christine Rebet lives and works in Paris and New York. After studying

at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice (1991), she graduated in theatre design at Central Saint Martins in London (1996), and was awarded a Master of Fine Arts at Columbia University in New York (2011).

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## FILMS IN THE EXHIBITION

### *Brand Band News* (2005, 3'21")

*Brand Band News* is one of Christine Rebet's first animation videos. The film starts out as a leisurely stroll and then takes a macabre, dream-like turn. After being shot, two twin sisters hitchhike along the roads of the American West in search of a new life. The wind grants their wish, and then they become the breeze that carries them into the theatre of Tim Bröss, an expert in mystery, who transfers the spirits of the sisters into the voice of his ventriloquist apprentice. The story is studied with collisions, technical quirks, and desynchronisation reminiscent of early cartoons and their ability to endlessly stimulate the imagination. The soundtrack, *Bullet Sisters*, written with Frédéric Rebet, the artist's brother, is also performed by him. "My idea was to tell stories in one song," says Christine Rebet. "The soundtrack was the narration."

### *The Black Cabinet* (2007, 3'50")

Created for the exhibition *Rendez-vous 07* at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon and exhibited since then on several occasions in various places including Santa Fe and London, the work is presented for this exhibition in a new scenography. The film is a mimed satire of late 19th century, leisured, aristocratic society. The artist invites the viewer into the oppressive atmosphere and music of a Victorian-style house. Hovering somewhere between a seance and a piece of political propaganda, the work superimposes temporalities. But rather than invoking the dead of the past, it is more like a dark prediction of the future.

### *In the Soldier's Head* (2015, 4'25")

In this animation video, Christine Rebet evokes the story of her father who, after serving in the Algerian war, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. This very personal film involved filming pen and ink drawings dipped in water, a process that gives the illusion of hallucinations emerging like ghosts. The film reawakens both the anguish of repressed memories and French society's unwillingness to acknowledge its colonial past.

### *Thunderbird* (2018, 5'40")

The film *Thunderbird* is about Girsu, one of the earliest known cities of mankind. Gudea, prince of the city of Lagash in Mesopotamia, ordered the construction of the city and a host of temples following the apparition in a dream of *Thunderbird*, the lion-headed, winged avatar of the god Ningirsu. Christine Rebet re-interpreted this myth in response to the widespread destruction and looting of archaeological sites in the Middle East. For this film, she collaborated with Dr Sebastien Rey, Lead Archaeologist of the British Museum Iraq Scheme, whose aim is to train Iraqi archaeologists in the key technical skills integral to modern archaeology.

### *Breathe In, Breathe Out* (2019, 7'50")

Inspired by Christine Rebet's recent travels to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, where she stayed with artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Breathe In, Breathe Out* is a film that follows the spiritual journey of a monk. It is based on a text from *Metamorphoses* (2020) by philosopher Emanuele Coccia.

"This animation film follows the flow of thought and the steps of the monk as he descends the mountain. It is a journey in which all sorts of entities are transformed as the monk makes his way down; they subsist in a variety of disparate bodies, in animal and vegetable forms, and blend into architectural and mythical images. The monk becomes a complete entity" says Christine Rebet, "he embodies all the species of the world. There are no longer any categories. [...] His journey also traces the disasters of history, from the shackles of slavery to the boat of exile on storm-tossed seas and the threats of the ecological crisis."

### *Otolithe* (2021, 4'04")

Produced for this exhibition, *Otolithe* is inspired by the *fijiri*, the traditional songs of the pearl divers of the Persian Gulf. Before the discovery of vast oil reserves in the 1930s, trade in pearls was the most profitable activity for Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar—or, at any rate, for the captains of the ships and the merchants. For the divers and sailors, many of whom were East African slaves, the work was extremely difficult, dangerous and poorly paid. The various tasks on the boat were performed to the accompaniment of songs. Although pearl fishing has now been completely abandoned, some of the songs are still sung in gathering places (called "Diwaniyya")

in Kuwait or “Dhar” in Bahrain), as a reminder of this intimate link with the sea. *Otolithe* provides a sublimated repertoire of these age-old practices; it represents the collective memory of a bygone world, and an ode to the oldest jewel known to man, an anomaly usually created from a mere grain of sand: the pearl, venerated for thousands of years and sold to grace the fineries of royalty and the nobility.

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## Delphine Balley, *Figures de cire* Level 2

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Delphine Balley (born in 1974 in Romans-sur-Isère, France) is a photographer and video artist who creates narratives on the ancient foundations of our societies and rituals.

Delphine Balley's large-format camera technique requires long exposure times. From those frozen moments, photographic compositions emerge that seem to portray a stiff, almost petrified society. In her films and photos, the artist is interested in family portraits and the domestic isolation they imply, in hoarding, but also in still lifes, relics and decay—that of the inert physical body, as well as decay of the social organism. How do we socialise these days, now that we cut ourselves off from other people? How do we perform collective rites of passage? In three films: *Le Pays d'en haut* [*The Land Above*] (2013), *Charivari* [*Hullabaloo*] (2016) and *Le Temps de l'oiseau* [*The Time of the Bird*] (2021); sixteen photographs and a new sculptural work, Delphine Balley returns to the moments such as marriage or mourning that punctuate our lives. She makes use of artifice and illusion to suggest disappearance and the performance of “social theatre”.

In its evocation of a traditional, family world, the exhibition marks a turning point in the artist's career; there is a gradual elimination of the figure in favour of the object. The compositions have become more pared down, and the material, whether mineral (stone) or animal (wax), enters into a dialogue with absence and the void.

*Figures de cire* is built on the structural model of a religious or pagan procession.

The exhibition becomes the theatre of our human condition, an ephemeral stage that we are invited to step onto and cross.

Curator: Agnès Violeau

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“I WANTED TO MAKE FILMS BUT WITH THE AESTHETICS OF STILL PHOTOGRAPHY.”

INTERVIEW WITH DELPHINE BALLEY  
(extracts from a conversation  
with Melanie Pocock)

“*Le Pays d'en haut* tells the story of two women whose destinies intersect implicitly: ‘the transparent child’, who moves from childhood to adolescence, and ‘the illegitimate girl’, who lives on the fringes of society. In order to take her place in the community, she must go through the rites of passage: baptism, marriage and burial.

Being born, living, dying. The point of the film is to understand how society embraces this common narrative and organises it.”

“*Le Temps de l'oiseau* dramatises intersecting rites of life and death, burial and marriage. These rituals are very similarly organised. There are processions, exchanges of gifts and flowers, tears. [...] The photographs deal mainly with funeral rites and follow on from the last film, *Le Temps de l'oiseau*. Certain characters and objects migrate from the films to the photographs. It is the same world hovering between fixity and movement.”

« In the film *Charivari*, I explore the question of the sacrificial rite. The wild boar is an animal that is linked symbolically to fury, to black blood, to melancholy. [...] I filmed a poacher rather than a hunter; the poacher is close to the figure of the boar, a man who hunts alone on the border between savagery and civilisation. [...] For me, the film creates a dialogue between past and present by mixing different, though intertwining, worlds and times. For example, I wanted to get away from the idea of scenery in this film, in order to focus on faces. The decision to film faces in close-up was a directorial choice, I wanted to evoke Carnival masks but without the folklore aspect. These mask-like faces are all in the same non-place, in the same time frame—a kind of endless night, pierced by bursts of artificial light that suggest the emergence of something. The film unfolds at the winter solstice, the moon is full. The cold, the snow, the mist plunge

the protagonists into a seemingly endless twilight. It is a time of simulacrum and protection rituals, a world turned upside down. [...] Sound is used as a central element, a creator of mental images, a score for the *charivari*—the cacophony; it begins with an awkward, metallic rhythm (the rhythm of a blacksmith banging on his anvil) and grows more complex, developing into contemporary heavy metal music. The spectator will have an experience like that of hunters from ancient times who used to work through their hunt mentally before actually doing it. *Le Charivari* is a deafening noise, a cacophony. During Carnival, people make a racket to demonstrate their anger, their dissatisfaction with the established order.”

“Moving from photography to film has meant that I’ve been able to go further and deeper in my explorations. Each medium has its own peculiarities. The static image concentrates time around the precise moment when the image you’ve worked out beforehand appears in the frosted glass of the camera. It’s something approaching a revelation.

Time, when you’re making a film, dilates, it metamorphoses and accumulates; it’s like working your way through a puzzle or a mystery because the layer-by-layer process of filming keeps postponing the moment when the desired effect comes into existence.”

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## Jasmina Cibic,

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## Stagecraft

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### Level 2

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For more than ten years, Jasmina Cibic has been exploring the archives and collections of art and history museums in order to analyse the conditions under which public commissions are granted and undertaken. Her research has given rise to immersive installations combining films, sculptures, photographs and performances, through which she reveals the mechanisms of the relationship between political authorities and the arts.

The exhibition *Stagecraft* offers an interpretation of this power-motivated scenography and explores the specific relationship between culture (which the artist

sees as a diplomatic and economic “Trojan-horse” strategy) and national and international political agendas. At the heart of this analysis, Jasmina Cibic is particularly interested in the way a state uses this “soft power” to influence and shape international relations by peaceful means.

Through numerous examples drawn from European, Soviet and North American history, she has observed that soft-power policies often take the form of a cultural “gift”, with all that such generosity implies of humanistic disinterestedness. But, if the gift has to be reciprocated with a counter-gift (as defined by anthropologist Marcel Mauss in *The Gift*, 1925—an essay on which Jasmina Cibic bases some of her thinking), what political strategies might lie behind the use of the arts by those in power?

Superimposing different eras with sometimes contradictory ideologies, Jasmina Cibic examines the role that the arts and artists have assumed, sometimes to their detriment, particularly in political contexts where social division and the temptations of nationalism are on the rise.

Curator: Matthieu Lelièvre

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#### ROOM 1

Using archive photographs, the immersive installation that opens the exhibition is inspired by the stage sets created for the production of Bartók’s ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, as performed at the 1958 Universal Exhibition in Brussels.

*The Miraculous Mandarin* is an emblematic 20th century ballet that tells the story of a girl forced by three penniless villains to fleece a rich foreigner. It was banned after its 1926 premiere in Cologne by the city’s then mayor, Konrad Adenauer. It was nevertheless chosen to represent the six Yugoslav nations at the 1958 Universal Exhibition in Brussels.

Expo 58 was the first international exhibition to be organised after the Second World War. It was held in the middle of the Cold War (1945-1989) at a time when Yugoslavia under Tito (1882-1980) was the leader of the non-aligned countries. The choice of *The Miraculous Mandarin* was not without significance: it uses a modernist vocabulary that defines a clear and identifiable national aesthetic.

*The Miraculous Mandarin* has been the subject of several interpretations in Jasmina Cibic’s work, where the figure of the prostitute is an allegory for the arts exploited by politics.

## ROOM 2

*The Gift* (2019-2021) explores the use of culture as a political gift in an era of European identity crises. The nation is divided; only a perfect gift will restore unity to the populace.

But what form should that gift take: something architectural, a newly composed piece of music, or a ballet? An architect, a diplomat and an artist compete in an oratorical joust to demonstrate to allegorical figures, embodying the Four Fundamental Freedoms, which art form will best embody the values needed to bring a divided society together.

*The Gift* was shot in iconic palaces which, each in its own way, embody the relationship between power and the people: the Palais des Nations in Geneva, the headquarters of the Communist Party in Paris, the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, and the Monument House of the Bulgarian Communist Party on Buzludzha Peak.

Using original documents, archives, diplomatic documents and speeches contemporary with the construction of these buildings, Jasmina Cibic gives us a not altogether unambiguous rewriting of history.

The work juggles the codes of film, documentary, and historical commentary to explore the way in which official historical narratives and fiction can become confused. The artist is thus able to reveal the complicity of the arts in the service of political ideologies.

Born in 1979 in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Jasmina Cibic lives and works in London. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, and Goldsmith College in London, she represented Slovenia at the 55th Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2013 with the project *For Our Economy and Culture*.

*The Gift*: co-commissioned and co-produced by macLYON; FLAMIN – Film London Artists' Moving Image Network with funding from Arts Council England and steirischer herbst '19; co-producers Waddington Studios London. Supported by Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź; Cooper Gallery DJCAD, University of Dundee; Northern Film School; UGM Maribor Art Gallery; United Nations, Geneva; Espace Niemeyer, Paris and Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw.

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# Marina Abramović & Ulay, collection: performances 1976-1988

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## Level 3

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Marina Abramović and Ulay (Frank Uwe Laysiepen) were pioneers of performance art in Europe. They met in 1975 and, between 1976 and 1988, lived together and created a radical and highly committed body of work.

Marina Abramović was born in 1946 in Belgrade, Serbia. In her early performances, she would test the limits of her resistance, both physical and mental. She often put herself in danger; in *Rhythm 5*, 1974, for example, she lay stretched out between the points of a burning star and ended up losing consciousness through lack of oxygen.

Ulay was born in Solingen (Germany) in 1943 and died in Ljubljana (Slovenia) in 2020. He trained as a photographer. His early work was with Polaroids, making self-portraits in which he explored gender differences.

From 1976 to 1988, the two artists created performances in which many aspects of human existence were subjected to challenge. They defined their work as "vital art" and laid down its principles in the *Relation Works* manifesto: "Living art: no fixed abode, permanent movement, direct contact, local relationship, self-selection, overcoming limits, risk-taking, energy in motion. No simulation, no set end, no replication, extended vulnerability, exposure to chance, primary reactions."

The *Relation Works* were performances made without prior expectations or rehearsal, and their outcome was unpredictable. They were filmed, however, "in order to observe, after the event," as Marina Abramović put it, "what processes we had managed to achieve." From these films, originally made just for the record and which the artists had never intended to publish, they decided to create works in the form of installations, co-produced in 1999 by the museums of Eindhoven and Lyon. The Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon then acquired all of their joint work, a selection of which is on display in the exhibition.



In 1986, the two artists were invited to conclude their *Nightsea Crossing* performance cycle at the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon. All over the world, during the opening hours of the venues where they were doing the performance, Marina and Ulay sat facing each other at a table, without moving, without eating or drinking, meditating in silence. Over an arranged period of ninety days, this hieratic face-to-face meeting of a woman and a man was repeated in twenty-two phases. Rock crystal, a javelin, a boomerang, scissors, an elephant sculpture, a snake, a Buddhist monk, an aborigine and an artist observer occasionally accompanied these *Sittings*. In Lyon, after two days of performance, the cycle was finished and all the performances preserved as an installation—completed a few years later by a donation of the table and objects by the artists.

In *Imponderabilia* (1977) Ulay and Marina stood naked on either side of the entrance of the gallery. Visitors, who had to squeeze sideways between the two bodies in order to enter the exhibition, were forced to choose which of the two bodies to face. In *Breathing In/ Breathing Out* (1977), the two artists knelt face to face, their nostrils closed with plugs. Mouth to mouth, they breathed each other's air, running the risk of asphyxiation. In *Talking about Similarity* (1976), one artist speaks on behalf of the other. Ulay had sewn his mouth shut, leaving Marina to speak in his stead.

*The Lovers: The Great Wall Walk* (1988) was the last performance they did together, even though their relationship was breaking up. It was a way of testing a relationship that they both knew was finished. They set off on foot from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China and walked until they met in the middle. Realising that they could no longer communicate, they went their separate ways. The performance lasted ninety days, the same length of time as *Nightsea Crossing*.

# Practical information

# MAC LYON

## FEEES FOR ADMISSION AND ACTIVITIES

### ADMISSION

Normal: 8€

Reduced rate\*: 4€ (18-25 years inclusive)

Free\* for under 18s, handicapped persons and accompanying guide, tax-exempted persons, journalists, ICOM card holders... (\*with valid card)

### ACTIVITIES

● Guided tours, Family visits: entrance ticket + 3€ for adults / 1€ for under 18 years

● Visite Archi [Architectural Visit]:

entrance ticket + 6€ for adults /

3€ for 18-26 years old / 1€ for under 18 years

● Conference at Musée des beaux-arts: 6€ (reservation: Musée des beaux-arts)

● Workshop 14+: 27€

● Do it Yourself: 36€

● Petit Labo: 5€

● Invite your friends to the *Petit Labo*: 60€ (for a maximum of 14 children)

### ON LINE TICKET SALES

Book your tickets and seats for all the weekly activities online now. No queuing with these tickets! [www.mac-lyon.tickeasy.com](http://www.mac-lyon.tickeasy.com)

## OPENING HOURS, ACCESS, SERVICES

The museum is open from Wednesday to Sunday [11h-18h]

● Bus: C1, C4 and C5,

Get off at Musée d'art contemporain

● Bicycles, Vélo'V stations very close to the museum

● By car, 1€60 reduction (i.e. 45 minutes free) on the normal charge at car parks LPA P0

and P2 of the Cité Internationale

Car-sharing at [www.covoiturage-grandlyon.com](http://www.covoiturage-grandlyon.com)

### FOR YOUR COMFORT

Baby carriers, folding seats and wheelchairs are available at the ticket inspection point.

### FREE CLOAKROOM

A cloakroom is at your disposal. For safety reasons, backpacks and umbrellas as well as bulky bags must be left there.

### BOOKSHOP BOUTIQUE

Open during museum opening hours

### INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

Service des publics

Monday to Friday [9h30-12h30] [14h-17h]

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