

La Gazette du Kozhikèr

A space for
neighbourly
connections

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n°1

Our
shared
paths

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Editorial

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Welcome to the Gazette!

This Gazette initiative was born out of a desire to forge links with our neighbourhood, and to find an excuse to do so. To meet others while having an alibi. And to ask questions rather than answer them.

When one lives in the countryside without a car, the immediate environment takes on all the more importance. The same paths are covered every day, and the area explored remains small, which allows us to grasp all the nuances, colours and languages. Noticing the water level in the river every day, knowing which doors are always closed, and which ones are sometimes open.

Here at La SOURCE, we're a group of international artists and researchers, we talk a lot about creating a better world, and I also want to include the voices of other people who share the same paths, who live in the same landscape.

Can we create together here? And if so, what?

To start with, the Gazette will be a quarterly publication, which will include an interview with one of our members, an interview with a neighbour or someone active in the neighbourhood, and other features that may vary from issue to issue.

I hope it will be an opportunity for encounters, and a source of exchange, intimacy and support.

For this first edition, I interviewed Elise Goldstein, founder of La SOURCE, and Caroline Leroy-Déniel from the association Au Fil du Queffleuth et de la Penzé.

Elise will be presenting our project at La SOURCE and her relationship with the neighbourhood and the Sentier du Lin (The Linen Trail), and Caroline will be talking about her mission in protecting and restoring the Sentier du Lin.

We focused on Sentier du Lin which, ironically, is currently inaccessible due to the many trees felled by Storm Ciaran. We must be patient and thank all those who are actively involved in maintaining and clearing the footpaths.

Happy reading!

Cléo

... **La SOURCE** ...
presentation



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La SOURCE Center for Research & Creation is the first international and interdisciplinary Love-Studies research center.

La SOURCE is home to the TEMENOS art fellowship through which we invite artists (of all kinds) to live in an immersive engagement of radical creative practice. Together we work with a model of holistic research (integration of heads, hearts and hands), to uncover insights and co-create methodologies that can be transmitted for practice in the world beyond our little valley.

We share the resulting practices, insights and creation through conferences, workshops, exhibitions & our annual publication.



... **Along the** ...
Sentier du lin

Interview
with Elise Goldstein

I am interviewing Elise Goldstein, founder of the association La SOURCE.

It's 7am and we're sitting on the sofa in our library. It's still dark, and everything seems magical. When the sun rises, through the window, we'll see our little valley, the ruins of the old wash-house, the goats and, among the many trees, the oak we like to converse with...



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THE PROJET

(Cléo) I'd like you to explain the word "Temenos" ?

(Elise) Temenos is the perimeter drawn around a sacred site that separates it from the mundane world. It literally means "to cut off"; it invites the person who crosses into it to cut off or separate themselves from their usual or habitual way of being. It's about entering a space dedicated to something sacred, like a temple.

(C) So you consider our Temenos here, to be a «sacred space»?

(E) These days we often use the word "sacred" without really defining why. It used to be linked to the religious world, but that's not always the case anymore. I can say that, for me, the word "sacred" or "sacred

space” is about a place or thing actively dedicated to something: to values, traditions, shared visions, even priorities. So ‘consecrated’ or ‘sacred’ are pretty much the same thing to me.

If I’ve chosen to call our place and our programme Temenos, it’s because we’re trying to build a temple, not a religious temple but a temple dedicated to creation. Creation as a principle, as a possibility, as a responsibility of human beings.

The question we ask here every day through all our activities is: «How can creation, in our case artistic creation, serve to connect us to love?» - because ultimately, that’s the project. We’re here to study love. To understand what it is, because it’s often a rather vague and loaded word. When I use the word ‘love’, I mean ‘connection’, so how can we connect to ourselves, to the world, to the environment, to everything that exists around us and within us, through creation?

It’s a bit playful to say that we’re building a temple dedicated to creation - for artists, to change our vision of the world, and above all, to change our vision of what’s possible. But with all the stories, the gloomy and pessimistic predictions we have about our future, it’s about developing hope. And, it’s maybe a bit bold to say: Ok the old temples don’t serve as they did 200 years ago but we can build something new. It’s a chance to open our eyes and our hearts to the energy that drives us.

6 (C) You and Radu have been working on the Temenos project for about a year now?

(E) Yes, we started last autumn.

(C) The space officially opened on October 1st with the arrival of the researchers/artists in residence. How are things going?

(E) Every day here is a research laboratory, we think about how to create, as a community, as a collective. And because it’s new, the first step is to listen, and to be ready to adapt the format of the structure at any moment, to shift in alignment with what we see, with what we observe, with the needs of the resident researchers, and those of the coordinators. And I hope, one day, with the neighbours too. For me, love starts with curiosity. That’s clear. Curiosity is the impulse to discover something. I try to listen not just to the words, not just to the gestures, but also to the themes that emerge between the residents. Issues as reflections of our priorities, our questions, our tensions. I try to take everything that comes along as a clue. It’s a bit like being a mother making sure everyone’s all right. It’s also being a detective and trying to understand. Detective... no, that’s not it. It’s more like an architect: a good architect will create spaces aligned with the needs of those who will be inhabiting or using the space. The structure is there to be adaptable. It’s a living structure. It’s already an enormous project to create an institution that is not rigid, but rather one that can be continuously adjusted or adapted.

THE TERRITORY

(C) We live in Kozhkêr, in Saint-Thégonnec, in Finistère, Brittany.

(E) Can I say something about Kozhkêr? If I understood correctly, the word Kozhkêr means «the old village». This word helps me to imagine that our group here is a village and that we can try to build something like a microcosm of what we'll be able to create more broadly over time. It's a kind of research laboratory on how to live together. As a ground for making decisions, we could ask ourselves, for example : If I imagine every village operating with the same rules as we have here, I might wonder whether that would really be responsible or not.

(C) You moved here almost 3 years ago.

(E) Yes, and this is really the first time in my life that I've felt at home anywhere. On my first walk along the Sentier du Lin I spent half the time with tears in my eyes. It was as if I'd been waiting for this forest my whole life. I felt completely welcomed by the nature around me, by the river in particular, by the trees, the moss, the stones.

(C) How do you cultivate this connection with the forest and the land?

(E) I don't cultivate it enough yet, but I know that it will develop over time. I try to go for a walk in the forest on the Sentier du Lin at least once a week. I don't necessarily walk the whole path, but I like walking by the river. I try to really listen, to arrive in the forest without expectations, to be present to receive the reflections that emerge.

(C) Do you feel connected to the local flora and fauna?

(E) With the bats! We have quite a few bats here. There used to be a nest right next to my window, although it's not as active now. As soon as night fell, they came out. I'm deeply moved by their dance and movement. I sure love the fact that they eat the mosquitoes, which is great for us (thanks to them we don't have any mosquito problems), but it's above all their grace and their presence that I find inspiring. It's wonderful to be 'there and almost not there' at the same time. We've tried to put up several nesting boxes to welcome and protect them. There had been talks of building wind turbines in the neighbourhood, and we've met several times with the neighbours to talk about it. I was worried because I know that bats are hugely affected by this and I was afraid that they would disappear... I was ready to start protesting against this project with them in mind. Then there are the owls. There are two in our valley that talk to each other, so here we are in the middle of their communication channel. You can hear them in the evenings and at night... And then

there are the oaks. Our oak tree in the valley here is an incredible source of wisdom. And the beeches in the forest. The orange slugs. The salamanders... I feel like they all have secrets to tell. I feel really connected. I still have a lot to learn about medicinal and edible plants, for example. Wild harvesting appeals to me, and though I know a bit about it, I hope that knowledge will develop over time here.

(This interview was edited and condensed before publication.)

LE SENTIER DU LIN

(C) Back to the *Sentier du Lin* and the history of our house here at Kozhkêr (a weavers' house)...

This time Elise wrote back.

The voice of place has always been important to me in guiding what I want to create there, wherever I may be. This was even more the case with choosing a site for this project. While searching, I needed to feel that the place was resonant with the project and its vision, its values. I needed to feel the history of the place wanted us to be there as the next chapter in its Life.

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And this was it. This was exactly the place, Kozhkêr. After even our first visit, weaving appeared as such an iconic and beautiful metaphor. Many threads, many voices - together, stronger together, all visible. The rhythm and movement of weaving (over, under, over under)

also spoke to the nature of creation and research - moving into the world and then away again, into the visible and into the unknown. Also, this activity requires so many stages of processing - the flax into linen - and by so many hands. It speaks to patience, dedication, engagement and Collectivity.

Most importantly - to be in a place where people made of this linen sails. Sails. The woven cloth that fills with wind, and carries a vessel towards the horizon - towards possibility and the unknown. I am still so moved by this image. This is what I would want to honour. To imagine that what we can do here will echo all those who filled this place with life before. Transforming, through many strange or unexpected stages, these delicate blue flowers with their long stems into something strong and resilient enough to carry us towards an unknown yet hopeful future. I would wish to host artists here who will access the history as a source of inspiration. And not only the history, but also the nature, the ecosystem. I would like, over time, to earn our place on the Sentier du Lin. For many of our researchers and creators, the forest and the path have been a powerful place of research already. I am so grateful to those who care for it with such dedication. It's such an important resource, this path. It is a time machine into an imagined past - but also a reminder of how forests seem somehow eternal and history-less. I don't know for you, but every forest turns me into a child. And this one is particularly magical - with its moss and ivy creating green all year round.

I am hoping that as an organisation we will find a way to engage in the care of the path, this history and the forest. It is so generous to us. I'd like to believe we can find a way to give something back.

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Interview with Caroline Leroy-Déniel

Mélanie and I have left the Kozhkêr and are now in Pleyber-Christ, to interview Caroline Leroy-Déniel, director of the association Au fil du Queffleuth et de la Penzé. She welcomes us into the association's headquarters, a small, historic house that once housed the town hall and the library.

Caroline tells us how she led the working group that created the Sentier du Lin. She talks about the trail, the history of flax in the region, and her association.



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(Cléo) What is your relationship with the *Sentier du Lin*?

(Caroline) In 2010, 2011, with our association, we carried a project covering five municipalities: Saint-Thégonnec, Pleyber-Christ, Plounéour-Ménez, Plourin-lès-Morlaix and Le Cloître-Saint-Thégonnec, called *Heñchoù an Dour*. *Heñchoù an Dour* means «the water paths », in Breton. European funding was made available and these five villages got together to talk about projects to enhance their heritage. I was commissioned to work on the project and I coordinated the discussion process across the five municipalities. Each one decided on a water-related project. In Saint-Thégonnec, it was *Gwenojenn al Lin*, [Breton for the

Sentier du Lin], because the link between flax and water was quite obvious.

I led a working group of local elected representatives, volunteers from the *Saint-Thégonnec Patrimoine Vivant* association, and other key people. We started by making an inventory of the resources available on the trail and naturally, the theme of flax came up. We created the content together - I wrote the texts and the working group contributed further information. The back and forth between the working group and myself happened quite naturally.

At *Saint-Thégonnec Patrimoine Vivant* there are volunteers who work directly on the trails, on maintenance, and those who work more on the heritage and history aspects, and who know the trail and the area well. So they brought a lot of information. The texts were then translated into English and Breton. They can now be found on the interactive panels all along the route. The local authority put out a call for bids to design the panels, and the graphics were produced by a graphic design company. You can see that the drawings are pretty cool.

The work on *Gwenojenn al Lin* also involved the abandoned hamlet of *Keranflec'h*, where some European volunteer work camps took place. The hamlet was completely overgrown, with lots of trees growing in the houses, and in a terrible state overall. First of all, there was a major project with *Au Fil du Queffleuth et de la Penzé* and *Saint-Thégonnec Patrimoine Vivant* to cut down all the trees. The European volunteers came every year for three weeks to work on the building. In particular, they lime-set the top of the walls to prevent water from seeping into the walls. We also worked with the youth centre in Saint-Thégonnec on one of the buildings, a pigsty, which we restored together. The entire project took place between 2011 and 2014, and was inaugurated in 2014. .

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(Cl) Are you still actively promoting the trail?

(Ca) We have a flyer that can be found in all Tourist Offices. We're very present at events where we'll have a stand and we offer flyers of all the trails we've worked on. The *Sentier du Lin* isn't the only one we've created. There's one in Cloître-Saint-Thégonnec on water, Riboul an Dour, there's one on wet meadows in Plourin, *Prat ar gaor*, there's one in Locquéolé, Dans les pas de Mathurine... We promote all these itineraries at many events. We also regularly organise and lead outings on the *Sentier du Lin*. They're not necessarily walks on the topic of flax, as the boards are already there, but more about raising awareness of the flora and fauna.

This path is fantastic in Spring, when it's covered in flowers.

(Cl) Was the path already in use before it became *Gwenojenn al Lin*?

(Ca) The footpath has existed since 2004-2005. Our association created it and built the wooden

footbridges, and the others over the river.

The trail passes through a lot of private property, so we had to sign a lot of access agreements. What's interesting for the owners is that the local council and the departmental council's insurance covers them in the event of an accident. After a storm, for example, it's the associations or the local authority that have to cut down the trees.

THE HISTORY OF FLAX

(Cl) Can you tell us a bit more about flax growing in Finistère?

(Ca) The northern Finistère region, also referred to as Le Léon, was the main area for flax. The area from Landerneau to here was a major production zone. That's why we have the parish enclosures. In the 16th and 17th centuries, parishioners became wealthy and made donations to earn themselves a place in heaven. The parish enclosure in Saint-Thégonnec is particularly beautiful, demonstrating that there was a great deal of wealth in the area. There are also a whole series of houses with overhangs, known as sail merchants' houses. However, there wasn't much flax growing in Saint-Thégonnec, it was more processing. Our sector bought flax sticks in the growing area, then processed them into yarn and bleached the threads. Then there was the weaving, and finally it was sold in the Morlaix market to merchants who, in turn, exported.

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(Cl) The hamlet of *Keranflec'h* was inhabited until the 1960s, wasn't it?

(Ca) Yes, but the people there then were farmers, and flax hadn't been grown there for a long time.

(Cl) Why did flax production come to a halt?

(Ca) I don't think there was the necessary investment to modernise. Other agricultural choices were made within the Breton vegetable-growing area, with the SICAs (société d'initiative et de coopération agricole) and the Brittany Ferry company exporting to the UK. This was a time when we invested heavily in vegetables. There was also the arrival of cotton. In short, the flax industry came to a halt because the tools for growing and processing flax were not modernised.

When I was talking about flax growing, it was really during the golden age (17th and 18th centuries) that we saw it in Léon. Hemp was also grown here. After that, it spread to other regions and other parts of Brittany. After the golden age, flax didn't disappear completely either, there was still some domestic flax, but it was no longer dominant.

Your neighbourhood [Kozhkêr Le Fer] and *Keranflec'h* was very active during the golden age.

It's a bit complicated to talk about the history of linen because there were several busy periods between the golden age and the present day. At the time of industrialisation, in the 19th and 20th centuries, things were very different. In Plourin-les-Morlaix, for example, flax was scutched until 1950.

(Cl) Scutched?

(Ca) Scutching is the stage in the processing of flax when the fibre is separated from the wood. In the stalk, the wood is in the middle and around it are the fibres, and it's the fibres that will make up the yarn. So there was also an industrial period that lasted much longer here, in fact. It's not easy to sum up, because techniques varied from period to period. But it's fair to say that there have been no flax-related activities since 1950.

(Cl) But...

(Ca) It's coming back! There's a spinning mill being set up in Pleyber-Christ. Linfini, it was announced yesterday in Le Télégramme (Nov 12th 2023). There's also a group of farmers in Commana who are reviving the flax industry. There's one scutching project in Commana and another in Lampaul-Guimiliau, in the former Gad factories. Gad was a large factory involved in the slaughter and processing of pigs, which closed down a few years ago. It was a big trauma for the region because so many people lost their jobs. In Plourin, there are plots of land that are being recultivated for flax. Flax is making a comeback just about everywhere, so I don't see why there shouldn't be some in Saint-Thégonnec.

When you're working on heritage projects, it's always interesting when there's still something going on.

When we worked on *Gwenojenn al Lin*, we thought it was completely utopian that the cultivation of flax would come back. But in the end, it makes sense because Brittany is superbly suited to it.

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THE ASSOCIATION

(Cl) Can you tell us about *Au Fil du Queffleuth et de la Penzé*?

(Ca) There are five of us. I'm in charge of managing and supporting projects, such as the interpretation trails. Morgane and Capucine are environmental educators; they do a lot of work in schools and are also responsible for leading all the walks for the wider public. I'm in the process of reviewing our activities: we ran around 80 events this year and reached over 1,000 people. I think this is the first time we've exceeded 1,000.

Hervé and Aymeric are trail technicians who look after



the upkeep of the hiking trails and the waymarking. From May to October, they're out in the field, either clearing undergrowth or cutting down trees. We have a tractor equipped with a shredder. That's the bulk of our seasonal work. After that, we redo our yellow signposting and the mountain bike signposting. Exceptionally now, after Storm Ciaran, I think they're going to check the paths over several weeks to take stock of what needs to be done. Some municipalities, like Plounéour-Ménez, want to see if the insurance company can cover the costs, so the association is making an assessment.

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We also see where we can intervene quite easily. Sometimes the banks have fallen and it's easy to clear, but other times, depending on the size of the trees to be removed, more substantial or technical resources are required. When you're on a sunken path, it's complicated to clear the trees, but you can't just leave them in the middle, so you're going to have to use machinery. We may have to call in professionals with more resources. I've even thought of using horses to clear the wood.

A lot of people are also calling us to volunteer. We will mostly have them clearing branches after the technicians cut. In general, we leave them on the side of the path because it's good for biodiversity.

(Cl) Has the association been around for a long time?

(Ca) Since 1992, it was conceived on the trails. It was originally to develop the hiking trails and then there were events organised. Environmental awareness came along quite quickly, as well.

(Cl) Your premises are very welcoming, are they open to the public?

(Ca) Not particularly, because we don't intend to be a tourist office. On Fridays, however, from 11am to midday, we organise a Café d'Au Fil, which is open to



everyone. Anyone who wants to get to know us, or come and work on related projects, can come along. An employee is always present to run the café, and there are often volunteers popping by. You can also just come along to get to know people or if you want to get involved in the association, it's a good way of meeting other volunteers.

for more information:

www.aufilduquefleuthetdelapenze.over-blog.com

(This interview was edited and condensed before publication.)

... **The fellows** ...
Temenos fall
2023

Elise Goldstein (USA), founder
www.somapsyche.org

Cléo Munro (FR), coordinator
www.bisous-bisous-bisous.com

Radu Lazare (ROM), coordinator
www.instagram.com/radu.alexandru.lazar

Rémi Confida (FR), coordinator

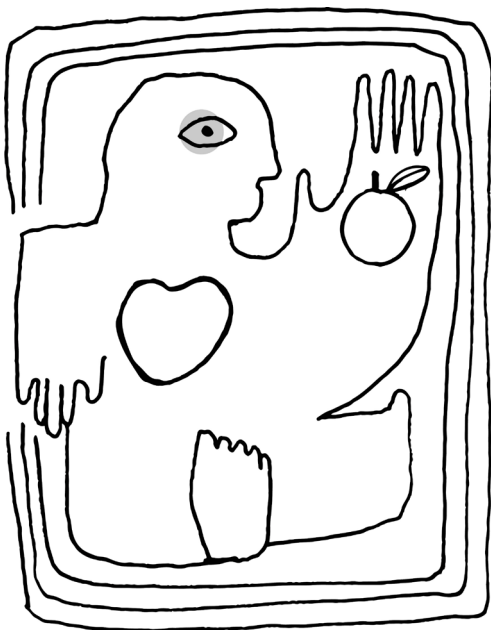
Jay Armstrong (USA), fellow
www.instagram.com/jayarmstrong.poetry

Mélanie Ganino (BE), fellow
www.melanieganino.com

Renn Simmons (USA), fellow
www.rennsimmons.cargo.site

Peter Beckers (NL), fellow
www.peter-beckers.com

Pol Asecas (CO), fellow
www.instagram.com/pol.asecas



...

Focus on

...

Renn Simmons

land activism

www.rennsimmons.cargo.site



“Earth Walkers are an on-going ephemeral sculpture project that explore notions of the pastoral/rural/pristine/untouched, clear-cutting and deforestation, settler-colonial systems and narratives, violence embedded within the fortress conservation and national parks systems, so-called Invasive species, and intimacy with land and place. Earth Walkers serve as symbols and objects of protest and grief associated with ecological violence and climate change. I seek out farmer’s burn piles, areas of deforestation/logging and blight, areas of severe weather damage, so-called Invasive overgrowth, and any other places where the presence of Trees and Plants exist within the stages of death, discardment, violence, and/or regeneration. In this collaboration with The Discarded, Transitioning, and Overabundant, I am able to support these forms of Life and Nature in creating identities, language, and shapes that are familiar to the Humxn realm, thereby allowing us to contemplate and consider what new intimate conversations we all might create with the Land around us.”

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Scotch Walkers, Tillamook and Chinook
Land, Tillamook, Oregon, 2021



... Online exchanges ...

We want to seize the opportunity offered by this gazette to test out a new tool for maintaining a long-distance conversation.

Follow this link to react and keep us informed:

What could we create together to make our neighbourhood more fulfilling, both personally and collectively?

→ www.lstu.fr/kozhkeri ←

... Adverts ...

Le Coin des Petites Annonces is a way of creating a local and ethical solidarity network that promotes bartering and exchange.

Send your advert to the following address: gazette@etik.com and it will appear in the next Gazette. No more than 60 words. If necessary, include a way of contacting you. Any advert is welcome, as long as it is friendly and potentially useful for the Kozkhêr community!

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Cléo (+33610857315 ; berbisey@gmail.com):

*I'm looking for **walking and drawing partners**, people who enjoy wandering around on foot, learning the names of trees and stopping from time to time to sketch.*

&

*I run **Women's Circles** and I want to set up one at La Source. We meet once a month to share, to support each other, to encourage each other and to celebrate.*

Mélanie (melanie.ganino@gmail.com):

*Do you know anything about **bryology**? I'm fascinated by the study of mosses (not cheeses, although I'm always keen to learn more - and taste more too) and I'd love to find out about the ones that grow in your gardens. Help me build up a little bestiary / herbarium and send me your photos of mosses! Maybe I'll even be able to come and observe them?*

Elise (elisegoldstein@gmail.com):

*Those with a passion for **local history and mythology** will find an eager student waiting for them!*

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Events

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Every 2nd Sunday evening at La Source

Ecstatic Dance evening

a time to move and release tension to music,
no pre-requisites necessary. Come and join us!

From 7.30pm to 9pm.

Contact gazette@etik.com

...

December 16th

at the STAL Café in Plounéour-Ménez

**presentation of our project and presentation
of our Autumn 2023 Creative Art Residency:**

workshop

readings

visual art

etc..

Any ideas for the next edition of the Gazette du Kozhkêr ? Your feedback will be appreciated and taken into account as much as possible.

gazette@etik.com

coordination

Cléo

content creation and editorial line

Cléo et Mélanie

interview and transcription

Cléo

photo credits

Cléo, Mélanie et Radu Lazar

graphic design

Mélanie

Cléo Munro

berbisey@gmail.com / gazette@etik.com

www.bisous-bisous-bisous.com

Mélanie Ganino

melanie.ganino@gmail.com

www.melanieganino.com

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