



Practical Preservation: Applied Approaches to Collections Care

Welcome!

The webinar will begin at 10:00 a.m. CT.

While you wait:

1. Download PDF of the webinar slides and handouts under the "Handouts" tab of your control bar.
2. Confirm that your speakers are turned on and your audio is working by doing a sound check in the "Audio" tab of the control bar. Having problems? Exit and restart the webinar or switch to "phone call" for a phone number and access code to hear the audio through your telephone.

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The Museum Services Program provides support, resources, and training to museums in Texas.

- Consultations
- Webinars and workshops
- Resources

www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services

On our webpage:

- Webinars
- Workshops
- Grants and Fundraising
- Helpful Resources
- Connect and Learn

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Upcoming Free Webinar

www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars

- Translation in Museum: Tips and Tricks to Get it Right!
 - Thursday, September 21, 10:00 a.m. CT

Upcoming Free Webinars from Other Orgs

www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections

- *DIY Preservation: From Monitoring to Management*, August 23, 11:00 a.m. CT, CCAHA
- *Safeguard Your Mission: A Guide to Nonprofit Insurance*, August 23, 12:00 p.m. CT, TALA
- *How Candid Helps Nonprofits*, August 23, 1:00 p.m. CT, Candid
- *Centering Historic Preservation in Community*, August 25, 11:00 a.m. CT, MANY
- *Beyond Labels: Understanding the Interconnectedness of Special Collections and Cultural Heritage Professions*, August 28, 5:00 p.m. CT, Backlog
- *Advanced Storytelling: How to Tell Stories Across All Types of Grants*, August 29, 11:00 a.m. CT, Foundant
- *Post-Pandemic New Museum Reality: The European Perspective*, August 29, 11:00 a.m. CT, MuseumExpert.org
- *10 Quick Tips to Supercharge Your Next Fundraising Appeal*, August 31, 12:00 p.m. CT, Productive Fundraising
- *Transparency Matters: Demystifying Audits for Nonprofit Organizations*, September 6, 12:00 p.m. CT, TALA
- *Arsenic in Collections*, September 6, 1:00 p.m. CT, CCC

Samantha Forsko



PRACTICAL PRESERVATION

Samantha Forsko

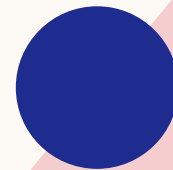
AGENDA

Introduction

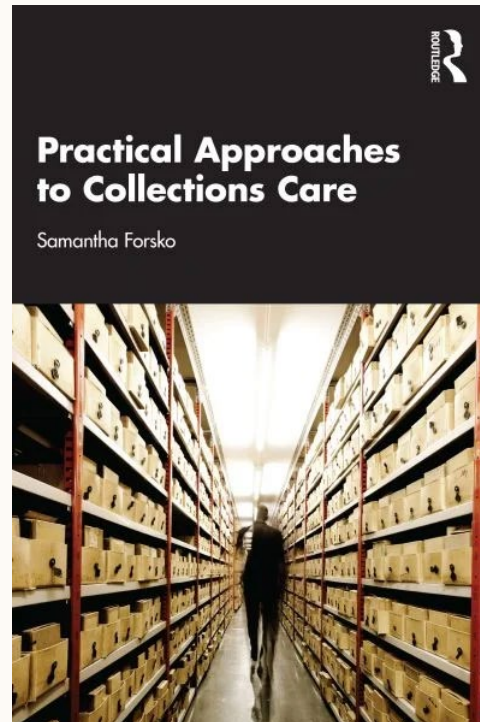
Main Concepts

Examples

Questions



INTRODUCTION



- Based on experience as Preservation Specialist for the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifact, and work as independent consultant for small/mid-sized organizations
- Supplemented by “day jobs” at large, well funded institutions such as LACMA, AIC, and University of Chicago

MAIN CONCEPTS

What Are Best Practices?

Stepped Approach

Not Everything Is a
Rembrandt

Collection Tiering

STANDARDS ARE GENERALLY ACCEPTED LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT THAT ALL MUSEUMS ARE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE. *BEST PRACTICES* ARE COMMENDABLE ACTIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES THAT DEMONSTRATE AN AWARENESS OF STANDARDS, SUCCESSFULLY SOLVE PROBLEM, CAN BE REPLICATED AND THAT MUSEUM MAY CHOOSE TO EMULATE IF APPROPRIATE TO THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES.

American Associate of Museums
and Elizabeth E. Merritt





LET IT GO



STEPPED APPROACH

- Based on “Forget the Best” presentation by CCAHA
- It’s not all or nothing - something is better than nothing
- Don’t let the best be the enemy of good or better



REMBRANDT RULE



- Idea from James Vaughan that not everything is a Rembrandt
- Set which step you're aiming for based on the importance of the artifact to the institution's mission.

COLLECTION TIERING

- Which parts or items in the collection are the most important or relevant to the institutional mission?
- Structured and standardized approach
- Apply “best practices” to those items that require it; don’t worry about applying it to those that don’t

KHS COLLECTION TIERS

1

PORTRAIT OF DENNIS DORAM

- Significant to KY & USA
- No duplicates
- \$\$\$\$\$
- Many programmatic applications

2

COAT OF GOVERNOR WHEN SHOT

- Significant to KY
- No duplicate, but similar examples
- \$\$\$\$
- Many programmatic applications

3

COPPER STILL

- Significant to parts of KY
- Similar examples elsewhere
- \$\$\$
- Some programmatic applications

4

FLAPPER DRESS

- Significant to places outside of KY
- Common
- \$\$
- Few programmatic applications

5

WOODWORK PLANES

- Not historically significant
- Very common
- \$
- Very few/none programmatic applications



EXAMPLES

How you might apply steps, anti-Rembrandt rule,
and tiers to collections preservation activities

EXHIBITIONS

The Best Practice:

Time on exhibition should be limited, and there should be little or no visitor interaction with the artifacts.

“Curators recognize that the balance between preservation and use of collection objects is delicate. They discourage uses of the collections that may unnecessarily hasten the degradation or deterioration of any object.”



UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

Agent	Mitigation Strategies
Physical Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artifact handling and installation training for staff or volunteers• Stanchions, vitrines, or other barriers to protect from bumping while on display• Visitor policies and signage to limit large bags, selfie sticks, or other similar objects, and prohibit touching or interaction with objects on display, or designate touchable collections clearly• Guards or volunteers to enforce the policies• Custom made mounts to properly and fully support object to minimize stress
Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of facsimiles or designation of sacrificial examples of artifacts• Limit the amount of time on exhibition for sensitive or higher tiered materials• Turn off lights and/or cover light sensitive artifacts when visitors are not present• Keep light levels low to extend allowable time on exhibition

IMPLEMENT MITIGATION STRATEGIES



- Creation of exhibition and installation manual covering:
 - Display parameters
 - Mount requirements
 - Furniture requirements
 - Light levels
 - Handling instructions
 - Housekeeping procedures
 - Needs based on collection status or tier

EXHIBITION POLICIES

Components of an Exhibition Policy:

- Responsibilities for planning exhibitions and executing their installations
- Timelines and rotation schedules, including specifications for more sensitive materials to limit light exposure
- Environmental specifications (including levels of light, temperature, and relative humidity that are acceptable, and the range of fluctuations allowable)
- Specifications for exhibition cases, supports, and mount materials
- Security issues for materials that will be on public display



SPACE MANAGEMENT

The Best Practice

Institutions should have enough storage space to accommodate the existing collection as well as the projected growth of the collection over the next 10 years.



KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE



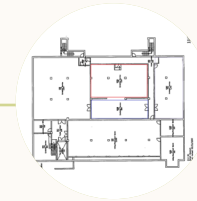
COLLECTIONS

- Collection Tier
- Collecting scope
- Medium
- Size
- Condition
- Growth Rate
- Housing Needs
- Frequency of Use



FURNITURE

- Materials: construction, varnishes, coatings
- Condition
- Purpose
- Appropriateness for specific collections
- Size and surface space
- Availability of built in units



SPACES

- Location
- Size
- Availability
- Accessibility
- Environmental conditions
- Historic incidents like leaks
- Load bearing capabilities

REORG YOUR SPACES

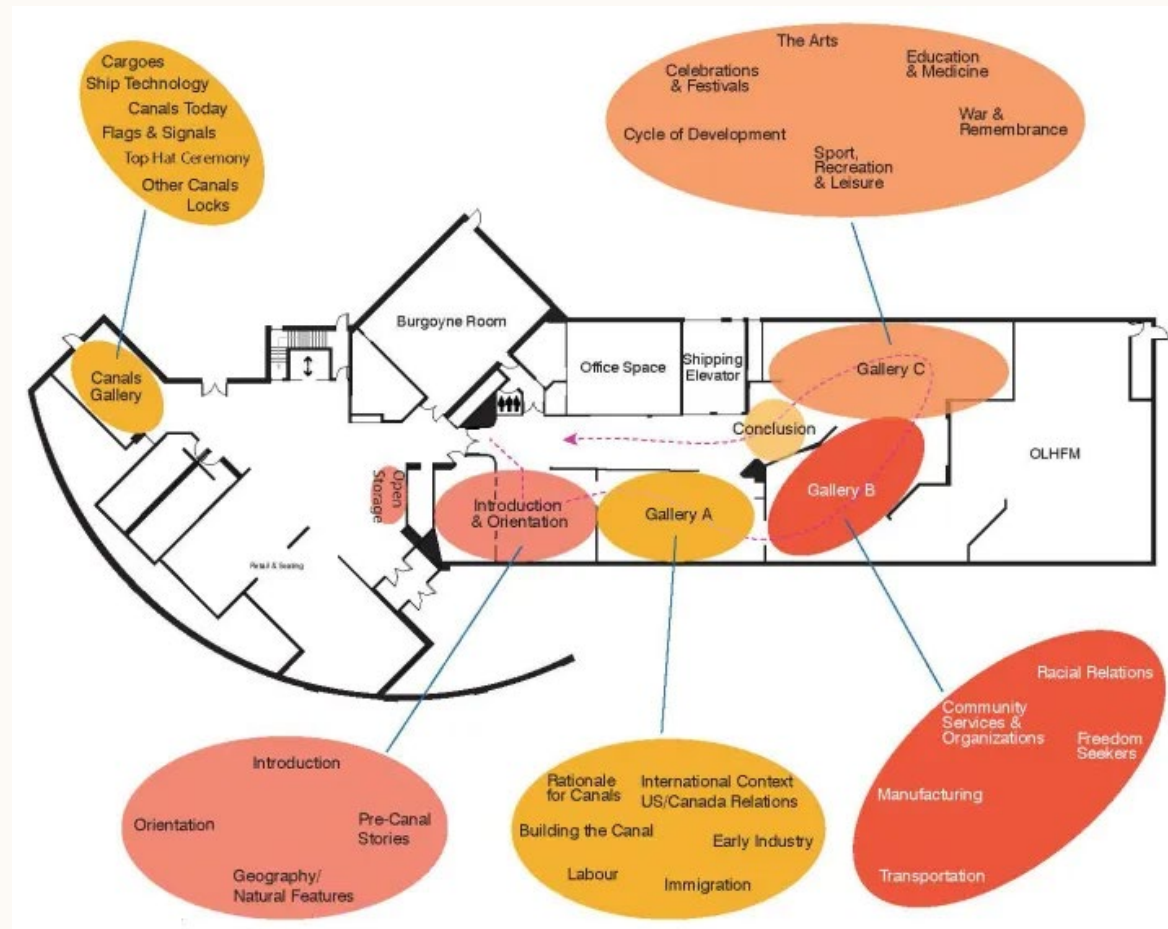
BEFORE



AFTER



ADVANCED PLANNING



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The Best Practice:

Keep objects within tightly defined temperature and humidity ranges while avoiding fluctuations.

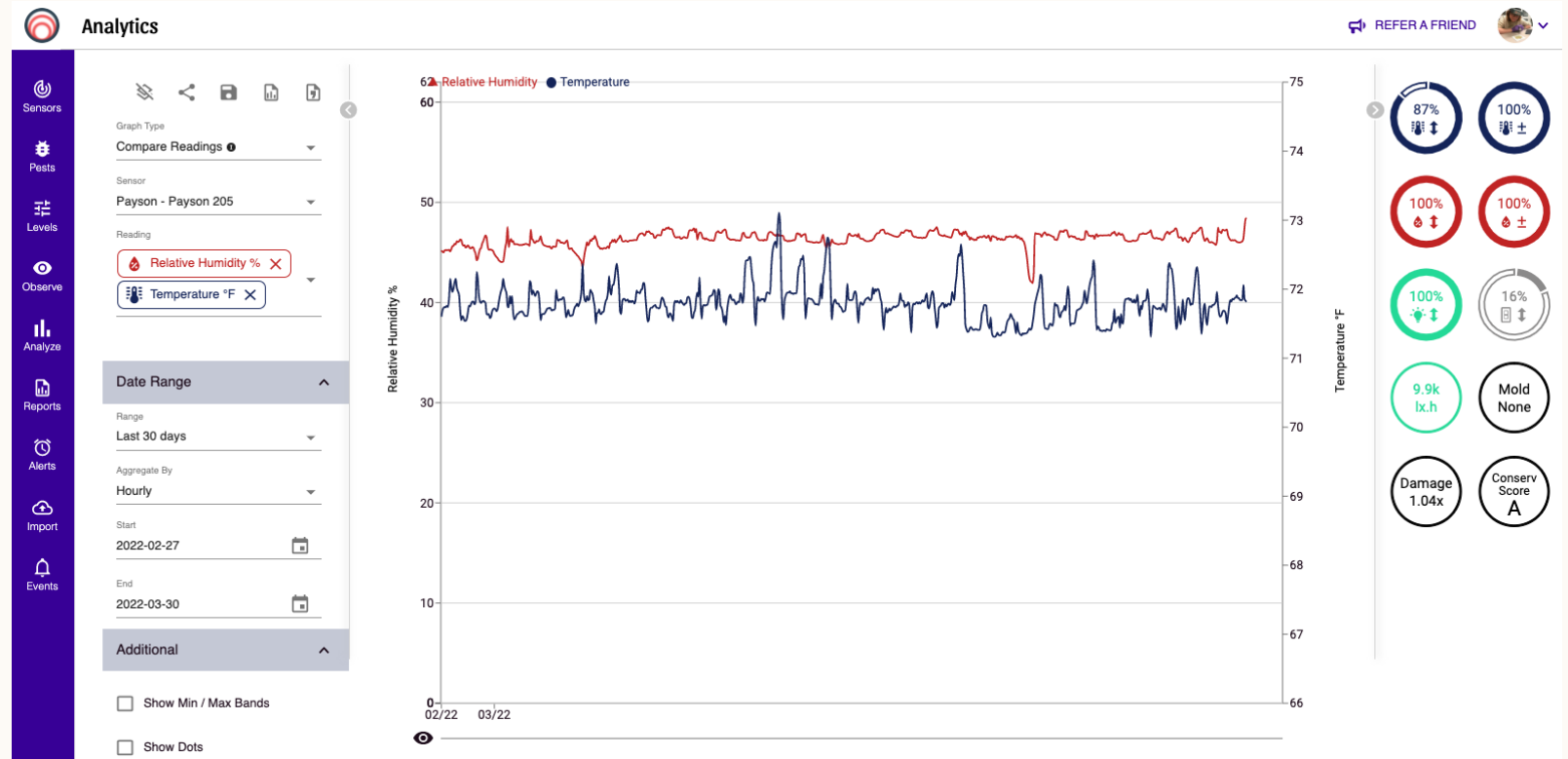
Parameter	Guideline Range
Temperature	15°- 25°C (59°- 77°F) with an allowable fluctuation of +/-4°C per 24 hr
Relative Humidity	45-55% with an allowable fluctuation of +/- 5% per 24 hr



COLLECT THE DATA

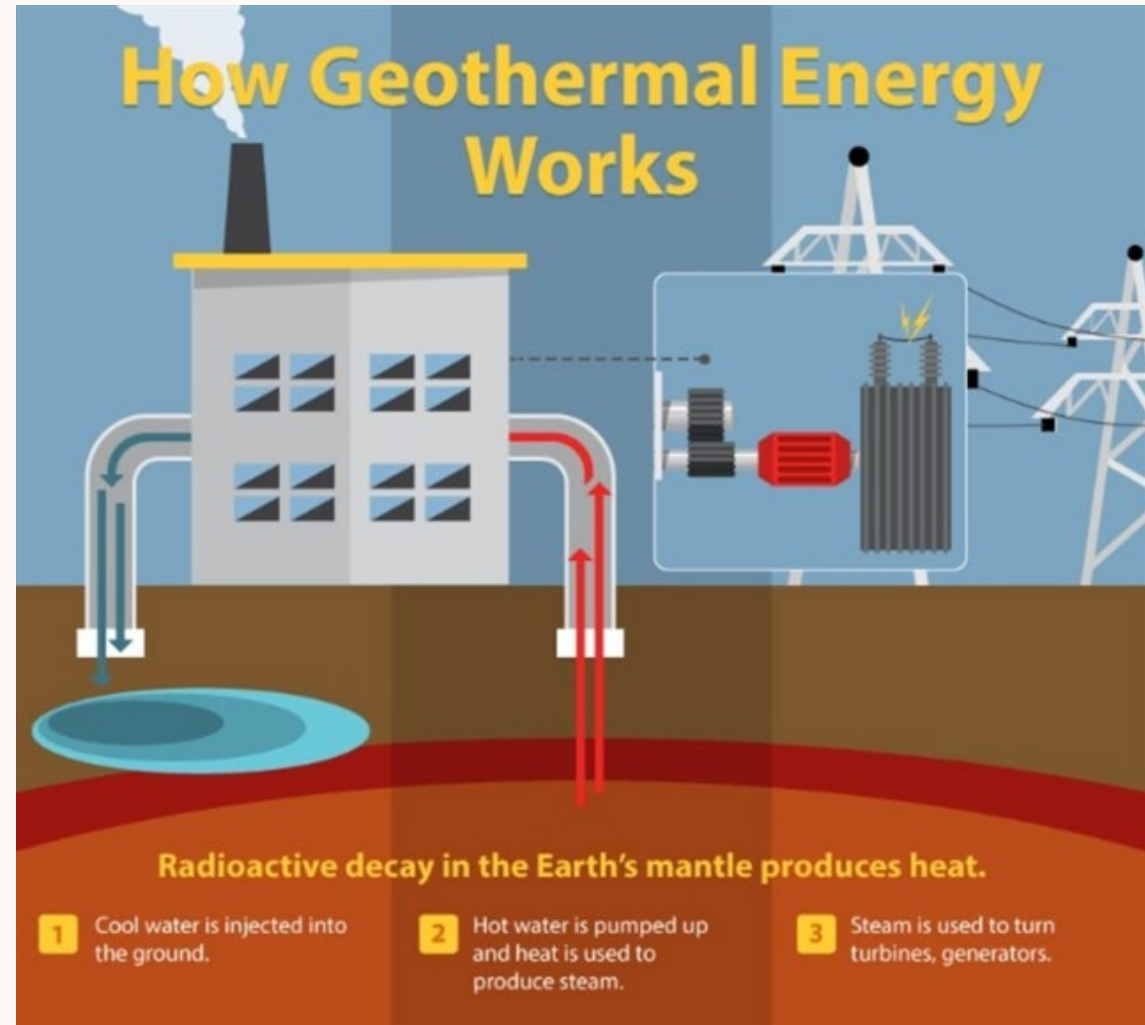


DO SOMETHING WITH THE DATA



INVEST IN CONTROLS

- Larger impact on many objects
- Should still monitor even with a system in place
- Consider renewable energy sources like geothermal or solar energy for long term benefits, tax incentives, and environmental responsibility

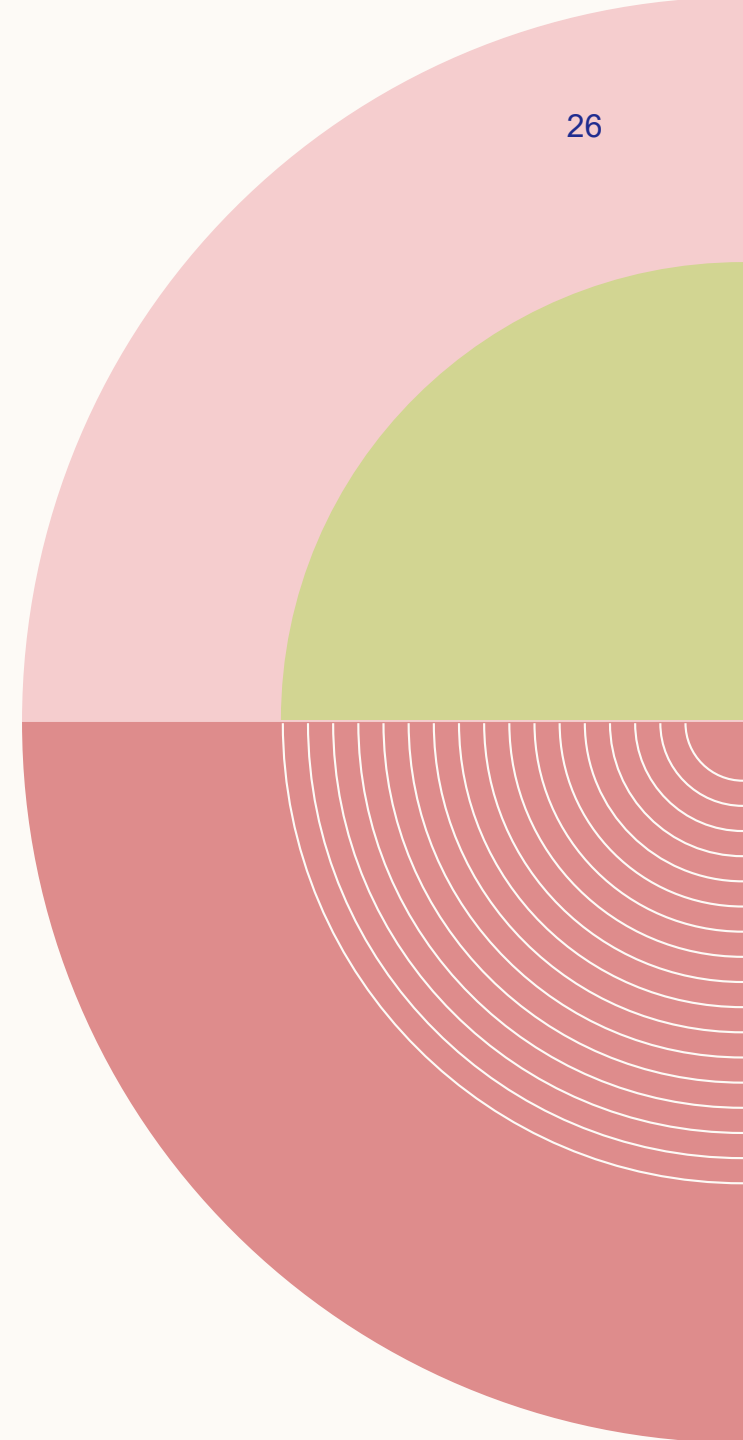
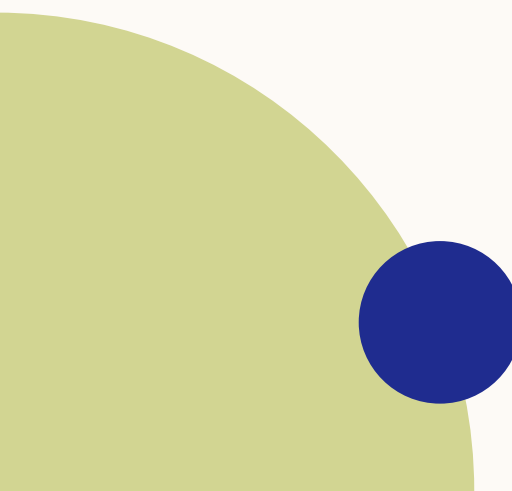


SUMMARY

Do what you can – it's not all or nothing

Nothing everything is a Rembrandt and should not be treated as one

Apply best practices where they are needed rather than wholesale



QUESTIONS

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