

B R U  
G G E

MUSEA  
BRUGGE

# Nele Van Canneyt

Arentshuis, Brugge

11.12 — 25.04



[www.mindtheartist.be](http://www.mindtheartist.be)

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Press file



# EXHIBITION NELE VAN CANNEYT

## INNER LAND

Bruges is empty and orphaned in corona times. For a city that receives about eight million visitors annually, it takes some getting used to the many empty hotspots. Commissioned by Musea Brugge, photographer Nele Van Canneyt now portrays the city.

What world is concealed behind impenetrable walls, locked doors and closed curtains? What is your position as the viewer in a game of reflections? Are you looking from the outside in or from the inside out? What thoughts are going through the minds of each of us, in the shadow of the pandemic?

During the recent corona pandemic photographer Nele Van Canneyt spent hours, both day and night, wandering through the centre of Bruges, the surrounding districts and the

streets of the nearby port of Zeebrugge. She discovered hidden places and had unexpected meetings and conversations. She penetrated a new Inner Land and brought the city, the silence and the emptiness into sharp focus.

Is silence threatening or restful? Does emptiness give rise to feelings of fear or of hope for the future? Van Canneyt's photographs view like a film and lead the spectator into her world. At the same time, she leaves much open to interpretation. As the viewer, you are free to formulate your own answers, write your own story. A clear passion for spatiality and colour characterises her images. They combine strong graphic qualities with a sense of tension, which tells a story – or at least suggests one.

**The curator of the exhibition is Han Decorte.**



# MIND THE ARTIST

The exhibition 'Nele From Canneyt' is the first project in the festival series 'Mind the Artist' by Musea Brugge.

The unexpectedly long duration of the Corona crisis has turned the entire cultural sector on its head. With 'Mind the Artist' Musea Brugge intends to invest for a year or more in the remarkably versatile and creative talent that our country possesses. Artists from every possible discipline, including photography, painting, sculpture, literature and music, will be given a temporary forum for their work. A number of artistic centres have even programmed a takeover in one or more museum locations.

Discover everything you need to know about this inspirational dialogue between contemporary art and old(er) art on [www.mindtheartist.be](http://www.mindtheartist.be)

## PROGRAMME MIND THE ARTIST

- Nele Van Canneyt from 15/12/20 until 25/04/21, Arentshuis
- Pieter Chanterie from 12/02/21 until 13/06/21, Volkskundemuseum
- Sanam Khatibi from 30/04/21 until 03/10/21, Groeningemuseum
- SEADS, summer, exact dates to be confirmed, Sint-Janshospitaal
- Tille Pepermans from 24/09/21 until 21/11/21, Arentshuis
- Strook from 29/10/21 until 06/03/22, several museum locations
- Line Boogaerts from 10/12/21 until 13/03/22, Arentshuis
- Delphine Lecompte - Musea Brugge poet laureate for one year (2021)
- Takeovers by Kaap (April-June), Mooov (June-August) & Concertgebouw (end of September-December)

Programme subject to changes and additions.

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Nele Van Canneyt

Delphine Lecompte

SEADS

Sanam Khatibi

Strook Pieter Chanterie

Tille Pepermans Line Boogaerts

to be continued...

Takeovers by KAAP — CONCERT — MOCCV — GEBOUW — BRUGGE — Stads Museum Brugge



## Curriculum vitae

### SOLO EXHIBITION

2020

- 'Binnenland' creation commission  
'Mind the artist' for Musea Brugge,  
curator Han Decorte

2018

'Moon' – Nylonfabric Sint-Niklaas ,  
curator Anik Eggermont (Bernice)

2016

'Awaken', Cecilia Jaime Gallery Ghent,  
curator Cecilia Jaime

2015

'Waking dreams', subsidised art pro-  
ject, De Waaiberg Gits

2012

'Japan, behind the obvious', 44 Gallery,  
Bruges, curator Luc Rabaey

'Snapshot 3', Zeebrugge, Volkskunde-  
museum, Bruges, Immaterial heritage  
projectt

'Iedereen is van ergens', 25 portraits,  
Gezelmuseum, Bruges

2011

'Stilled', 44 Gallery, Brugge, curator  
Luc Rabaey

'Iedereen is van ergens', 25 Portraits  
by order of Provincie West Vlaanderen,  
Tolhuis, Bruges

2009

'Worlds inside, outside', Galerij In  
Between (Gynaika)- Antwerp, curator  
Ann Geeraerts

Guest artist in 'Villa de Olmen', Wieze

2007

'Cuba, a different view', art platform  
Zebrstraat, Ghent

2005

'Stillway New York Non-stop', Geuzen-  
huis, Ghent

—

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2020

'De nacht' , De Warande, Turnhout,  
6/7 - 13/12, Curator Annelies Nagels &  
Glenn Geerinck

'Common ground', duo exhibition with  
Bert Danckaert, Bobox, Paardenstal-  
len in collaboration with Musea Kor-  
trijk, Curator Catherine Baelde & Jan  
Ovaere.

'Inside/out 2020', castle Borluut,  
Brant, Elke Desutter and Free  
Pectoer

2019

'Salon Blanc' #40 - curator Els Wuyts,  
Ostend

'Hier und dort' - Bad Godesberg (DL)  
& The wrong house, curator Jonas  
Vansteenkiste

2018

'Unknown masterpieces' Photo festival  
Knokke, Scharpoord Knokke, curator  
Freddy Van Vlaenderen and Stephane  
Verhey

'Photo sequence'- Cultural festival  
'MoMeNT' Tongeren, curator Bert  
Daenen

'On The Move' Nucleo, Blanco, Gent,  
curator Brant and Free Pectoer

2016

Photo Event Cultuurcentrum Mechelen

'10 years in one space', retrospective,  
Zebrstraat , Gent

2012

Flanders House group exhibition Bel-  
gian artists, NY (USA)

Contemporary Art Zone, Art Ghent, 44  
Gallery

2011

'Outside the box', Croxhapox, Ghent,  
group exhibition with Giannina Urme-  
netika Ottiker and Freya Maes

'El mar y sus sentidos', SP), curator  
Nayra Martin

2010

Four-yearly Provincial prize of West  
Flanders, Venetiaanse Gaanderijen,  
Ostend

2008

Canvascollectie', Museum voor Schone  
Kunsten, Bozar, Brussel

### SELECTIONS/AWARDS

2015

'Waking dreams', subsidised art pro-  
ject, De Waaiberg Gits

2012

Young ones award, Gent

2010

Four-yearly Provincial prize of West  
Flanders, Prize winner

2008

Canvascollectie, 3 works, Bozar,  
Brussels

### EDUCATION

1999-2003 Sint-Lucas Academie, Pho-  
tography, Ghent

### CONTACT

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nelevancanneyt/](https://www.instagram.com/nelevancanneyt/)

Source: Musea Brugge Magazine 3 / 2020

## NELE VAN CANNEYT/ An interview

**In March, during the first wave of the corona crisis, Musea Brugge commissioned photographer Nele Van Canneyt to capture the prevailing mood in Bruges in a series of images. What does this kind of crisis do to a city and its inhabitants? And what impact does it have on the images of a photographer who wanders through the city centre, the outlying suburbs and the nearby port of Zeebrugge? Working together with curator Han Decorte, Nele Van Canneyt used her photographs as the basis for a new exhibition: 'Inner Land'. The two main protagonists discuss what this exhibition has to offer.**

**- INTERVIEW BY HAN DECORTE**

**Han Decorte:** At the end of November, your solo exhibition 'Inner Land' will open in the Arentshuis. This exhibition is the result of a commission you received from Musea Brugge. What was the first thing that went through your mind when they approached you?

**Nele Van Canneyt:** At first, I hesitated, although afterwards you think: 'How

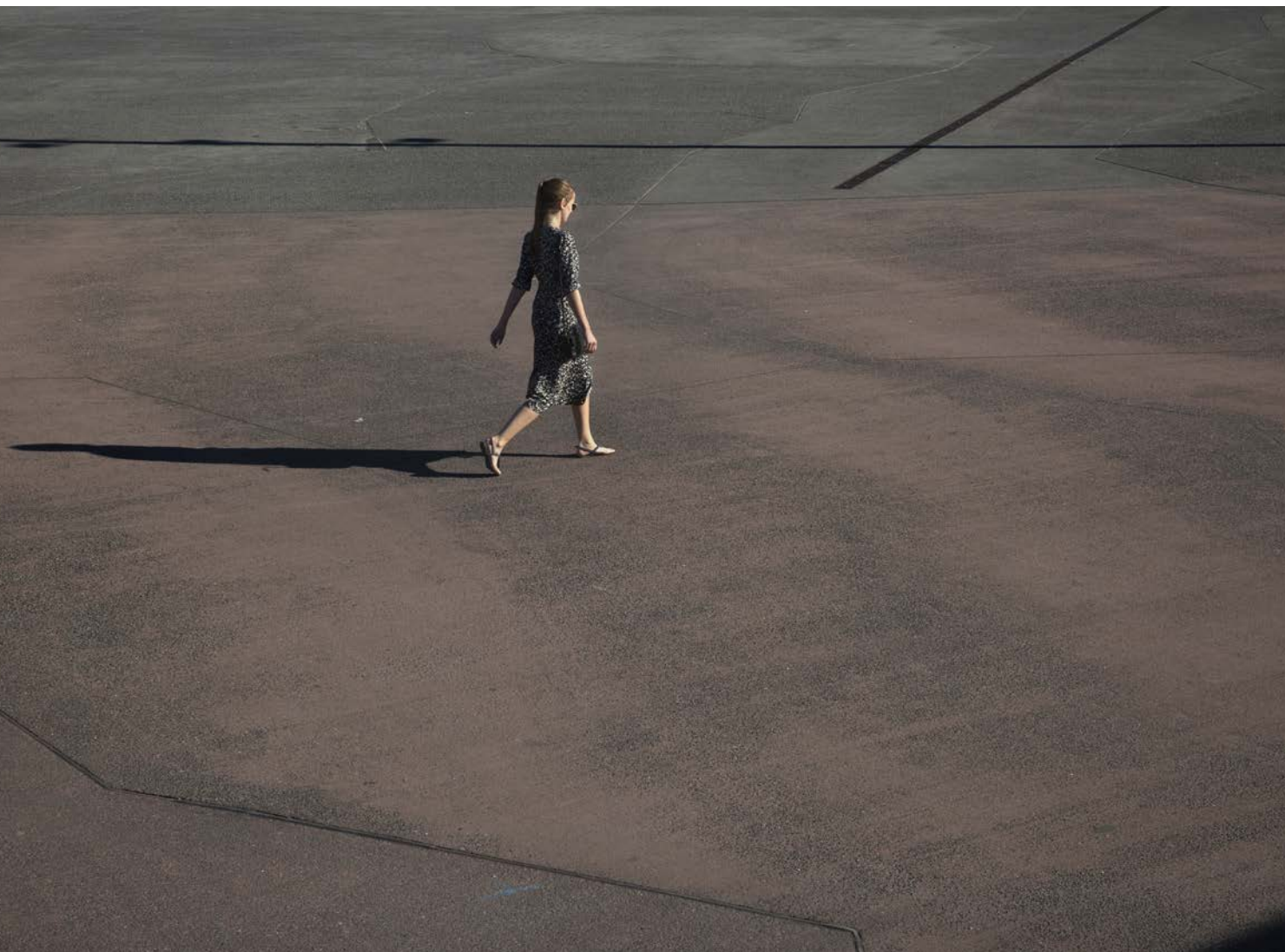
could you ever have hesitated about such a fantastic opportunity!' When I heard that I would be free to work in my own style and that I would be given carte blanche in all creative matters, the project became more feasible and more concrete. Looking back, this commission was a positive experience for me, especially in these corona times. I am not the kind of person who likes to

sit around at home. I prefer to always be out and about, constantly searching for new images. The commission not only allowed me to make what were regarded as 'essential journeys' to Bruges, but also made it possible to further pursue my own creativity journey.

**Han Decorte:** What was the reason for that first hesitation?

**Nele Van Canneyt:** Bruges is a beautiful city, with great character and a remarkable history, but for my photographs I usually work in cities like New York, where the atmosphere is more universal and modernist, which is something that inspires me. When I work abroad, it is like I am always on a voyage of discovery, a voyage from which a new visual language emerges. When that happens, I feel like a visual explorer! I make those journeys to free myself from reality, so that I can make





a kind of dream world based on that reality. When I am working closer to home, everything is familiar. I need to challenge myself more to find inspiration. I have learnt over time that I can do that as well, as long as I can find the right mindset. I was already taking photographs in Belgium before this commission.

**Han Decorte: How did you decide to deal with this familiarity?**

Nele Van Canneyt: By also conceptualising the commission as a voyage of discovery. Each time I came to Bruges I entered the city by a different gate and wandered through the narrow streets, open to the images that presented themselves, even though there were relatively few people around.

Han Decorte: You took photographs both during the day and at night. Was there a special reason for that? How did you find the experience?

Nele Van Canneyt: I like the night. At night your senses are sharper and you are more alert. Your inspiration is different. The light has gone, so that many other things also disappear

from view. Only the essential remains. Everything is more intense. In Bruges, you can hear a pin drop in the middle of the night. The only people around are those who live on the streets. Bruges is turned into a ghost city.

**Han Decorte: You also photographed a number of people. How important were these meetings?**

Nele Van Canneyt: I had some remarkable moments and conversations during that period, which touched me deeply. If I think back to some of those deep conversations (all at a safe corona distance, of course!), it was not only a period of isolation but also of connecting with people. It is part of my work process to talk with passers-by when I am wandering around. That helps to feed the photographs I make later on. I often let myself be led by the moment, or by a surprise happening, or by the combination of people and their environment.

**Han Decorte: Like photography, making an exhibition is a total process, of which taking photographs is only a small part. How did you approach this process?**

Nele Van Canneyt: You first have the experience, the making of the images. That is a highly intense and sensory process. At that moment, you are in a flow. I love old films and old art, and during that creative moment I feel as though I am in a film of my own. I see compositions and colours. Afterwards comes the selection of the photos. This is a time-consuming process, going backwards and forwards over the same prints, time after time, until the definitive choice is made. Once you have viewed an image a couple of times, the experience and the subjectivity fade. You look at the image like other people would look at it. Usually, I ask a few critical questions. 'Is there too much of me in this photo?' 'Does this image raise questions?' 'Does it match the other images I have chosen?' 'Is the composition right?' 'Does it add something to the exhibition?' It is odd, but some of the most striking photos selected first time around later need to make way for more subtle images that create a special atmosphere.

**Han Decorte: In the exhibition I have tried to depict your story and your wanderings in the scenography. The**



**process for choosing the right images went through several stages. For you, which aspects were most important when selecting photographs for 'Inner Land'?**

Nele Van Canneyt: Images that raise questions or have an impenetrable aspect are an important part of the exhibition. This is something that is constantly present in my work. The corona period is depicted as a time of fear but also of a strange kind of peace. A period of indeterminacy, impenetrability, emptiness and isolation. These are the aspects on which the selection was based.

**Han Decorte: The selected photographs have a number but no title. In the past, you have used titles for other series. Why not this time?**

Nele Van Canneyt: Titles also involve a process. They take time. You can compare choosing a title with selecting photos. If a title continues to seem right for a photo and its contents, no matter how many times you look at it, then it is a good title. In this exhibition we focused first and foremost on the selection process, so that it is too early

to give a definitive title to the images.

**Han Decorte: The title of the exhibition as a whole is 'Inner Land'. How did you arrive at that?**

Nele Van Canneyt: 'Inner Land' is a title that can be interpreted in different ways. Bruges is inland from the coast; in other words, in the inner part of our land. And during the corona crisis everyone was trapped to some extent in their own 'inner land'. The photographs also often reflect what was going on inside people's heads, which is another kind of 'inner land'.

**Han Decorte: It struck me that your photographs do indeed explore the field of tension between inside and outside. The viewer no longer knows exactly where he is or where he is looking to or from. Can you say something more about that?**

Nele Van Canneyt: You will find very few concrete answers in my work. My photographs invite viewers to ask questions and to go in search of their own meanings. I leave the interpretation to them. People and cities can never be fathomed completely. There is always

an element of impenetrability. Even a city like Bruges has its walls. As an outsider, you look inside. Or from inside you look outside, at the outside world. There is always a gulf between the two. I love that interaction and the questions it can prompt. Many different stories are being played out behind walls, stories that you cannot see as an outsider, stories that are not on the photo or that may be very different from what is visible from the outside. That is the reason why walls, doors and reflections play an important role in this Bruges series, because that is where you find the stories that are not being told.

**Han Decorte: Where you struck by particular colours during your rediscovery of Bruges?**

Nele Van Canneyt: Colours cover a deeper layer of meaning, something that cannot always be expressed in words. That is why colour is so important in my work. Not everything needs to be explained. I am grateful that I also learnt how to take black-and-white analogue photographs, because it teaches you to focus on the composition and the story. The image has to be strong enough on its own, without the need







## Nele Van Canneyt – 'Inner Land'

11.12.2020 – 25.04.2021, Arentshuis

Nele Van Canneyt studied photography at the St. Luke's Academy in Ghent. In recent years, she has exhibited her photographs in solo and group exhibitions, both at home and abroad, including an exhibition at the Volkskundemuseum in Bruges (Snapshot). Her night-time photography is currently on display at the Warande in Turnhout. In her images the interplay between the inner world of human experience and the visible outer world always plays a crucial role. In this way, seemingly banal images can become charged with meaning, in a manner that draws the viewer, as it were, into a kind of cinematic dream world.

[www.nelevanconneyt.com](http://www.nelevanconneyt.com)

Han Decorte obtained her master in textile design at the St. Luke's University College in Ghent, which she later supplemented with a second master in contextual design from the Design Academy in Eindhoven. Until recently, she was the assistant curator at the Atelier 34zero Muzeum in Jette. Since 2018, she has been a guest lecturer at the Luca School of Arts (C-Mine, Genk), specialising in the scenography of design. She has curated numerous exhibitions involving design and contemporary art.



for colour. Colours can, however, have a real added value. That is why I work abroad so often, because of the colours I can find there. In the past, I used to think that Belgium was grey; the light here is often subdued. Over time, however, I have discovered that there are also interesting colours in our country and that they don't always need to be vivid, but can work through their subtlety. Grey, for example, has a broader spectrum than just mouse-grey. You can discover different totalities, if you look for long enough.

**Han Decorte: Would you say that you have your own photographic style?**

Nele Van Canneyt: That is a difficult question to answer about yourself. Your style is usually something that other people recognise in you. So perhaps I should ask you! How would you describe my style?

Han Decorte: Your passion for spatiality and for colour is obvious. The filmic elements and the graphic quality of the images are equally clear, particularly the composition and your ability to frame and record the moment. You search for the emotional charge in an image, the aspects that tell a story. This is combined with close attention for the figure in the space: your personages are usually portrayed as individuals, by themselves and in themselves, occupied with their own concerns and seldom part of a group. These are the characteristics that frequently recur in your photographs, as do a pleasing contrast of light and shade and a subtle air of mystery. I don't think I would refer to it as a fixed style. That is one

of the nice things about looking at your photos: I can recognise them without the need to pigeon-hole them into a particular style. You allow yourself to be caught up in the moment, but at the same time can capture that moment in a manner that has a clear signature.

**Han Decorte: What can the visitor expect from the exhibition in the Arentshuis?**

Nele Van Canneyt: It is a contemporary exhibition. It is not the Bruges that you are used to seeing in the picture postcards. Sometimes Bruges is visible in my images; sometimes it isn't. The commission and the preparation leading up to the exhibition have been a fascinating process: the long selection sessions to whittle down the photographs to a final fifty or so; the interaction of the photos with the scenography, the collaboration with others; perhaps above all the way the scenography adjusts itself to the series, so that the viewer can experience the feeling of impenetrability I was trying to capture and also get a sense of what it was like to be in Bruges during the time when I was there.

Han Decorte: Is it important that you can recognise Bruges in these photographs?

Nele Van Canneyt: That was never my objective. Bruges is certainly in there somewhere, but that was never the starting-point for my photos. They are more about what is going on inside the heads of the people I portray, about what is happening behind the city's walls and windows. They are about the silence and the emptiness that charac-

terise the corona period, facets of life that are universal and ubiquitous in nature.

**Han Decorte: Do you now look at Bruges differently because you have photographed it?**

Nele Van Canneyt: Yes, I will never forget Bruges. I must have walked on every cobblestone in every street (although I still sometimes get lost!). Above all, my night-time expeditions, when I wandered around almost entirely alone, were a unique experience. What's more, Bruges is linked to my youth. When I was a child, we used to visit the antiques market on the Dijver. I can still remember the smell of the stand where they used to make sweets the old-fashioned way, cutting them up on a block of marble. It was nice to go back there.

**Han Decorte: Do you have new projects that we can look forward to?**

Nele Van Canneyt: At the moment, I have an exhibition at the Warande in Turnhout called 'The Night', where a number of my night-time images are displayed on light boxes. (This exhibition runs until 13 December). Since the start of the corona crisis, I have largely been working in my own 'inner land', focusing on places that take me back to my roots and to my identity as a person. It is another fascinating process - and one that has taught me that you don't always need to travel far from home to find inspiration.



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Title	Nele Van Canneyt
Location	Arentshuis, Dijver 16, 8000 Bruges
Dates	from 11 December 2020 to 25 April 2021
Opening times	from Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 to 17.00. On 24 and 31 December open from 9.30 to 16.00. Closed on Mondays, 25 December and 1 Januari.
Tickets	€ 7   € 6 (red.) [incl. permanent collection] free up to and including 12 years old Reservation is warmly advised through <a href="http://www.museabrugge.be/reservatie">www.museabrugge.be/reservatie</a>
Information	<a href="http://www.museabrugge.be">www.museabrugge.be</a>

## IMAGES IN HIGH RESOLUTION

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/museabrugge/albums>

Please mention the correct credits to be found with each photo.

## MORE INFO

All **arrangements** can be made via the press officer of Musea Brugge,  
[sarah.bauwens@brugge.be](mailto:sarah.bauwens@brugge.be) or t +32 50 44 87 08.

**Press visits** to the exhibition are possible with an appointment: see on the website  
[museabrugge.be/en/pers](http://museabrugge.be/en/pers). The press file can be consulted there, and texts can be copied.

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Thank you for your cooperation and interest.

**MUSEABRUGGE.BE #MUSEABRUGGE #MINDTHEARTIST #NELEVANCANNEYT**

**THE MUSEA BRUGGE FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION THANKS THEIR SPECIAL BENEFACTORS**





# Mind the Artist

Nele Van Canneyt

Delphine Lecompte

SEADS

Sanam Khatibi Strook

Pieter Chanterie

Tille Pepermans

Line Boogaerts

to be continued...

Takeovers by KAAP

—CONCERT—  
—GEBOUW—  
—BRUGGE—

MUGCV  
films met zicht op de wereld

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