

**BRIC**

**Youth Curatorial Fellowship**

**LOOKING  
BACKWARDS**



**LOOKING  
FORWARDS**



**TEEN ARTIST  
OPEN CALL EXHIBITION**



**BRIC**

# Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards

## 2nd Annual Youth Curatorial Fellowship Exhibition

Tuesday May 25, 2021–Friday June 25, 2021  
BRIC Gallery, 647 Fulton St. Brooklyn, NY, 11217  
Gallery Hours: Wed–Sat 11AM–6PM

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### **EXHIBITION ARTISTS**

Jordan Kohn  
Giselle Cordero  
Sharon Hwang  
Nayeon Park  
Jeremy Feliz  
Georgina Nash  
Jade Duffus  
Du'a Zaid  
Laila Salem

### **CURATED BY BRIC's 2020-21 YOUTH CURATORIAL FELLOWS**

Alyssa Burke  
Silvia Liang  
Audrey Wong  
Elizabeth Yang  
Jimmy Santiago  
Kayla Williams  
Adele Ho  
Lila Cipolla

## LOOKING BACKWARDS



### Exhibition Artists

Jordan Kohn  
Gielle Cordero  
Sharon Wuang  
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Jeremy Feiz  
Georgina Nash  
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Du'a Zaid  
Laila Salem

## LOOKING FORWARDS



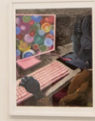
### Youth Curatorial Fellows

Alysa Burke  
Shiva Liang  
Aashy Wang  
Elizabeth Yang  
Jimmy Santiago  
Kaya Williams  
Adah-Isa  
Lila Cipolla

How has 2020 affected you? What changes do you want to see in 2021 and the future? This exhibition showcases the different views we've had of the same 2020, highlighting the personal experiences of poets in New York City. A year unlike many before it. A pandemic, losing someone working, learning, and socializing differently, making many feel isolated.

Wake up call protests against the injustice headed in all by authorities. A controversial election. The overwhelming impact of climate change. How has this past year impacted you? What can our leaders look like? This exhibition seeks to provide answers to these questions.

Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards is an exhibition curated by JACIC's and annual youth Curatorial Fellows.



# Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards

How has 2020 affected us? What changes do we want to see in 2021 and the future? This exhibition showcases the different views we've had of the same 2020, highlighting the personal experiences of teens in New York City. 2020 was a year unlike any before it with a pandemic leaving everyone working, learning, and socializing differently, leaving many people feeling isolated, along with wake up call protests against the injustices handed to us by authorities, a controversial election, and the overwhelming impact of climate change and self isolation. How has this past year impacted our lives? What will our futures look like? This exhibition seeks to provide answers to these questions.

## ABOUT THE YOUTH CURATORIAL FELLOWSHIP

BRIC's Youth Curatorial Fellowship program is a group of teen curators developing and producing the second annual For-Teens-By-Teens Exhibition. This exhibition showcases artworks in a variety of mediums by NYC high school age (13-19) teen artists, including printmaking, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, textile, media and performance.

**Teaching Curator:** Lix Zackeroff

**Contemporary Art Education Manager:** Beto Sepúlveda

[BRICartsmedia.org/YCF-ARTIST-OPEN-CALL](https://BRICartsmedia.org/YCF-ARTIST-OPEN-CALL)



@BRICBrooklyn







Stuck, 2021



# Georgina Nash

**Artist Name: Georgina Nash**

**Curator Name: Audrey Wong**

***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

To me, it means that it is important for us as a society to 'look back' at our past experiences and grow from them so that we may continue to 'look forward' and evolve. 2020 was a very rough, hectic year for many of us, so it is important to take time and reflect on what happened and how our own state of mind is faring.

***How does being an artist in NYC affect your work?***

Being a young artist living in NYC is definitely important to my growth as an artist, and as a person in general. I credit my inconsistent art style to the constant exposure to different cultures/experiences and environments found within the city. By living in such a diverse area and seeing all the different types of art here—like the murals, spray paint, and sculptures—I have never felt pressured to box myself into a certain category. This freedom of expression allows me to enrich my artwork by exploring countless styles and infusing it with the cultures I am surrounded by.

***What do you want the viewer to take away from your artwork?***

I understand my piece may seem out of place, considering the theme of the exhibition is "Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards" and my title is "Stuck". However, what I want people to take away is that it is alright to feel

stuck, it is alright to have that struggle of not knowing what to do—and it is especially understandable to be in that headspace considering the last year of tragedies upon tragedies that we all had to face. I would like the viewer to use my piece (or really any of the others in the gallery) as an excuse to take a moment to reflect—either on the state of the world, the past/current year, or even your own mental state and how you are currently.

***How do you think being a teenager affects your perception of 2020, artwork, and/or life in general?***

Being a teenager during this time definitely affected my perception of 2020, since my age group went through a very different experience than that of a child or adult. 2020 rapidly took a toll on our systems of education, work, everyday life, and mental stability. I think teenagers had the widest range of experiences throughout 2020 since we could relate to those younger than us struggling with things like our social lives, but also with those older since we weren't able to go to work/school. As a group, teenagers' mental stability and independence were also impacted by the cruel year. Being a teenager I think made the harshness of 2020 even more prominent because we are all still learning about ourselves and developing our social lives, and having a sudden loss of our independence—being stuck at home all the time for safety and not being able to see many people physically—was a major challenge.

# Du'a Zaid

**Artist Name: Du'a Zaid**

**Curator Name: Kayla Williams**

***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

It's a topic that makes you reminisce. At least that's what I felt when I read through what this exhibit was about, it gave me the time to look back and look forward; about what happened and what will happen. To think about what went wrong that led us to the position we are in the world and if this situation is beneficial to us more than we make it out to be.

***What is the meaning behind the symbolism in your poem?***

I felt like I needed this poem to represent my heart more than my mind; how I felt throughout quarantine and express the emptiness and fear many people were feeling. I symbolized air in a way of choking my future and holding it captive. Through the poem I grew from questioning the air to empathizing it; trying to recognize the faults humanity implemented into the upbringing of this pandemic. The air symbolized the ignorance the world has towards probing the legitimacy of COVID to letting the air symbolize an apologetic mindset of compassion I feel towards it.

***Do you think your age has played a part in how your outlook of 2020 turned out?***

My age has definitely changed my outlook on 2020, in the beginning of the pandemic I

assumed it would be a few weeks like the rest of us. Months had gone by and my Sophomore year became my Junior year in the blink of an eye. I still can't grasp the thought that the crucial part of a teenagers life, highschool, is casually slipping through my control. But it made me glad that I was taking this time to experience my youth with my family and closest friends outside of the drama highschool brings. It's made me realize every age is your prime and my teenage years aren't replaceable but they also aren't the only time I could experience fun. I have my entire life ahead of me and I can't be selfish enough to dwell on the time I'm "losing".

***Is there anything you would like viewers to know about you or how you write your poems?***

Writing has always been something that's come easy to me. Poetry has been my outlet since I could remember, it started as little phrases that'd I'd think of in the shower and hum into songs, annoying my entire family with my awful voice. But then it grew into a passion that I couldn't let go of. I don't plan when I write and I learned to not pressure myself into creating, it sounds cliché but as an artist tapping into your mind; at least for me, is logical but not expressive, and I need my work to be expressive. Being from a huge Arab family your voice could get lost in the crowd and my way of vocalizing my thoughts is by writing.

# WHAT IS IN THE AIR?

What is in the air?

The air that was filled with purity and love;  
drenched with sorrow reaching the above.

Another death becomes invalidated,  
from the air that is so hated.

Does life coat the selfish,  
while death flies the innocent

The brain has become storage for hate  
while compassion has closed the gates.

What is in the air?

Was it March,  
when life fell off the charts?

When it became revolving tabs instead of doors?  
STOP pausing my experience!  
No, I'm serious.

Declaring war on my past two years,  
Faking strength through all my fears.

What is in the air?

What was once in sanity,  
rebirths in misery,  
The mind and soul;  
transformed into something so cold.

Gasping from your own thought,  
that you just fought.

What is in the air?

Behind the bright light,  
Unplugging the one out of bare sight.

Is it trusting keyboards?  
Is this what our livelihood is moving towards?

Feels like running up an escalator.  
Our air has become the traitor.

What is in the air?

Does our earth need to cleanse?  
From the pain inflicted by its friends.

I'm so sorry to the mother,  
We treat you as if there is another.

We did this.  
And it's made us all reminisce.  
Our hate has led us to this fate.

What is the air?

Does she have any more pureness to spare?

Du'a Zaid



*Creeping On, 2021*

# Jeremy Feliz

**Artist Name:** Jeremy Feliz  
**Curator Name:** Lila Cipolla

***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

It means to think back on all of what we went through in the past year, the concerns and fear and acceptance of what it was. It's a reminder to understand and learn from those experiences so that we can move forward with more precautions.

***What do you want the viewer to take away from your artwork?***

I want for them to remember that we made it through and to keep looking forward to what's to come, even if it's a bit scary because we can keep on working to make things a bit better.

***Has the past year made you realize anything personally or as an artist?***

Absolutely, it reminded me that things can change in very unexpected ways every day, and that it is better to accept these changes as they come and work with what I can as it pushes me to get out of my comfort zone and explore.

# Laila Salem

**Artist Name:** Laila Salem

**Curator Name:** Alyssa Burke

## ***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

What Looking Backwards Looking Forwards means in the context of 2020 to me is to preserve and persevere. Alhamdulillah (thank God) I have not lost anyone I care for to COVID. However, I recently lost someone I cared for deeply and have not seen since March 16 of 2020 when schools shut down and it's been difficult for me to come to terms with the fact that she is gone because I only saw her in the school environment and this is my first loss. Due to the pandemic, I feel that "as a society" we have become desensitized to death. We have become so used to the paranoia of losing those closest to us that we mentally put a guard up when it comes to the high mortality rate so it doesn't faze us anymore as a way to cope. So as time went on I began to ponder the thought of what this meant to me, I realized that I had grown accustomed to preserving the memories of those I love close to me while doing what I can to protect myself and those closest to me. Try to look back at my life and preserve it knowing that the environment we live in will never be the same again. While simultaneously trying to protect myself from the unpredictable future looking towards my life.

## ***Your poem, "Quarantine" will be displayed as large text on a wall. What do you want the viewer to take away from your poem in the gallery?***

I hope that the viewer will be able to take away from my poem a sense of acknowledged and heard. When I had written quarantine, it was three months in lockdown and even though I was in a house of six people with my little sister on the way, I felt completely isolated and alone. I have felt so small in a universe that is continuously expanding. When I was writing this poem, I knew that it was something that would help me feel as though I

was preserving the memories that I had before lockdown and it was a way for me to appreciate the things that I could no longer experience on a day-to-day basis. I hope what the viewer takes away from my poem is that you are not the only one feeling like you are a tiny speck in the universe and it is valid for you to feel anxious or paranoid even if you haven't been directly affected by this virus.

## ***What inspires you to write poetry?***

On January 21, 2019, and I was in my freshman year of high school and I was watching videos on Youtube about the Stoneman Douglas Shooting. I stumbled upon the famous speech by Emma Gonzalez, "We call BS". It was as if a switch went off and I thought I wanted to write something like that. So, I began to write about what I was feeling as I was watching those videos-the anger I felt. I began to channel those emotions into what I didn't know at the time was my first poem: The Unspoken Truth. A year later, I presented that same poem in front of my sophomore english class and that was the first time anyone heard my poems.

I have written over 40 poems since then. It's become a way to help solve the equations inside my head. It's the one thing that can help me feel like I can breathe when my obsessive thoughts are playing on repeat. In some cases, poetry can be both my poison and my cure because it forces me to let go of the emotions that I've repressed for so long. It's what I go to when I need a way to break free but at times it can be my prison forcing me to dig into the parts of myself I hide from others to create better art. It's my form of expression that pours out of me. In the two years that I have been writing, I have written 35 poems. I have written poetry about heartbreak, activism, justice, happiness, and mental awareness. My poetry is my emotional outlet and it's beautifully, authentically mine and I love it.

# QUARANTINE

I miss the dirty streets  
Never mind  
I miss being there  
I miss seeing things  
I miss going outside  
I miss seeing people  
I miss New York because this isn't it  
I miss my friends I miss my family I miss it all  
I miss the sound of cars in traffic Quarantine is a serious issue  
I miss the New York demographic People are dying and fighting over tis-  
I miss seeing people with their brightsues  
outfits Some people don't care  
I miss the sound of my shoes hitting They are being unfair  
the pavement  
I miss walking past the flower  
shop and seeing their ar-  
rangements  
I miss the trains  
The people in the trains  
Seeing the conductor  
that would always  
smile at me and say  
good morning  
I hope I get the  
chance to learn her  
name  
I miss the girl on  
the train that I would  
say hello to every  
morning  
She and I always said  
hello and looked out  
for each other  
I hope she is okay  
I miss my school  
I miss seeing some of the greatest  
people I know  
I miss being around the good vibes  
I miss going to Coney Island and hopping  
on rides  
I miss the fireworks  
I miss going to work  
I miss seeing Ayoub and his smile  
lighting up a room  
I miss seeing Yahya and his hyperactive  
personality that I love  
I miss Sister Waseema and her tea and  
advice that  
I always appreciated  
I miss the walk from work  
The calmness  
The air  
The houses  
The trees  
I miss it all  
I miss New York City  
I miss the vibrant personality  
I miss hating the city because of the  
traffic  
I do not think we will ever  
truly be the same  
So many people are  
going insane  
I just hope my  
brain can handle all  
of this pain  
It's been 8 months  
since March  
Since Governor  
Cuomo had an-  
nounced that school  
would close to pre-  
vent the spread  
Tragically, most of our  
loved ones are now  
dead  
Hold them close  
You never know when you  
will lose the ones you love  
most  
Since then I've written more poems  
(Including this one that I wrote in  
May)  
I've welcomed another baby sister into  
my life  
I've had to say a final goodbye to  
some friends  
I've had time to make amends  
I've grown  
I've lived  
And I'm still here  
Most people didn't get that gift  
I hope that we can get through this  
We are rebuilding  
But we need to make sure that as a  
society we are instilling safety  
Be safe  
Be smart  
Be happy  
Be patient



~Laila Salem





# Jordan Kohn

**Artist Name: Jordan Kohn**

**Curator Name: Elizabeth Yang**

## ***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

We are constantly told to look forwards rather than backwards—to put the past behind us and project our attention to the future. Going into 2021, everyone was so eager to let go of the pandemonium of 2020 and have a fresh start in the new year. A new digit in the ones place does not erase the pain, distress, and tumult that was universally experienced this past year. It is critical that we as a community continue to look forwards and work towards a brighter future, but also look backward and acknowledge and accept the past. Looking back, I see a catastrophic pandemic, an economic collapse, racial injustice, civil unrest, and a contentious election that questioned our democracy and the fundamental standards our country holds itself to. However, looking back I also see a time where communication with friends and family was more valuable than gold, I see how creative we become when we're lonely, and I see the strength and resilience of the human spirit. Even in isolation, there were silver linings, and these silver linings allowed me to be able to look forward and sustain hope.

If I had a dime for every time the phrase, “when life goes back to normal...” was used, I would not have to work a day in my life. After a calamitous year like this, we don't have a normal to go back to. 2020 wasn't just a time where new problems arose, but a time where underlying issues within our nation were brought to the surface. How can we go back to a normal where socioeconomic divisions pervade the nation, where people's productivity

is more valuable than their health, and an earth that is dying before our eyes? We are at a critical juncture where we have an opportunity to transform and create a new normal. We must look backwards but move forwards—always forwards.

## ***What about the Klimt piece “The Kiss” inspired you in your creation of “The Last Kiss”?***

Gustav Klimt's “The Kiss” has always been one of my favorite works of all time. It's an embodiment of everlasting love and passion, yet simultaneously when I fixate on this piece I perceive the lovers' embrace to be a transient moment in time—such that the two figures could vanish from the edge of the flowerbed forever—and I find myself flooded with feelings of grief and sorrow. I drew a distinct connection between this piece and the chaotic and uncertain state of the world. Inspired by the original, I took this famous painting and put a modern-day twist on it, navigating the challenges of a global pandemic and exploring the gravity of the world's condition. Through keeping the two figures locked in an embrace, but rather than being in an extraterrestrial golden sphere, I present the figures on a hospital bed. The woman is attached to a ventilator and kneeling on an array of viral particles. Embodying Klimt's geometric forms and brilliant colors, I replicated this piece through a modern-day lens. Overwhelmed by turmoil, I found solace through this image, metamorphosing chaos into tranquility, creating a piece of commemoration. In the original, the lovers are teetering on the edge of the world—yet still, they prevail and exist in this state of eternity—which is exactly how I conceived our society back in 2020.

# Sharon Hwang

**Artist Name: Sharon Hwang**

**Curator Name: Adele Ho**

***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

Looking backwards, 2020 was a difficult time for me. It was a time to reflect on who I am. During this time many students were forced into quarantine and stuck in online school. Going to school online took away our daily socialization and kept us surrounded by technology. Looking forward, I am trying to warn students about the dangers of being obsessed with technology.

***What made you want to submit artwork to Looking Backwards Looking Forwards?***

I wanted to submit because I wanted to share how I felt during the quarantine and have other teens relate to these feelings. Looking back, many of us were surrounded by technology because our school, work, friends, and entertainment were all online. This meant tremendous amounts of screentime, which made me look forward to a time when we didn't have to be separated by screens.

***What do you want the viewer to take away from your artwork?***

I am trying to portray the dangers of technology during quarantine, and how it may slowly be taking over our time and eating away at our lives. My pieces depict how teens start to rely on technology and unknowingly forget reality.

RIGHT TOP: *Addiction*, 2021

RIGHT BOTTOM: *Oblivion*, 2021





# Giselle Cordero

**Artist Name: Giselle Cordero**

**Curator Name: Silvia Liang**

## ***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

Considering 2020's continuous shenanigans and hurdles, I would regard the phrase "Looking Backwards Looking Forwards" to talk about a moment of reflection, followed by a collected decision to move forward from such difficult circumstances. Now in the year 2021, I find that the phrase prompts me to think about all the bumps I've had during 2020, and how I was able to overcome everything that was thrown at me. This followed by a moment of thinking about how all the lessons I've learned will push me to acquire a better future.

## ***Were there challenges you faced as an artist and/or towards creating art in 2020?***

There were definitely some challenges that I faced as an artist when it came to creating art. Not only had the pandemic separated me from my well-loved community of artists and professors, but it also brought forth various personal hurdles, which kept me from being able to produce artwork for many months. It wasn't until I started incorporating my personal struggles into my artwork that I found myself more motivated to create than ever. It was a form of therapy for me, one that is familiar and I can personally connect to the most.

## ***What would you want viewers to take away from your artwork?***

When it comes to "Coping Mechanism" I hope viewers can understand the double-edged sword that a coping mechanism can be. In some cases, Coping Mechanisms are used to get through difficult times, this alone is fine. The problem arises when coping mechanisms are dependent on ignoring one's issues. I speak from personal experience when I say that this will always backfire. Much like I portrayed in my work, Coping mechanisms only offer temporary happiness until we are eventually pushed back into what we were trying to escape from in the first place. We are better off facing our problems head-on, so there eventually won't be a need for a coping mechanism.

# Jade Duffus

**Artist Name: Jade Duffus**

**Curator Name: Lila Cipolla**

## ***What inspires you?***

Something that inspires me is my unique perspective on anything, people, things, places, etc... The simple experiences of life through my eyes and my eyes only develop in a way that is specific to me. The questions I ask on human experiences and the way I interpret those questions to narrate into a specific piece of art . Is something that is truly inspirational to me. I would also say that my mom is the person that inspires me as well. Her desire and passion to see me succeed in whatever I do is the reason I can create such wonderful works of art. To simply make her proud and prove that her efforts put in me have not gone to waste. Without her, I probably would have never even got the chance to be in such an amazing opportunity as this. So thank you mom, I love you.

## ***Is there anything you want the audience to take away from your piece?***

Something I want the audience to specifically take away from my art is the hysteria 2020 has caused. Not just in our government and social lives but in every aspect of human life. I believe that I speak for everyone when I say 2020 has become a real crucible and allowed the ugly to reveal itself. That is what I want my audience

to take notice of. How when the truth is revealed, it can make us blinded by hope, which is exactly what has happened. I feel that is so ironic and as the saying goes, "perception is a reality to the one in the experience".

## ***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards mean to you?***

To me Looking Backwards Looking Forwards is a sense of blinded hope. The idea that regardless of all the chaos and evilness in the world. The hope that we as human beings have as an instinct cling on as a use of survival. We have survived the most terrorizing of events, but that spec of hope is one of our many motives. The one thing we pride on and have left, so the question now is. Why not cling on to it for dear life?



Our Motive, 2021





# Nayeon Park

**Artist Name: Nayeon Park**

**Curator Name: Silvia Liang**

***What does Looking Backwards Looking Forwards in the context of 2020 mean to you?***

The theme of this year's exhibit seems like a quite appropriate representation for how many people have experienced 2020. For many, including myself at times, quarantine has neither been eventful, nor empty for a while. For that reason, reminiscing about the past and looking ahead towards the future seemed like recurring trains of thoughts throughout the year. While 2020 has brought a lot of pain and fear, it has really allowed me to reflect on my own actions and how I will act differently when things are back to normal.

***Has this past year made you realize anything personally or as an artist?***

This year has definitely helped me find my passion for art again! For a while, I used my skills in the arts for extracurriculars or projects. Although I still do those things, quarantine gave me the time to rediscover how to draw and paint for fun and not for any reason other than because I wanted to. Surprisingly, I think that I grew a lot in my technical skills over this year too.

***What inspires you in general, as a person and/or an artist?***

A lot of what inspires me stems from the people and communities around me. When asked to do a creative project, I always go to close friends and family members to source my inspiration from. I see this process as a win-win because not only do I get to have cool references and themes from people I want to highlight, but I also get to strengthen bonds and friendships after interviewing or talking to them about my project!

## CHECKLIST OF WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

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### **Giselle Cordero**

*Coping Mechanism*, 2021  
Collage  
22.5"x11"

### **Jade Duffus**

*Our Motive*, 2021  
Mixed Media, Paint, Charcoal and  
Graphite  
10"x10"

### **Jeremy Feliz**

*Creeping on*, 2021  
Charcoal and Ink on Paper  
18"x24"

### **Sharon Hwang**

*Oblivion*, 2021  
Ink  
18"x10"

### **Sharon Hwang**

*Addicted*, 2021  
Acrylic Paint & Ink  
18"x14"

### **Jordan Kohn**

*The Last Kiss*, 2021  
Neocolor Crayons on Paper  
32"x40"

### **Georgina Nash**

*Stuck*, 2021  
Acrylic Paint  
16"x20"

### **Nayeon Park**

*Hands of Elders*, 2021  
Acrylic on Canvas, Muslin and Glue  
18"x24"

### **Laila Salem**

*Quarantine*, 2021  
Poem, Digital Print  
Broadside by Silvia Liang  
8.5"x14"

### **Du'a Zaid**

*What is in the Air?*, 2021  
Poem, Digital Print  
Broadside by Silvia Liang  
8.5"x14"

# BRIC

## ABOUT BRIC

We are a leading arts and media institution anchored in Downtown Brooklyn whose work spans contemporary visual and performing arts, media, and civic action. For over forty years, our institution has shaped Brooklyn's cultural and media landscape by presenting and incubating artists, creators, students, and media makers. As a creative catalyst for our community, we ignite learning in people of all ages and centralize diverse voices that take risks and drive culture forward. BRIC is Building Brooklyn's creative future.

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*Manager, Youth Media Education*

Lix Zackeroff  
*Teaching Curator*

## SUPPORTERS



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