'LANDSCAPE MIRROR' & 'FEED THE WIND'
Teaching Landscape Architecture on Site at Oerol Festival in the Wadden Sea.

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Abstract: In the projects 'Landscape Mirror' 2011 and 'Feed the Wind' 2012 students of the Master of Landscape Architecture of the TU Delft have made an interactive project that evolved over the course of Oerol, a unique yearly recurring festival on the Wadden-Sea island Terschelling for landscape theatre & art. Both designs are focused on making people aware of the landscape of the island.

In 2011 the 10-day installation mirrored from the highest dune all different landscapes of the island - beach, dunes, forest, city and polder- onto the beach. A camera obscura, situated on the top of the dune, gave the opportunity to see the real as well as the mirrored landscape at once. Visitors first experienced the landscape through the eye of the camera before walking themselves into the area depicted there. Besides experiencing the spatial qualities of the island in the installation, the public could influence the space itself by building parts of the forest and preventing the city from flooding by improving the dikes of the polder.

In 2012 visitors of the festival gained awareness of constant changes in the landscape on a much smaller scale: a garden. Geological changes were simulated. One project entitled 'Feed the Wind' demonstrated how the wind as a natural force shaped the land, and how man used this power to modify the island. In a garden designed and built by the students, visitors were asked to bring sand and fill it into an assemblage of foot pumps and bridges. Slowly the making of the Wadden Sea began. The project lasted 10 days.

The unpredictability of the design and building process and the fact that the final result of the exhibition is not fully determined by the design make these installations valuable experiments. For our students building something, working in a team and the experience of the interaction with visitors during the construction was a totally new and rewarding experience. Unforeseen problems had to be dealt with directly instead of thinking about possible future scenarios on a drawing table.

The Delft Chair of Landscape Architecture are happy to continue this experience next year, if funding and artistic programming of the festival will allow it. In the paper we would like to present this outstanding element of our curriculum as a very fruitful way of education. Our wish is to test our teaching through the exchange of ideas with colleagues in practice and education and to encourage others to similar experiences.
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Introduction

In this paper we will introduce a design and build course within the TU Delft Landscape Architecture Programme as a contribution to the Oerol Theatre Festival on the Wadden Sea Island of Terschelling. In order to present the project we will first explain the setting in the context of the Oerol festival and secondly in the academic arena. In paragraph 1 of the paper we will show two projects, the 'Landscape mirror' project from 2011 and the 'Feed the wind' project from 2012. Respectively the projects will be evaluated in paragraph 2 and 3. Finally, in paragraph 4 we will discuss the general educational implications of the projects and pose some open questions on how to combine practical experience and research in Landscape Architecture education.
1 Educational Setting and the acquaintance with a Festival

The projects 'Landscape Mirror' and 'Feed the Wind' were one component, at the end of the first year programme of the new Master Track in Landscape Architecture. Though TU Delft has a long tradition of teaching Landscape Architecture in the track of Architecture and Urbanism, it only established an independent track in September 2010.

The Delft approach to Landscape Architecture is characterised by a particularly intense connection between research and education in the topics of Architecture and Landscape, Urban Landscapes, and the fine art of Dutch land-making. The Oerol project essentially collects all of these goals into one. The project was integrated into the Heritage Landscapes Programme, the fourth domain of our research. Our academic programmes cultivate 'research by design' and 'design research' on both educational and research levels (Nijhuis, Bobbink, Jauslin 2011, 2012 and Steenbergen e.a. 2008)

On the other hand, work experience in such an intensely academic setting falls short. To overcome this problem we bring in guest teachers and speakers from artistic and professional practice. The invitation of Oerol made it possible for students to go beyond the studying of landscapes and Landscape Architecture.

By starting the new master track on Landscape Architecture, an evening lecture series entitled 'How do you Landscape?' was established. It has continued to the present and was recently extended with a monthly updated blog (www.howdoyoulandscape.com). One of its intentions is to better understand and cultivate different approaches and interpretations of Landscape Architecture. This exchange within the faculty and across its borders led to the acquaintance of Joachim (Joop) Mulder, founder of the exceptional Oerol Landscape Theatre and Art Festival at the Wadden Sea Island of Terschelling.

In March 2010, Joop Mulder came to Delft to present the Oerol festival in Delft (How Do You Landscape? 2010). Oerol means 'everywhere' in local Frisian dialect and refers to an old custom of letting all cattle eat from everyone’s land during a certain time-span. It mirrors well the practice of artists and visitors in June spreading out over the entire island of Terschelling. The Oerol Festival started more than 30 years ago as a street theatre festival from his bar but soon extended. Due to its unique location on an island in the Wadden Sea the Oerol theatre productions develop a strong interaction with the landscape. Many productions developed over the years’ site specific performances. This very particular atmosphere produced an enchanting setting for visitors and developed into a great cultural success. During the festival there are more than 50,000 visitors on the Island, normally inhabited by only 5,000 people.

The Island of Terschelling is part of the Wadden Sea Islands that separate the North Sea from the European Mainland. It is one of a long series of islands that stretches along the north along the coasts of the Netherlands and Germany, up to the Western Coast of Denmark. The intertidal zone between the islands and the mainland is called the Wadden Sea. In all three countries the islands have become popular seaside destinations with bathing hotels and recreational services. Since 2009 the Wadden Sea is a tri-national UNESCO World Heritage site as it is "the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, with natural processes undisturbed throughout most of the area" (UNESCO 2009). Protection is mostly directed to the rich flora and fauna that characterize the landscape of tidal creeks and muddy flats. Today the zone is in need of further protection, not only because of tourism, but also due to the large scale of industry and shipping around the area. Most urgent is the ongoing discussion regarding gas drilling below the Wadden Sea that led to much NGO activism in the 1990s. In the Netherlands the Wadden Sea is regarded as the last piece of natural landscape. But even this qualification remains questionable, since...
the Wadden Sea can only survive by conservation. And to preserve a landscape means constant looking after.

Geologically speaking, the Wadden Sea Islands are rather young. Some Islands shrink and disappear, others come into being. The Wadden Sea is a dynamic landscape. Terschelling itself has been inhabited since the year 850 and used to consist of two islands. Through natural forces and by poldering parts of the Wadden Sea, the islands grew together. For many years, multiple dialects were spoken on the island, a remnant of the island's past as two separate bodies.

Nowadays, for many Dutch, Terschelling is best known for its Oerol Festival. In 2010, the Oerol Festival was looking forward to its 30th edition, seeking a redefinition of its engagement with its special landscape. In a seminar called 'Beauty and Brains,' with the Dutch Wadden Academy, several artists and scientists discussed the future of the festival (Bazelmans e.a. 2010). A possible solution proposed that the festival should be more aware of its own environmental and social impact and moreover make the audience aware of it. The artists were aware of the fact that touristic exploitation and sustainable development of an island are not always at ease with one another.

From our standpoint as landscape architects we were particularly puzzled by the discrepancy between the enthusiasm of the festival visitors for the landscape and their ignorance about it's dynamics in both natural and cultural processes. Most visitors and performers cherish the aesthetic and experiential qualities of the landscape. They see the landscape as a décor, a setting for theatre or the performances, which involve freezing, walking, sitting on dunes and a constant struggle with the weather. But from our point of view little is done to deepen the understanding of the landscape itself. How does this landscape work - be it farmland, be it the natural land, be it the colonization or the sophisticated mixtures of cultivated nature? The processes and the knowledge behind the form and the appearance of the landscape is what most interests us as landscapes architects, and promised to become an interesting field of action for our students, with the additional opportunity for inspiration from many artists that worked here before.

Inspired by the seminar and the discussion, we developed a plan to involve students of the Landscape Architecture department to work on the awareness of landscape. Students should explore the landscape of Terschelling. Their educated interpretation should then act as a lens to focus the attention of the audience on subjects relevant to the landscape issues discussed in the seminar or to the heritage landscape in general. Oerol offered TU Delft the opportunity to participate in the 2011 festival within the platform of the Passport projects. The projects consist of smaller performances or artistic sculptural interventions which can be visited during the day. Passport projects are set out all over the island, along different locations between the villages, campsites, the festival centre and theatre locations. Most festival visitors are on bikes and pass by during the days. Passport projects are all very different. Some examples include a walk performance, a one-man dance act, a recitation of a poem, installations on the beach, and outdoor media presentations. Oerol chose only 20 projects from more than 200 applicants - TU Delft however was lucky to be given carte blanche over a project yet to be developed.

**Three Illustrative References of Landscape Projects on Oerol**

To illustrate the scope of projects form the last 5 years on Oerol, we will briefly describe a few that have caught our interest in particular in this paragraph. These projects were also presented to the students.
Jaaringen (year rings) - Bruno Doedens

Landscape Architect Bruno Doedens, co-founder of DS landscapsarchitecten, worked on Oerol on several occasions and founded SLeM to support his productions. In 2006 the artist used a bulldozer to make 25 circular ditches, one for every year of the festival's anniversary. The 25 rings resemble a section of a tree-trunk in perfect circles on the beach. The outer growth-ring was 400-metres wide. The bulldozer worked for 3 weeks "but no grain of sand moved farther than 8 meters" (SLeM 2012). Visitors had to climb through the two meter high sinus section. Inside the inner rings the ‘dikes’ were above eye-level. The blocked view is a very unusual experience on the beach, since usually the view is unobstructed to the horizon. SLeM stands for Stichting Landschapstheater en Meer (landscape theatre "and more"). Doedens explains his unique approach by his growing interest on the action and interaction in public space. Originally trained as an architect designing spaces, as an artist he can create a dialog with the people using the space itself. One of his main ‘research’ subjects is the question of how time changes the experience of the space (Doedens 2011).

Walking - Robert Wilson

Very different in method but perhaps similar in effect is the work of the American director Robert Wilson, who also happens to have an Architectural education. He developed the installation "Walking " on Oerol 2008 in collaboration with the Dutch set designer Theun Mosk and choreographer Boukje Schweigman. The project was a unique experience of interaction between landscape and audience, which took place during a 4 hour show. Audiences were instructed by 'hosts' to walk individually at a very slow pace. Along the route they encountered a variety of sculptural interventions and enacted spaces and forms. "As they do so, participants slip into the role of the performer; nature becoming their stage" (Norfolk & Norwich Festival 2012). This installation will be presented again at the Holkham Estate near Wells-next-to-the-Sea this summer of 2012.

Forestwalk - Vesta Kroese

In 2010 the Dutch artist and architect Vesta Kroese organized ‘a requiem for a forest.’ Originally the Dutch national forestry (Staatsbosbeheer) came to Terschelling in the 19th century to protect farmland from the land-side movement of the North Sea Dunes. They planted large numbers of Maritime Pine trees (Pinus Pinaster) in large turf boxes into the dunes. Technically speaking, the trees were suitable because they could resist the salty grounds.

By 2010 Staatsbosbeheer understands itself as conservator of Dutch nature more than a facilitator of agriculture. Unfortunately, the choice of the Pine trees does not suit the picture of a "natural" coast anymore. Consequently parts of the forest were cut down and topsoil removed in order to make breeding grounds possible for threatened indigenous species like the bird Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) who itself has become an iconic species in the political debate about nature preservation.

Vesta Kroese used the 2010 Oerol festival and its audience to celebrate a forest funeral. She selected 26 trees at regular intervals around the boundary of a remaining 8ha patch of forest, which stayed as marks for the path during the festival. By walking around them the audience made a path in the deserted landscape and was introduced to the hypocritical story of the trees. On the last day of the festival, 25 trees were cut down. Only one was to remain as a reminder. Today the tree looks sad and is bizarrely malformed. Moreover, by error the remaining tree was not the one which had been selected by the designer. She and the
audience watched the trees fall from a remote viewpoint – celebrating their funerals in the rain. (Kroese 2010)

*Producing with Students for a Festival*

Many more interesting projects have been realised throughout the years by Dutch and International artists and designers from different professions. One could say that the site-specific landscape art projects are framing the theatre, dance and music productions. It is important to mention here, that the core of the festival is filled in by theatre. All art-forms here somehow explore the boundaries of Landscape Design, because they have to deal with the place and its dynamic circumstances. It would be too easy and not fair to call Oerol a ‘Land Art’ festival. The festival occupies a unique niche of art and developed over the years a very unique signature.

All of the 3 proposed projects have been carried out by professional artists. Their meaning and beauty are beyond the abilities and possibilities of our course. These examples do illustrate the possibilities and perspectives of the festival. The described references have been selected because they give hints toward the direction we wanted our students to take - they are able to make people aware of the Terschelling landscape.

TU Delft’s Oerol Studio had to be restricted to a quarter of a semester. Luckily the students explored many scales and design methods of Landscape Architecture - and got used to a fast rhythm of production. In each quarter, students had to do some field work of their project site. They learned to work in varying sizes of groups as well as alone, and produced many project ideas in a very short time. For the assignment of Terschelling groups were formed. Within the group students had to analyse the island and choose with a strong argument a specific site on the island.

An internal pitch among 4 to 6 projects with participation from the Festival Artistic and Production Directors led to the choice of one concept. After the pitch, forces were united and the whole studio worked together on the chosen project. Time was short - only a month to go until the opening – and the students faced the considerable logistical challenge of realising an immense project in their first year.

From Opening Day on we could expect about 500 visitors each day. Our aim was to introduce the public to a participatory role and try to make them understand and learn something about the specific place of Terschelling.

In and of itself, building with little budget, little experience, and unrefined craftsmanship was certainly a challenge. That challenge was complicated further by the logistics of restricted transportation slots and long delivery times for the selected materials. It was a difficult task - ensuring an artistic product on time, on budget and building it on site. Besides building the project by hand, the students had to entertain the visitors and in the end, remove everything without remains. The island again made this more difficult than at another location. Finding the right way of doing all these things was the most important result of the project. The build project itself must be considered under these circumstances, but nevertheless deserves to be shown.
In late April 2011 our first master students visited Terschelling and spread out to investigate and analyse a range of previously selected locations with different landscape characteristics. The finally selected location was the North Sea beach, which attracted most of the students. Several ideas for different teams finally melted together in the catchy concept of a 'Landscape Mirror'.

The 10-day installation consisted of a giant walk-through a cross section of the island, from our site at Formerum of 50 x 300 meters. It represented a section from the North Sea to the Wadden Sea in roughly 1:10 scale, cutting through different landscape typologies of the island from North to South: the beach, the dunes, the forest, the city and the polder. The section was ‘mirrored’ across the dune ridge, hence the title, 'Landscape Mirror'.

A camera obscura, situated on top of the dune, gave the opportunity to look at the real as well as the mirrored landscape. Visitors first experienced the landscape through the eye of the camera before walking into the installation. Besides experiencing the spatial qualities of the island in the installation, the public could influence the space itself by making additions to the forest and preventing the city from flooding by improvement of the polder dikes.

The mirror made the visitors of Oerol aware of the development of the island over time, both natural and manmade. During the festival the students, along with the audience, worked on the abstraction of the island by using simple materials. Everyday something happened so that the work in progress had to adapt to its new context.

Students formulated the following description: ‘With Oerol as our stage, the beach and tides as our canvas, and the audience as our performance, we seek to identify and highlight the unique features that compose the spatiality of the island of Terschelling. We take as our inspiration the patterns that have been inscribed over and compose the landscape, which is formed by polder, town, forest and dune.’

On one of the first mornings, while the first outline of the 3 zones (polder, city and forest) became visible, a storm surge blew the tide unexpectedly one meter higher than normal. Nobody had foreseen that the tide would cover half of our design, breach our under-scaled 'dike', flood our 'town,' and reach far across the 'forest'. In a 2 hour emergency exercise with 'all hands on deck,' we had to collect all left-overs of our building equipment and materials, so that the tide would not take them off our site. By chance and through ignorance the power of nature had provided us with probably the best exercise of risk management in planning and gave us new inspiration.

Conclusions for a second edition

After our first Oerol experience the student's had enthusiastic replies. Besides being very grateful for the learning experience and rightfully proud of the collective performance, they enjoyed very much the artistic atmosphere at Terschelling. The situation demanded a huge effort from every participant, particularly with the inclement weather, narrow timeframe, and harsh logistical conditions making things even trickier. The general feeling of the students can be best described as content but exhausted. Luckily after Oerol the summer holiday started.

Although audience reactions where generally positive not all of the audience seemed to grasp the idea. The installation was mostly an architectural composition. Certainly "aha" moments like inside the camera obscura proved to be very valuable – and made us more aware of the need to be more explicit in the message we want to reveal.
Some important lessons could be learned for the next edition. Firstly the scale of the project had to be limited. What was set up as a landscape installation in 2011 became a garden in 2012, which gave a controllable framework to the project. Secondly the site was pre-selected together with the festival. After the beach experience, it was clear that a more urban setting would ease logistics on all levels. Thirdly, more study time and more budget had to be allocated - which was made possible through the success of the 'avant guard' (first shift of master students) and the growing mutual trust with sponsors.

Besides all these adjustments the main conclusion was that this fabulous experience needed to be repeated.

3 'Feed the Wind' 2012

The assignment for 2012 was to design a ‘Garden as a Staged Landscape’ out of easily movable materials - dead or alive. The site chosen was the front or backyard of the Nature Museum (Centrum voor Natuur en Landschap CNL) at West Terschelling, close to the harbour. One project out of 5 student projects was selected to be built; the other projects were exhibited in the foyer of the museum. The goal of the small-scale intervention was to provide a landscape experience that interconnects the different scales of the garden with the island of Terschelling and the whole Wadden Sea.

In a garden design, the artistic representation of landscape is expressed in an architectural composition that goes beyond the mere combination of the multiple aspects of technique, cultivation and nature. The garden was also used to connect the indoor museum to the outdoor festival. The museum itself - in competition with the festival - encounters even fewer visitors during the festival than throughout the year. With our project we wanted to build a connector between the natural science museum and the festival around it, for us so clearly a common subject: the landscape.

In the installation 'feed the wind,' visitors of the festival were made aware of the constantly changing character of the landscape on a small and therefore more visible scale. The students of the second year Oerol designed an interactive environmental installation.

The installation was to illustrate the force of the wind and its effects such as - in combination with water and sand - the formation of the unique Wadden Sea landscape. The project made visitors aware of these forces, which make Terschelling a shifting territory, and - geologically speaking - a fugitive moment of sedimentation. The wind created the island, man colonised the island and turn it into a productive - and later recreational - landscape. Only through man's conservation and stabilisation of the land did it become possible to shape and fix the island.

The garden consisted of two parts. The first part sharpened awareness for the subject and the second involved visitors in simulating geological changes. They could create their own Wadden Sea island in a time lapse of 10-days.

In the first segment of the project the visitors were led by the sound of the wind through a maze. By closely listening to the sound, the visitor’s were getting more sensitive to the wind. In the second segment of the project the visitors created through their movement a passageway of crossing bridges. Coming out of the maze they had to pass across a large pond to get to the museum. Our installation on this passage was such that visitors were generating wind themselves while walking across the water, which was in turn blowing sand into the pond. The visitors become actively immersed in the formative process. Their wind created islands.
An initial image, "Leaving Footprints in the Sand," which became a relief after erosion, was utilized. Moving elements were constructed along the route. By stepping on embedded foot pumps, wind was made, which blew the sand in certain directions. With pamphlets visitors were invited to bring sand from across the island. The sand was blown away from funnels in the passageway into a shallow water basin.

The passageway consisted of straight bridges and triangular pillars where sand was dispersed. The bridges were fixed on only one side, and with the pumps acting as a spring on the other, visitors walking across the pond would produce wind. One of the bridges was even working as a seesaw - blowing away sand on both sides and especially attractive to children of all ages. Everyone understood that they created islands by the movement. The process was recorded throughout the week with a time-lapse camera. The growth of the island was exhibited at the exit of the garden.

The whole installation let to the inside of the museum, where the natural processes were explained and exhibited. In this way a playful link to the scientific explanation of coastal land forming was made. The museum was so happy with the design that they considered hiring the students to design a permanent educational water playground on a site close-by.

Conclusions from Gardening on Islands

The 2012 project was luckily much easier to realise, thanks to more funding but mostly because of its manageable size and logistical advantages. The students also had more time to prepare and build the project, and also had better tools than the previous year.

The design and installation of the project was quite unusual. The whole thing was an original mixture of installation and playground. The design was at the same time abstract and interactive. The relation with the audience was clearer - the garden was not too simplistic nor too didactic – which resulted in a clearer exhibit. This was confirmed through the nodding and smiling of those who were familiar with the formative forces of the Wadden Sea Islands. Others were surprised and experienced something they had never before, or only vaguely heard of.

The actual exhibition was more of a 'happening': the main attraction was a process that was generated through interaction with the audience. The actual performing of landscape exposed all visitors - in a participatory public manner – to the creation of a new landscape together. They where enjoying the making of an island landscape, and watching others doing so.

4 General Conclusions for Landscape Architecture Education

As mentioned, the focus of the course lies on making landscapes - and obviously there are many ways to do so - and many more to be explored by our students. With this landscaping exercise our students are forced to bring their ideas out in a short time into real life. The work 'out of the studio' has some consequences as opposed to 'traditional' studio work. The first consequence is that students become more aware of many aspects of their design work like scale, feasibility, effectiveness and understanding for the audience, all in teams with individuals from various backgrounds. Even more important than the informative forces of internal processes is the feedback - through communication with the audience. And last but not least the university takes a certain responsibility in communicating the science and art of Landscape Architecture.
It is certain that the experience with audience interaction in 2011 - unusual for all including the tutors - is something that enhanced the 2012 project vis-à-vis the first one. A very relevant message of both exercises to any future landscape designer is the fact that the final result of a landscape intervention is not determined by the design, but it is truly only with Nature that we can design landscapes - as put so clearly by Ian McHarg (1969). This message is certainly much more impressive if felt interactively than if only explained as a line of academic thought.

In Landscape Architecture, education on building 'something' is rarer than for example in Architecture (not to speak of Industrial Design) presumably because the scale is an issue.

The collaborative building outdoors and the experience of live interaction with visitors made both projects a totally new experience for our students. Many unforeseen problems have to be dealt with directly on site. Instead of theoretical future scenarios on a drawing table the design solutions here imperatively had to be realistic, quick and easy. In the protected realm of the University there is an artificial split between design process and actual building – it is always a simulation of reality. Real sites, real audiences, real landscapes are always different, unpredictable and unexpected. The adaptation of both student and teacher to changing challenges provides an irreplaceable learning experience.

5 Encouragement: Immerse into Similar Experiences

The challenge in this project for us teachers was to find the balance between academic education and the artistic and productive reality of the Festival. The projects had to serve the academic peers and the audience. Both worlds have their very own dynamics and it is certainly interesting and demanding to manoeuvre with a group of students between these, in order to satisfy the very different modes and habits of assessment.

We all know that it is important to make mistakes to learn. Sometimes the mistakes came from this tension of serving a whole set of agendas - not a bad exercise for the tensions to be encountered in public space by our future Landscape Architects.

The disadvantage of our students not (yet) being professionals - but being in competition with professionals - could also be seen as an enormous advantage: students are suddenly taken seriously by a demanding audience other than their usual peers of teachers and colleagues. The experience could help to understand how the students will act later as professional designers. Building for real, finishing in the night before the opening is definitely more intense than any role-play or planning game in University.

In introducing our students to their task, artistic director of Oerol Kees Lesuis quoted Arnold Berleant by saying 'Participatory landscape offers spectators a space which they may penetrate and become engaged in, to the point of no longer being able to dissociate or distance themselves from it.' We would like to add that this can also be true for designers and even their tutors. The notion of full engagement can - under these circumstances - also be extended to participatory learning. This kind of immersive design experience proved very precious to all participants.

The Delft Chair of Landscape Architecture are happy to continue this experience into the next year if funding and artistic programming of the festival will allow it. It is certainly gratifying for design teachers to be responded to with such enthusiasm.

But also in academic terms we strongly believe in the project as an outstanding element of our curriculum and hope to build up our knowledge through exchange of ideas with colleagues in practice and education and encourage others for similar adventures.
References


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"Feed the wind" was designed and built in May & June 2012 at CNL West-Terschelling after a concept of Nikolaos Margaritis & Lisanne van Niekerk with Marc Souverein, Beatrice Reinbacher, Michiel van der Drift, Roel Muselaers & Anna Ioannidou more alternative designs where exhibited as proposed in Mai by Heather Chapman, Marij Hoogland, Mariska van Rijswijk & Arjan L. de Vries, Lin Wei, Kath Kok (all projects see: Jauslin 2012 and Margaritis 2012)

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