



IRVING NORMAN (1906-1989)**The Human Condition****NORMAN004**

Signed verso, "The Human Condition I. Norman"

oil on canvas

120 x 182 in. (187 x 122 1/2 x 1 1/2 in.)

1980-1981

32204

PROVENANCE:

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento

EXHIBITION:

1986 Alternative Museum, New York

2002 Santa Monica College

2006 Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento

2007 Pasadena Museum of California Art

2007 Utah State Univ. Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art

2007 American University Katzen Museum, Washington, D.C.

LITERATURE:

Dark Metropolis: Irving Norman's Social Surrealism, ed. Scott A. Shields and Ray Day (Sacramento and Berkeley: The Crocker Art Museum and Heyday Books, 2006), pg. 199

Irving Norman's masterpiece, "The Human Condition," from 1980, draws upon the artist's lifetime of acquired experiences and knowledge. Surviving as a volunteer fighter during the Spanish Civil War, the artist returned to the United States after the loyalist defeat. Upon his return, fervent studio practice in Half Moon Bay, California, would become his life's devotion.

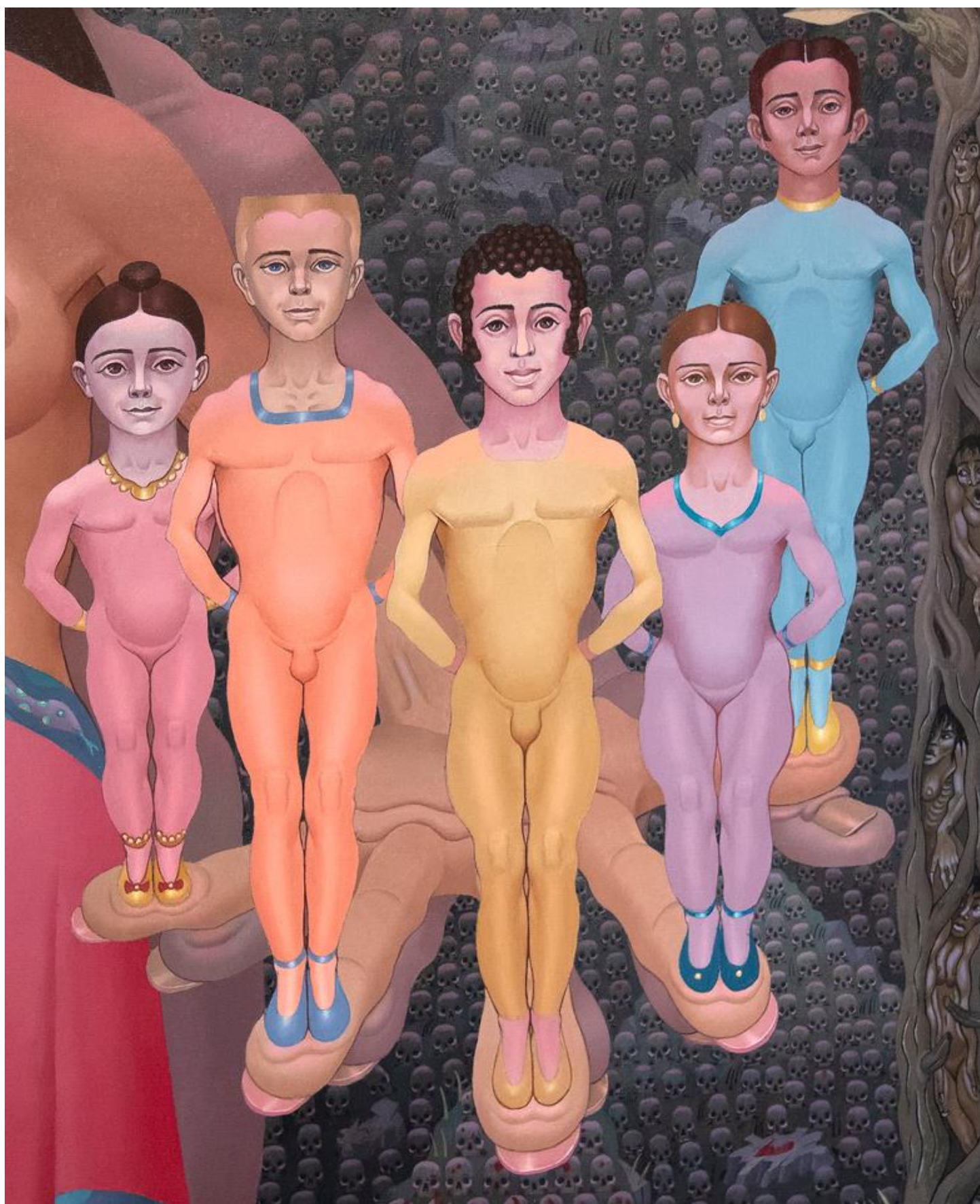
The present work, a nearly 16-foot-wide triptych, is reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch's triptych, "The Garden of Earthly Delights," c. 1510. The dystopian vision portrayed in "The Human Condition" is a warning - a lesson from the European dictatorships Norman experienced firsthand during the 1930s. Disturbing tableaux show the darkness of humanity and the evil that can rise to prominence when humanity is at its worst. There is hope, however, in the experience of the viewer: Norman thought of his audience as the greatest hope for humankind.

The Lithuanian-American artist Irving Norman was a social surrealist who painted large-scale and highly detailed critiques of contemporary life with hopes that viewers would consider the consequences of their actions and change their behavior. Influenced by the dire conditions of the Great Depression, his massive canvases feature armies of clone-like figures behaving in the clockwork manner in which they have been programmed. He moved from New York to Los Angeles in 1934 before helping to defend the Spanish Republic from the fascist Franco dictatorship. He survived the Spanish Civil War and in 1939 settling on Catalina Island off the Southern California coast, where he began drawing and painting from the atrocities he had witnessed. In 1940, he moved to San Francisco and had a solo exhibition at the San Francisco

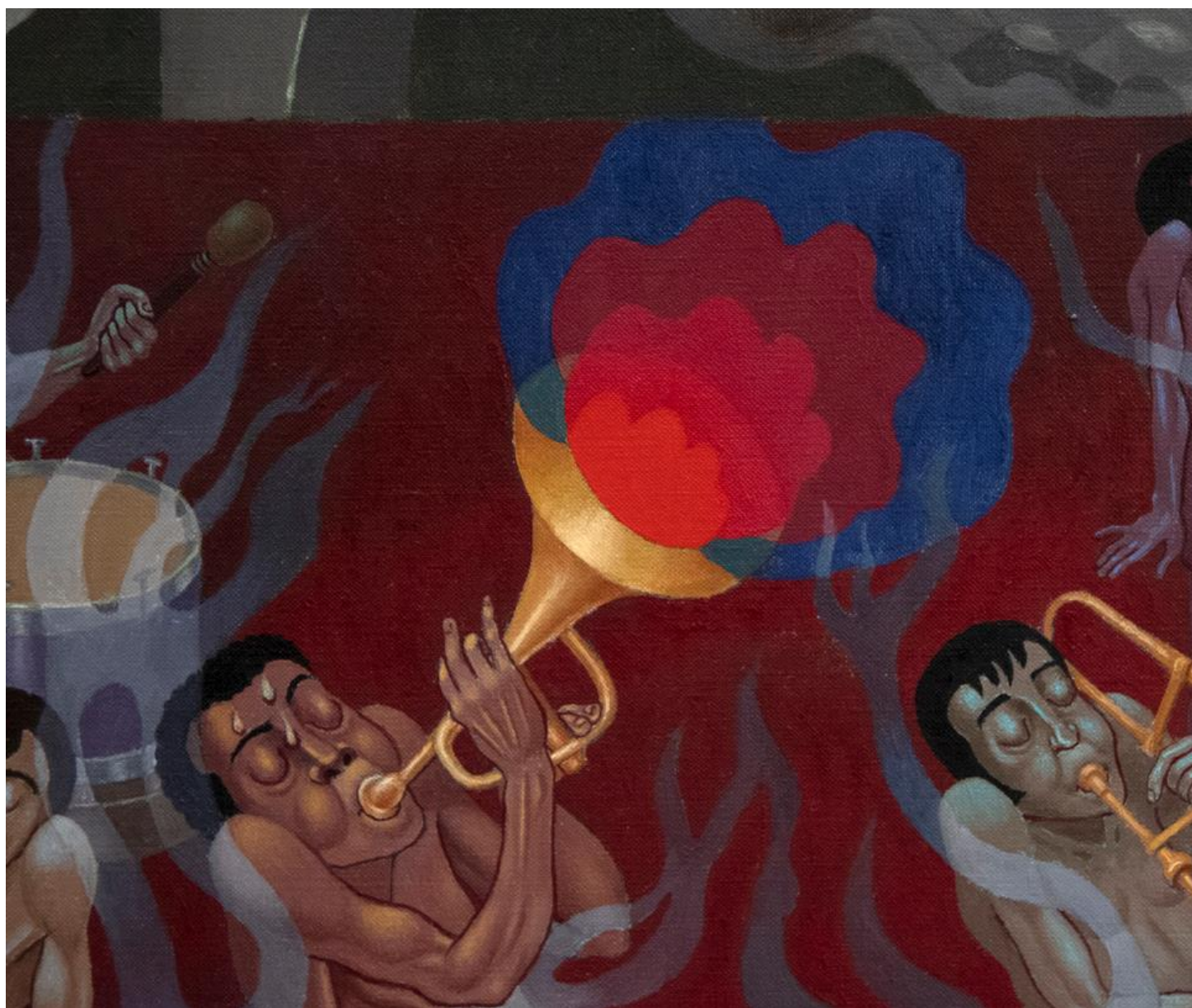
Museum of Art two years later. He then traveled to Mexico City and saw the murals of Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros before moving to New York City to studying at the Art Students League from 1946 to 1947. He returned to San Francisco in the late 1940s. In 1988, fire destroyed his home, studio, artwork, and personal papers.

The information and material herein represents Gallery's best efforts and understanding of the current history and scholarship with respect to the provenance of the Work(s) of Art described and is not part of any warranty.

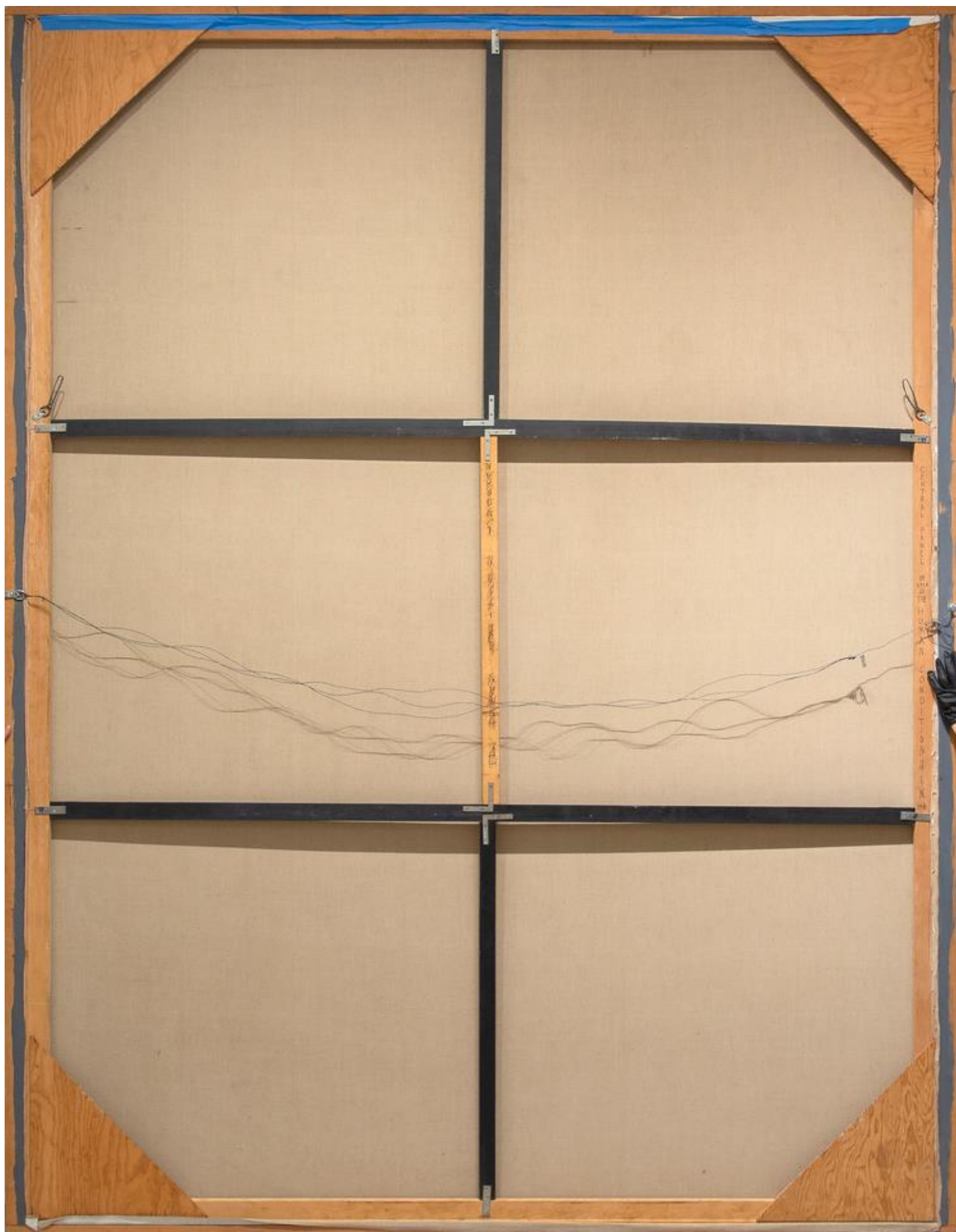












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