

OUR 
ARTS
PLAN

2023 ————— 2027



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
SINGAPORE

OUR SG ARTS PLAN (2023 - 2027)

A Creative City That Inspires

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MESSAGE AND FOREWORD



Visitors viewing the projections on the façade of The Arts House during *Light to Night 2023: Here and Now*, presented by National Gallery Singapore as part of Singapore Art Week 2023.

The arts foster creativity, inculcate a sense of belonging, bond people together and distinguish Singapore globally.

Message

When it comes to the arts, our generation stands on the shoulders of those who have come before us. The arts in Singapore today are more established and confident compared to the early years of our nation. We have a good mix of arts professionals – established and respected practitioners, as well as a new generation of creatives, making work and experimenting in various artforms, pushing boundaries, taking on new ideas from overseas then blending it with what we have here, and inventing new forms which are distinctively and uniquely our own.

Our arts and artists are essential to Singapore. In line with the ongoing Forward Singapore exercise, *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)* is the National Arts Council (NAC)'s sectoral roadmap to chart the path forward.

First, the arts have an important role in forging a connected society. Our social fabric is changing – the aspirations of our youth may differ from that of older generations, and our societal expectations and norms are constantly being re-evaluated. The arts can be an effective way for society to reflect on and have conversations about these changes, which can contribute to our sense of belonging and well-being. The arts have the power to unite our communities and anchor us to our core Singaporean identity.

Next, we have always been a distinctive city at the crossroads of the East and the West. The arts play a vital role in enhancing the dynamism and vibrancy of day-to-day life in Singapore, so that we can be a more endearing home for Singaporeans and an attractive destination for visitors. Through a greater infusion of the arts in our daily life, *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)* will help us realise our ambition for a more liveable and thriving city.

Finally, through *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)*, we want to unlock Singapore's creative economy and create good jobs. Beyond technology and digitalisation, the sustainability of our arts sector has to be powered by artistic talent, excellence and innovation. We will continue to encourage collaboration within the arts sector and with adjacent industries, so that the flow of ideas and talent can uplift our creative economy as a whole. We hope that the arts can continue to flourish with new ideas, themes and aesthetic forms, and that these works can collectively inspire and enrich us as a society.

Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027) is more than a policy blueprint for what we hope to achieve. It is a statement of belief in the power of the arts to foster creativity, inculcate a sense of belonging, bond people together and distinguish Singapore globally. It also conveys our people-centric focus: whether you are an artist, the audience, a corporate partner, educator, philanthropist, policymaker, volunteer or an arts lover, we are all vital parts of a robust ecosystem.

Building on the consultative approach that NAC has taken to develop the plan, we now call on all stakeholders to participate in the creation of a dynamic and flourishing arts scene. Together, I am confident that we can leverage the power of the arts to create a connected society, make a distinctive city we are proud to call our home and fulfil the diverse aspirations of Singaporeans.



Edwin Tong
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth &
Second Minister for Law

Presented in 2020, *District 14:7 Kali Bah* is a dance film by P7:1SMA inspired by the stories, anecdotes and memories of the Geylang Serai community.



At the heart of *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)* is the people.

Foreword

At the heart of *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)* is the people. The process of creating this plan reflects the focus on inclusivity. The plan is the result of over a year of conversations with more than 16,500 stakeholders from the arts and culture sector, partners in the public and private sectors, as well as members of the public. We consulted artists, leaders of cultural organisations, public and private sector partners, seeking to understand their aspirations for arts development in Singapore, and their views on how the arts could play a part in the society, economy and our everyday lives.

A number of important questions arose from these conversations: What must we do to sustain the arts ecosystem and nurture artistic excellence? How can technology better support artists and spur new business models? With whom can we work with to broaden reach to diverse audiences, sustain appreciation, and increase access to the arts regardless of background and abilities? How do we pave new pathways to encourage more people to pursue a career in the arts and adjacent sectors? In today's increasingly polarised environment, how do we draw on the arts to express ourselves, carve supportive spaces for conversations and strengthen bonds among people?

The first step in the development of the arts plan involved exploring possible responses to these questions. We believe that the time and effort we invested to gather different perspectives helped to create a solid arts plan that is well-poised to deliver an exciting arts agenda for the next five years.

Our SG Arts Plan (2018 - 2022) focused on supporting the integral role of the arts to inspire our people, connect our communities and position Singapore on a global front. Some of these initiatives have already begun to bear fruit and helped the sector to gain some ground against external pressures such as economic uncertainties, rapid technological advancements and the wave of changes in the way we live and work post-pandemic. Other initiatives advanced the good work done by past cultural policies and strategies.



Goh Swee Chen
Chairman,
National Arts Council



Low Eng Teong
Chief Executive Officer,
National Arts Council



Drawing on the work done in the past five years and the feedback from the engagement sessions, *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)* will be built on the following three ambitions:

1. A Connected Society:

We want to build a tight-knit Singapore community anchored by our shared arts and culture. This will be achieved by embedding arts in key life areas such as education, leisure and well-being across ages. For example, we aim to deepen engagements with schools so that more students can experience our art galleries and performances from an early age. We also hope to spur more giving to the arts from private donors and corporations.

2. A Distinctive City:

We envision Singapore as a creative city filled with vibrant spaces for and inspired by the arts. To enable creativity to flourish across different points in the city, we will ramp up our efforts to work with other government agencies and industry partners to unlock physical and virtual spaces to support arts creation and presentation, and connect with audiences.

3. A Creative Economy:

We will focus on helping our artistic talent develop capabilities to drive excellence and innovation, as well as work on providing pathways for career progression, skills development and acquisition, and career mobility. We will also explore new business models to increase employment opportunities, monetise creative assets and grow international demand.

The efforts under this plan will be underpinned by the use of data and insights, technology and innovation, and driven by forging strategic partnerships to expand the playing field for the arts.

Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027) seeks to address pressing challenges, pave the way for professionals to build a viable career in the arts and enable audiences to enjoy and be inspired by the arts. We see this masterplan as a living cultural policy document, evolving as the needs of the arts community change, as new partners in the public and private sectors come onboard, and as we learn novel ways to engage audiences.

The arts are an essential part of human experience. They convey our story, what we stand for and our hopes for the future. Collective effort and support will bring about new peaks in creativity, excellence and dynamism in the arts, making Singapore a creative city that inspires both citizens and visitors alike.

Singapore Multi-Ethnic Dance Ensemble, a multicultural dance troupe formed by Sri Warisan Dance Ensemble Singapore and Jigri Yaar Bhangra, represented Singapore at the 2021 VIVA ASEAN for ASEAN Member States.

Credit: Sri Warisan – Som Said Performing Arts Limited

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Arts Practitioner Liew Jia Yi at the programme *I Pinky Promise You, Okay?* at the Canadian International School that took place during Words Go Round 2022, a school outreach programme that began in 2011 as part of the Singapore Writers Festival.

Credit: Singapore Book Council

Our Vision

A Creative City That Inspires

The arts play a vital role in defining what makes us Singaporean, contributing to a rich and unique national identity. Whether it is through music, dance, theatre, writing or painting, the arts have the power to connect us to our diverse cultural heritage and foster shared experiences. The arts have also transformed the places where we live, work and play. From street murals to art museums and centres, the arts imbue character into our cityscape that reflects our distinctive multi-cultural identity.

A vibrant and thriving arts industry complements the power of the arts to connect people and enliven spaces. It also provides good careers and helps develop Singapore into a distinctive city and cultural hub. Going forward, we will tap on the vast potential of the greater creative economy to build a sustainable arts ecosystem. Besides building the capabilities of arts professionals, we will connect the arts industry to adjacent industries to unlock new markets and new ways of working.

Since its formation in 1991, the role of NAC has been to champion the arts. In the subsequent two decades, we responded to the challenges of the times with the Renaissance City Reports (2000, 2004, 2008). The Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) set out long-term directions for 2010 to 2025. Guided by the ACSR, *Our SG Arts Plan (2018 - 2022)* charted the strategic priorities of the last five years.

Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027) builds on the gains from the previous arts plan.¹ It draws on valuable inputs gathered from more than 16,500 stakeholders from within and outside the arts. The key priorities in the plan are shaped by data and insights gleaned from our research, as well as studies of future and technological trends that are likely to affect the arts and culture sector in the coming years. NAC envisions the plan as a framework that will guide how we work with the rest of the arts sector over the next five years. While some projects and plans are already in development, we will continue to work hand in hand with the arts community to flesh out the vision laid out here.

¹ For more details of the impact of *Our SG Arts Plan (2018 - 2022)*, refer to the Appendix.

National Gallery Singapore presented *Light to Night 2023: Here and Now*, a marquee event of Singapore Art Week. Light to Night showcased new art installations and light projections crafted by both local and international artists.



Our SG Arts Plan: The Next Lap

Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027) is a strategic roadmap guiding Singapore's arts and culture policies over the next five years. It brings together the collective efforts of the public, private and people (3P) sectors to respond to the opportunities and challenges in a changing world.

Guests admiring artworks by residents of Telok Blangah as part of a co-creation project titled *Better 2gather at Growing Home: A Showcase about The Arts Plan and You* at The Arts House in January 2023. The showcase was part of the public engagement efforts in preparation for *Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027)*.

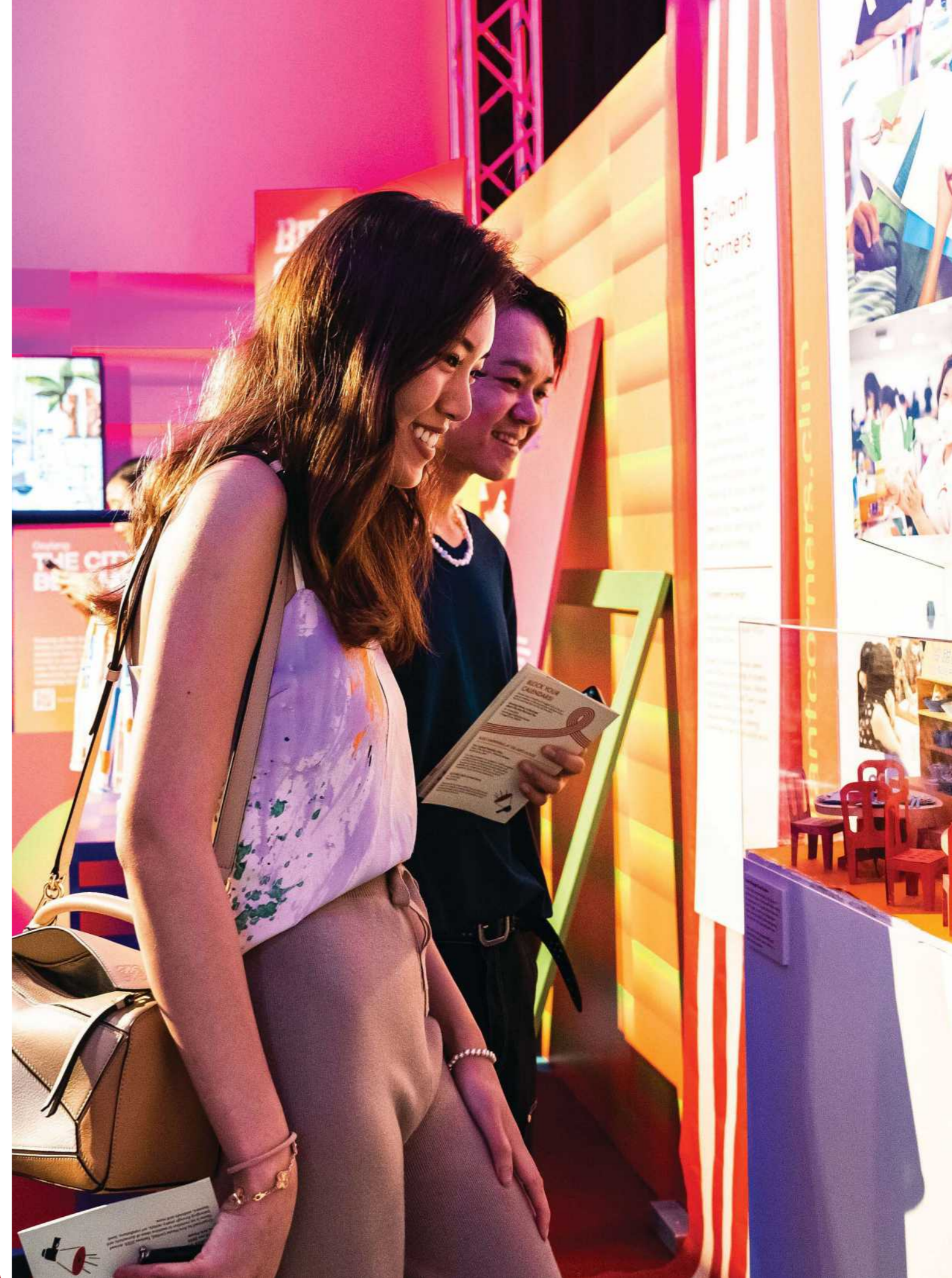
Credit: Island Boys

Key shifts in our arts strategy

1. Adopting an **ecosystem approach** to industry development to ensure the arts sector remains sustainable for the future. This includes **forging partnerships** with stakeholders in and beyond the arts to build a thriving arts ecosystem.
2. Placing **greater focus on audience needs** so that audiences are central in all that we do. This involves growing appreciation for, participation in, and consumption of the arts at every life stage.
3. Investing in **technology and innovation** to lock in the gains made during the pandemic. We will support artists and arts organisations in digitalisation and new ways of audience engagement.

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Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027) will be built on the following three strategic thrusts, each driven by key priorities to deliver on our objectives.



Produced by System Sovereign under the Brilliant Corners initiative, *POTLUCK Zine* was a community arts exhibition that presented artworks co-created by Toa Payoh East residents, in collaboration with artists BAKED, Stacy Tan, Cherry Chan, Djuan Chng, Kiat and Stephanie Peh.

A Connected Society

where our national identity is anchored on our shared arts and culture.

Key Priorities

- + **Sustain Audiences through Life**
Embed arts experiences in key life areas such as education, leisure and well-being across all ages.
- + **Strengthen Communities through Shared Experiences**
Expand arts touchpoints for audiences through strategic partnerships and programmes to grow strong ties within and across diverse communities.
- + **Drive Advocacy to Grow Support**
Foster an appreciation for the social impact of the arts across the 3P sectors, and encourage contributions to the arts from a diversified and growing pool of patrons.



Led by multidisciplinary studio System Sovereign, residents from Toa Payoh East bonded as they shared personal stories, picked up skills in photography, writing and printmaking and worked together to create an e-zine and put up an exhibition of their works at the void deck, inspired by their conversations on hornbill sightings in the neighbourhood.

A Distinctive City

where spaces are invigorated by the arts and contribute to making Singapore an endearing home and attractive destination.

Key Priorities

- + **Diversify and Unlock Spaces**
Increase and deepen access to affordable public and private spaces, integrating the arts in more spaces where people live, work and play across Singapore.
- + **Activate Places and Precincts**
Work with the public and private sectors to co-create innovative and unique arts places and precincts for artists, as well as local and global audiences.
- + **Infuse Arts Everywhere**
Create an immersive and creative city filled with the arts in real life, in augmented reality and in the metaverse.



Audiences young and old enjoying a performance by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra at the Botanic Garden's Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage, as part of the Arts@SBG NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Gardens series.

Credit: Singapore Chinese Orchestra

A Creative Economy

where our arts sector is powered by artistic talent, excellence and innovation, as well as close collaborations with the larger creative industry.

Key Priorities

- + **Forge New Ways of Doing Business**
Increase visibility and potential for the arts and adjacent industries to create more employment opportunities.
- + **Grow Artistic Excellence**
Build capabilities and development pathways for sustainable careers in the arts.
- + **Expand Internationalisation Opportunities**
Develop a globally connected arts sector and establish Singapore's reputation as a creative centre, so as to grow international demand and markets for local arts.



Installation view of the return exhibition of *Pulp III: A Short Biography of the Banished Book* by Shubigi Rao and curated by Ute Meta Bauer, commissioned by NAC and first presented at the Singapore Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

Credit: Alessandro Brasile

Our SG Arts Plan (2023 - 2027) will be supported by the following enablers:

+ Partnerships

NAC aims to forge new partnerships with organisations from the business, social and community sectors from both arts and non-arts stakeholders, to gain diverse perspectives and strategies to help the arts scene thrive. We will step up on partnerships with targeted international partners to strengthen capabilities in the areas of art-making, arts and technology, and research.

+ Technology and Innovation

NAC will continue to support the exploration and adoption of technology, enable new opportunities to be harnessed, and encourage continuous innovation, learning and collaboration between the arts and technology sectors. We will also support the arts sector as it develops its technology infrastructure industry-wide.

+ Data and Insights

Data and empirical evidence will provide critical insights for the arts and help us understand audience preferences. This understanding will allow us to better cater to different audience segments and co-create artworks with audiences in Singapore and beyond.

Each of these strategic thrusts and initiatives are explained further in subsequent sections, including the desired outcomes that we seek to pursue to achieve a sustainable arts industry.

Our Next Steps

NAC remains committed to working with stakeholders and partners from the 3P sectors to co-deliver the plan over the next five years. We believe that each of us can play a part in building an inclusive, diverse and vibrant arts scene that is beloved at home and admired globally. Together, we can realise our vision for Singapore as a creative city that inspires.

Guests experiencing 360° illustrations as part of *Sorta Scary Singapore Stories* by Tusitala at *Growing Home: A Showcase about The Arts Plan and You* at The Arts House in January 2023.

Credit: Island Boys





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