



*THE* CAMPAIGN FOR *TOMORROW'S*  
FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM



## Mission Statement

The Florence Griswold Museum fosters the understanding of American art, with emphasis on the art, history, and landscape of Connecticut.

1899

Lyme Art Colony  
founded

1936

Florence Griswold  
Association is formed

1947

Museum opens

1993

Florence Griswold Museum  
designated a National  
Historic Landmark



## The Florence Griswold Museum

# Then, Now, Next

The Florence Griswold Museum has a **storied history**: home to the Lyme Art Colony whose artists left their mark on the very walls that surrounded them. We have a **singular sense of place**: 12 acres along the Lieutenant River where visitors can experience the interplay of light on the water and marsh just as the Colony artists did over 100 years ago. We have a **remarkable collection**: works by the original Colony artists, the 190 works that comprise the Hartford Steam Boiler Collection, and new acquisitions that enhance our understanding of three centuries of American art. And we have the people: **dedicated, intelligent staff and volunteers** with the imagination and vision to transform the Museum's resources into immersive, compelling experiences.

While our vision and collection have grown over the past two decades, our facilities and resources have not. Wherever you look, our galleries, Café Flo, collections storage, or education programs, we are bursting at the seams. Our walls are limiting our ability to create an unparalleled visitor experience.

**That's all about to change.**

**“So, you see, at first the artists adopted Lyme, then Lyme adopted the artists, and now, today, Lyme and art are synonymous.”**

**Florence Griswold**

**1999**

Hartman Education Center opens

**2002**

Kriebler Gallery opens

**2009**

Rafal Landscape Center opens

**2019**

Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail opens

# Ever Evolving: the Florence Griswold Museum's Permanent Collection

The Florence Griswold Museum's genesis and for that matter, our evolution, are unlike those of other museums. You might say we are in a constant state of becoming: Florence Griswold's house becoming home to the Lyme Art Colony; artists from the Colony becoming the Lyme Art Association; Florence's friends and family, together with townspeople, becoming the Florence Griswold Association; and that Association becoming one with the Lyme Historical Society. Every step along the way we were *becoming* the museum we are now, just as we are in the process of becoming tomorrow's museum with every step we take today.

As the Museum has evolved, so has our permanent collection. We began with works created by American Tonalists and Impressionists who had painted on the grounds of Miss Florence's house at the turn of the 20th century. Over the next one hundred years, artists' families, along with Museum patrons and staff cultivated a collection of these works and poised the Museum for growth. We collected intentionally, securing works like Thomas Nason's wood engravings and studio contents, along with the largest museum collection of natural specimens and artwork by Willard Metcalf. In so doing, we expanded the stories we could share about American art.

For most of our history, that expansion came slowly, one piece at a time, or through the acquisition of a handful of works together. Then, in 2001, the Hartford Steam Boiler (HSB) Inspection and Insurance Company gifted the Museum their entire 190 piece art collection. These works instantly broadened the Museum's scope, both geographically and chronologically, to include artists working in every corner of Connecticut from the 18th to the mid-20th century. "It was a transformational moment," says Florence Griswold Museum Curator Amy Kurtz Lansing. While the landscape was the preferred subject of most Lyme Colony artists, HSB brought to the institution a variety of canonical American portraits, still lifes, figurative compositions, narrative scenes, and landscapes painted by Connecticut artists working in other locations, as well as sculpture.



Frederic E. Church, *The Charter Oak at Hartford*, ca. 1846. Oil on canvas. Gift of The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company

“The HSB gift was both a sign of our growth up to that point and a catalyst that encouraged the Museum to evolve, to become something different than it had been,” explains Amy. With the opening of the Robert and Nancy Kriebel Gallery in 2002 came new opportunities both to showcase this gift alongside other works from our permanent collection and to welcome traveling exhibitions.

And we continued to collect. Four pastels attributed to James Martin depicting members of the Noyes family, ca. 1798, provided a glimpse of the artists who passed through Old Lyme long before the colony, and of the family and commercial networks that gave the town its identity. New attention was applied to women artists: Cecilia Beaux’s portrait of Ethel Saltus Ludington; Robert W. Vonnoh’s portrait of Bessie Potter Vonnoh; and a portfolio of works on paper by Fidelia Bridges received in 2003 that laid the groundwork for scholarship on the still life and landscape painter. Building upon these strengths, we added key works by some of the colony’s best-known practitioners, including Willard Metcalf’s *Kalmia*, 1905, rediscovered in a private collection after being hidden from view for decades. And we welcomed home Childe Hassam’s *Apple Trees in Bloom, Old Lyme*, painted on the Griswold estate in an homage to the artist’s favorite studio. To broaden the collection further and represent the 20<sup>th</sup> century more fully, we acquired examples by Martin Lewis and Paul Cadmus, along with abstract work by American Synchronist James Daugherty and sculptor Harry Holtzman.

The new gallery spaces can be the jumping-off point to attract new visitors . . .

Today, the arc of our permanent collection continues to inspire our collecting strategy. Newly acquired works like contemporary artist Mark Dion’s site-specific *New England Cabinet of Marine Debris* (Lyme Art Colony) open doors to conversations about connections between humans, art, and the environment as works by the Lyme Art Colony did over a century ago. Another recently acquired work, *Cotton Pickers* by New Haven artist Winfred Rembert, encourages exchanges about the African American artistic experience and race relations in Connecticut, especially when paired with still lifes by 19<sup>th</sup>-century painter Charles Ethan Porter. “We’ve grown our collection intentionally,” says Amy, “and we are excited to share these new stories.”

That’s just what *Inspiration Lives Here: The Campaign for Tomorrow’s Florence Griswold Museum* will make possible. With expanded gallery space and accessible collections storage, curators and scholars from around the world will be able to study the collection through new perspectives, pair works together in fresh ways, create dynamic exhibitions, and bring to life new stories.

“The new gallery spaces can be the jumping-off point to attract new visitors,” says Amy. At the same time, she explains, expanded gallery space will further cement the ties that bind our current supporters to the Museum by allowing us to permanently showcase collection favorites, from Frederic Church’s *The Charter Oak at Hartford* to Childe Hassam’s *Apple Trees in Bloom, Old Lyme*.

“The permanent collection is amazing,” explains Florence Griswold Museum Honorary Trustee Kathryn Parsons. “We need to show it and use it as an inspiring educational tool. It’s easy to look back here because of the site’s fascinating history. **It’s time to look forward.**”



Mark Dion, *New England Cabinet of Marine Debris* (Lyme Art Colony), 2019. Purchase

# Inspiration for Tomorrow's Museum

In June 2021 our Board of Trustees welcomed a strategic plan to guide the Florence Griswold Museum through 2026, and we are already making progress. Our goals include:

**Engaging a Wider Audience:** Continue the spirit of the Artists' Colony by further connecting our art, history, and landscape to create a more immersive experience for a wider audience.

**Celebrating Identity:** Expand the Museum's identity around our established mission of fostering the understanding of American art, with emphasis on the art, history, and landscape of Connecticut.

**Planning for the Future:** Provide for financial, physical, educational, and environmental stability to ensure the growth of the Museum for future generations.

**Embracing Friends & Neighbors:** Expand the Museum's ability to showcase our art, history, and landscape through increased collaboration with local, regional, national, and international museums and institutions.

**Perfecting the Museum Experience:** Enhance our onsite and virtual visitor interactions to create an exceptional visitor experience.

Today, we are thrilled to announce *Inspiration Lives Here: The Campaign for Tomorrow's Florence Griswold Museum* to provide the financial and physical resources we need to achieve these goals while elevating our outstanding collection, our 12-acre campus, and the work of our remarkable staff and volunteers to a national stage. With you as our partner, we will:

- Expand our efforts to foster an understanding of American art, with an emphasis on the art, history, and landscape of Connecticut, **by substantially increasing our gallery space;**
- Strengthen connections between our art, history, and landscape **by completing the Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail, expanding Café Flo, and improving our collections storage;**
- Provide resources to ensure the Florence Griswold Museum's growth and prosperity for years to come, and to support our expansion responsibly and sustainably, **by growing our endowment to \$30 million.**





## Today's Museum

The space to exhibit **either** objects from the permanent collection **or** special exhibitions

**2-3** temporary exhibits per year

Gallery space designed exclusively for two-dimensional art

Disjointed portions of the Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail on opposite sides of our site

A short summer season and limited seating at Café Flo

Collections are vulnerable to future sea-level rise and are difficult to access

An endowment that provides 30% of our operations per year

## Tomorrow's Museum

The space to exhibit the permanent collection **and** special exhibitions simultaneously

**4-6** temporary exhibits per year

Gallery space designed for two- and three-dimensional art, including large-scale sculpture

Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail loop and interpretation complete

Expansion of Café Flo seating and dining season

Collections are safely secured away from the floodplain and easily accessible for research

An endowment that supports the increased expenses associated with our growth

## A Message from Our Director

Our Museum family has built an astonishing institution and together, we are poised to grow even stronger. In our embrace of art, history, and nature, we offer a singular experience to the visitor strolling the grounds, the Member in the galleries, and the researcher in the archives.

### **Yet there is so much more we can do.**

From the expansion of our galleries, to the creation of new gathering spaces, to the completion of the Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail, the future of the Florence Griswold Museum is within reach and holds extraordinary promise:

To showcase our incredible permanent collection while exploring new themes;

To ensure we provide the highest quality of stewardship for our collections of art and archives;

To honor our natural environment and ecological history;

To offer all who walk through our doors a welcoming, accessible visitor experience of the highest caliber;

These goals comprise the future that this campaign makes possible.

With your investment in our campaign, you are an author of the next chapter of the Florence Griswold Museum.

**Art lives here. History lives here. Nature lives here.**

## Inspiration lives here.

Rebekah Beaulieu, Ph.D.  
Director





# One Museum, Many Voices: The Volunteers of the Florence Griswold Museum

Ask almost any volunteer to describe the Florence Griswold Museum, and they'll start with the same word. "We feel like we're part of a *family*," says Kathy Valliere, who began volunteering at the Museum after retiring as an elementary school teacher in 2005. "Everyone on the Museum staff is invested in you like you are invested in them," she says.

Fellow docent Anne Czepiel agrees. "Still to this day, my best friends are here," says Anne. "When I first started, the director, Jeff Anderson would come out every Friday and thank us," she explains. "That is still the way the Museum works. I get handwritten thank you notes. It's incredible how the volunteers are appreciated."



Anne Czepiel

Our collection is unique and world class. Our scale makes it accessible. Our programs bring history alive.

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Sally Lawrence,  
Board of Trustees

The Museum's commitment to embrace change and facilitate connections energizes docents. "What gets me excited is how the Museum moves forward, how they explore different directions in the galleries and then tie those exhibits to the Griswold House," says Kathy. Sue Aberbach, who started in the Garden Gang and later became a docent, echoes Kathy's sentiments. "Through the work of the professional staff and other volunteers, we are always learning about different connections between the Museum's collection and local history, art history, events in Connecticut, and contemporary artists," she explains. For long-time Member turned docent Nancy Mol, our curators' ability to create and present exhibitions, from *Revisiting America: The Prints of Currier and Ives* to the photography exhibit *Nothing More American: Immigration, Sanctuary, and Community*, that connect viewers to the past **and** the present is what gives the Florence Griswold Museum "a unique and authentic voice."



Nancy Mol

If there is one particular change docents are most excited about when it comes to *Inspiration Lives Here*, it's expanded gallery space. "We have this extraordinary collection, including the 190 works of art that are part of the HSB collection," says Anne. "People ask for them all the time." And just like family, our volunteers are ready to get to work to make the campaign and the Museum's future as bright as its past. "We will do whatever we can do to help them," says Kathy Valliere. "That's what we are here for."

Today, over 230 volunteers serve the Museum regularly, caring for our gardens as part of the Garden Gang, answering visitors' questions as docents, and leading tour groups through our exhibits.

# Priority 1

## Increase Gallery Space

Despite additions to our campus over the years, **far more of the Florence Griswold Museum's permanent collection is in storage than on exhibit, and we do not have the space to exhibit our permanent collection and traveling exhibitions at the same time.** As a result, pieces from our collection remain just out of reach. Visitors miss out on opportunities to engage with important works of American art, and we must pass on compelling exhibitions designed by our nation's most respected curators. We have run out of space to fulfill our mission.

Through *Inspiration Lives Here*, we will **substantially increase our gallery space.** Doing so will allow us to:

- Showcase our incredible permanent collection and compelling temporary exhibitions at the same time;
- Increase the number, size, and variety of temporary exhibits we can host each year;
- Develop exhibitions that include three-dimensional objects and sculptures.

With your investment in *Inspiration Lives Here*, we will illuminate the far greater story of American art, connect the Florence Griswold Museum's collection to the art that was created before and after it, and deepen our connection to visitors while growing and diversifying our audiences.

“The historic house provides access to a small selection of the permanent collection between its painted panels and galleries, but that’s just a drop in the bucket compared to what the Museum has to offer. The ability to have the permanent collection on exhibit, which is what the Museum is known for, to bring in new audiences—that would be transformational.”

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Jeff Cooley,  
Board of Trustees



# Priority 2

## Enhance Our Visitors' Experience

The Florence Griswold Museum's magic lies in the interplay between our art, history, and landscape. *Inspiration Lives Here* will enable us to amplify that synchronicity and create an even more immersive visitor experience by:

- Leveraging potential matching support from the Schumann Foundation **to finish the Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail**, where visitors interact with the same landscape that inspired the Colony's artists over 100 years ago. Today, 60 percent of the Trail has been completed. The finished Trail will encircle the entire campus in a single loop and include interpretive markers that connect our art, history, and landscape. As the weather and seasons change, so will the Trail, enticing visitors to return all year long.
- **Expanding Café Flo's season and capacity** both to encourage guests to lengthen their visits and to attract residents of our surrounding community more often. Café Flo embodies the congenial spirit that drew artists to Miss Florence's boardinghouse. It's where visitors and locals gather for respite and refreshment, an experience that solidifies their ties to each other and the Museum. Today, demand far exceeds capacity.
- **Improving collections storage** to eliminate major safety and security concerns caused by inadequate storage conditions and our location in a floodplain. New storage will also facilitate research by making our collection more accessible even when objects are not on display.

Making it easier for art historians, our curators, and our docents to conduct research reflects our commitment to growing our understanding of our remarkable collection. It strengthens our ties to American art and culture, past and present, and will allow us to share what we've learned with on-site and virtual visitors. Moreover, increasing our storage space is essential in order to grow and develop our collection.

Your gift to *Inspiration Lives Here* will enhance the experience of every visitor, whether they come to enjoy a walk on the Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail, a meal at Café Flo, or an exhibit inspired by new research on our collection. Each of these projects presents an avenue for new visitors to come to know the Museum, and each offers new opportunities for long-time visitors and members to experience the Museum more deeply and more regularly. Your gift is an investment that will allow us to inspire new visitors and old friends and make the Museum more sustainable over the long-term.





“When you are on the grounds or at Café Flo, you experience what the painters did. You can watch the light on the river, and as the clouds travel across the sun, you can see the shadows on the trees. You can see how the light changes everything. Your experience with art becomes visceral. This is what makes us unique.”

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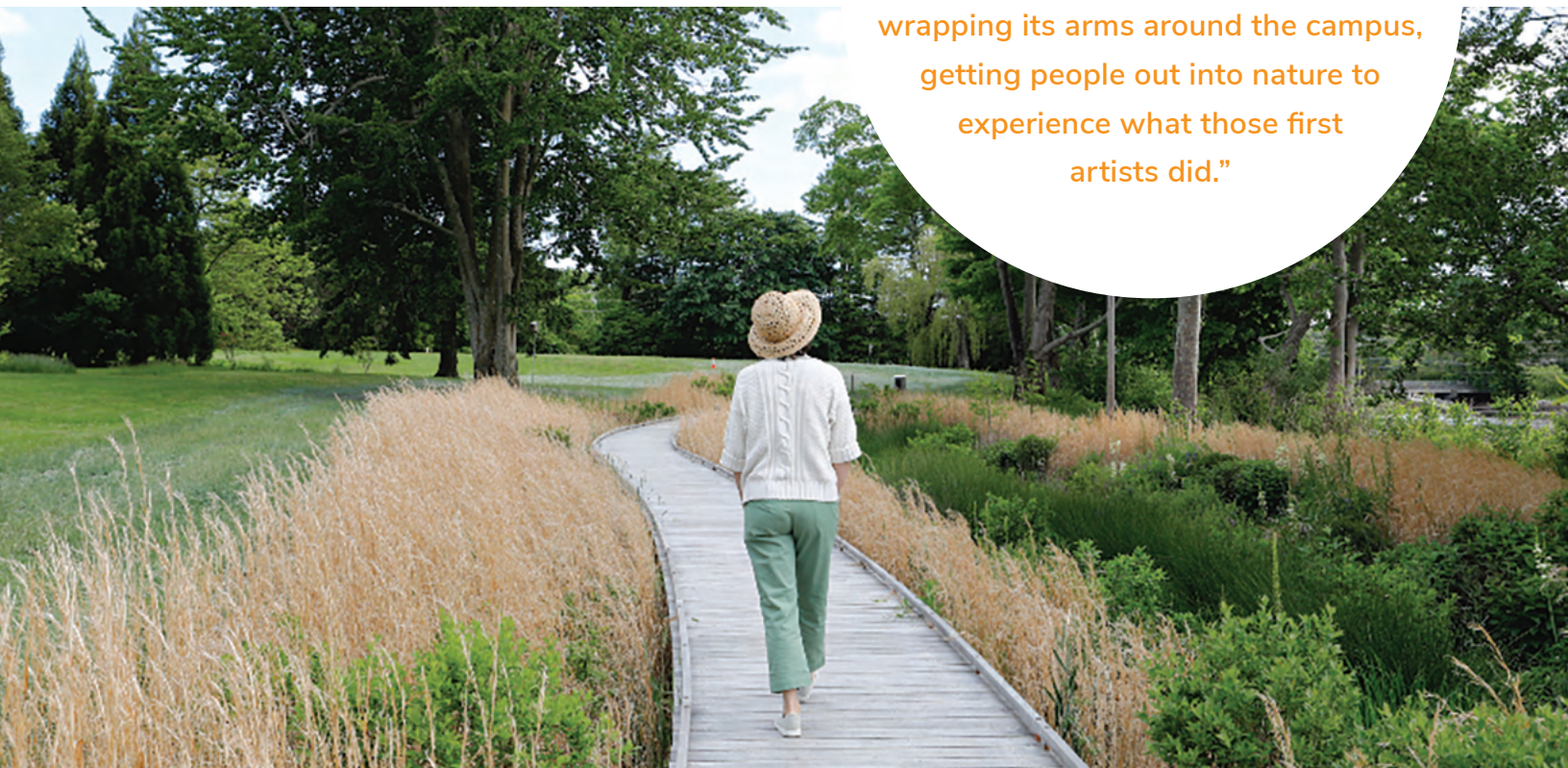
Deborah Moore,  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Nancy Mol,  
Docent and long-time Member

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“Part of our focus is the landscape. That’s what the Lyme Colony artists painted. When the Artists’ Trail is complete, it will serve as a big hug, wrapping its arms around the campus, getting people out into nature to experience what those first artists did.”



# Priority 3

## Provide Resources for Growth and Prosperity

Our collection, our endowment, our people, together they are the strong foundation that ensure the Florence Griswold Museum's success and sustainability long into the future. Through this campaign, we will strengthen our foundation by **growing the endowment to \$30 million** and:

- Support the increased annual operational expenses that come with expanding our campus;
- Reduce our exposure to risk during periods of economic uncertainty;
- Grant us the financial flexibility, and artistic freedom, to change, innovate, and pursue new opportunities when they arise.

Your gift to the endowment will provide the steady, dependable funding that will enable us to strive toward our vision today, achieve it tomorrow, and sustain the Florence Griswold Museum for decades to come. Moreover, with an investment policy designed to minimize risk, annual earnings drawn from the endowment will represent only a portion of the fund's projected growth year after year. **Under our stewardship, your gift will grow and thereby contribute more to the Florence Griswold Museum with every passing year.**

### When You Believe in the Museum: Deborah Moore



Deborah Moore, Chair of the Board of Trustees, first came to know the Florence Griswold Museum through her mother, Lorraine Lincoln Lieberman, who has served as a docent for over 20 years. "You might say she lured me in," says Deborah. With years of experience as the Executive Director of the Wadsworth Mansion in Middletown, CT, Deborah joined the Museum's Benefit Committee in 2008 and the Board a few years after that.

"What makes the Museum unique is that as you're listening to the story about the Lyme Impressionists you can go outside and experience what the painters experienced. You see the shadows from clouds dance across the marsh and the hillside. You see the play of light and shadow," says Deborah. "That is Impressionism. The experience here is visceral: between the visitor and the painting, or between the visitor and the landscape or the history."

## Becoming Tomorrow's Museum

From our humble beginnings as a house museum on a single acre to our present-day operations across a 12-acre site, the Florence Griswold Museum has come so far. But we no longer have the space or capacity to expand—to showcase our remarkable permanent collection alongside the best traveling exhibitions, to reinvigorate our current audiences and grow new ones.

Through *Inspiration Lives Here: The Campaign for Tomorrow's Florence Griswold Museum* you can honor the spirit of the original Lyme Art Colony. With your gift, you will provide the resources we need to grow intentionally and sustainably; illuminate the Florence Griswold Museum's myriad layers of art, history, and landscape; and provide an unmatched visitor experience.

- With new galleries we will foster a deeper understanding of American art—especially as it relates to our growing permanent collection—and have the capacity to host the nation's best traveling exhibitions.
- With a completed Robert F. Schumann Artists' Trail and expanded Café Flo, we will provide new opportunities for visitors to connect with each other and with the Museum.
- With safe, secure storage for our collections, we will protect the art that is at our very heart and encourage the research and scholarship that ensures the Museum's vitality.
- With a strengthened endowment, we will have the resources the Museum needs to prosper for years to come.

This is our moment. As in so many years past, we are on the cusp of becoming something even greater, even more vibrant. It's time to celebrate this institution we love, engage wider audiences, connect more deeply with our neighbors and museums across the world, and perfect the visitor experience.

*Join us as we become tomorrow's  
Florence Griswold Museum.*

You feel it. It's immersive," she explains.

For Deborah, *Inspiration Lives Here* is the Florence Griswold Museum's next critical step. "We have a permanent collection that spends a good portion of its time in storage. And so, the Museum is faced with displaying that collection or bringing in new exhibitions. We can't do both right now," says Deborah. "It's just as important for us to tell the stories of the HSB Collection as it is to bring in exhibitions from other museums. Those new exhibits give us vitality."

But, when it comes down to it, growing the Florence Griswold Museum's endowment is the priority that is closest to Deborah's heart. "A lot of organizations are undercapitalized," explains Deborah. "and consequently don't have the ability to properly steward and maintain their heritage." To Deborah, a solid endowment is about more than ensuring the Museum can weather temporary storms like the pandemic. "Building the endowment is about ensuring the Museum inspires future generations," says Deborah. "To me, it's the life insurance policy of the Museum. If you truly believe in an organization, then you want to give to the endowment, because that is what gives it its security and its future."

# Inspiration Lives Here

## Campaign Steering Committee

Barbara Harms, *Co-Chair*

Sally Lawrence, *Co-Chair*

Mary Ann Besier

Charles Clark

Jon Cohen

Jeffrey Cooley

Valerie Koif

Deborah Moore

John Niblack

Lee Pritchard

Jane Rapport

Morgan Regan

Barbara Smith

Jim Tilton

Katie Tuttle

Rebekah Beaulieu, Ph.D., *Director*

Matthew Strekel, *Director of Development*

Melissa Diaz, *Chief of Staff*



## FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

**Celebrating Art, History, and Nature**

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