21. Prague Writers' Festival 16 - 20 April 2011 New Stage National Theatre

Some Like It Hot



Press Pack complete information for media

WWW.PWF.CZ



© Prague Writers' Festival spisovatelů Praha 2011 Václav Kovář vaclav.kovar@pwf.cz 608 204 823 The theme for this year's Prague Writers' Festival follows loosely in the same vein as last year's "Heresy and Rebellion" by asking, with some irony, "Who likes it hot?" Inspired partially by the headlining Samuel Beckett quotation, "Find the wrong path that suits you best," this theme aims to stir up a hornet's nest of questions concerning modern-day crises that beset the literary and intellectual world. What path will you take?

Guests of the festival will discuss hot topics. The festival's thematic conversation titles draw attention to conflict between the superficial world of images and the intimate world of literature — to quote PWF president Michael March: "Appearance does violence." Conversations will also address global social and political issues, especially those relevant to Europe and the Mediterranean. The festival will explore the cultures of Turkey and Greece, their relationship at present and its half-hostile, half-symbiotic nature in the past. Discussions will examine recent events in the Mediterranean, which highlight many problems plaguing Europe and the globe. The festival's theme is summed up graphically by its poster image, an Antonín Kratochvíl photo from the cycle "Moscow Nights."

Prague Writers' Festival begins on Saturday, April 16, with a book-signing at Starbucks café, followed by an afternoon discussion and reading in Gallery Louvre. The Commissary for Culture of the European Union will open Sunday's gala evening, which will also be attended by the Ambassadors of Greece and Turkey. Following the opening, Turkish star Zülfü Livaneli will introduce himself to a Czech audience for the very first time with a solo musical performance. Last but not least, Jan Urban will moderate a discussion, "How hot was the Cold War?"

This year's theme addresses the tension between the world of images and the invisible world of the intellect. Festival participants, fifteen prominent figures in contemporary literature, represent the world of intellect. Confirmed attendees include the Saint Lucian Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott (*Selected Poems – Feast*); one of the best-known American writers, Don Delillo; and Pullitzer Prizewinner, Junot Díaz, (*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*) who was born in Dominican Republic. Two guests, both Turkish writers, are especially significant from a geo-political perspective: Nedima Gürsel was accused of insulting Islam in his novel, The Daughters of Allah; Zülfü Livaneli (*Bliss*) is a true star of Turkish cultural, social, and political life. There will be readings by several Greek authors (Athena Papadaki, Dionysis Kapsalis, Constantine Kokossis) as well as Czech natives (Petra Hůlová, Sylva Fischerová, Vladimír Páral and Tomáš Kafka). Francophone literature will be represented by two classics of poetry: laureate of many honors, Michel Deguy, and lyricist, Werner Lambersy. Notable also is the participation of Saadi Yousef, an Iraqi poet who, exiled from his homeland, lives in London.

But among these distinguished participants is one uncontested headliner. Don DeLillo— often referred to as "bard of the television age"—authors works of literature (*White Noise, Underworld, Falling Man, Point Omega*) that focus on problems inherent to a society super-saturated in media and communication. DeLillo explores the complexities and crises of modernity: his novel *White Noise* introduces the concept of television as family member; in *Underworld*, DeLillo draws a bizarre connection between a New York Giants' victory and a Soviet nuclear test; *Falling Man* references the 9/11 terrorist attacks; his latest novel, *Point Omega*, paints a portrait of an aging secret war advisor.

Prague Writers' Festival has made an important change of schedule this year. "Some Like it Hot" will take place from April 16th – 20th, two months earlier than usual. We hope these dates will accommodate students who, due to final exams, could not attend PWF during the summer months of years past. Some of the 2011 festival's conversations are free of charge for students. Student discounts are also available for evening readings.

The festival's main events will take place on the New Stage of National Theatre. Other calendar events will be held in various venues. Discussions will be held at the American Centre and at Gallery Café Louvre. All events will be simultaneously translated into various languages, including Czech and English, and streamed online. More information on Prague Writers' Festival 2011 and its guests can be found at www.pwf.cz. In addition to pwf.cz, the Prague Writers' Festival maintains a news site, www.literární.cz, subtitled "world literature live."

Authors

Michel Deguy (France) Don DeLillo (USA) Junot Díaz (USA) Sylva Fischerová (Czech Republic) Nedim Gürsel (Turkey) Petra Hůlová (Czech Republic) Tomáš Kafka (Czech Republic) Dionysis Kapsalis (Greece) Constantine Kokossis (Greece) Werner Lambersy (Belgium) Zülfü Livaneli (Turkey) Athena Papadaki (Greece) Vladimír Páral (Czech Republic) Derek Walcott (Saint Lucia) Saadi Yousef (Iraq)

Moderators

Tomáš Laně Denis Molčanov Jíří Pehe Jay Tolson Jan Urban



Michel Deguy France

The resplendent genie of French poetry—Michel Deguy was born in 1930 in Paris. As a "writer of poems", he has forged an emergency exit—"at the edge of the world."

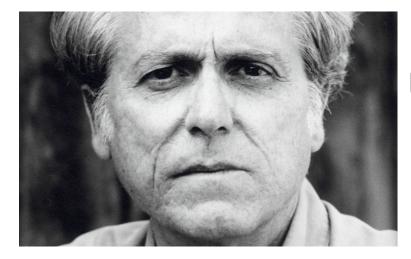
"But what an effort, what a secret, what hands in a flash among shadows and the close darkness of legs, what betrayals, what trust in the goodness of forbiddance."

Deguy is always asking himself one question in his poetry: what is "that strange contradictory object, constituted in language yet separate from linguistic assemblies, enunciation, discursiveness, diction, inscription—?"

The founder and editor-in-chief of Po&sie, Michel Deguy has received numerous awards, such as the Grand Prix de poésie de l'Académie Française. He has published over thrity collections of poetry, which include Fragments of the Cadastre, By Ear, Acts, Figurations, Given Giving, and Recumbents.

"Poetry like love risks everything on signs."

Michel Deguy lives in Paris.



Don DeLillo USA

"He speaks in your voice, American, and there's a shine in his eye that's halfway hopeful."

A legendary figure of contemporary literature, Don DeLillo was born in 1936 in New York. For DeLillo, "writing is an intense form of thought—home a failed idea." His voice carries Hart Crane and Herman Melville—the Giants win the pennant.

DeLillo surprises us with the excitement of the revealed thing—"a series of reports that carry a comet's tail of secondary sound." Then you lose him in the crowd.

"You die for people and the nation, your death is massive and intense. Die for the oppressors, die working for the exploiters and manipulators, die selfish and vain and you float away like a feather of the smallest bird."

His work includes: Running Dog, The Names, White Noise, Libra, Mao II, Underworld, Cosmopolis, The Body Artist, Falling Man, and Point Omega.

"People are no longer home or not home. They're either picking up or not picking up. The truth is I don't feel awkward. It's probably easier to talk to you this way. But that's not why I'm calling. I'm calling to describe the sunrise. A pale runny light spreading across the hills."

Don DeLillo lives in Bronxville, New York.



Junot Díaz USA

Pulitzer Prize-winner Junot Díaz was born in Villa Juana, a neighborhood in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in 1968. He emigrated to the United States in 1974—to be re-united with his father in Parlin, New Jersey. The duality of the immigrant experience remains central to his work.

Best known for his short story collection Drown and the novel The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao—which received the Pulitzer Prize in 2008—Junot Díaz dazzles with a body language that floats upon the page until it's our turn to talk with ghosts.

"Rushdie claims that tyrants and scribblers are natural antagonists, but I think that's too simple—it lets writers off pretty easy. Dictators, in my opinion, just know competition when they see it-same with writers."

As an active member of community organizations from Pro-Libertad to the Dominican Workers Party and the Unión de Jóvenes Dominicanos, Díaz has defended the legal entitlements of immigrants.

Junot Díaz lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Sylva Fischerová Czech Republic

"What illuminates the shadow to its bone? Why don't we know the shape of feelings?"

Sylva Fischerová wears a silver cross—dying to whistle. Born in Prague in 1963, she grew up in Olomouc—the daughter of non-Marxist philosopher whose works were unpublished in former times.

Fischerová is one of the most formidable Czech poets of her generation—the last generation to glide on a blue horse—recycling physics in ancient Greek.

"Her poetry moves in and out of historical events, with an understanding and loving eye on our frailties, as well as our corruptive acts."

"here, inside, where you live, your own child, a step from birth"

Fischerová's works include: The Tremor of Racehorses, In the Underworld City, The Chances, Bloody Knee, A Miracle, The Swing in the Middle of Chaos, and Passage.

Sylva Fischerová lives in Prague.



Nedim Gürsel Turkey

"Writing is perhaps nothing but an illusion. But is also a way of jumping into the void of defying death."

Novelist, essayist and literary critic Nedim Gürsel was born in 1951 in Gaziantep, Turkey. One of the most audacious Turkish authors of modern times, Gürsel has been accused of slandering the the Turkish army—for his short story collection The First Woman, awarded the İpekçi Prize for promoting Turkish-Greek cultural understanding—and for insulting religion in The Daughters of Allah—for which he was recently acquitted in an Istanbul court. Fortunately, Gürsel remains a curse on all ill-kept houses.

As for exile—after the military coup d'état in 1971—Gürsel left Istanbul for Paris, where he completed his doctoral dissertation in 1979 on Nâzim Hikmet and Louis Aragon. He then returned to Turkey, but the military putsch of 1980, sent him back into exile in Paris, where he presently lectures on contemporary Turkish literature at the Sorbonne and is Director of Research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Nedim Gürsel's work includes: A Summer without End, The Conqueror, Return to the Balkans, In the Country of Captive Fish, and Demon, Angel and Communist.

In 2004, Gürsel was named a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.

Nedim Gürsel lives in Paris—with frequent trips to Istanbul.



Petra Hůlová Czech Republic

"When winter was as cold as it was in the Year of the Rabbit, the dogs would do crazy things. They were hungry all the time and they would scratch at the door all night, even though they knew very well that the warmth was only for us."

One of the stars of Czech literature—Petra Hůlová was born in 1979 in Prague—though it would take her exotic experiences in Mongolia to capture our attention. "Strangeness upon strangeness"—in the words of Paul Celan.

"When the good horses died, I quickly came running to watch as their dying eyes turned cloudy and blank and their flanks twitched as if they were driving off flies."

Hůlová focuses on disconections-the eternal brimstone conflicts of cultures—localized in the intimate settings of daily life.

"Then I took off my gloves and reached down to touch the horse's belly, between its rear legs, where it was the warmest, to warm myself."

Her works include: All This Belongs to Me, Through Frosted Glass, Plastic Three-Bedroom Apartment, and Station Taiga.

Petra Hůlová lives in Prague.



Tomáš Kafka Czech Republic

"Life is full of honey bees Who turn out to be enemies Because I am rather prone Be transformed into a drone"

Poet—diplomat—historian Tomáš Kafka was born in 1965 in Prague—into a distinguished literary family. Falling into the noble abyss of poetry, he entered the world of samizdat least he die of heights.

"The world will exhibit Even shit as shit So nothing goes in vain Insane as well as sane"

Bitterness proved wonders, witnessed by his collections of poetry: Gouaches, Out of the World, and Rhymes in Times.

Kafka's "psycho—crime" of the future has many foreign affairs.

"I am neither right nor strictly left I feel like the IMF"

Tomáš Kafka resides in Dublin as the Ambassador of the Czech Republic.



Dionysis Kapsalis Greece

One of Greece's foremost poets Dionysis Kapsalis was born 1952 in Athens-

"with the inconceivable of another world all of us knowing that there is no return no end, only movement and pain"

He studied Classics and English literature—

"places of origin, dim and integral inhabited by sacred bones places so near us and yet so remote"

Kapsalis' extensive collections of poetry include: Yet Once More, Sentimental Education, Ballads and Circumstances, The Noise of Time, On the Tomb of C. P. Cavafy, and All the Evenings of the World.

"and every night I raise my dreams, the events of the soul, high up in chaos zodiacs, riddles, numbers, heralds and contemplate the disenchantment of the world."

Dionysis Kapsalis lives in Athens.



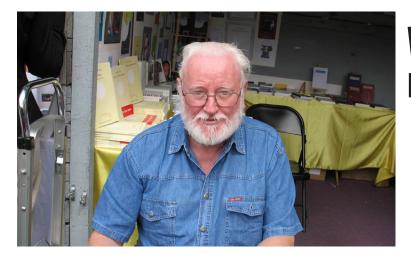
Constantine Kokossis Greece

Constantine Kokossis was born in 1951 in Athens. He studied law in Athens and international relations in Brussels. In 1976, he joined the Foreign Ministry—serving in Cyprus, the United States, Turkey, Ethiopia and Albania.

As a trained observer, Kokossis tends to pinpoint-with irony, sarcasm and a pinch of self-criticism the precise historical backdrops which snare the protagonists in his novels: The Rise of the West, The Diversion, and Achilles' Long Journey.

For Kokossis, the social fabric makes the man.

Constantine Kokossis resides in Prague as the Ambassador of Greece.



Werner Lambersy Belgium

"master what are we doing if not waiting this moment even though we know nothing of it"

Before dawn-before the falling leaf—Werner Lambersy—sits down to write poetry. Born in 1941 in Anvers, Belgium, he remains unchanged—snow on the sea in spite of night.

"you cool the boiling water and the lid suddenly sings as if it was talking to silence about a secret they share"

One of the foremost French-language Belgian poets, Lambersy's verses "range in tone and form from the utterly spare to the full and ample—spinning out one continuous meditation on self-effacement through love and writing."

His works include: Tea Masters Tea Houses, Despite My Growling Heart, The Presence of Poetry, and Coimbra.

Werner Lambersy lives in Paris.



Zülfü Livaneli Turkey

One of Turkey's most gifted artistssinger, composer, film director and novelist—Zülfü Livaneli was born in 1946 in Ilgun. Throw in his political career as a member of the Turkish parliament and his daily activities as a columnist for the newspaper Vatan, we still have not exhausted his energies as a performer—with Mikis Theodorakis-and his travels as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations.

In 1971, Zülfü Livaneli was held at a military prision during the coup and subsequently lived in exile—in Stockholdm, Paris and Athens—before returning to Turkey in 1984.

"In this country, everyone detested each other. Where else were newspaper columns filled with profanities and invective? The intellectuals were themselves a breed apart. They fostered animosioty, and there conversations were full of mockery, spite, and malice."

Livaneli's prose includes: A Child in Purgatory, The Dictator and the Clown, The Eunuch of Constantinople, Memory of Snow, Bliss, Conversations with Gorbachov on Revolution, and Leyla's House.

Zülfü Livaneli lives in Istanbul.



Athena Papadaki Greece

"I respect silence-it comes from the cosmos."

Athena Papadaki was born in 1945 in Athens. She studied politics and works as a journalist. Not quite the Madonna of the Pressure Cooker, Papadaki writes in the tradition of Elytis and Ritsos—using a particularly Greek form of surrealism, centered on the concrete realities of daily life.

"I believe in all that burns in vain. Transient and speechless I see mammals blazing in the festivity of milk. I'm precious, I guarantee nothing but ash."

Papadaki's work includes: Archangel of Concrete, Earth Once Again, So Pale Almost White, Shop-window Lioness, Sleepless Woman of the Skies, and In the Balcony's Realm.

"I must sing of those who taught me deprivation."

Athena Papadaki lives in Athens.



Vladimír Páral Czech Republic

Vladimír Páral was born in Prague in 1932. After graduating in chemistry, he worked for thirteen years as an engineer, specialising in the research of sex hormones.

He travelled extensively in India, China, Nepal, Middle Asia, the United States and Canada, In the sixties he became one of the most successful and popular Czech writers, inventing his own so-called "technological style".

He has published fourteen novels, seven of which were adapted for the screen. They include Catapult, The Four Sonyas, Lovers and Murderers, and A Book of Pleasure, Laughter and Joy.

Vladimír Páral lives in Prague and Mariánské Lázně.



Derek Walcott Saint Lucia

Nobel laureate Derek Walcott-Caribbean poet, playwright, visual artist-was born in 1930 in Castries, Saint Lucia in the West Indies. His virtues as a poet are amazing. For Seamus Heaney, "the Walcott line is sponsored by Shakespeare and the Bible—it can compel us with the almost hydraulic drag of its words."

Influenced by the history of European colonialism on West Indian culture-and his family's history as descendants of slaves—Derek Walcott's poems are characterized by references to traditional English poetic tradition and a symbolic imagination that is simultaneously personal and Caribbean. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 "for a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment".

Walcott's work includes: In a Green Night, Sea Grapes, The Fortune Teller, Omeros, The Bounty, Tiepolo's Hound, The Prodigal, and White Egrets.

"Derek Walcott has made his culture, history and sociology into a myth for our age and into an epic song that has already taken its place in the history of Western literature."

Derek Walcott resides in St. Lucia and New York.



Saadi Yousef Iraq

Born in 1934 in Basra, Iraq—Saadi Yousef "has become, through the vicissitudes of history and the cosmopolitan appetites of his mind, a poet not only of the Arab world, but of the human universe. He has lived in and communicated with the cultures and literatures of Algeria, Lebanon, France, Greece, Cyprus, Yugoslavia, and this dialogue engages and informs his poetry."

Saadi Yousef started writing poetry at the age of seventeen and has published over thirty collections of poetry since permanently leaving Iraq in 1979, after Saddam Hussein's rise to power.

"Night begins in his old continent and the porcupine moves slowly with laughing eyes, glad the earth is full of these temptations."

Saadi Yousef currently resides in London.

History

The Festival originated in late-seventies London, when Michael March (PWF's President) began organizing international poetry readings at Keats House. As allowed by the Helsinki Accords, writers from the former Soviet Bloc were invited to participate. Immediately following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the readings relocated to Prague, which was "a natural host and meeting place for writers." The first Prague Writers' Festival took place at Valdštejn Palac in May 1991 and was themed "Wedding Preparations in the Country." Over the next twenty years, Prague Writers' Festival became increasingly more an essential event in Prague's cultural scene.

Educational Dimension

HIGH SCHOOLS Prague Writers' Festival offers discount tickets and other perks to high school classes. PWF also partners with principals and teachers of local schools to present talented young writers with the annual Walter Serner Short Story Prize.

UNIVERSITIES The festival has been connected for many years—by virtue of its focus on humanities, languages and literature—with numerous Czech



Walter Serner prize 2009

universities and with New York University in Prague.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SUBJECTS The festival often asks its participating authors questions regarding politics and society. It is the hope of PWF that the event will initiate discussion of important issues and contribute to the creation of a socio—political consciousness.

LITERARY DATABASE The festival's archives are available to the public online. PWF.cz gives access to a useful database of Czech and English texts. One of the major aims of the PWF Foundation is to secure funding for full digitization of its archives.

Activities

READINGS The main focus of the festival is its annual public readings. Every evening during the event, authors take the stage. They engage in conversation and read excerpts from their work, each writer reading in his native language while Czech and English translations are simultaneously broadcast through headphones or read by actors onstage.

CONVERSATIONS Each day a new conversation, dedicated to a literary or political subject, is held. The hourlong discussions are followed by questions from the audience, inviting free interaction between thinkers and artists, writers and audience. This is why Prague Writers' Festival is considered a festival of ideas.

MEETINGS At the close of each reading and discussion, writers and audience



Wole Soyinka and Gary Younge in The Guardian Conversation, PWF 2006

meet, interact at signings and other such gatherings.

OTHER PROJECTS As a cultural foundation, Prague Writers' Festival is engaged year-round in many, diverse cultural activities. The PWF Foundation publishes books and helps to organize concerts (Ed Sanders and the Plastic People of the Universe) and movie screenings (Heresy and Rebellion in Aero cinema), as well as art exhibitions (Dada East?, World in 1968).

Extensive website

ARCHIVAL CONTENT The festival's online archives include author biographies, cultural and literary files, interviews, book reviews, and video and photo galleries.

PRESENTATION Each year, PWF.cz details extensive information about the festival's guests and theme. It offers articles, guides to previous festivals, an explanation of the festival's theme, and other relevant background information.

Nadační fond Festival spisovatelů Praha



www.pwf.cz

RELEVANCE IN LITERATURE

Throughout the year, PWF.cz keeps current with information about the Czech literary world. The site publishes articles, reviews, translations, announcements, debates, and often-controversial editorials, such as its defense of Milan Kundera. It also allows visitors to follow the festival's previous guests by providing excerpts from their latest works.

AN OPEN SPACE Apart from providing a forum for social and literary conversation, the festival website is also open to external contributors. It often publishes the work of PWF partners and of students who are working to hone their writing skills. The Café Central section of PWF.cz contains poems and prose from both established and unknown authors, exposing art and artists to an international audience. In Autumn 2011, the PWF Foundation will launch Literarni.cz, which is to be a comprehensive review of contemporary writing.

literární.cz



Some Like It Hot New Stage National Theatre

Sponsors

City of Prague

Prague ranks among the world's most cultural cities, and Prague Writers' Festival is, according to an official statement, one of the City of Prague's most important cultural events. The City of Prague has supported Prague Writers' Festival for many years. It is thanks to their support that the festival has been able to bring hundreds of the world's best authors, including five Nobel Prize laureates, to the singular City of Prague.

21. Prague Writers' Festival

www.praha.eu

Pražská plynárenská—**Prague Gas Company**, the city's largest energy supplier, has been a partner of Prague Writer's Festival for many years. Pražská plynárenská recognizes and acts upon the idea that a nation's true identity is its culture. In 2007, the company supported PWF in organizing Dada East, a unique exhibition, which explored the eastern roots of Dadaism. That same year, the company was awarded the Knight of Culture Prize. Currently, Pražská plynárenská manages Smečky Gallery and The Gas Museum in Prague.

www.ppas.cz

Hotel Josef

For over a decade, Hotel Josef has been home to all participating Prague Writers' Festival authors. Situated in the heart of Prague's Old Town, the 109—room structure is outfitted according to a design concept created by Eva Jiricna. Hotel Josef

elegantly blends modern elements with the rich history of its surroundings. Hotel Josef provides comfortable, trouble-free accommodation for business people and holiday-goers alike, offering a lobby equipped with free Wi-Fi, a restaurant and open-air courtyard, sauna, gymnasium and zen-massages.

www.hoteljosef.com







Partners

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Some Like It Hole New Stage National Theatre

film staff is available to shoot tutorial, documentary, and short films. The company also offers equipment such as wide Watchout screens for special video projections, dry Fogscreen technology, and other unusual effects for digital presentations. Prague

21. Prague Writers' Festival

Writers' Festival is grateful to Pozitiv Company for providing the festival with a live-stream channel on their partner server Play.cz and for recording and archiving all PWF events.

www.pozitiv.cz

www.play.cz

THE GUARDIAN

The Guardian has been an exclusive media partner of Prague Writers' Festival since 1996. Each year, they print forty plus press ads in their Continental Issue to promote PWF authors and partners.

www.guardian.co.uk

REFLEX is our main Czech media partner for a very first time. **www.reflex.cz**

GRASP Magazine is PWF partner for the second year - together we are prepearing an April "Some Like It Hot" issue. **www.grasp-journal.com**









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Accreditations

Press accreditation is given to active journalists and press agency correspondents. Only accredited photographers may photograph the festival.

Accredited journalists are granted open access to festival conversations and readings and to the Press Center at New Stage Theatre. They may also request interviews with participating authors.

Applications for accreditation will be accepted until April 7th. Accreditation cards will be available for pickup March 16th—April 8th. We are unable to mail out press cards; you must pick them up at the PWF office or the New Stage Press Center.

Apply for accreditation by filling up the online application at www.pwf.cz.

Press Center

The Press Center at New Stage Theatre will open daily at 2pm, April 17th - April 20th. It is reserved for accredited journalists only.

Journalists will have access to photos and printed documents. Computers and free WiFi will be provided.

The Press Center is meant to be a quiet space for working, relaxing, and conducting interviews with Prague Writers' Festival authors and staff.

Interviews

If you wish to conduct a private interview with one of our writers, you must contact us in advance. Please be informed that private interviews will be granted as allowed by the authors' schedules. If you would like to cancel or postpone a scheduled interview, please contact us as soon as possible.

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