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Designing the Muse of the Space

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Designing the Muse of the Space

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Abstract

From the time of the muses, the collecting of works of art is a fundamental part of the human essence. In its beginnings, arises from a space for the contemplation of spiritual and religious objects. Then it turns into collective places where space was transformed changing its size and scale in the research of a greater representation. But, interestingly, there remain forever the parameters of the human scale; the human relation with the promenade through the exhibition is therefore, the ancestral home of the collector, a latent memory in many museums. In this way, the sense of promenade is as fundamental value, from which begin the design of a new space and a new kind of museum.

As well as the relationship between the observer and objects, our established and predetermined concepts associated to the value of Monument. Eventually, the diversity of the program and the development of popular culture make industrial buildings, which previously were used for sweatshop, become icons for culture by its conversion in museums, subverting the concept of monument.

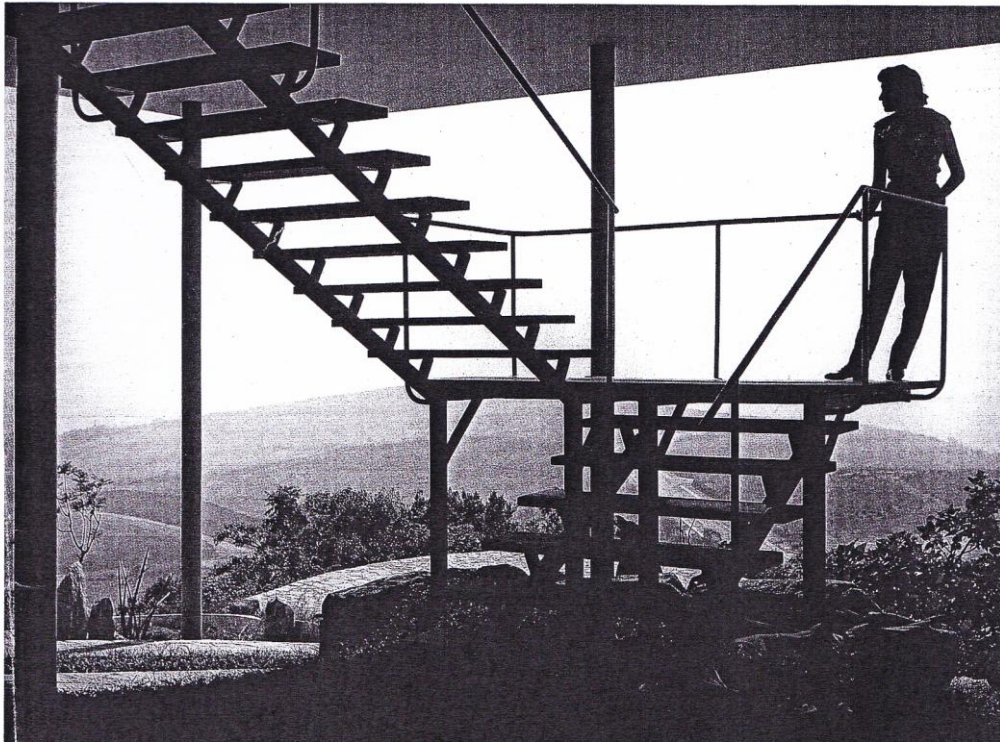
Up to now, these have become almost cities inside cities, encompassing a multitude of uses and functions, entertainment and inspiration to the collective community. While the historical city itself suffer a phenomenon of transformation in a museum object, becoming a false symbol of the identity of our culture.

In an attempt to explain the evolution in the design of this kind of space, it is propose another way of looking the history, by reading the emblematic projects in the history of museums and contrasting with the work of Lina Bo Bardi, in which projects, it could be found designs paradigmatically universal in the history, as the same time that a new way of looking forward the concept of what should be a Museum or how should be defined this kind of spaces.

Keywords:

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Casa de Vidro, Morumbi, São Paulo



PHOTOCOPY. Lina in the stairs of the Glass House

Collective Space

When in 1946 Lina Bo Bardi began her trip to Brazil, she did not only move to a new world full of unimaginable possibilities, but she also had to face all her European cultural heritage. Her immediate relationship with the Brazilian cultural structures, which she had not discovered yet and were unknown to her, reminds her of her home city, Rome¹. She expressed the happiness that she felt because of being in a country without present ruins of her past, in a country where men were free of predefined and archaic conceptions, free to create a modern mind without preconceptions.

Lina Bo's relationship with all her projects is, therefore, linked to this culture clash, which arises from her “olhar estrangeiro” (foreign look)², but with a conceptual view based on her strong convictions about the meaning and origin of Culture and her strong belief that space is not defined by use, since the use is an added feature, in the same way as the space is associated with predefined cultural and social values.

*The Critical Consciousness and Historical Continuity
are the great legacies of the Modern Man.*

L.B.B. (1960)

This critical position arises from her great sensitivity towards Brazilian reality, far above the social and cultural clichés of her time, but mostly has a conceptual background developed throughout her career, where she developed many activities, always linked in one way or another to the museum activity, focusing on activities ranging from management, journalism, outreach organization, criticism, curator for different themes for several exhibitions and different choreographies and sceneries. Always identifying and defining her strong conviction that museums have to be a humanized space for learning and training, built around a collective and urban space.

¹Achillida Bo, born in Rome in 1914, was educated at the *Liceo Artistico* first and then in the *Facultá d'Architettura della Universita di Roma*. In 1939 he moved to Milan, where he began his career with Giò Ponti, director of the Triennial of Milan at that time. She was the editorial boards of several journals, among which we highlight *Domus*, which he directed during the World War and was involved in the resistance to German occupation until 1946 developed an intense activity always bound journals and newspapers, collaborating with Bruno Zevi, Carlo Pagani and Raffaello Carrieri, until after she married Pietro Maria Bardi, an important Italian journalist and art critic, decided to move to Brazil. (Pereira, 2008:19).

²Foreign look, in Portuguese “Olhar Estrangeiro”. A look at the space yet to build Latin American reality, which can only be interpreted as a common issue in all the processes of immigration to the continent, as is addressing different ideological constructions of immigrants, suggesting a complex that would be likely to develop in a subsequent work. (Pereira, 2008:30).

Muses and Space

Venerated by their ability to divine inspiration, the Muses whispering, evoke in the humans the wisdom of gods. Deities of Classical Greece, which were enshrined the evocative spaces that were primarily characterized by the spatial relationship with the altar of devotion, where votive objects deposited. The temple could be considered as the Home of the Muses¹, symbolically stood on a high platform where the outside collective space was open and arcaded with wide proportions. This space enclosed in his interior an reduced space only lighted by fire, keeping inside the anthropomorphic representation of divinity, accessible only by initiates, regarded as the impenetrable abode of gods.

The proportion and harmony of the temples in the Occidental culture, was determined by, the one that has been regarded as the noblest of the senses, the sight. The sight and its relation to the object have been determined in a fundamental way, our relationship with them, the same as it has the determinate factor to explain how have been evolved the spaces for exhibition, *las Arquitecturas de la Mirada*². From the moment that, in an attempt to capture its inspiring capacity, we have locked his myth in the objects, transforming the collective imagination and memory in collectables objects.

When, at the beginning, arises the idea of create the Museum of Art in *São Paulo*³, MASP, there where no place and no collection. It was a museum full of possibilities without preconceptions about the art. After multiple proposals for the location, was located on a large lot in the Paulista Avd. The site in question was as a relevant and pre-existing historical viewpoint, this was an elemental key for the creation of the project.

Consistent with her reflections on the past and present, Lina began designing in his early sketches as a glass pyramid as a sacred space, a mountain, a temple. A single space in which inside a spiral ramp is developed, just as in the Greek temple⁴, the space that surrounded the cellar was collective, urban and configured the limits of self place. Initially, Lina designed an viewpoint square, a collective space where the glass prism, where placed as an object, function only as an inside access, without an formal predetermination from the collective space.

¹Not only were evocative and sacred spaces, but they lived in the mysticism of knowledge and divine power, concepts together with the proportion and harmony determined the formal definition of the temple itself.

²*Arquitecturas de la Mirada*. (Zuzunegui, 1993)

³Founded in 1947, since its inception, the museum is not associated collection tube, so that its foundation was never determined by this aspect of being a museum for a type of art, but an art museum, Lina Bo generating principle, emphasized on numerous occasions, emphasizing that this was a virtue to develop a look without preconceptions about their own work of art, no definitions or set a priori prejudices. (Pereira, 2008:75).

⁴No religious mental image than a mountain, the triangle as a reference to the myth of the ascent. (Zuzunegui, 2003:67)

Space as Re-Presentation

The proposal for the MASP is based on a new way of looking at modernity, at the same time as a reflection of the traditional Museum's model, established in the Renaissance with the rise of humanist ideals, in a new presentation of the object to the observer's eyes. When it was rediscovered the classical antiquity, many objects, sculptures were emerging in the own process of re-construction of the Italian cities. At this time were restored the concepts of proportion and scale, the ideals of beauty and purity, while established order and harmony as a structural shaped element for the space.

It was in that moment, where was linked to the development of emerging creative activities, one of the fundamental features that we consider key in a museum, the artistic patronage. Art and Muses resided by the time, in the Florence of Medici family, where illustrated erudite and artists, where whole together with the new findings of classical antiquity.

Specifically *Il Palazzo Medici*¹, designed by the architect Michelozzo (1444), has been considered as the first museum space, not because of the value of his collection, by this time, or the relevance of artists that converged in, but as a centre of publisher, an artistic core for contemplation, inspiration and reinterpretation of classicism.

In a same way, Lina considered the museum as a place where all creative interests confluxes by the link of Art, resubmitting a new concept of Art. While *il Palazzo Medici* the shape of the space was designed as a magnificent austere cubic volume, harmoniously proportioned, in which inside a portico with great subtlety and liveness supports the heaviness of the volume, generating an inside patio, from which we can glimpse an inner garden, through a *loggia*².

At this point, we can not exclude or ignore all social, political and cultural concepts, which are associated with this urban image; what is intrinsically a Palace more than a representation of power, is the sight of our cultural memories. Consequently, the MASP, with its giant free beam of seventy-four meters in length³ can be considered as an abstraction of the fundamental concepts of Florentine palatial scheme. As a large Italian *Loggia*, the magnificent sleekly volume coexist with the Belvedere open to the countryside, while at the same time, Art is turn into the space, in a subliminal and unconscious way, by the pressure of the mass.

¹Il Palazzo Medici is structured inside as a sequence between indoor and outdoor spaces, like a reinterpretation of the Roman villa, from the collective outside space to the landscape through collective inside space. (Anico, 2008:107).

²Spatial type widely developed in the Renaissance, were vaulted with themed decorations that served transition between inside and outside, open on one or both of its sides, intended to walk outside and contemplation, whether garden or landscape. (Falcon Merraz, 2007:28).

³Built in 1956-1968, the reinforced concrete structure was designed by Mr. JC Figueredo Ferraz, collaborator on many occasions of Lina Bo Bardi. (Pereira, 2008:75).

Infinite Space

The MASP project is designed reinterpreting these variables as a solid volume that hovers above the collective space, a space that is no longer enclosed and delimited, which becomes continuous with no hierarchy or representative image *a priori* associated. The proposal takes us back to a modern vision of the concept of space, an infinite and free place from the unconstrained designs of Le Corbusier.

Significantly, not until the middle of the 20th century when the formulation of new kind of spaces¹ began, inscribed in what we determine as the Modern Movement. From them it could be highlighted two opposite designs for museums, both of them reflecting about the space and his relationship with the infinite concept, as main background projects related to the MASP.

The first of them was made by Le Corbusier; the Museum of Infinite Growth²: this design was developed in different proposals. After all, there is one key issue, the direction of travelling as an element which does not determine in any way the fact of contemplation, a formless space, but with an endless growth. In this case, the museum is defined as a living element, a collective spiral space, which becomes shape from the production and modulation models established previously by Le Corbusier. The concept of the released plant through overhead lighting removes the need of a relationship between outside and inside. Space was transformed into a world of possibilities in an infinite promenade.

Despite the fact that the spiral, as in the myth of ascension, is at the same time the shaper element of the proposal for the Solomon Guggenheim Museum (1959) by Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier projects, there is a significant difference. While Guggenheim's project is based on the force of the formal symbolism itself, and the ascensional movement to the overhead light is abstracted in their own way, showing it and giving rise to conceptual generation in which the museum is itself an object of contemplation; Le Corbusier reflects about the fundamental definitions of the space, on a single plain.

In contrast on the MASP, it is created as a collective space that contemplates from de inside the outside, looking to itself. The vertical core of stairs decentralized from the square was originally planned as spirals, as an object that links the outer and inner space. Although only the sense of upward movement is kept from the original proposal, it still links the interior with the exterior space. For Lina, the infinite space projected by Le Corbusier was a representation of the value of the Collective Monumental more than a possibility of growth.

¹After the post-reform wars, where was determined the housing problem as a principal debate during the first half of the 20th century. (Oliveira, 2006:75).

²The most relevant of them are: Musée à croissance Illimitée (1939) - Musée de Tokyo, (1956) - Le Musée du XX^e siècle à Nanterre, (1965). (Le Corbusier, 1966)

Space around the Object

On this paradigmatic situation the projects were designed by Lina Bo essentially as urban and public places, in which there was place for more than just a critical reinterpretation of the meaning of Art or Museum. Determining that they are spaces to integrate present and past, valuing the popular reality without preconceptions associated to folklore, while not only demystifying the art work itself as an object, but redesigning the museum space itself in a new way that has its heredity in the classical culture of the Muses from which Lina is her own heiress.

This relationship inherited subconsciously is so elementary that Lina Bo proposed herself to demystify and destroy; reinterpreting the sacred concept associated to Art and Museums concepts. Desecrating Arts, eliminating any feeling that the Museum is a religious institution in which we started to learn, eliminating the old image of the art object and its associated values for the object contemplated, without predetermined stories.

The art object, like the past, is essential for the knowledge, not by its associated value and erudite mystical aura. It is relevant by its condition as present reality, and this is the source from which we can redefine the relationship with the object, by the space around it, establishing a new way of connections with the object, with Culture and Arts.

The Library of Alexandria is the first place we know about that houses objects with the purpose of encouraging inspiration and detached from religious functions. The *Museion* is normally seen more than a place of worship or contemplation, a collective space for training, research and dissemination of knowledge. Although we could hardly abstract from all concepts and the historical burden to which the Library reminds us, it is noteworthy that the books themselves that were therein may be regarded as the first major collection of humanity, establishing a fundamental change in the space-object relationship.

While in the temple the human scale, the proportion and harmony of collective space and the object-subject relationship are symbolic, at the Library - *Museion*¹, the relationship is direct, as the inversion on itself. Closing from the outside and opening to the inside, into a portico space lit by a courtyard. Even though an inside space full of the documents and collections from all over the classical world realities, as in the temple, were disposed the statues of the divinity, it is relevant to consider that they were de-contextualized from their original reality.

Despite these two classical perspectives, the MASP proposed to recover the rapport with the object as a piece of work. While on one hand, the objects are de-contextualized, undressed and showed on par in ascetic glass frames without possibility of association to their original time, the space is

¹In Alexandria in the third century B.C. was founded by Ptolemy Dynasty, this building, from which comes the term museum, from the Greek "museion" meaning "home of the Muses", the Muses were daughters of Zeus (Greek Ζεύς) and Mnemosyne (Μνημοσύνη), Memory. (Falcon Merraz, 2007:28).

transformed on an linear sequence, where there is no centre, unless the space around the objects. Like resumption principles of various Italian exhibitions designed by Franco Albini¹ (1934), in which the objects are abstracted from their reality, as they have reached our time, detaching them from its context.

Therefore, as never before, it is necessary to move around the object to experience the museum. While the pieces of Art are levitating on the air, in the interest of eliminating preconceptions established in previous valuation, on their back it is offered contextualized data about the author, date, technique, and comments that contextualize the piece, always made from a didactic vision without determining a valuation judgment.

In this sense, we cannot let us question how the established order in exhibitions determines an oriented sight, although at the same time, this kind of space, without order and full of de-contextualized pieces, could not be imagined without the reference to the *Cabinet*, that in our contemporary imaginary has a maximum reference on the House of Sir John Soane² (1792).

MASP, emerged as a museum without a collection, this variable mainly determined its spatial design, from the large exhibition hall which is inside of solid volume hovers over the square to the lower floors. Both spaces are formulated on the same premise, but in a different way, while the room is a big inner collective space, a space with more longitudinal development, which is linked through a visual and spiral staircase with the square on the outside; the collective space on the lower floors is developed on two different levels, all related to each other through a double-height space, a covered patio which is open to the outside, as the viewpoint square, where vertical communication ramps become, once again, in the objects that link the space.

Therefore the direction of the promenade became the link which unifies space set from the collective space outside to the inside, from the space around the object and the object as spatial connector.

¹Modern Architecture Italian postwar development principles called Italian Museum, which is deep space determined by the relationship between the viewer and the work of art. Franco Albini, together with Edoardo Persico, Marcello Nizzoli designed in 1934 the first exhibition structures with steel profiles for the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan, and in 1941 developed the first exhibition in the Brera Gallery, where the tables were suspended in the air. (Pereira, 2008:122)

²Intervention The set is a part of the sum of three existing homes, which are reconstructed in Lincoln's Inn Field, London, where he established through travel and overhead lighting systems, spatial sequence closed to the outside and deeply marked by the intrinsic relationship between the observer and the object. A spatial travel *horror vacui* objects clogging up the degree of saturation can be considered as an elaborate set which makes an interesting game with spatial scale, through compression and expansion of the conjugate with a subtle gap play of light. (Falcon Merraz, 2007:50).

Space on Promenade

The determination of space as a promenade could not be classified as an oriented sight or a preconception about Artwork, as Lina Bo, time after time, reiterates disassociating this chronological link introduced in the Museums.

Since the Enlightenment period, the most suitable space to house the muses, is defined as the Gallery, a spatial typology existed since ancient times, but incredibly developed in the late medieval French. The corridor emerged as an elongated and compressed space for a unidirectional movement, whose only function was to serve as a connection between the main spaces of castles and palaces, with an proportion established basically by functional issues. It is with the combination of these kind of spaces, determined by the linear movement of the observer, with the Italian *Loggia*, that the Gallery arises, this type of space rapidly was absorbed and developed in different ways on Architecture.

In the early 17th century, the Gallery became the archetypal contemplation space, essential in palaces, castles and villas until in middle of the 18th century, when the Enlightenment period granted to museums new collective functions, through returning into the Light as a shaper of the space. In an interior space without openings in their vertical walls, the light from the abroad heaven transforms the outside into an alien reality, where the initiated observer in the knowledge contemplate simultaneously the objects in an inside space but intrinsically universal.

The zenith illuminated Gallery became the first proposed model as spatial typology expressly for the Museum. J.N.L. Durand (1802) projected the first considered ideal museum that was never built¹. The human scale of the Roman house, with the portico around the patio, are extended to a monumental scale, where the internal promenade sequence turns into a unitary space and the inside space become a continuous large archway zenith illuminated.

From this model and technological advances arise most of the XIX Century buildings, in which the scale space increases with the light that fills the inside space through the glass domes, as in *the Crystal Palace*, or the *Gallery of the Machines*². Although the evolution of the space scale, the insides were fragmented, in traditional spatial model, maintaining the same relationships with the human scale inside a great Palace.

On the contrary, the large exhibition hall of MASP, that represents an example of building technically pioneering by the time, with its reinforced concrete structure symbol of technological progress in Brazil, it was never thought to have a fragment inside. From the outside to the inside, is a single space, a container space on the sides lit by large uninterrupted windows, in

¹Durand developed a proposal for a Museum, which takes up all the issues discussed earlier in the spaces in museums that were implanted without being created specially for this function, the palace temple, combined with a background proposal of L. C. Sturm (1704). (Falcon Merraz, 2007:28).

²Universal Exhibitions in London (1850) and Paris (1878), the Museum as an spectacle for the society and a labyrinth (Zuzunegui 1993:69)

which inside the most important element is the relationship between the observer and the object itself.

Space Container

During the ss. XVII-XVIII, collecting becomes a common practice, and all could be stored together from work of art, archaeological remains to botanical and biological samples... It could be almost said that everything transportable was transported to a museum. At the same time we can not forget, that these buildings were never created specially to be a Museum, were spaces intrinsically associated with power and a great representation, capable of holding the knowledge of mankind, and the own building is a Monument and a Space container of the representative pieces of the history.

In its proposal for the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia¹, Lina Bo Bardi, suggest the issue from a new spatial perspective. Being created as a Museum without place, the character of space were not defined by the use. If there is no determined space for a Museum, the space start to be as in theatre, understood as a container that could not be fundamental to determine was is inside.

After some exhibitions, O Solar de Unhão², was chosen to install not only the MAMB, but also, the Popular Art Museum, in conjunction with a school of industrial design based on a reading of artisanal heritage of the Brazilian north. The intervention was based not on the issue of rehabilitation as an essential point, but on a consciousness raise of the past as part of the design of present, by the evaluation of Architecture as the Cultural heritage or work of Art.

As well as in other proposals in Lina's work, the space was not predetermined by his use, it is just an attribute. In this case, the Museum seems to be transformed into a decorated, collective representation of the past heritage to create an imaginary future. But in reality, the way was made the intervention, absorbing the past to create the future, is as modern that the collective consciousness do not takes the past to indoctrinated concepts of progress and evolution, as it was made in the great museums like the British (1753), or the Louvre (1791)³.

¹MAMB, created in 1959 the first exhibition were on the foyer of the Castro Alves Theatre in Bahia. From the beginning it was more a Centre, a Movement or a School that and Museum created without place and collection. (Pereira, 2008:116)

²Solar de Unhão, is a complex from XVI century, that a long his history used for different functions as manufactures, storage of flammable, sawmill, garage, warehouse, church, barracks, and in the time of the project development space lived in fourteen different uses. (Bardi, 2008:152).

³All this Museums were created not only in reused spaces, but also in a collective space, as generated from private collections. So it is no surprise that, while the patina of history, serve to put in all values Cultural / social / political co-existing inside a container building, where the space in serve of the interests of the nation, where the collections were transformed into a collective heritage to be shared by all. (Pereira, 2008:113)

It is remarkable that in the opposite to these Museums petrified, in all projects for exhibitions, Lina Bo determine their valuation of popular culture, without the perception of embalming realities and patrimonial objects by their condition, but criticizing that these values will be associated with the modern museum. What is modern in the conservation is the integration in the present reality without the isolation of the past.

Spaces and Muses

Since Lina's projects, most of the museums have been transformed into collective spaces, by his ability to congregate the community; inside of them we can develop the most varieties activities. Designed in their interiors as complex machines for social behaviour, at the end seem to be dehumanized, by becoming social spaces with iconic cultural images on the outside and so full of meaning and symbolism as a building as the objects themselves that contain in their guts.

Today more than ever we are catalogued, as well as these spaces have not only designed themselves, as their exterior environment by shaping the adjacent urban fabric without precedents. They have become focus of attraction of the massive show, turning into the own exhibit object. As a Russian doll that inside we can find another, as a city within the city. That is why Yona Friedman's proposals are so remarkable, when he talk about the City museum¹, it seems to retrieve the value of the collective as monumentality, by defining the space of the museum as the collective space in the city, as the same time that deconsecrate the relationship with the object which has turn into an Icon in our contemporary society.

This proposal is really realistic, with the consideration that in the last three decades the desire for urban preservation has almost become most historic centres of Europe in urban mausoleums, in urban museums almost alive. Where objects are homes and buildings, windows and doors, colours and benches, pavements and trees ... everything could be capable of being preserved, while we all know that nothing really is.

In this sense we can not stop to wonder as André Malraux on Imaginary Museum², on how the museum has given so considerably our relationship with Culture and Art, but really think about where the Muses reside.

¹In the Street-Museum Project (2004-2008), Yona Friedman defines the museum as the space for exhibitions, where there is no necessity for being a building, inside the street we could find all that we need. In the proposal for Zurich in 2012, he plan an experiment, in the centre of the old town all the shop windows will be used as a museum showcases, as indeed the commercial streets are effectively museums of our present civilisation. (Frampton, 2011:74).

²Andre Malraux explains in his text that the Imaginary museum is an infinitive space where we can accumulate the reproductions of all pieces of Art. (Malraux, 2000:258)

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