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The ICA/Boston is fierce in its commitment to teens. We work with teens during and outside of school time and empower them to connect with art, artists, and one another. We believe that robust arts education is critical to building future artists, audiences, thinkers, and leaders and to creating more equitable education for young people. Museums have a unique role to play in the landscape of arts education, giving people direct experiences with art, convening people to discuss ideas, and acting as centers of community-based learning and social change.

WallTalk is a multidisciplinary arts engagement program for Boston middle and high school students that encourages creative thinking, open discussion, and individual connections to contemporary art through visual art, writing, and performance. Centering on ICA exhibitions, the program consists of multiple museum and classroom visits over a school year in which students observe, question, interpret, and respond creatively to the art and issues of our time. Teaching artists guide their critical analysis.

The experience culminates in a Reading Jam. The ICA Barbara Lee Family Foundation Theater becomes a brave space for WallTalk students to come together and showcase their creativity in an exhibition of their visual art and performances of their writing. Through this program, the ICA aims to provide an engaging and supportive environment for student expression and to make contemporary art an integral part of the development of young people.

During the 2019–2020 school year, the ICA collaborated with more than 500 students from 10 partner schools: Boston Collegiate Charter School, Boston Community Leadership Academy, Boston Latin Academy, Charlestown High School, East Boston High School, Excel High School, Greater Egleston High School, McKinley South End Academy, Rafael Hernández School, and Snowden International High School. In addition, the ICA partnered with Boston International Newcomers Academy to pilot the WallTalk Special Project, customized museum- and school-based experiences co-designed with teachers to amplify their curriculum. Thank you 826 Boston for also supporting this special project.

This year’s program would not have been possible without the generosity and dedication of many individuals and organizations. The ICA extends our most sincere thanks to the Nathaniel Saltonstall Arts Fund for their longstanding support of the WallTalk program, as well as the Wagner Foundation and the many other foundations and government, corporate, and individual partners who allow us to do what we do. I am grateful for the many teachers and administrators at our partner schools who contribute time, energy, and enthusiasm to the program. I also extend my deepest appreciation to the ICA Education staff: Education Department Coordinator Lenny Schnier, Teaching Artists Katytarika Bartel, Dzidzor, Olivia Feal, and Mary Teuscher, and most especially Jessie Magyar, School and Family Programs Manager. A final, heartfelt thank you to all the young people who opened themselves up to art, to ideas, and to us. Thank you for sharing with us the stories that move you.

Betsy Gibbons
Director of Teen Programs
Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston
Katytarika Bartel (they/them) is an artist, educator, and organizer based in Lowell, Massachusetts. Katytarika is a queer, mixed-race Thai-American photographer and award-winning filmmaker interested in shining light on spaces of in-between. Katytarika is fiercely passionate about making photography more accessible, letting young people do things, and the color yellow. Behind the lens, Katytarika is an arts educator and youth worker at various nonprofits in Greater Boston. Their favorite workshops to facilitate involve lots of poetry, collective movement, and claiming youth power. Katytarika is the co-founder and co-director of the Boston-based art collective ANGRY ASIAN GIRLS, which works actively in the community to promote and uplift the narratives of Asian American and Pacific Islander (APIA) young folks.

Dzidzor (she/her, pronounced JEE-jaw) is a Ghanian-American folk and performing artist, author, and entrepreneur. Dzidzor’s style of call and response has reimagined poetry and storytelling as an interactive experience that invites the audience to challenge, inspire, and encourage themselves beyond traditional forms. She began performing through slam poetry and now curates spaces like Black Cotton Club and facilitates empowerment workshops at libraries, women’s shelters, and schools and performs around the world, spreading the message of “being” and freedom. Dzidzor is releasing her first listening project, entitled “Bush Woman,” this spring.

Olivia Feal (she/her) holds a degree in art history with a concentration in museums from Smith College and could have never gotten there without the support of her professors at CUNY LaGuardia Community College, where she transferred from. Born and raised in New York City, she owes her passion in museum and arts education to a high school internship at the Rubin Museum of Art. She has had the pleasure to work in the education departments at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, Smith College Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum, and the Dallas Museum of Art. In addition to being a WallTalk Teaching Artist, she is the Program Coordinator at the Cambridge Art Association.

Jessie Miyu Magyar (she/her) is the School and Family Programs Manager at the ICA and has been a teaching artist for WallTalk since 2017. Prior to joining the ICA, Jessie was an art therapist for youth and families in Boston, Chicago, and Milwaukee. She wants to see and make beautiful things, all while continuing to challenge what beauty is. Her practice as a maker, art therapist, multicultural educator, and human has shaped her work as a museum educator and commitment toward a more just, equitable, and creative society for all.

Mary Teuscher (she/her) is a dancer/choreographer focused on inclusion and community. A former GED teacher, Mary is committed to education justice and access to high-quality arts education as a human right. Her love of movement has taken her to San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she trained with Andanza and Bread and Puppet Theater, and to Salvador, Brazil, to study with Roxangela Silvestre. Mary has performed in works at AS220, the RISD Museum, Movement Research NYC, Providence Fringe Festival, Outside the Box, Boston Conservatory, and the Boston Center for the Arts. As a dance maker she explores the idea of make-believe, false binaries, physical abandon, and the use of imagination as a neuromuscular force. Mary also loves to write poems, draw, paint, cook, take photos, collect found objects, invent unusual musical instruments, and dream up ideas for expansive and unwieldy public art projects. She holds a master’s in teaching from Brown University.
INTRODUCTION

Visitors come to the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston to experience contemporary art. They come to see something different. To see something that inspires them. To see something that moves them. Each year, WallTalk students engage deeply with the art on view through close looking, discussion, exploration, and making. This year, we asked students to dive deep into the stories that move us. This yearlong theme was looked at both metaphorically, welcoming students to connect personally and emotionally with artwork, and literally, through the fall 2019 exhibition When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art. WallTalk students reflected on migration, movement, and identity. They considered cultural, political, social, and familial histories and how those histories have shaped their identities. This year, they created work that presented who they are, where they’ve come from, and where they want to go.
The work represented in this publication was inspired by the ICA’s major fall exhibition When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art. Borrowing its title from Warsan Shire’s poem “Home,” the exhibition presented work from 20 artists from more than a dozen countries, all responding to the global experience of migration. We can’t escape news of migration, immigration, and displacement; it’s everywhere, from our newspapers to our TVs to our social media. However, migration is not new. Rather, it has existed since humans have existed on this planet. We are a species that has always been on the move, and yet, no two migration stories are the same. Each of the 20 artists along with every one of our WallTALK students has their own personal experiences regarding migration and has presented their stories through their unique vision.

2019–2020 YEAR
While we had some returning students, the vast majority of WallTALK students this year were new to the program. Many were new to the ICA. Some were new to museums.

Prior to the students’ first ICA visit, teaching artists visited their classrooms to introduce WallTALK and give a sneak peek into When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art. Students began to think about the theme of home through prompts engaging their senses. During their visit to the ICA, students engaged with various works; several chapters of this publication focus on a selection of those works they experienced. Each chapter discusses how the students engaged with the work at the ICA and during follow-up workshops back in their classrooms. We have included examples of gallery questions, student responses, artwork, writing, and more. When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art gave students the opportunity to connect to personal stories of migration in the context of identity and teaching artists encouraged students to think about their identities within the contexts of their communities and the larger infinite universe. Under the mentorship of teaching artists, students developed their own written, visual, and performative work throughout the year.
WHAT IS HOME?

The title When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art, was borrowed from Warsan Shire’s poem “Home.” She wrote, “You only leave home/When home won’t let you stay.”

To help engage the senses and dive into creative thinking and writing, WallTalk teaching artists asked students to visualize and respond to the following prompts:

What does home smell like?
What does home taste like?
What does home feel like?
What does home look like?
What does home sound like?
What is home?

These are a few of the responses we received...

Home Smells Like...

Chinese food
Plants
Nail polish
Coffee
Food coming from the kitchen
Flowers
Dog
Laughing

Home Tastes Like...

Sancocho
Omelet
Lasagna
Fresh fruits
Tradition
Frijoles
Christmas day candy/boxed chocolates

The best thing in the world
Curry goat with yellow rice, seasoned with the world
Rice and chicken with a Dominican twist
Tamales
Pho
Ice cream
Soul food
Rice and beans
Mom’s favorite drink: peach punch
Vanilla with caramel sauce and granola
Sugar and salt: it can be sweet or salty at times

Home Feels Like...

Steaming hot weather
Heaven
Summer all the time
Love & sadness and more love
The warm sun
It’s lost & won’t come back
A warm place to be at
Happiness
A brisk spring breeze
Safety
Home looks like care. It feels like positive energy flowing from room to room.
Home feels like a smooth cocoa butter on my skin but sometimes it feels a bit rough
Happiness and peaceful cold in the morning
Church, peace, loving people
Opening the fridge and seeing the food you’ve been anticipating
The ocean. It’s sometimes peaceful but sometimes chaotic.

Home Looks Like...
A blue house
A messy bedroom
Family
My cat sleeping
Cluttered
Siblings

Home Sounds Like...
Quiet, peaceful
Laughter
Barking
Trains
Chaotic
Laughing
Birds chirping
Everyone in my family talking at once
People cheering
A lo-fi soundtrack with rain in the background, because you unwind to the rhythm
A lovely and peaceful song
A smooth R&B beat, and it's not too loud.
Like there's a party with salsa playing
Rose in Harlem
An opera song; very dynamic
Bachata
Some Kizomba. It's energetic and dance-worthy

Home Is...
Paradise with loads of flowers
My home country without my own mix
All the family together making memories
The building where I eat and sleep

A bed of flowers blooming
Wherever my bed is
A family that supports and encourages my time with them
Family, love, and mom's food
A place, thing, or person that you find comfort in
Anywhere with people who genuinely care for my well-being
Loud, safe, and loving
My safe place, the only place in this world I feel the most comfortable
Where you feel safe to be yourself without judgment
Home is a place where I find my peace but sometimes is a bit crazy
Endless laughter shared with those that you love and cherish
WallTalk has always been about inviting youth voices into the museum walls and bringing unique experiences into the classroom. Acknowledging the amazing work that teachers are doing in their classes and the potential for direct connections to be had with our exhibitions, we decided to engage in a Special Project this year with *When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art* and Boston International Newcomers Academy (BINcA). We worked with the Newcomers Academy and students in 11th and 12th grade to explore the themes of migration and movement with contemporary art. We partnered with 826 Boston, a nonprofit youth writing and publishing organization, and teachers from BINcA to design gallery experiences and in-class workshops to support the projects, lessons, and work they were doing in the classrooms. We hope to continue Special Projects next year with another WallTalk school in which we bring the themes, ideas, and connections of our exhibitions and develop curated curricula to support the learning happening in schools.

During their visit to the ICA, students from Boston International Newcomers Academy were invited to create their own interpretations of home using lines from Warsan Shire’s poem. Using a method known as cut-and-paste poetry combined with collages, students created their own visual poetry inspired by home and their own migration stories.
no one skin would be tough enough

if home is a city of fire

no one would leave home and wade through the oceans

until home is a sweaty voice in your ear

I don't know what I've become

home is the barrel of the gun and

how do the word #save #could take me

back

Your Survival is more

Important!!!

Because sometimes you just have to get over things, friends or places where you can't express

Your survival is more

Important!

Because the only person that matters is you
And you always have to make sure that you know where you going And also where you come from!

Because...

Your survival is more

Important!

don't let no one to bring you down
Because...
it’s not something you ever thought of doing

unless the water is safer than the land

is safer than here

you have to understand.

Entender algo siempre se nos dificulta, juzgar algo es Super Fácil, ayudar nunca podemos… Entender es observar, pensar, que podemos hacer, para ser mejor.

Muchas veces pensamos, caer en el abismo por la razón de no querer Entender nuestro mundo, en el que hay en día vimos.

Entender es saber reconocer cuando nos equivocamos, Entender es ser más inteligente, para hacer nuevas cosas, Entender es saber valorar a las personas que tenemos en nuestro lado.
1/GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

“A line is an important form that carries immense meaning when drawn between territories and how the line really decides the fate of citizens on either side.”
—Reena Saini Kallat, Artist

Reena Saini Kallat
Woven Chronicle 2011–2016
Circuit boards, speakers, electrical wires, and fittings; single-channel audio (10:00 minutes)

Upon entering When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art, students were immediately faced with Kallat’s large-scale installation featuring a map of the world. As the first piece in the exhibition, it was an opportunity to immediately place the issue of migration within a global perspective, to remind students that migration is not new. It has always coincided with the existence of humans on this planet. It is experienced around the globe and thus the stories of migration are a myriad collection of unique experiences. While the priority of teaching artists was to foster connections between students and works of art in the exhibition, this piece allowed the opportunity to discuss the issue of migration within a global perspective and to provide clarity on the various terms and concepts associated with the issue.

Above: Students from Boston Collegiate Charter School
GALLERY QUESTIONS

What is going on in this artwork?

What messages about migration do you think the artist is telling?

What are the stories being told today by the media about migration?

What are the reasons why someone would migrate?

Where on this map do you feel connected to?
TALKBACK

STUDENTS RESPOND—
What is Art?

Art has a story to tell.
Victoria
Boston Latin Academy

The way humans express themselves.
Anonymous
Boston Community Leadership Academy

Art doesn’t have to be something drawn. It has to be something that connects you with something.
Nadia
Boston Community Leadership Academy

IDK but, it’s interesting.
Elidja
Boston Latin Academy
“What brought me to Juan Manuel is I see a reflection of me. I was here illegally. I went through the same kinds of fears growing up.”
—Camilo Ontiveros, Artist

Camilo Ontiveros
Temporary Storage: The Belongings of Juan Manuel Montes
2017
Personal belongings of Juan Manuel Montes, rope, metal sawhorse, aluminum base, and wood

After discussing migration on a global scale, WallTalk students came face-to-face with Camillo Ontiveros’s piece Temporary Storage: The Belongings of Juan Manuel Montes (2017), literally. Students were asked to look closely and to begin to name the objects they recognized: a bed, a chair, boxing gloves, a karate uniform, textbooks, a mirror… For some who saw the mirror, they also saw a face. Ontiveros strategically placed a photograph of Juan Manuel Montes, the first known DACA recipient to be deported from the United States during the Trump Administration, so that the viewer would see his face within the mirror when viewed at a specific angle. Teaching artists would then ask the students, who else do you see within the mirror? Ontiveros wanted the viewer to see themselves alongside Juan’s portrait, just as he saw himself in Juan’s story. Migration is very much a global issue; Ontiveros reminds us that it is also deeply personal and rooted in human experiences.
GALLERY QUESTIONS

Here we see objects that Juan left behind. What do you imagine he brought with him?

If you had to move with little notice, what would you bring with you? What would you leave behind?

How do you want to be remembered? What would you want to say to people in power today about the legacy they are leaving? What advice would you give to someone younger than you about leaving a legacy?
GALLERY ACTIVITY

The teaching artists passed out blank cards and pencils and invited students to create a “symbolic self-portrait.” If you were to assemble a series of objects to represent who you are right now, what would you include? Students were first encouraged to share their drawings in pairs and eventually shared out within the larger group.

QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS FROM STUDENTS AT EAST BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL:

What's in there?
Masterpiece
A mattress
Trash art
Junk
Color
Large
Many materials
Traveling

Homeless
Confusing
Tangled
His life’s messy
Cool
“What the...”
Odd
Multi-detailed
Creativity
Compact
Wow
Treasure
In thinking about migration globally and personally, teaching artists worked with students to find their own personal connections to local, national, and global stories. Using newspaper cutouts, students engaged in “blackout poetry.” After reading an article, they would then black out sections and words with a black marker and/or paint to create their own poem or story using the words available. Despite the simple instructions, students were able to take the process in their own direction to express their creativity and insight.
TALKBACK
STUDENTS RESPOND—
Why do you think people make art?

To make others feel, to educate, to enlighten, to remember things, and for fun.
Annabel
Boston Latin Academy

To find some type of meaning.
Rasheed
Boston Community Leadership Academy

To feel liberated.
Kendra
Boston Community Leadership Academy

To let go. To be free.
Kyle
Boston Latin Academy
"...it’s about the movement. Because as a beholder of the work, you need to move your body to experience the work. And that’s the way I experience my life.”

—Do Ho Suh, Artist

The teaching artists invited the students to close their eyes, if they felt comfortable, and to imagine the first place they remember living. Walking around the space in their mind’s eye, students were asked to visualize as much as their memory allowed. The teaching artists then asked, what do you remember? If you were to choose a color for that place, what would it be? The students were then introduced to Do Ho Suh’s Hubs, ghostlike structures made of stainless-steel frames and polyester fabric, replicating his childhood homes to scale. Students were then invited to enter the structures. They not only had the opportunity to witness the artist’s memory from the outside; they were able to enter it.
QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS FROM STUDENTS AT CHARLESTOWN HIGH SCHOOL:

Reflections through stairs
Looks cool
Why did he make this?
Resembles a house
Colorful

Looks like a hologram, to be more specific
How was this created?
Glass walls
Stairs
See through
Beautiful
Creative
Surprised

GALLERY QUESTIONS

What do you notice about the material and colors the Hubs are made from? What do you think that choice says about the artist’s memory of home?

What do you imagine it smells like in this home? What does it sound like? What temperature is it?

Why do you think the artist wants to invite strangers into his childhood home?

The artist talks a lot about how “your house gets inside of you.” What does he mean? Have you ever experienced that feeling?
WRITING WORKSHOP

Teaching artists visited students back in their classes and facilitated workshops in writing and performance inspired by their visit to the ICA. Teaching artists planned games and activities to help students warm up and brainstorm ideas for their own work. Teaching artists then supported each student in developing their creative writing, inspired largely in part by how they connected to When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art. The resulting poems and written work were as varied as each student’s story and connection to migration, movement, and home.

Family stays at home
Friends come and go
Bonds stick or soften
Relationships either prosper or get put in a coffin
Finished means you’re complete
None means stay on your feet
Yourself is when you’re alone
Rarity is something we all are becoming to be
Family knows my friends
Friends stick together like bonds
Bonds keep our relationships
Relationships

Rasheed
Boston Community Leadership Academy

The car on the street zooming to and fro
Many turns
Many corners
Dogs barking behind a fence
House on the left
House on the right
But one was blue
People on the street

Jordi
Boston Latin Academy
It’s somewhere I feel secure
Home’s a busy place sometimes loud
But always welcoming
Always welcoming & cheerful
Always partying & food
It’s somewhere things fall into place
Home is a place I will miss
Home is where my family is

Anonymous
Boston Community Leadership Academy

Open my front door.
Stairs that are wooden.
A place for you shoes if they are dirty or muddy.
Right is my kitchen where the stove is hot.
Turn right and my kitchen table, black set.
Turn around and walk straight through the kitchen and smells like Apples.
Brown couch u shape.
Turn a little my porch the door is cold.
Turn more there’s my christmas tree colorful.
Turn again there’s my tv on a big fireplace.
Turn more and see my glass cabinet filled with our baby stuff.

Anonymous
East Boston High School

Home
Never in my life did I think I would leave home.
Never in my life did I think I would need her affection.
Never in my life did I—
Never in my life did I think I would miss home.
Never in my life did I think I would want to be her best friend.
Never in my life did I think I would miss her energy.
Never in my life did I think I would want to work with her.
Never in my life did I think I would want to play with her.
Never in my life did I think I would want to share my food with her.
Never in my life did I think I would want to play soccer with her.
Never in my life did I think I would crave her affection.
Never in my life did I thin—

Christopher
Boston Community Leadership Academy

I walked into the room.
I see the playstation on the table.
Don’t touch.
As it is precious.
Football he watches.
The pirates he loves.
He gives his dog a hug.

Ameen
Boston Latin Academy
Home is my safe place
Home is warm fun & relaxing
Home is the place where I find my peace.
With the love of my mama, safety is with me.
We all as a FAMILY are unstoppable.
My parents held my hands while I was discovering the world.
My room is the place where my freedom lives.
Where I make the decisions in my life.
Where I celebrate MY ACHIEVEMENTS.
Where I get to know about new opportunities.
But all together comes back home.
HOME where I get to know who I am truly.

Ricardo
Boston Community Leadership Academy

Home is being where my Family is. Where I can be free with love around me. Where the field is a place I could always go to and play softball. And playing softball gives me opportunities. When I’m happy. Also when I could think about the future.
Even though it could be scary, but also the present. Home is ME.

Nadia
Boston Community Leadership Academy
We walked down the street
We could feel the summer heat
We rushed to the metal door
Because it started to pour
We hurried up the 12 steps
Our shoes were very wet
We went down the hallway
We could smell the food

Hadassah
Boston Latin Academy

---

Home is the safe space.
In the home you need a family.
To have a healthy big family you need kids.
Kids are also our future.
They will be here until the afterlife.
Everyone will see death.
That will cause everyone to go through sadness and sorrow.
The people close to them will grieve.
The ones who are built for that kind of pain become resilient.
Then the strong survive.

Abdiaziz
Boston Community Leadership Academy

---

My home brings me peace. I feel free, where I can feel and be myself. I love how my home brings me comfort. It’s my safety where I can cry in peace, tell the truth without being scared of judgments where I can laugh till my belly hurts. Where I eat one of the most amazing foods made by my amazing mother. Food that’s made with love. It makes me miss home, when I am not home. My home is what makes me who I am, I am myself.

Jocela
Boston Community Leadership Academy
TALKBACK

STUDENTS RESPOND—
What do you like about making art?

I can easily describe my feelings without speaking/explaining.

Harley
Boston Latin Academy

I like how from my art you can tell something about me.

Caitlin
Boston Community Leadership Academy

I like how art is what you make it to be. No wrong or right answers.

Jocela
Boston Community Leadership Academy

I'm not bored and I have something to look back at and be proud.

Luis
Boston Community Leadership Academy
Surrounded by 6,000 books wrapped in brightly colored Dutch wax-print fabric, many of the WallTalk students found themselves in awe. Many were curious about the fabric: a textile that is multicultural in its origins, having been inspired by Indonesian batiks, appropriated by the Dutch, produced in West Africa, and then reappropriated into West African clothing and culture. Everyone was curious about the names inscribed along the books’ spines. What was their connection? Shonibare established that in order to be featured in The American Library these individuals had to have made an impact on American society and culture AND be either a first- or second-generation immigrant or a descendent of the Great Migration. Students were intrigued that the library featured people who are actively pro-immigration as well as individuals who are known for their anti-immigration policies. The teaching artists reminded students that many of the spines were blank, symbolizing that there are still stories left to be added to this library, including many of theirs.

"It is the story of America."
—Yinka Shonibare CBE, Artist

**GALLERY QUESTIONS**

- Of the names listed on the books, who would you want to have dinner with?
- Who is someone you’d want to interview? (What is one question you would like to ask them?)
- Who is someone you’d follow on Instagram?
- Whose autobiography would you want to read?
- Whose name would you make sure was included in this library?
- If your name was on one of these books, what would be written inside?
VISUAL ARTS WORKSHOP

How do you want your story to be told? After experiencing *When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art*, WallTalk students were encouraged to reflect on their own and their family’s experiences with migration and movement. Students were then asked to think about who they are in this moment, and, using the form of an accordion book, to create a personal archive of the stories they would want to pass on. Using bookmaking techniques and drawing, painting, and collage materials, students constructed their own artists’ books inspired by their experiences.
Life the way that you want.
Above: Student from Boston Latin Academy

4 / The Stories to be Told

A chair is still a chair
Even when there's no one sitting there...
TALKBACK

STUDENTS RESPOND—
What do you like about going to the ICA?

The exhibits change every time, and it’s a different experience every time.

Nico
Boston Latin Academy

I like seeing all the different ideas people come up with.

Fena
Boston Community Leadership Academy

It’s small but everything connects.

Patrick
Boston Latin Academy

So many pieces that could mean anything to anyone.

Dina
Boston Community Leadership Academy

It’s a FUN PLACE!

Ricardo
Boston Community Leadership Academy

I learn something new every time.

Maria
Boston Community Leadership Academy
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