

“Architecture and Fashion”: Something in Common

Yasser Osman El-Gammal*

Permanent Faculty, Architectural Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Egypt

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***Corresponding author:** Yasser O El-Gammal, Permanent Faculty, Architectural Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Egypt

Abstract

“Architecture and Fashion - Something in Common”, is exploring the parallels between one of the most two influential fields in the creative design industry; which are “Architecture” and “Fashion”. The purpose of the research work introduced in this paper is to find the common elements between architecture and fashion. “Design” and “Creativity” are major common elements between architecture and fashion, where both fields involves; imagination, art, visualization, creativity, and skill. On the other hand, architects develop a variety of creative design skills during their undergraduate studies in addition to learning their major in “Architecture”, such diversity of skills expands the realm of their job market, so that those who did not manage to find jobs in their field of major as architects may be able to find jobs in fields where they have developed creative design skills, during their undergraduate years of study². The paper is aiming towards integrating learning fashion design principles as part of the undergraduate architecture syllabus, which in turn may facilitate numerous job opportunities for architects quitting their major field of study but still wish to work in the fashion industry which is a field where they can express and practice their creative design skills. Research introduced in this paper found that most famous and influential fashion designers were architects before they switched to fashion design, it was also found that there were many fashion designers who made architecture designs and great buildings, similarly, many famous and influential architects made great fashion designs.

Keywords: Fashion and Architecture; Fashion Architect; Fashion Designers; Architectural Fashion; Building Fashion

Problem

Job market statistics in USA and Europe found that salaries of fresh graduate architects are very low compared to other professional jobs that require creativity and design skills; also, it was found that finding a job opportunity for a fresh graduate to work as an architect in a design firm is scarce, which caused many fresh graduates to accept working as “Interim architects”¹. In the beginning, without receiving any salary for a period of time that may, in many cases, extend to two or three years after graduation, in hope that they will be able to have a permanent employment in the firm at the end. For the above reasons; the concept of expanding the job market for architects have been adopted in many schools of architecture around USA and Europe. Since architects develop a variety of skills during their undergraduate studies in addition to learning their major in “Architecture”, they learn graphic design skills which allow them to work as graphic designers, and in the field of publication design, they also learn 3Dimensional visualization skills so that they can work as visualization specialists, rendering specialists, and animators.

And in some architecture schools; they learn interior design, theatre, and cinema plateau design, web design, multimedia design, and some industrial design principles. This diversity of skills expands the realm of their job market, so that those who did not manage to find jobs in their field of major as architects may be able to find jobs in fields where they have developed creative design skills, during their undergraduate years of study. Since “Design” and “Creativity” are major common elements between architecture and fashion, where both fields involves; imagination, art, visualization, creativity, and skill; integrating learning fashion design principles as part of the undergraduate architecture syllabus may facilitate numerous job opportunities for architects quitting their major field of study but still wish to work in the fashion industry which represents a field where they can express and practice their creative design skills.

Literature Review

The literature introduced in this research paper is exploring the common elements between architecture and fashion, through

introducing examples of fashion designs influenced by architectural buildings, and vice versa. It also introduces some of the most famous fashion designers whose background study was architecture, and architects who worked as both architects and fashion designers.

An “Interim job” is a temporary occupation where a worker is employed for a specific period of time, and without the notion for changing such working status into a permanent employment. “Interim architects” are usually fresh graduates who are temporary hired by design firms, as the latter prefers those fresh graduates above experienced, or intermediate, and senior architects due to their higher salary rates. However, in some cases the word “Interim architect” is used for describing undergraduate students of architecture who spend some time receiving a “Training opportunity” in a design firm, where the time they spent has been calculated as part of the completion of their credits in order to be eligible for graduation. In general, “Interim employment opportunities” are characterized by its no, or very small compensation.

One of the major working issues that aroused in USA and Europe since 2000 is that major architecture firms started to heavily depend on “Interim architects” as the main back office workforce in order to minimize their major running expenses represented in salaries. Instead, the firm in many cases gives the “Interim architect” a certificate of experience with a little compensation. This situation caused many fresh graduate architects to quit the field and start using skills they learned during their undergraduate years of study to work in the creative design industry, as free lancers, or finding better job opportunities as employees.

Research Goal

The goal of this research is to find the common elements between architecture and fashion, for the purpose of integrating learning fashion design skills in architecture syllabus, especially at the under graduate level, where architecture students developed various creative design skills.

Research Scope

The research work introduced in this paper is focusing on exploring attributes that may be common between architecture design and fashion design. Subjects like “Fashion Cycles” and/or “Fashion Trends” are not within the scope of work introduced in this research paper.

Methodology

In order for the research paper to fulfill its goals; the paper started with an overview about the nature of fashion design, then the paper discussed the following topics:

- a) Fashion Designers with Architectural Background
- b) Examples of Fashion Designers who Make Architectural Designs

- c) Examples of Architects who Make Fashion Designs
- d) Examples of Fashion Designs Influenced by Architecture
- e) Examples of Architectural Designs Influenced by Fashion

Discussion

Overview

Fashion designs are inspired from all sources; Fine arts, society, culture, nature, architecture, etc. There is a great synergy between architecture and fashion. While architecture provides spaces for living, work, entertainment, learning, health, etc. Fashion provides wearable art. Many Fashion designers use their materials as building blocks, constructing all types of dresses and garments in the same way architects utilize concrete, cement, and glass to build up their structures Stewart Jessica [1].

Fashion Designers with Architectural Background

Fashion giants such as the late “Pierre Balmain”, “Gianfranco Ferré”, “Fernando Garcia”, and “Coco Chanel”; they all came from an architectural background. Also, famous classic fashion designers like “Versace”, “Cardin”, and many others studied architecture before switching to fashion.

Balmain: “Pierre Alexandre Claudius Balmain”, or “Balmain” [May 1914–June 1982], was a famous French fashion designer and founder of the leading post-war fashion house “Balmain”, he was known for his sophisticated and elegance fashion designs. “Balmain” studied architecture at the “École des Beaux-Arts” in Paris, France. While in 1934, he switched from architecture to fashion when he was offered a job at the “Edward Molyneux” fashion studio Elle-Balmain [2]. “Balmain” was clear in his words for incorporating architectural elements into his designs, stating that: “Dressmaking is the Architecture of Movement”.

Gianfranco Ferré: “Gianfranco Ferré’s”, [August 1944 – June 2007], was a famous Italian fashion designer who studied architecture at the “Milan Polytechnic Institute” in Milan, Italy. He was also known as “The architect of fashion” for his background study as an architect, and his original attitude towards creating fashion design. BBC News [3]. “Ferré” began his fashion career in 1970 by designing accessories, and then worked as a raincoat designer from 1972 to 1974. Afterwards, he started his own company “Baila” in 1974 and launched his signature collection for women in 1978. His first men’s collection appeared in 1982, followed by his first couture collection in Rome in 1986. Then in 1989, “Ferré” was chosen by “Bernard Arnault” the owner of “Christian Dior”³ to replace its director “Marc Bohan”. (Blanchard Tamsin [4].

Fernando Garcia: “Fernando Garcia” is a famous fashion designer, who grew up traveling between the “Dominican Republic” and “Northern Spain”. His love for drawing on napkins led him to

study architecture at the University of “Notre Dame” in USA. Being a creative artist and architect made him switch into fashion design. He found the opportunity to work at “Oscar de la Renta” fashion studio in New York where he built his reputation as a recognized fashion designer; he won with Laura Kim the “Swarovski Award for Emerging Talent for Monse” fashion design award. In his opinion about the interrelation between fashion and architecture he said: CFDA [5]. “I Find A Building’s Façade, For Example, To Be Similar to When I’m Trying to Find A Balance in Designing Any Garment “

Coco Chanel: “Coco Chanel”, or “Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel”, [August 1883 –January 1971] was a famous French fashion designer and businesswoman. She was the founder of the famous “Chanel brand”. “Chanel” was nominated on “TIME” magazine’s list of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century. Her fashion design for females was recognized as the feminine standard of style of the post-World War I era. In her opinion about the interrelation between fashion and architecture she said: (Horton, R. Simmons, and Sally [6]. “Fashion Is Architecture: It Is A Matter of Proportions”.

Versace: “Gianni Versace” [1946-1997] one of the most innovative fashion designers of the 20th century, being inspired by studying architectural drafting and the ancient Greek and Roman architecture in his early age; Versace entered the world of fashion with his clothes designed using architectural materials like metals, plastics, and leathers. He was awarded the best fashion designer of the year [1982-83] for his fall/winter collection called the “L’Occhio d’Oro”, or the “Golden Eye”, for designing women garments made of metals cut by laser technology. (Encyclopedia of World Biography [7] (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Showing the “ Selena White Laser Cut Cross-Body Bag” introduced by “Versace” in his Spring 2008 Collection, the bag is made of: White Faux Leather, Silver Hardware, a Popper Snap Closer, with a Detachable Chain Strap, the design was cut by laser and came under the “Versace Jeans” Branding in 2008, Source: Daniel Footware [38].

Cardin

“Pietro Cardin”, also known as “Pierre Cardin”, is a famous Italian-French fashion designer who moved with his wealthy parents from Italy escaping “Fascism”⁴ to settle in France. In 1945, and after the end of World War II, he studied architecture in Paris.

Yet with a great passion for fashion design; he worked with many famous fashion houses like “Paquin”⁵ “Elsa Schiaparelli”⁶ and also became the head of design department at “Christian Dior’s” atelier in 1947. “Cardin” founded his fashion house in 1950. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [8]. Being influenced by his architectural background study; “Cardin” was known for his inclination towards applying geometrical shapes and motifs in his fashion design and often ignoring the female form. He was also known by his “Avant-Garde” style [7] and “Space Age” designs⁸. In 1954, he introduced his famous “Bubble Dress” design inspired by the geometrical shapes of ellipsoids and spheres. Pierre Cardin [9] (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Showing “Cardin’s” 1954 Bubble Dress design that was inspired by the geometrical shapes of the ellipsoids and spheres Source: Pierre Cardin [9].

“Christian Dior” is one of the most famous and biggest fashion houses of the twentieth century, founded by the French fashion designer “Christian Dior”, who lived between [January 1905 and 24 October 1957]

“Fascism” is a political ideology that was developed after World War I in Italy and Germany, it was characterized by its extreme nature, almost classifying human beings as superior nations and others that should be dominated by military invasion, “Fascism” was a very oppressive political form of dictatorship that was against “Liberalism” and “Socialism”. The ideology was adopted by “Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini” who was the leader and Prime Minister of Italy from 1922 to 1943, “Fascism” was one of the major political ideologies that influenced the beginning of world war II in 1939, (Grimsley Shawn [10]

“Paquin” is a leading French fashion design house founded in Paris by “Jeanne Paquin”. She lived between [1869 and 1936], and she was considered one of the female pioneers in the fashion industry, (Brenda Polan, Roger Tredre [11].

“Schiaparelli” Designs, was a famous fashion house founded by the Italian fashion designer “Elsa Schiaparelli” [1890–1973], she was also considered as one of the most female pioneers in fashion design between world war I and II. Her clients included many prominent figures and celebrities like “Heiress Daisy Fellowes” and actress “Mae West” Bradley Laura, Watt Judith [12].

“Avant-Garde” is an intellectual, artistic, and cultural movement lead by many writers, critiques, artists, and social activists who challenged the main stream of thinking in both their societies and their professional fields. The “Avant-Garde” movement dates back to early 1850’s. And it had great influence on art, writing, architecture, and many other social related fields. Gongini Barbara [13].

“Space Age” is a term defining the time period where the space science technologies began to evolve and introduced to the main stream media, the space age is marked by the launch of “Sputnik” space ship in 1957” Garber Steve [14]

Examples of Fashion Designers Who Make Architectural Designs

What follows are some examples of famous fashion designers who make architectural designs

Versace: “Versace” inc. was commissioned by “ENSHAA PSC”; a major real estate developer in UAE to design a luxury 130,000 square meters [1,400,000 sqft] seven stars “Palazzo Versace Dubai” hotel in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, the hotel consists of 215 hotel rooms and suites, and 169 residencies, together with main entrance, high ceilings, multipurpose halls, restaurants, spa, landscaped gardens with promenades, terraces, water features, reflection pools, and other amenities. The hotel was aimed to reflect the “Versace” lifestyle. Its public spaces and hallways were designed to showcase the artwork, sculpture, featured sketches, and artifacts of the atelier “Versace” gowns, while every interior detail in the hotel including furniture in the hotel rooms and other hotel spaces were exclusively designed by “Versace” to create an immersive experience of his lifestyle Marcellous Jones [15] (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Showing the “Palazzo Versace Dubai” hotel in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, designed by “Versace”, Source: (Marcellous Jones [15]).

Virgil Abloh: “Virgil Abloh” is an American creative fashion designer, and founder of the Milan-based fashion label “Off-White” [9] “Abloh” also studied architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology. In addition to running a famous fashion line, he collaborated with “IKEA”, to create a capsule furniture collection, and planned to publish a series of books that showcase his clothes alongside iconic structures by “Le Corbusier” and “Mies Van Der Rohe”. (Figure 4). “Abloh” quoted in an interview with the “Architectural Digest”, Maria Bobila [16], Mathew Taylor [17]. “The Idea Is to Teach My Demographic — The Younger Generation Who’s Immersed in Fashion — About Architecture Through These Sites.” Moreover, the style director at the “Architectural Digest” “Jane Keltner De Valle”, an established longtime fashion editor in both the “Women’s Wear Daily”, and “Elle” magazines, after moving to work in the “Architectural digest”; She interviewed “Abloh” and cited him as: “The Brains Behind Off-White and another Designer Who Heavily References Architecture in His Work”. In her personal opinion about the interrelation between fashion and architecture she stated that: Tyler Mccallnov [18]. “I think we’re going through such a seismic Cultural shift right now”



Figure 4: Left: Showing a glass cabinet with a wooden frame, to offer millennials a place to store and showcase sneakers, Right: Showing a simple wooden chair with a bright red Door Stop Interruption on one of its legs, both models were designed by “Virgil Abloh” For “IKEA”, Source: Gibson Eleanor [39]

Examples of Architects Who Make Fashion Designs

What follows are some examples of famous architects who make fashion designs



Figure 5: Showing a Shoes Designed by “Zaha Hadid” for “United Nude” Source: (zahahadidarchitects/Instagram [43]).

Zaha Hadid: In 2003, and in collaboration with “Zaha Hadid” under “Rem D. Koolhaas”¹⁰; the creative director and co-founder of “United Nude”.¹¹ They both launched their famous brand the “Möbius” shoe. Ryan John [19], United Nude [20]. (Figure 5).

A famous men’s wear collection designed by “Virgil Abloh”

“Rem D. Koolhaas” is the successor of his older uncle “Rem Koolhaas” the world famous Dutch architect. “Rem D. Koolhaas” has become the world’s top expert in technically “Advanced/ Architectural” ladies footwear.

“United Nude” is a fashion design house founded by “Rem D. Koolhaas”, the house started its fashion collection lines with designing high heels. Since the launch of its first shoe named “Möbius”, the design house produced a consecutive series of “Haute Couture runway” shoes with “Iris Van Herpen”, “Lady Gaga’s” Fame shoes, and the “Nova Shoe” by “Zaha Hadid”.

Frank Gehry: The famous architect “Frank Gehry”; designer of the “Guggenheim” Museum on the “Nervi6n” river in “Bilbao”, “Spain” has designed a hat for the “Lady Gaga’s”¹² collection, also in collaboration with “Louis Vuitton”¹³; he designed the “Twisted box” handbag. Basulto David [21], Neuendorf Henri [22] (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Left: Showing a hat designed for the “Lady Gaga’s” collection, Right: Showing the “Twisted box” handbag both designed by famous architect “Frank Gehry” in collaboration with “Louis Vuitton”, Source: Basulto David [21], Neuendorf Henri [24].

Examples of Fashion Designs Influenced by Architecture

Moreover, recent big fashion houses like “Balenciaga”, “Chloé”, “Fernando Garcia”, “Dolce” & “Gabbana”, and Guy Laroche” have created many collections with fashion lines inspired by architecture.

Balenciaga Spring 2008 Collection: “Balenciaga” was inspired in his Spring 2008 collection by the contemporary “Guggenheim” Museum, in “Bilbao”, “Spain” designed by the famous architect “Frank Gehry” Herald Tribune [23]¹⁴ (Figure 7).

Chloé Summer Collection 2016: “Chloé” Summer collection 2016 was influenced by the “Arabesque” of Islamic architecture. Chloé Offices [24]¹⁵ (Figure 8).



Figure 7: Showing “Balenciaga” Spring 2008 Collection Inspired By The “Guggenheim” Museum, In “Bilbao”, “Spain” By Architect “Frank Gehry”, Source: Scarfe Anna [42].



Figure 8: Showing “Chloé” Spring/Summer Collections 2016 and Its Inspiration from Islamic Architecture, Source: (koket, 2016).

Dolce & Gabbana Spring/Summer 2012 Collection: “Dolce” & “Gabbana” Spring/Summer 2012 collection inspired by the architecture of “Cathedral Notre-Dame De Reims” in France¹⁶ Wisf blog [25]. (Figures 9 & 10).



Figure 9: “Dolce” & “Gabbana” Spring/Summer 2012 Collections Inspired by the Architecture of “Cathedral Notre-Dame De Reims”, France. Source: WISF Blog [25].



Figure 10: “Guy Laroche” 2014 Collection Inspired by the “Frank Gehry” Beekman Tower, NY USA, Source: Blouinartinfo [26].

Guy Laroche 2014 Collection: “Guy Laroche” 2014 collection was inspired by the “Beekman Tower” in New York, USA, designed by the famous architect “Frank Gehry”¹⁷ Blouinartinfo [26].

Professionally known as “Lady Gaga”; “Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta” [Born March 28, 1986], is an American singer, songwriter, and actress. She is an icon in the entertainment industry known for her unconventional and provocative work of entertainment. NME UK London [27].

“Louis Vuitton Malletier”, referred to as “LV”, is a famous French fashion house founded in 1854 by “Louis Vuitton”. The collections and fashion lines of “Louis Vuitton” have been labeled by the well known “LV” brand.

“Balenciaga” is a luxury fashion house founded in “Spain” by “Cristóbal Balenciaga”, a Spanish designer born in the “Basque” Country. He had a reputation as a distinguished fashion designer with outstanding design standards, and he referred to as “The master of us all” by “Christian Dior”.

“Chloé” is a French luxury fashion house located in Paris and founded in 1952. Chloé fashions have been worn by many celebrities including “Marion Cotillard”, “Sienna Miller”, “Madonna”, “January Jones”, “Maggie Gyllenhaal”, “Cameron Diaz”, “Emma Stone”, “Clémence Poésy” and “Katie Holmes”.

“Dolce & Gabbana” is an Italian luxury fashion house founded in 1985 by the two Italian designers; “Domenico Dolce” and “Stefano Gabbana”. “Dolce & Gabbana” became famous after they won the “Woolmark” award in 1991, and Perfume’s Academy “Most Feminine Flavor of the Year” in 1993 for the unique fragrance of their “Dolce & Gabbana” perfume Vernon Polly [28].

“Guy Laroche” was a famous French fashion designer and founder of the high-fashion atelier “Eponymous” in 1957 in Paris. He was known for his skilful cutting and tailoring of garments with vibrant colors such as pink, orange, coral, topaz and turquoise, (Swank Hillary, Davis Kristen [29]).

Examples of Architectural Designs Influenced by Fashion

Out of many examples are some of the architecture works by both late architects “Zaha Hadid” and “Frank Gehry” who have spent some time off from designing buildings to work on jewelry, shoes, and bags. And because of their dual practice they were known for bringing elements of fashion into their designs, (Highs Nobility [30].

The Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion - By Zaha Hadid: “Karl Lagerfeld”, artistic director of “Maison Chanel” commissioned “Zaha Hadid” to design a mobile pavilion to showcase the best of his fashion house works celebrating the design of the iconic brand “Matelasse” bag. Fashion Phile [31], Rodgers Barry [32]¹⁸ The following figure shows that “Zaha Hadid” used the cross grid pattern on the design of the “Matelasse” bag as a finishing module on the overall body of the pavilion building (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Showing Zaha Hadid And Chanel Contemporary Art Container, The Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion By Zaha Hadid Architects Celebrating The Design Of The Iconic Brand “Matelasse” Bag. Source: (Fashion Phile [31], (AD Architectural Digest, 2017).

The Dancing House in Prague - by Frank Gehry: Inspired by a scene from the movie “Flying Down to Rio”¹⁹ of “Fred Astaire” and “Ginger Rogers’s”²⁰ garment; “Frank Gehry” designed a master piece; the “Dancing House” in “Prague”. Daniel Libeskind [33] (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Showing “Frank Gehry” Design of the “Dancing House” in “Prague” inspired by a Scene From the Movie “Flying Down To Rio” of Fred Astaire” and “Ginger Rogers’s” Garment. Source: Daniel Libeskind [33].

The pavilion presented in a futuristic fiction story devised by “Fabrice Bousteau, director of “Beaux-Arts” magazine.

“Flying Down to Rio” is one of the most famous American musical films produced in 1933 Wikipedia, [34].

“Fred Astaire” [May 1899- June 1987] and “Ginger Rogers” [July 1911- April 1995], were two iconic and famous Hollywood dance partners who made many motion pictures together from [1933 to 1949]. Wikipedia [35].

The Yokohama International Passenger Terminal - by Foreign Office Architects (FOA): The following figure is illustrating the design of “Yokohama International Passenger Terminal” by “Foreign Office Architects (FOA)” In 1995. The design concept was inspired from the “Viktor + Rolf” “Avant-Garde” fashion line Langdon David [36], Wikipedia [37] [21] (Figures 13 & 14).



Figure 13: Showing Design of the “Yokohama International Passenger Terminal” The Design Concept Was Inspired From The “Viktor + Rolf” “Avant-Garde” Fashion Line. Source: Langdon David [36].



Figure 14: Is a Diagram Showing aspects that both fashion and architecture have in common Like; visualization, concept, design, innovation, creativity, aesthetics, Elegance, and style. Source: (Researcher).

“Viktor & Rolf” is a famous fashion house specialized in creating conceptual and avant-garde designs. It was founded in 1993 by

Dutch fashion designers “Viktor Horsting” and “Rolf Snoeren”. “Viktor & Rolf” were known for their bridging the division between fashion and art [38-43].

Conclusion

- a) Most worldwide famous fashion designers studied architecture
- b) Some of the famous fashion designers make architectural designs for iconic buildings together with their practice as fashion designers.
- c) Some of the famous architects make fashion designs on their own or in collaboration with major fashion houses
- d) There are many famous architects inspired their work of architecture from fashion design
- e) There are many fashion design collections and brands that are inspired from architectural designs and buildings
- f) Architecture and Fashion have many aspects in common they both involve; visualization, concept, design, innovation, creativity, aesthetics, elegance, and style
- g) Both fashion and architecture influence each other, fashion and architecture exchange the use, and interpretation of; motifs, designs, styles, and patterns in the design of both garments and buildings.
- h) The process of creating the design of a building from scratch is similar to the process of creating the design of a garment, jewellery, shoe, or bag from scratch.

Recommendations

Design and creativity are major common elements between architecture and fashion, both fields involves; imagination, art, visualization, creativity, and skill. It is recommended that schools of architecture integrate learning fashion design principles as part of their undergraduate architecture syllabus, the same way graphic design and other creative design skills integrated with their major of study. The fashion design industry may facilitate numerous job opportunities for architects quitting their major field of study but still wish to work in a field where they can express and practice creative design skills. Moreover, learning “Fashion design” may not require a certificate re-validation across the globe for those architects who move from one country to another, unlike the study of architecture; where an architecture course is accredited in one place and not in another, even an experienced architect may be registered and a terminal in his/her field in one country, and may not be allowed to practice the profession when decided to move to another country.

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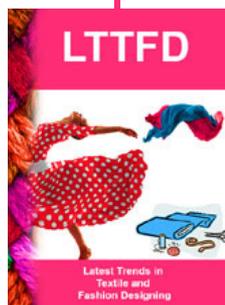
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