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Candela Capitán - SOLAS © Daniel Cao

EUROPALIA ESPAÑA

EUROPALIA, the festival that produces a multifaceted artistic programme every two years around a particular country or theme, celebrates its 30th edition this autumn with a large-scale Spanish biennial. Exactly forty years after a first edition in 1985, EUROPALIA ESPAÑA will unfold a multidisciplinary programme from October 8, 2025 to February 1, 2026, uniting heritage and contemporary art forms and providing fascinating perspectives on themes that connect and challenge us.

With Francisco de Goya as its main focus and inspiration, this festival highlights the cultural richness of Spain through visual arts, architecture, theatre, dance, music, performance, film, and literature, featuring both renowned names and lesser-known figures alike. The artistic teams from both countries have consciously chosen to select artists from different generations and not only from major cities like Madrid and Barcelona but also from different regions of Spain.

Exactly 40 years after the first time EUROPALIA was dedicated to Spain, the question of how to re-present EUROPALIA ESPAÑA today has posed a challenge. It prompted EUROPALIA to focus on the changes that Spanish society has experienced since the beginning of democracy and its incorporation into the European Union in 1986, as well as to explore artistic creation over the last four decades.



EUROPALIA.EU¹

GOYA: A CENTRAL FIGURE

The festival kicks off with the main exhibition *Luz y Sombra. Goya and Spanish Realism* at Bozar (Brussels), running from October 8, 2025, to January 11, 2026. This exhibition is built around one of the grandmasters of Spanish art, whose modern sensibility is more topical today than ever. Goya (1746–1828) is known for his impressive portraits and colourful folk scenes. His œuvre is at the same time characterized by socially critical imagery, including indictments against war and the general abuses of his time.

Curated by Rocío Gracia and Leticia Sastre, along with scientific committee members José de la Mano, Anna Reuter, and Rocío Robles, the exhibition invites reflection on Goya's work from a contemporary perspective. Goya and the 'Goyaesque', with all the connotations of light and shade, have become established in the Western imaginary since the 19th century as models, stereotypes of the authentically Spanish. Far from rejecting them, this exhibition uses these clichés as a springboard, trying to identify the shape and references of some of their basic patterns as a way of understanding 'Spanishness'.

Goya lived in a time of crisis, transformation, and paradigm shifts, with all the insecurities and possibilities that this generates—perhaps a time similar to our own. He captured the present, reflecting his time, and created a mirror in which we continue to see ourselves, even if our times are different. His contribution to constructing the Spanish collective imagination is undeniable, both within Spain and beyond, not from an idealized or idealizing perspective but rather from a critical and visionary attitude.



Francisco de Goya Retrato de Jovellanos con el arenal de San Lorenzo al fondo, 1782-1785 © Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid (España) CE2839 Depósito en el Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias (España) The exhibition brings together Goya's paintings, drawings, and engravings with works by his contemporaries and by artists of later generations (José Gutiérrez Solana, Pablo Picasso, Antonio Saura amongst others). In addition, new multidisciplinary creations, such as those by visual artist Asunción Molinos Gordo, sound artist Francisco Lopez, by filmmaker Albert Serra and by contemporary Spanish and Belgian writers, help to demonstrate the relevance of Goya's œuvre today. The ensemble of approximately 200 works explores Goya's legacy and its significance in the image of Spain.

From October 8, 2025 until January 11, 2026 at Bozar, Brussels





Luz y Sombra. Goya and Spanish Realism: exhibition calatogue

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Published by Pelckmans

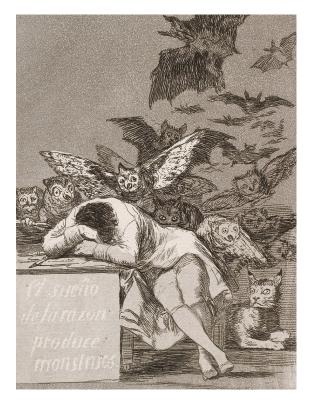
N° pages, copies, images, etc.: 280 p.

Ed. 4,000 copies. ENGLISH (Spanish insert TBC) Hardcover 25,000 words* / 200 images (*not counting institutional texts, bio of Goya, bibliography and colophon. Not counting captions/text notes).

Graphic design by Sara De Bondt

MAIN THEMES: CAPRICHOS, DISPARATES AND DESASTRES DE LA GUERRA

Caprichos, Disparates and **Desastres de la Guerra** (Quirks, Madnesses, Disasters of War) are titles to three engravings series and three terms that imbue Goya's critical and visionary spirit, all of which have inspired the EUROPALIA ESPAÑA programme as a whole and allowed it to connect the past with the present, and the local with the global. The series are sources of inspiration from which to view the present and explore contemporary themes. How would Goya's *Caprichos, Desastres de la Guerra*, or *Disparates* manifest today? What are our caprichos, our disasters, our absurdities? Here, the 'our' seeks to transcend identity, just as Goya did, in order to speak to the broadest possible community. This results in underlying themes that are certainly alive today in Spain, but which, from a broader perspective, concern us all: (Re)presentation; Connectedness, Democracy and Water.



Francisco de Goya, El sueño de la razón produce monstruos (No. 43), from Los Caprichos,1797-1798 **CAPRICHOS** represent inspiration, originality and creative freedom. In Goya's work, the *Caprichos* reflect a free attitude towards social and cultural conventions. In the contemporary context, this term can be related to consumerism, the culture of excess and the cult of the image. The subtheme of (Re)presentation explores how images and identities are created and perceived, focusing on social networks and the construction of ideals.



EUROPALIA ESPAÑA

The exhibition **Resolución. On lifetime decisions in Spanish cinema** at **MoMu (Antwerp)** examines Spanish cinema and depicts how women are portrayed during pivotal moments in their lives, such as departures, separations, and murders. **Cristina Garrido**'s **The White Cube** *is Never Empty* at **MACS (Hornu)** engages with visual representation and photographic reproduction of visual arts.

In their solo *The Making of a Lethargy* (Monty, Dans in Brugge, Antwerp), young performer Héctor Espuela Pablo deconstructs the fairy tale of *Sleeping Beauty* from a trans, non-binary perspective. Alberto Cortés challenges capitalist, patriarchal, and normative narratives in his solo performance *One Night at the Golden Bar* (Théâtre des Tanneurs, Brussels and CAMPO, Ghent), questioning how we define and experience love in a world that shapes and undermines our romantic ideals. Candela Capitan denounces the male gaze and plays with challenging female poses as in her performance *Solas* (DE SINGEL, Antwerp). In *Dirty*, Juan Domínguez has participants work with clay, critiquing the hierarchy of the visual and emphasizing the political potential of touch and sound.





Héctor Espuela Pablo - The Making of a Lethargy $\textcircled{}{}^{\odot}$ Marc Wallens

Alberto Cortés © Alejandra Amere

At the **Musée Royal de Mariemont**, the heritage exhibition **Mary of Hungary. Art & Power in the Renaissance** shows how Charles V and in particular his sister Mary of Hungary understood that the key of power lay in the art of representation, in order to secure a fragile dominance in Europe for Charles V's successor Philips II. From her palace in Binche and her hunting estate in Mariemont, Mary developed a propaganda programme, carving out a unique place for herself in a world then reserved exclusively for men. At the **Snijders & Rockoxhuis** in Antwerp, visual artist **Santiago Ydañez** starts up a dialogue with the museum's collection and recreates, copies, represents the images in overwhelming paintings and installations.







Francisco de Goya, Modo de volar (No. 13), from Los Disparates, 1815–1816

DISPARATES: in this series of engravings Goya describes absurd, grotesque, surreal or irrational situations linked to social criticism through hyperbole, humor and satire. It will allow us to address issues such as the between the real and the absurd, and questions such as economic inequality or gender and LGBTIQ+ concerns. In the face of a consumerist and individualistic way of life, we want to reclaim the bonds, the connectedness, that unite us as a way of confronting the challenges ahead.

Southern European and Mediterranean societies are perceived from the outside as societies in which family, interpersonal, intergenerational, and intracommunity bonds are very strong. Many artists and artistic practices, including traditional and collective ones, focus on creating, nurturing, and enhancing bonds or questioning them, reflecting on the evolution, needs, and transformations of societies.

In *Rituales* during All Saints' Week, traditions connecting us with our deceased loved ones merge, featuring the duo of singers **Tarta Relena** with **Sara García Fernandez** developing a ritual with bread (**at cemeteries in Leuven, Ostend, and in Four à Chaux in Tournai**). *Cuerpos Celestes* (heavenly bodies) by the theatre company **El Conde de Torrefiel** is an audio-guided tour of the **Zuiderbegraafplaats cemetery** in Ghent, conceived as a hidden city inhabited by silent residents.



Rituales





Spaniards from different generations and backgrounds also come together for rituals, celebrations, traditions that are based on social, religious, culinary peculiarities, like the Fallas in Valencia and Semana Santa in various cities. Throughout Spain, dance, song, and music also serve to connect people, with flamenco being a prominent example in a number of provinces. Curator and artist **Pedro G. Romero** will develop a flamenco focus from November 24 to 30 at **Bozar, KVS, the Constantin Meuniermuseum and other venues**. At the **Concertgebouw in Bruges**, **Marcos Morau** choreographs the **Ballet Nacional de España** in **Afanador**: an overwhelming, performance with thirty seven dancers, inspired by flamenco and more broader by Andalusian folklore. **Yinka Esi Graves** intertwines flamenco with other forms of bodily expression in **The Disappearing Act**, presenting a contemporary perspective from the African diaspora. She will perform at the **Théâtre Royal de Namur** and at **Dans in Brugge**.



Yinka Esi Graves - The Disappearing $\operatorname{Act} \ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$ Alain Scherer

In the new creation **Chapters of Celebrations** by **Benjamin Abel Meirhaeghe**, **Wouter Deltour**, and **B'Rock Orchestra and Muziektheater Transparant** (in co-production with **DE SINGEL**, **Antwerp**, also performed at **Palais des Beaux-Arts Charleroi** and **Wintercircus**, **Ghent**), the music from the 17th-century *La Folia* transitions into rave rhythms, combining Spanish and Belgian choreographies that embody collective ecstasy, the power of music and dance, and the connectedness of queer communities.

The window drawings and workshop **The Day I Left Home** at **Muntpunt (Brussels)** by **Jesús Cisneros** will be focused on the role of the library in welcoming newcomers within the community. The many forms of writings it holds, all the diverse works, invite us to connect with different cultures while also representing a space of resistance and repair.







Francisco de Goya, Y no hay remedio (No. 15), from Desastres

DESASTRES: Goya's *Disasters* depict the horrors of war and violence. Today, more than ever, there is a need to celebrate Democracy in a world where it is under great pressure. In the last 50 years, since the beginning of the democratic transition in Spain, many artists have looked back to try and understand recent history, have actively engaged in the struggle for the establishment or consolidation of democracy, or have outlined their dreams of a more just and free future.

The theatre piece **1936** at **KVS (Brussels)** examines one of the most critical events in Spanish history, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), which marked the beginning of the Franco regime. The exhibition **Villages of Colonization** at the **Spanish Embassy** focuses on the villages built by Franco to populate and exploit rural Spain. Plans, models, film material, and interviews with current inhabitants illustrate the evolution of a landscape and scrutinize the handling of the dictatorship's legacies. At the **S.M.A.K**. in Ghent, the group exhibition *Resistance* reflects on the power of images to infiltrate, denounce and collectivize ideas in the struggle for contemporary democratic values.





Composer, pianist and percussionist **Aitor Etxebarria** brings his composition **Gernika 85**, referring to the bombing of his native Gernika to the **Museum of Fine Arts (Antwerp)**, where the late night Thursdays of December will be devoted to EUROPALIA ESPAÑA.

The film series **Dreams of the Future** at the **Cinematek in Brussels** includes two blocks: **Eager for a future (1975–1981)**, showing films and documentaries that narrate the time of the Spanish transition; and **Dreamed Futures (2010–2025)**, with works that address the tensions of contemporary society, between the uncertainty provoked by the global crisis and the need to recover dreams of the future.

In today's world, *disaster* can also refer to a whole series of global crises: political instability, environmental collapse, social and armed conflicts and decolonial struggles. The programme will pay special attention to the theme of Water. As a crucial element in Spain's history. Artists and authors start from the theme in order to address its beauty and topical issues such as climate change, migration and tourism: issues that are on the agenda not only in Spain but also worldwide.

Dragon, Rest Your Head on the Seabed is a composition for six synchronized swimmers in a swimming-pool, developed by **Pablo Lilienfield and Federico Vladimir** merging dance, sports, hydro-feminism and speculative fiction. A tale featuring a dismembered and gendered self: a transindividual self that is dismembered and joined together through liquid and formed by the multiple subjectivity of the six swimmers (**Wezemberg Swimming pool, Antwerp**).

Maider López will develop a collective performance around the **Zenne River in Brussels**, which has significant historical importance to the capital but is now hidden beneath streets and squares.

As the title suggests, *Fires* by *Ça Marche* centers around the opposite of water: fire. This immersive installation-performance in *Ghent's Astridpark* (in collaboration with *CAMPO*) addresses not only the destructive power of fire but also our primal relationship with an element that has shaped both our evolution and our imagination.





A MULTIFACTED SPAIN, A MULTIFACETED WORLD

EUROPALIA ESPAÑA encompasses around **100 events** featuring approximately **170 artists**, spread across Belgium in **more than 80 venues**. The artistic teams in both countries deliberately chose artists from different generations, not only from major cities like Madrid and Barcelona but also from different regions in Spain. Therefore, the programme also includes **territorio**, a cooperative platform dedicated to the dissemination and research of performing arts in Spain's diverse communities, established by KVS (Brussels) to promote a more collective and diverse construction. And *Tapas Poetas* brings together four women authors presenting poems in four official languages in Spain, while the audience enjoys Spanish tapas and wine (**VIERNULVIER**, **Ghent**, in collaboration with **Poëziecentrum**).

The festival features established artists from older generations, such as **Juan Dominguez, Cuqui, Maria Jerez, La Ribot, Mal Pelo** and **Esther Ferrer**, as well as younger talents like **Nuria Guiu, Las Huecas, Elena Medel** and **La Chachi**. Some will engage in dialogue with artists from Belgium or other countries to create new works, such as **Suso Saiz** with **Echo Collective**, or the four Spanish dancers and musicians in *Pick Up Club* (in co-production with **Charleroi danse**) who will have a blind date with four dancers and musicians residing in Belgium.

The festival will showcase renowned names like the baroque music ensemble **Cantoría**, theater maker **Angélica Liddell**, pianist Javier Perianes, filmmaker **Albert Serra**, dancer **Israel Galvan**, design icon **Patricia Urquiola (CID, Hornu)** and author **Agustín Fernández Mallo**, while also deliberately featuring lesser-known names, particularly in Belgium, such as filmmaker/designer **Iván Zulueta**, and artists **Marta Azparren**, **Esperanza Collado** and **Elsa Paricio**.

Together, they represent a multifaceted Spain and a multifaceted world, which EUROPALIA aims to connect with a diverse audience in collaboration with a rich network of partners.

"EUROPALIA ESPAÑA represents a unique opportunity to engage deeply with the cultural and artistic heritage of Spain while reflecting on contemporary, global issues through the lens of Goya's work. By intertwining historical narratives with contemporary artistic expressions, the festival invites audiences to explore the complexities of identity, community, and democracy in Spain and beyond. As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to the connections and dialogues that will emerge, enriching our understanding of the past while inspiring future generations to continue the conversation."

- Maral Kekejian & Dirk Vermaelen, artistic directors of EUROPALIA ESPAÑA





Artists

Adelaida, Aire, Aitor Etxebarría, Alán Carrasco, Albert Serra, Alberto Cortés, Alphonse Eklou Uwantege, Álvaro Perdices, Álvaro Murillo, Amarilis Castán, Ana Amado & Luis Patiño, Ana García Pineda, Anacronía, Angélica Liddell, Avelino Sala, AzkonaToloza, Ballet Nacional de España, Beatriz Lobo, Benjamin Abel Meirhaeghe, Ça Marche, Candela Capitán, Cantoría, Caroline Roche, Carlos Aires, Checkin Producciones, Cherish Menzo, Cris Blanco, Cris Balboa, Cristina Garrido, Cuarteto Quiroga, Cuqui Jerez, Dame Area, Daniel G. Andujar, Deneb Martos, Diego del Poso Barruiso, Echo Collective, Edurne Rubio, El Conde de Torrifiel, Eli Cortiñas, Elsa Paricio, Emiel Vandenberghe, Esplendor Geométrico, Esther Ferrer, Eulàlia Grau, Euskal Barrok Ensemble, Fahmi Alghal, Pablo Lilienfeld & Federico Vladimir, Felix Lugue Sánchez, Fernando Sánchez Castillo, Francisco López, Guillem Jiménez, Héctor Espuela Pablo, Hector Fuertes, Iker Karerra, Iro Aka, Israel Galván & Mohamed El Khatib, Janet Novas & Mercedes Peón, Jasss, Javier Perianes, Jeremy Nedd, Jesse Kanda, Jesús Cisneros, John Talabot, José María Sánchez-Verdú, Joan Rabascall, Juan Domínguez, Julio Linares, Kor'sia, La Chachi, La Ribot, La Tristura, Laryssa Kim, Las Huecas, Lasseindra Ninja, Léa Kadian, Lole Montoya, Los Voluble, Louise Vanneste, Lúa Cordech, Luis Fernando Pérez, Luz Arcas & La Phármaco, Mabel Olea, Madoka Nakamaru, Maider López, Mal Pelo, Marc Piñol, Marc Vilajuana, Marco Mezquida, Marcos Morau, María Ruido, Maria Jerez, Mario Barrantes Espinoza, Marta Azparren, Maya Dhondt, Mercedes Dassy, Michelle Rizzo, Moisés P. Sánchez, Momi Maiga, Montdedutor, Niño de Elche, Núria Güell, Núria Guiu & Ingri Fiksdal, Oma Totem, Oriol Vilanova, Osaka Ueda, Oscar Bueno, Oscar Mulero, Patricia Urguiola, Patrick Eduardo, Paz Rojo, Pedro Rojas, Pilar Aymerich, Pilar Palomero, Raül Refree, Rocío Márquez, Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Santiago Ydañez, Sara DeCorso, Sara Garcia Fernandez, Sylvia Pérez Cruz, Suso Saiz, Tarta Relena, Taxio Ardanaz, Toccororo, Toni Jodar, Wouter Deltour, Xavier Arenós, Yeli Yeli, Yinka Esi Graves, Zuraburu + ...

Cultural partners

Ancienne Belgique, Beursschouwburg, Bozar, Brussels Art Film Festival, CAMPO, Charleroi danse, CID Grand Hornu, Cinematek, CIVA, Concertgebouw Brugge, Cultuurcentrum Brugge, De Bijloke, De Cinema, De Garage, De Markten, DE SINGEL, Musée royal de Mariemont, Filem'On, Film Fest Gent, Flagey, Fondation Boghossian - Villa Empain, Fondation Walter Leblanc, GUM, iMAL, INSAS, Instituto Cervantes, Jeunesses Musicales, Kaaitheater, KAAP, KASK, KMSKA, Koningin Elisabethzaal, Kortfilmfestival Leuven, kunstencentrum nona, Kunsthal Mechelen, KVS, Festival en ville Les passeurs de mémoire, Listen Festival, LOCI, M Leuven, MACS Grand Hornu, Magdalenazaal, Maison de la culture Tournai, Maison poème, M HKA, Midis de la poésie, MoMu, Monty, MORPHO, Muntpunt, NTGent, OFFoff, OPRL, OstbelgienFestival, Palais des Beaux-Arts de Charleroi, Passa Porta, Pianofabriek, Pink Screens, Poëziecentrum, Quai 10, RITCS, Royal Conservatoire Antwerp, Kortfilmfestival Leuven, S.M.A.K., Snijders&Rockoxhuis, Stad Leuven, Stad Oostende, STUK, Tabakalera, Théâtre de Liège, Théâtre de Namur, Théâtre les Tanneurs, Théâtre National, Théâtre Varia, VIERNULVIER, Ville de Bruxelles/Stad Brussel, Wezenberg Zwembad, workspacebrussels, Zuiderbegraafplaats + ...





The Spirit of Goya - Youth Project for EUROPALIA ESPAÑA by Alex Akuete

The Spirit of Goya is a youth initiative curated by multidisciplinary artist, community builder and projet coordinator Alex Akuete, in collaboration with EUROPALIA. This innovative dance-based project invites 40 young performers from Antwerp and Brussels to explore the life and themes of Francisco Goya through movement and artistic research.

Through the universal language of dance, participants between 16 and 25 will reflect on Goya's work in relation to the themes of the festival -representation, democracy, community, and waterwhile developing their own expressive styles. The project fosters inclusivity, experimentation, and co-creation, offering young people a safe, empowering space to grow artistically. The project is based on peer-based mentorship, involving emerging talents from both cities to guide and support participants. For this project, EUROPALIA and Alex Akuete will collaborate with Gaetano Vestris Terrana, Fanny Christina Van Geel, Yamuna Kyamo Huygen, and Nora Fagbemi each bringing diverse styles and backgrounds from ballet to urban, Krump, and contemporary dance.

In June 2025, EUROPALIA will release the open call, targeting youth organizations, dance schools, and community networks. The selected young performers will then be splitted into 4 groups and attend a 5-days research lab in either Brussels or Antwerp in July. The final performances will be presented at partner venues as part of the EUROPALIA ESPAÑA programme.

EUROPALIA at school

Since 1969, EUROPALIA has fostered intercultural and intergenerational dialogue throughout Belgium, which remains a hallmark of the festival for both artistic partners and audiences. In 2025, EUROPALIA is opening its doors wide to Dutch- and French-speaking schools in Belgium. Thanks to the educational programme *europaliaatschool*, designed by the creative studio Oetang Learning Designers, EUROPALIA invites all pupils to explore the themes, disciplines, and artists featured in the EUROPALIA ESPAÑA festival.

The playful and educational approach enables pupils aged 10 to 12 to develop their observation, expression, philosophical thinking, and civic awareness. Ready-to-use content is provided to teachers via an accessible digital platform. This allows schools to create their own EUROPALIA festival within their classrooms. By becoming active participants in the festival, pupils discover art in all its forms, nurture their curiosity, and strengthen cultural connections.

With *europaliaatschool*, EUROPALIA reaffirms its commitment to artistic and civic education, while planting the seeds of creativity and open-mindedness for future generations.

Bloomberg Connects

From September 2025, EUROPALIA will be present on the Bloomberg Connects app. Here, digital visitors will get an overview of the exhibition programme of the upcoming edition, EUROPALIA ESPAÑA, as well as access to exclusive behind-the-scenes videos, audio excerpts and interviews with artists and curators for each project. Through a QR code that can be found at the festival's partner venues, visitors can download the app and find the digital EUROPALIA ESPAÑA festival guide. **www.bloombergconnects.org**.



About our Spanish partners

This programme is co-organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, through the AECID, with the main collaboration of Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) and the support of the Instituto Cervantes, the Ministry of Culture and the Commissioner for the celebration of the 50 years of Spain in Freedom, institutional collaborators in this event.

About EUROPALIA

EUROPALIA: art as a driving force against polarisation

Since 1969, more than 25 million visitors have flocked to EUROPALIA festivals, each edition dedicated to a particular country or theme. The founding mission remains unchanged and as relevant as ever: bringing people and cultures closer together through art.

EUROPALIA seeks perspectives and creates ...

Today, this translates into a multidisciplinary programme that combines cultural heritage and tradition with contemporary creations. EUROPALIA festivals start from the local context of a country, then place it in the wider perspective of global society. Each biennale encourages debate around identity(ies) and invites artists to contribute their perspectives on themes that affect and challenge us all. Interdisciplinary creations are always given centre stage, alongside works by both famous and lesser-known names, spanning different generations.

... to find new connections

EUROPALIA seeks to bring its multifaceted programme to an equally multifaceted audience. This happens through its public engagement initiatives, and thanks to an extensive network of diverse cultural partners who co-develop and co-produce the festival. Every two years, during four months, hundreds of artistic events unfold across Belgium and neighbouring regions, attracting a wide European audience.

Since 2024, EUROPALIA also organises three-day focus editions in between biennales. They are conceived as multidisciplinary programmes in Brussels, both at our artistic partners' venues and in public spaces.





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