



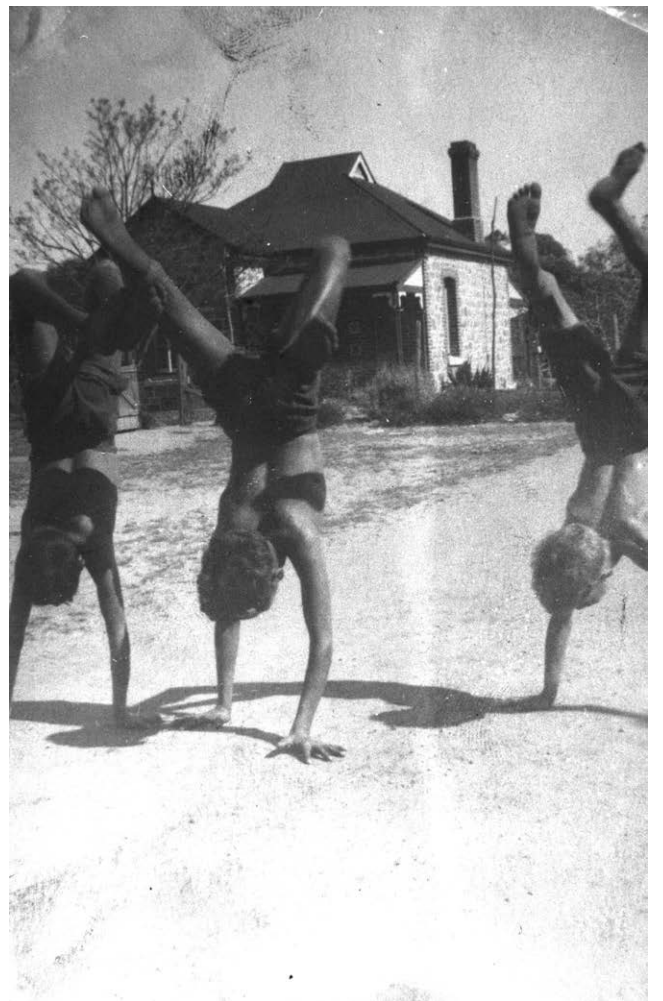
# CARROLUP REVISITED

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SOUTH WEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

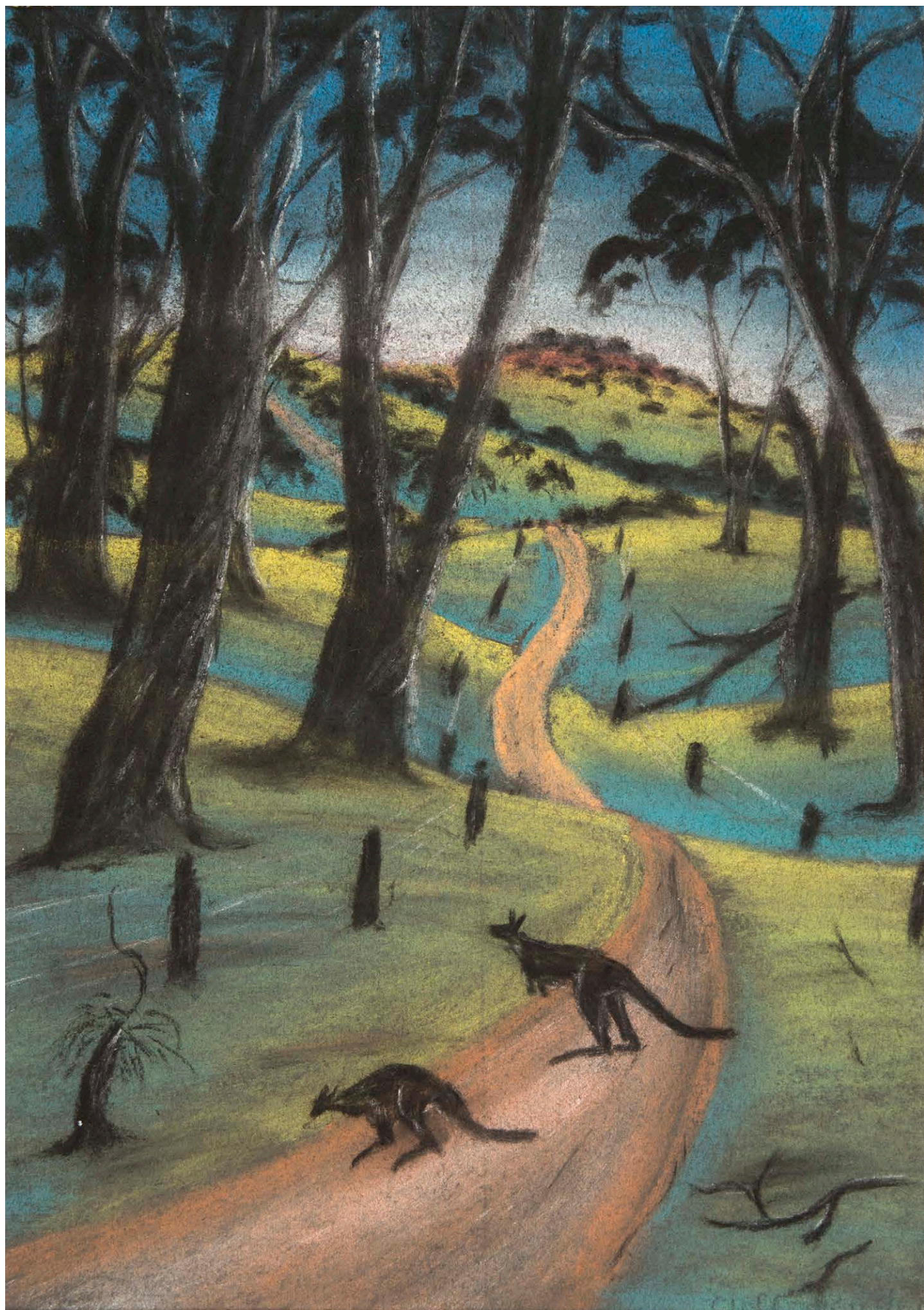
9 FEBRUARY – 29 JUNE 2019

A BERNDT MUSEUM EXHIBITION  
AT THE LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY

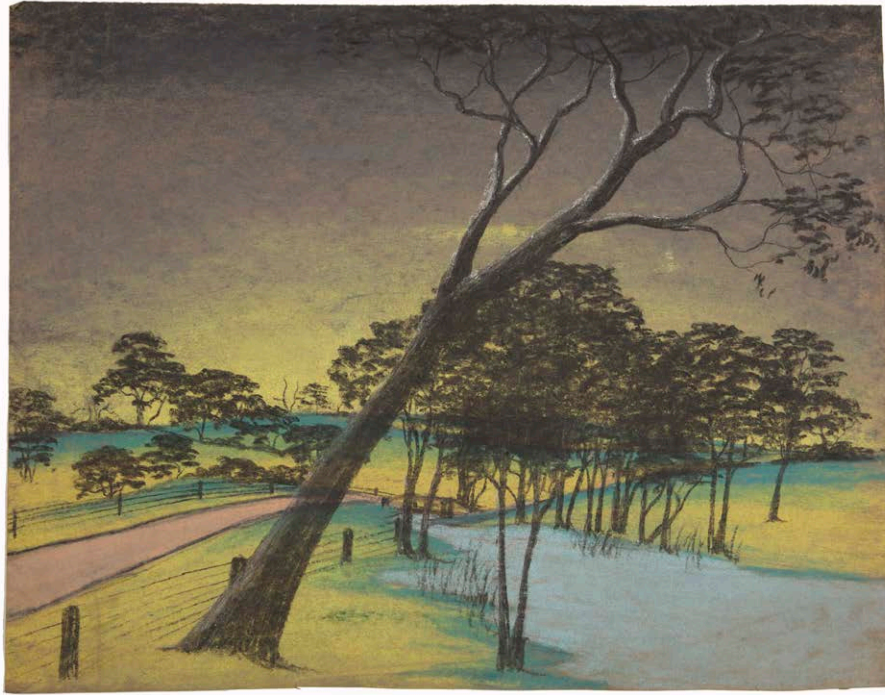












## CARROLUP REVISITED: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SOUTH WEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

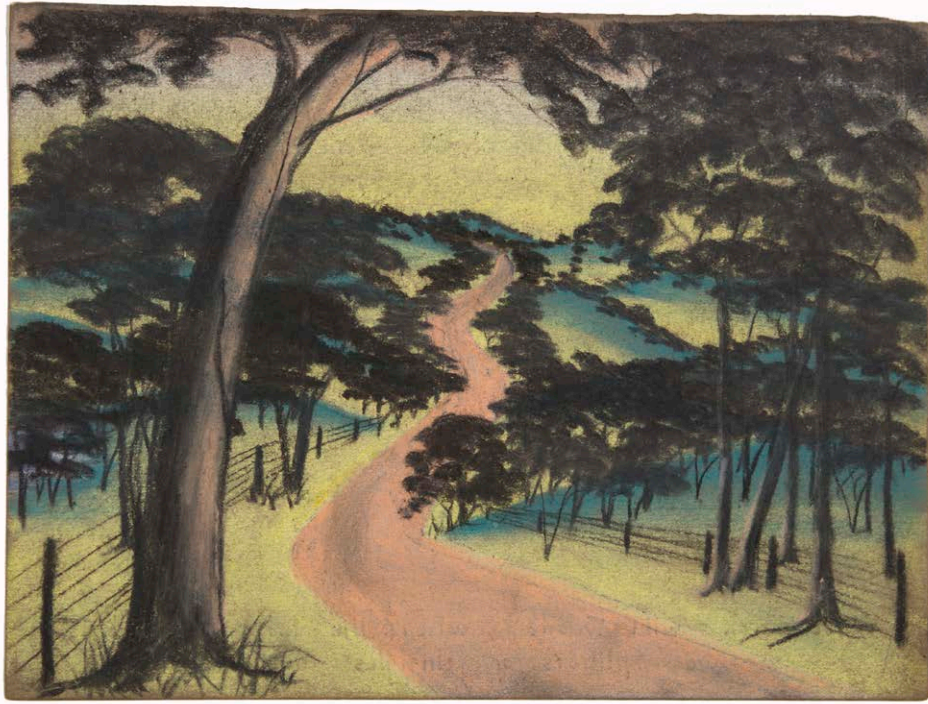
*Carrolup Revisited: A Journey through the South West of Western Australia* is an exhibition that explores the power of influence and imagination. The Berndt Museum of Anthropology (BMA) has been fascinated by aspects of the Carrolup story since the 1960s. The primary collection of Carrolup works, some 255 drawings, held by the BMA were donated in the 1990's by E.S. Phillips. Stan Phillips had been a teacher employed by the Western Australian Department of Education during the 1960s and acquired the works through Mary Durack, Noel White and from a state-wide exhibition of Aboriginal children's school drawings. The archive holds correspondence between Ronald Berndt and Phillips during this period and we know that Berndt was happy to display some of the drawings around his office during his time at UWA. Though these are not the only works held by the BMA, they represent one of the most important collections alongside the Colgate University collection held at Curtin University. The research suggests that Catherine Berndt was also interested in cultural exchange within children's drawings. The ways and means for Aboriginal children to learn about their culture was made difficult due to policies of the day which separated children from their families without discernment for their well-being and identity. These moments in our history heighten the value of these works today. The historical reference to such a large number of young people and their response to life experiences have been captured within these drawings. Their technical skill and dexterity using primarily pastels - one of the most difficult mediums to work with - is evident throughout this exhibition. Through influence we have also expanded this exhibition into the South West to recognise other artists who have become the current backbone of art produced today.

This exhibition follows on from shows like *Nyungar Art from the South West Region of Western Australia* (1991) supported by Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation, *Nyungar Landscapes: Aboriginal Artists of the South West: The Heritage of Carrolup,*

*Western Australia* (1992) and *Koorah Coolingah (Children Long Ago)* (2006). *Carrolup Revisited* was initially an idea that came from providing access to our collections for a relative of one of the students from Carrolup who was researching her family history. As an extraordinary story of survival, mateship and colonial hardship which resulted in a legacy of cultural material now stored at the BMA, we hope to continue to revisit this story in decades to come.

The Carrolup Native Settlement was established in 1915 and remained until the 1970s when it was later referred to as Marribank Mission. It was originally a State run facility for the relocation of Aboriginal children from the public gaze. After 1919 A.O. Neville - Chief Protector of Aborigines (1915 - 1945) - established new regulations that added to police powers enabling the forced removal of Aboriginal children from as young as 4 years of age. The policies influenced a steady increase in the number of children held at Carrolup and at other missions across the state. Neville was supportive of re-educating those perceived to have certain percentages of Caucasian and Aboriginal blood, to restrict access to language, ceremonial experiences and cultural exchange with their Aboriginal families. The belief of the day was that if you wanted to change a society you needed to start with the children.

Carrolup was essentially a farm situated 25 km from Katanning and was actually one of around sixty settlements and missions operating between the 1800s to the mid-1970s. Though the purpose of the Chief Protector of Aborigines was to 'protect and care' for Aboriginal inhabitants, the underfunding and failure to provide such care made these facilities more like internment camps, than places of safety and care. By the 1900s places like Katanning became tense, racially divided towns with the propensity to advocate for the removal of Aboriginal people which pushed them to the fringes of society and into slum like conditions. By 1915 with ongoing complaints from



Images, left to right:

Cliff Ryde, *Kangaroos on Road*, 1948, pastel on paper, 25 x 18cm. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by E.S. Phillips and Dr G. Phillips [1992/0101] © family of the artist  
 Unknown artist, *Landscape*, c 1947, pastel on paper, 30 x 38.6cm. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by E.S. Phillips and Dr G. Phillips [1992/0119] © family of the artist  
 Barry Loo, *Landscape*, 1948, pastel on paper, 25 x 18cm. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by E.S. Phillips and Dr G. Phillips [1992/0006.A-B] © family of the artist  
 Unknown artist, *Untitled*, pastel on paper, 25.1 x 17.5 cm. Berndt Museum of Anthropology [2011/0057] © family of the artist

the non-Aboriginal public, police had uprooted the entire Aboriginal community to Carrolup<sup>1</sup>, with those interned at the farm and others living on its fringes. Most had little money, but there was a comradeship that embraced the children which seems to have carried them through the experience. Children held on missions were often told that their parents had abandoned them or were dead - though in truth some parents wrote to the Aborigines Department to ask for their release but were denied. Many never saw their parents again and this created the history of the Stolen Generations.

In 1945 the school at Carrolup was to have a new teacher by the name of Noel White and White's wife Lily would work alongside him teaching kindergarten. Having heard about the disruption of the children, the lack of interest in school and the impossible teaching conditions he would experience - Noel started exploring opportunities to teach reading, writing, drawing and music to the children through other means. It seems that sport and a keen interest in drawing became a window for inspiration and personal expression. At the time the Native Affairs Commissioner for Carrolup scoffed at the idea of Aboriginal people having careers, playing sports or being artists, which makes the work of Noel and also Mrs Florence Rutter important. Rutter was a philanthropist to the Carrolup kids. A wealthy woman from Britain, she was influential in ensuring the children's work reached an international audience.

When asked if he influenced the boys, White said:

*"Certainly I did! I influenced them to use the eyes in their heads. Sometimes I would take them back and back to the same place, even to the same tree, to see how things looked at different times of the day, in different lights. When they made their first tentative sketches of trees I would encourage them but I would suggest also that*

*we went for another walk to find out more about the way branches grew from trunks and how foliage masses looked against the sky."*<sup>2</sup>

The question of influence is not necessarily a one way street. We often seek influence through others, be they artists, sporting greats, writers, poets, leaders and occasionally politicians. The Carrolup School of Art was one such form of influence in the South West of Western Australia with the children often challenging comparisons to the work of Albert Namatjira. The impact on up and coming artists who looked to the likes of Revel Cooper, Parnell Dempster, Reynold Hart, Malcolm Ellis, Cliff Ryde, Barry Loo, Claude Kelly and Primus Ugle for inspiration are also recognised in this exhibition. The boys were competitive and were known to have hid their works from each other until completed. They were also known to have critiqued each other's works and reflected a preference to their own South West trees over those of Namatjira's. Influence has always played a part in artists practice and today we celebrate that influence for other generations to see.

We pay our respects to all Carrolup members past and present.

#### Bibliography

1. Wexler, Alice. 'Koorah Coolingah: Children Long Ago - Art from the Stolen Generation of Australia', *Studies in Art Education*, Vol. 50, No. 2. (Winter, 2009), pp. 137-151.
2. Durack Miller, Mary; Rutter, Florence (with). *Child Artists of the Australian Bush*. George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. London, 1952.









Left age:

Top

*Children standing in front of the Carrolup River*, c 1940s. Carrolup Native Settlement, Western Australia. Photographed by Noel White. Courtesy of the Noelene and Ross White Collection, Berndt Museum [P15837]

Below le

*Interior view of paintings on the classroom wall*, c 1940s. Carrolup Native Settlement, Western Australia. Photographed by Noel White. Courtesy of the Noelene and Ross White Collection, Berndt Museum [P15863]

Below right

*Children doing gymnastics*, c 1940s. Carrolup Native Settlement, Western Australia. Photographed by Noel White. Courtesy of the Noelene and Ross White Collection, Berndt Museum [P15840]



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Top

*Berndt Museum visit to Marribank (Carrolup) 1st view*, 2018. Marribank, Western Australia. Photographed by Dr Vanessa Russ

Below

*Inside the church*, 2018. Marribank, Western Australia. Photographed by Natalie Hewlett



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Berndt Museum of Anthropology would like to thank all the families associated to artists from the Carrolup Native Settlement (Merribank). We hope that this provides an opportunity to learn about what works we have in our care from this period in Western Australian history, so that future generations may return to us over the years and request to see the works themselves. We also look forward to continuing research and adding new details to the artist's information for future reference.

Thanks must also go to Ezzard Flowers who has been so generous with his time, with ensuring we can connect with people and in supporting the idea of revisiting this incredible story. Thanks also to the Ryder family for their support.

We would like to thank Kerry and Christine Stokes for loaning the incredible Albert Namatjira from the Kerry Stokes Collection which was a delight to see in the flesh.

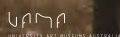
We would also like to thank John Stanton who has had a long history of working with Marribank over the years.

We would also like to thank Noelene White for her ongoing support of the Carrolup Story.

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Cover image: *Berndt Museum visit to Marribank (Carrolup) 2nd view*, 2018. Marribank, Western Australia. Photographed by Dr Vanessa Russ



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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA, Australia 6009  
P +61 (0)8 6488 3707 W lwag.uwa.edu.au  
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