

Art World News

SEPTEMBER 2026

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

SPECTRUM MIAMI & RED DOT MIAMI ANNOUNCE MIAMI ART WEEK DATES

Spectrum Miami and Red Dot Miami will return to Mana Wynwood Convention Center, offering “Two Fairs Under One Roof” for both exhibitors and art enthusiasts during this year’s Miami Art Week, taking place December 2nd to December 6th at Mana Wynwood, 2217 NW 5th Ave., and NW 22nd St. in Miami.

NO, PICASSO SHOULD NOT MATCH THE COUCH

ADC Fine Art’s Litsa Spanos explains how a piece of art was never meant to quietly coordinate with a room’s upholstery, but is an object that becomes part of the collector’s story. Page 22.

WHAT EMPLOYEE TURNOVER COSTS A GALLERY

Strategies for Success’ Sheila McCumby says that gallery owners and frameshop managers eventually face the same compensation fork in the road to either keep wages low and protect thin margins or pay above market value and build a steady team. Visit page 18.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KNOWLEDGE HAS NO HOME

Gallery Fuel’s Katherine Hébert provides practical ways to connect responsibilities and decisions so a small team can work with greater clarity and consistency. Go to page 23.



The Sun ATL is located in Atlanta, GA.

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS EXPANDS BRAND & AUDIENCE

In the art and framing industry, multi-location expansion is a way to grow a business’ brand, customer base, sales and exposure for artists, but it also requires operational changes that affect each location. Management then shifts to coordinating across each location’s staff, inventory, customer experience, marketing efforts and office tasks, not just building their own community of close-knit artists and collectors. When a gallery or frameshop owner sees consistent stability and sales, some consider opening a new location as a way to expand their brand and revenue from the customer loyalty that has been built, services offered and

desire to bring their business to a new area. Some choose to open another location as a way to expand the product mix offered from different artists, mediums, genres or price points of art.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:
“Deciding to open a new location comes down to finding the right market, the right space and the right opportunity.”
Shanan Campbell, page 12

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Shown is "Rainbow
Umbrella Man in Reeds"
by Peter Max from
Park West Gallery.
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Multiple Locations Expand Brand

Multi-location expansion is a way to grow a business' brand, customer base, sales and exposure for artists, but it also requires operational changes that affect each location and show consistency.

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What's Hot in Open Editions

This month's What's Hot in Open Editions features a variety of the latest best selling open edition prints, most available as print-on-demand images, and it includes contact information as well.

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IN OUR OPINION

Missing the Point of Service

Customer service seems to be suffering a bit of an identity crisis. Historically, the study of it fell into four distinct categories defined by the focus on people, possessions, mental stimuli or information. Traditionally, art galleries and custom frameshops fell onto the "possessions category" where focus was on a physical good of either artwork or a custom framing project. The best service was defined as providing the best product for expressed needs.

Somewhere along the line, sharp-minded retailers recognized there was more to success than just building a better mousetrap. Answers to the "why" and "how" behind customer's purchase decisions started to matter more to marketers than just the virtues of the product. Thus began the age of consumer behavior, a blend of economic

and psychological theory that attempted to explain consumption. Competition evolved to become much more than just products offered.

Now, the AI age is upon us. Where marketers now can anticipate, react and applaud every buyer's quest for art and framing. The transaction might be completed but the service component is incomplete. Selling art and framing is special. It's a relationship that needs tending and care to grow and prosper. "Showing up is half of success" and tasking an AI lackey to fill in for you is short sighted. It might not effect how you did today but certainly impact how you do tomorrow.

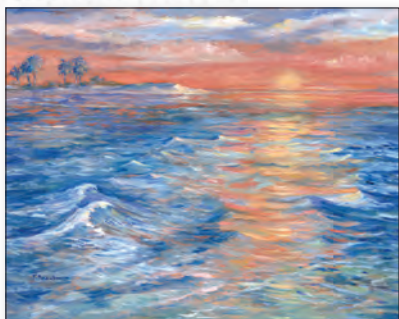
The human interplay with customers builds sales, relationships and repeat sales. AI and other tools can be helpful but they alone will extinguish a burning flame. Watch ask and listen to your customers.

John Haffey
Publisher



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ARTISTS & PUBLISHERS

Shepard Fairey's 'Raw Power' Exhibit

Jonathan LeVine Projects, Jersey City, NJ, and Wooden Walls Public Art Project presents a new exhibition jointly hosted by Parlor Gallery and The Art Spot called *Raw Power* with a selection of works by Shepard Fairey. The exhibitions showcase more than 150 works, across the two spaces, including paintings, mixed media works on paper, hand-painted-multiples, mono engravings and prints on wood and metal. Limited edition screen-prints, many long unavailable, will be for sale at the galleries as well. *Raw Power* is supported in part by funding through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's (NJEDA) Activation, Revitalization and Transformation (A.R.T.)—Phase II Grant Program. Call Jonathan LeVine Projects at (201) 763-6998 or visit: www.jonathanlevineprojects.com.



"Moonage Daydream"
by Shepard Fairey.

Bentley Art Publishing's New Images

Bentley Art Publishing, Elk Grove, CA, introduces 80 new images by American artist John Singleton Copley. Known for his masterful portraits of colonial New England figures, Copley (1738–1815) was born in Boston and was largely self-taught. He gained early acclaim for his realistic depictions of merchants, politicians and families, capturing both likeness and character with meticulous detail. The new images are available in rolled paper and rolled and stretched canvas. All of the new images are available for printing via POD Exchange and can be viewed at the Bentley Art Publishing website: www.bentleyartpublishing.com. For further information, telephone the company at (925) 997-7145.



"Young Lady With A Bird And A Dog"
by John Singleton Copley.

OBITUARY: Peter Max

Iconic German-American artist Peter Max of Peter Max Studio passed away on September 14, 2026, at the age of 88 from complications of dementia at a hospital in New York, NY. Known for his psychedelic and Pop art, his artistic style changed over the course of his career, from early realism to Pop-style work in the 1960s and a Neo-Fauvist style in the 1970s and beyond, according to Park West Gallery. Max's work is featured in more than 46 museums and 50 galleries around the world. Born in Berlin, Germany, in the 1937,

his family left the country for Shanghai the following year, escaping the rise of nazism.



Peter Max

During his childhood, the family visited many countries

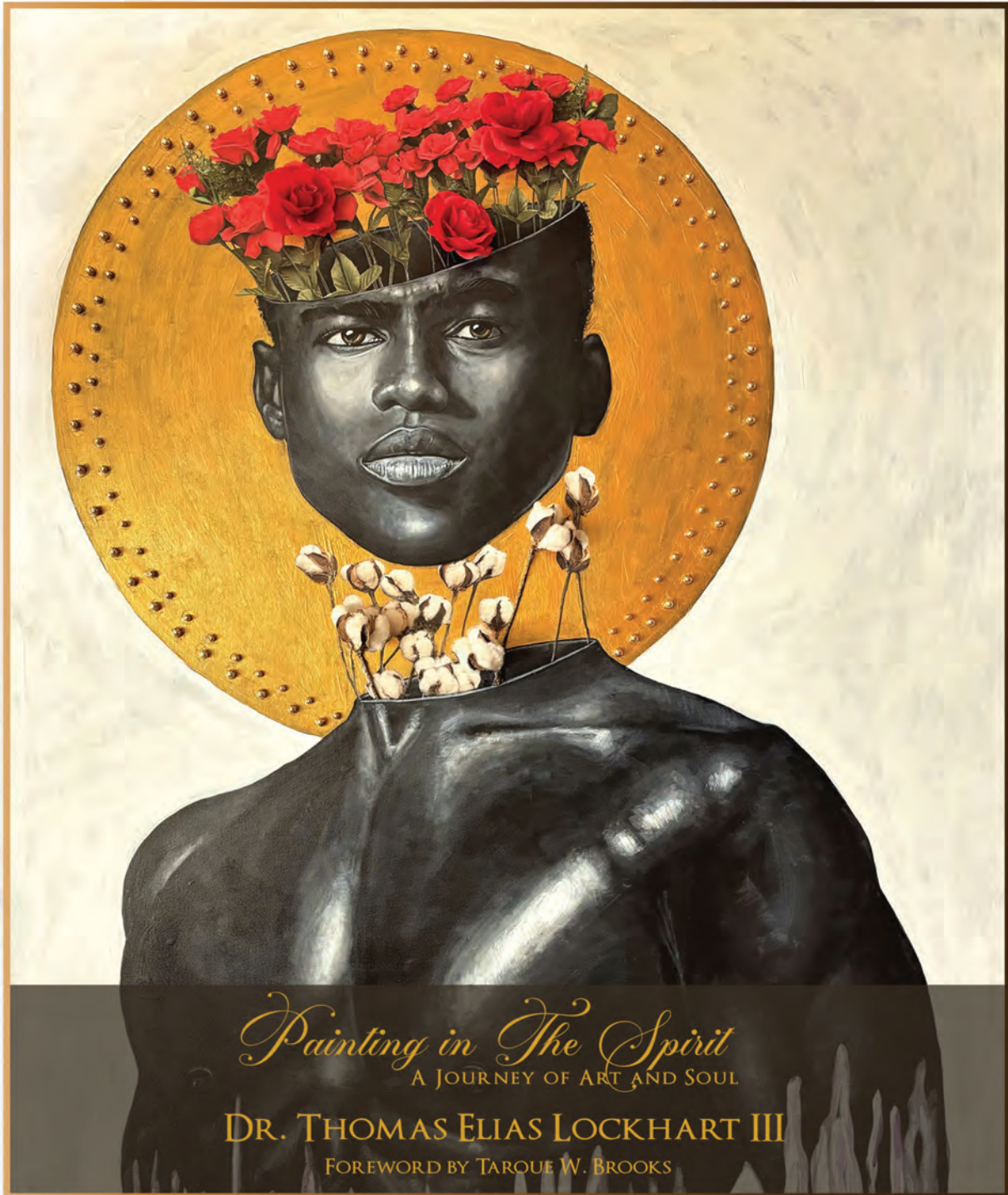
around the world, landing in Brooklyn, NY, in 1953 when Max was 16 years old. After high school, he enrolled in the Art Students League in 1956. He received classical training in drawing, anatomy and painting technique from the realist Frank J.

Reilly, a contemporary of Norman Rockwell at the League.

In the 1960s, he became the artist that rock bands of the Woodstock era turned to create posters and album art.

He has made portraits of six sitting U.S. presidents and various world leaders. Max's art spans several media from acrylic painting, line drawing, etching, lithography, serigraphy, collage and sculpture. Many of his paintings are acrylic on silkscreen prints from photographic originals. His invention of the split-fountain ink technique made his posters important examples of the art of printing in the 1960s.

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**THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM PRESENTS
AWAKING BEAUTY:
THE ART OF EYVIND EARLE**



CARMEL, CA—The artwork of late artist **Eyvind Earle** will be exhibited at The Walt Disney Family Museum in an original exhibition titled, *Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle*. Co-curated by the CEO of **Eyvind Earle Publishing**, Ioan Szasz, and museum director of collections and exhibitions, Marina Villar Delgado, *Awaking Beauty* opens October 23 and explores the life and work of prolific American artist and Disney legend Earle. The presentation builds upon the museum's 2017 exhibition while offering a fresh perspective on the artist's artistic legacy. Earle is best known as the color stylist—the artist determining not only the colors but the entire visual look—for Walt Disney's classic feature *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). His evocative concept and background art also helped shape such enduring films as *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *The Truth About Mother Goose* (1957), *Paul Bunyan* (1958) and others. Following the popularity of the museum's original retrospective in 2017, *Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle* has now been reenvisioned with roughly 200 works on view and includes two new gallery spaces debuting for this exhibition. Shown is "Sleeping Beauty" a paint on board from the Collection of the Walt Disney Family Foundation. For details, call (831) 625-1738, or go to: www.eyvindearle.com.

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS EXPAND BRAND

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Staffing becomes more vital in the expansion as owners cannot be in two places at one time. Walking the floor, controlling inventory levels, making personalized contact with collectors and monitoring day-to-day activities becomes more difficult, therefore putting the right people in place is vital. Being comfortable with giving up some control and having an ability to delegate is now part of owning the business.

Having a successful Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that is well-documented and consistent, will also help to keep all of the locations healthy. This is where having unified Point-of-Sale (POS) and inventory tools to track sales data, stock and customer retention must be seamlessly maintained across multiple locations.

Experts say that there are ways to identify if a business is ready for an additional location. One sign is if there has been a demand that is consistent. If sales and demand outpace one location's ability to keep up, and long lines become a problem for customer retention, a second location can help to spread the demand and keep people coming back. Consistent profits are also a catalyst.

Finding the right location involves much market research to find the demo-

graphics that one desires, as well as gauge the competition.

Litsa Spanos, President of ADC Fine Art, Cincinnati, OH, with a 13,000-square-foot mega-gallery, as well as a framing facility in the West End of Cincinnati, says that creating a cohesive look that fits your brand is the best way to attract the customers that staff work so hard to ac-



ADC Fine Art is located in Cincinnati, OH.

quire. "Trained staff, exciting window displays, a variety of merchandise with mixed price points are what brought clients in the first time and it is what will keep them returning, as well as seeking out other locations."

Part of the cohesion involves using marketing material, signage, website updates and social media posts to show a united front among locations. Even the design and look of the showroom should be used to show connection, Ms. Spanos says. "You want to look unified in visual appearance and in how clients are treated."

More than 30 years ago, ADC Fine Art opened its doors as Art Design Con-

sultants, Inc. (ADC) in a 500-square-foot studio. Today, many of those early principles stand true as consulting work is still a big part of their day-to-day activities.

"Because our business is more of an art consulting company with a large showroom (and more of a destination location), we wanted to try retail in more affluent neighborhoods and get first time buyers," she says. "This has lead us to opening three locations over the life of our business. We are now down to two and they have allowed us to attract a nice mix of new collectors and framing customers over the years."

Shanan Campbell, owner of Sorrel Sky Gallery with four locations (Durango, CO; Santa Fe, NM; New York, NY; and East Hampton, NY) says that creating cohesion amongst the galleries is important. "My original gallery opened in 2002 in Durango, CO, and it's still our home base in the Rockies, now at 828 Main Avenue," she says.

"Santa Fe came next, in 2014, at 125 West Palace Avenue, right in the heart of one of the country's great art markets. That building has its own history, too. It once housed the Elaine Horowitz Gallery, the leading gallerist for Southwestern contemporary art. I opened in SoHo in 2024 at

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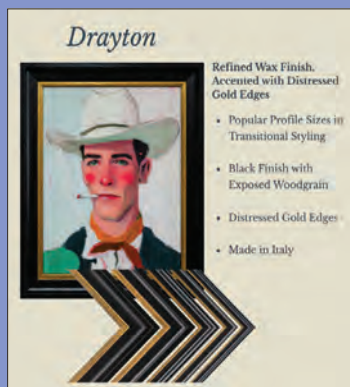


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SUWANEE, GA—Larson-Juhl has launched two new collections: Drayton and Moderne, both made in Italy. Drayton features a refined wax finish, accented with distressed gold edges in popular profile sizes with transitional styling.

Moderne is a minimalist profile in sleek, scratch-resistant silver and gold finishes with two new curved profiles in the O'Keeffe style.



All of the company's new collections, as well as their marketing resources are on its website at: www.shop.larson-juhl.com/new-collection under the New Collections page. The website also presents new features in Larson-Juhl's LJ Design Studio, that allows users to choose from a wide variety of mats and frames. For more details, call (800) 438-5031 or visit: www.larson-juhl.com.

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS *continued from page 10*

419 West Broadway, and we expanded to East Hampton in 2025, at 58 Park Place. Two in the West, two in New York. All under one roof, so to speak."

The key factors to successfully running multiple locations, for Ms. Campbell, has been hiring talented and hard-working staff. "It's our people that make the difference. A gallery is only as good as the person standing in the room with a collector, so we hire for knowledge, judgment and integrity, not just sales ability," she says.

"Then, we trust them. After that, it's a clear point-of-view about what we show and why, and the discipline to hold every location to the same standard no matter how far apart they sit on the map."

Having a love for the artwork, artists and collector base is important to Ms. Campbell. "A shared eye ties them together. I founded Sorrel Sky because I believe in the power of art to impact lives, and because I wanted real connections between the artists we represent and the clients we serve," she says.

"Every location shows David Yarrow's contemporary photography, but each one has its own personality. Durango leans Western. Santa Fe leans into its Southwestern and Native

American heritage. Each gallery answers to its own city, its own light, its own community. What stays consistent is the roster, the sensibility, and how people are treated the moment they walk in. What changes is the character of the space around all of that."

The personalization of marketing for each location is also part of Sorrel Sky's identity. "Each gallery speaks first to its own community, because a collector in East



Shown is Sorrel Sky's East Hampton, NY, location.

Hampton and a collector in Durango aren't the same person. What ties it together is how we've always worked online. We were among the first galleries to invest seriously in a website and sell art online, roughly 25 years ago, and that reach is what lets someone see what's on the walls in any of the four from wherever they are. One identity, four front doors."

The branding throughout is a consistent way for collectors to identify each location. "Any of the four galleries should read as unmistakably Sorrel Sky the moment you step in, from the look of our materials to the feel of the space," Ms. Campbell says. "That consistency is what makes four

galleries feel like one gallery. The architecture of each room is its own, but the identity running through all of them is deliberate, and it does real work in both, how we market, and how the spaces are designed."

But the process of expansion has not always been an easy one for her. "I always knew I wanted a gallery in Santa Fe eventually. It's where I spent time with my father, artist Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and where I was inspired to become a gallery owner. When the building that once housed Elaine Horowitz's gallery came available, it felt inspired, almost meant to be, so I jumped on it. But opening that second location was so much harder than I expected.

Having two locations forces you to build duplicatable systems, and that's a different skill than running one gallery well.

"I waited another 10 years before opening the third location in New York, built around featuring David Yarrow and then gradually bringing in our other artists, along with new artists looking for an opportunity in Manhattan. Deciding to open a new location comes down to finding the right market, the right space and the right opportunity. But sometimes you just have to take the risk and trust you'll make it work."

These new galleries opened the doors for new sales, new

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MULTIPLE LOCATIONS *continued from page 12*

mediums, new genres and new price points.

"These different markets bring new collectors," she says. "Santa Fe attracts a broad range of visitors and collectors, but New York shifts that mix, and now East Hampton lets us reach a new level of art buyer as well."

Ms. Campbell's biggest struggles have been the ability to manage all of her locations. "I can't be in four places at once, so everything depends on the strength of the team in each gallery. I'm incredibly proud of what we've built. A stellar group of art advisors and managers, plus a full team for marketing, publicity, graphic design and website management. Holding one standard across four locations sounds like it should be hard, but with a team this good, it feels less like a challenge and more like a shared sense of pride in what Sorrel Sky stands for, no matter which door you walk through."

Shawn Vinson, owner of The Sun ATL in Atlanta, GA, has much experience with juggling multiple locations having had four over the span of his career: Vinson Gallery (1998–2008), Different Trains Gallery (2017–2026), The WADDI (2019–2022) and The Sun ATL (2025–to present). "I actually never intended to have multiple locations—let alone one," he says.

"I started as a wholesale art rep in the early 1990s,

traveling throughout the Southeast calling on galleries, frameshops, designers and showrooms, back in the day before the internet and mobile phones. In 1998, while looking for a studio for my wife and partner, artist Ruth Franklin, I found a charming storefront in Decatur, GA. It turned out to be better suited to a gallery, so we took the plunge."

The Sun ATL is a 9,200-square-foot contemporary art gallery and cultural



The Sun ATL is located in Atlanta, GA.

space in Atlanta's historic Sweet Auburn district. "When it came to opening multiple locations, the key factors for us was having supportive partners, a strong roster of artists and gallery locations within a few miles of one another. That proximity made managing them considerably easier. The primary thread connecting them was our artists and curatorial point-of-view," he says.

"We've operated as VINSONart, LLC since 1994, while the brick-and-mortar galleries have each had their own character."

Each gallery offered opportunity. "Vinson Gallery was a small space on bustling Decatur Square. We opened Different Trains Gallery and were soon invited to open a satellite gallery inside a local bank. Two years later, I was asked to open The WADDI in Atlanta's Inman Park neighborhood. Its larger scale allowed us to show more work and bring in new artists. After The WADDI closed in 2022 because of a zoning issue, I curated several pop-up ex-

was the director and curator behind each one. We used the same email list, which grew along with us, while creating separate social media channels for each gallery. Word-of-mouth has always served us well. I also joined local business and community organizations and attended networking events near each gallery. For a small business, becoming part of the community can be more valuable than conventional advertising."

Choosing storied locations helped to become part of each locations' identity. "The neighborhood, architecture and history of each gallery played an important role in its branding," he says. "I was once described in a news article as having a knack for opening galleries in unusual places, and there's some truth to that. Our first gallery was in an old brick building on Decatur Square. Different Trains was on the ground floor of my business partner's townhome, and our satellite was inside a bank—the only art gallery in a bank that we knew of. The WADDI occupied a former machine shop that once repaired train engines.

"The Sun ATL began life as a shop that manufactured and repaired saws and blades and was later renovated for an architecture and engineering firm. We called it The Sun ATL because it's a big yellow building in the heart of Sweet Auburn. Rather than impose the same design on

hibitions in Candler Park. Through that experience, I met the owners of a 9,200-square-foot building near the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park. That became The Sun ATL, which opened in January of 2025. Each gallery was distinct, but the artists, relationships and curatorial sensibility provided continuity."

When it came to marketing, each gallery appealed to their audiences. "We never made a particular effort to market the galleries as a group," Mr. Vinson says. "People who followed us generally knew I

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MULTIPLE LOCATIONS
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every gallery, I've always tried to respond to the character of the building and its surroundings."

Each opportunity helped to expand the business in their own ways. "We became well-established in Decatur, but our physical footprint and immediate audience were relatively small. Opening The WADDI introduced us to new collectors and art lovers in affluent Inman Park, close to downtown Atlanta. The Sun ATL has broadened the audience again. We're on the edge of downtown, a block from Ebenezer Baptist Church and The King Center and close to Georgia State Uni-

versity. We're seeing a younger and more diverse audience here. That has influenced what we offer," he says.

using to exhibit higher-end original work by established and internationally known artists. The larger building also gives us

Mr. Vinson notes that a difficult part of the business was his inability to clone himself. "Multiple galleries mean multiple exhibitions, installations, events, marketing efforts, relationships and day-to-day challenges demanding attention. Looking back, relationships have been the most important constant. What we lacked in working capital, we made up for with artists, collectors, landlords, business partners and friends who believed in what we were doing. Those relationships made it possible to take chances I probably couldn't have taken otherwise. I've been very fortunate."

"Multiple galleries mean multiple exhibitions, installations, events, marketing efforts, relationships and day-to-day challenges demanding attention. Looking back, relationships have been the most important constant."

—Shawn Vinson

"We're developing a museum-style gift shop with artist-designed apparel and original prints while contin-

more freedom to present different mediums, price points and types of exhibitions."

Koleen Kaffan is Editor in Chief of Art World News.



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WHAT TURNOVER REALLY COSTS YOUR SHOP

By Sheila McCumby

Every gallery owner and frameshop manager eventually faces the exact same compensation fork in the road: Option A: Keep wages low, protect those razor-thin margins and accept that your shop will have a revolving door. Option B: Pay above market rate, build a steady team and stop having to teach new hires how to use the mat cutter every four months.

On paper, low wages look like financial genius. Labor is usually one of the bigger line items on your P&L, so shaving a few bucks off hourly pay delivers an instant dopamine hit to the bottom line. That logic works great, right up until someone actually quits, and you get

slapped with the real price tag of turnover in a craft-driven industry. When a custom framer or sales associate hands you their two-week notice, the finan-

ing listing fees, and reading dozens of resumes from people who claim they “love art”

- Interviewing candidates and trying to figure out if

- Standing over their shoulder while they learn your specific pneumatic joiners, wall cutters and POS system



While that position sits empty, someone else has to do the work. Usually, that means your master framer is stuck cutting backer board instead of building complex, high-margin shadow-boxes, which can also be a huge morale killer.

Once the new hire starts, prepare for the transition phase. Roughly a third of all turnover happens in the first 90 days, usually because an overwhelmed shop throws a rookie straight into production without real train-

cial bleeding doesn't end with their final paycheck. Replacing them eats up real time and cold, hard cash:

they actually know how to join a corner.

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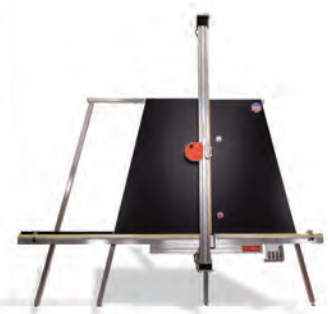


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STAFFING TIPS

continued from page 18

ing. Unfortunately, in our world, “learning curves” look like miscut rag mats, scratched glass, upside down-mounted prints and scrapped moulding. That \$5,000 you saved on salary? It just got swept into the shop vacuum alongside three lengths of ruined imported moulding.

The Safety Hazard Nobody Talks About

There is another direct cost to inexperienced staff: safety claims. Custom framing involves razor-sharp mat blades, heavy chop saws, power under pinners and large sheets of fragile glass.

An experienced framer handles glass and equipment with practiced, automatic safety protocols. A nervous, rushed, or undertrained hire is a walking workers’ compensation claim. We never want to see our employees get injured, but a single severe glass slice or saw mishap doesn’t just halt production for the day, it spikes your shop’s insurance premiums for years to come.

The Skilled Trade Shortage Reality

You can’t just run an online ad and expect a master framer to show up at your door on Monday. Custom framing is an aging craft, and fewer young workers are entering our trade.

When a skilled craftsman leaves, you are rarely replacing them with a peer;

you are hiring for potential and building them from scratch. That means months of lower shop output while they learn the trade, making the loss of an experienced framer far more expensive than in industries with a ready talent pool.

You Can’t Put a Price On Tacit Knowledge

Custom framing and art sales rely on a massive amount of invisible knowledge. An experienced framer just knows how to

tomers are a loyal bunch, they like seeing the same friendly face who remembers their aesthetic. A shop with a revolving door makes a gallery look shaky, even if your framing procedures and quality haven’t changed a bit.

People Quit Bosses, Not Framing Shops

While uncompetitive pay will push employees away, high wages alone won’t keep them. There’s an old management saying that

chaotic, unsupportive or toxic, you will constantly pay the turnover penalty, no matter how much you pay per hour.

Being a good manager isn’t a soft skill; it’s a direct cost-containment strategy. The best managers are excellent teachers who inspire their team to learn and grow in their various positions.

It’s Not Just About the Paycheck

This doesn’t mean you should start handing out six figure tech-company salaries for every entry-level task. Pay raises have diminishing returns on simple, low-skill jobs that require minimal training. Money isn’t the only tool you have to keep good people. Small shops have a huge secret weapon: flexibility. You can retain key staff with low-cost, high-value perks:

- Schedule flexibility: Compressed four-day workweeks or predictable scheduling.
- Professional growth: Sponsoring PPFA Guild Certified Framers credentials or sending staff to trade shows.
- Tool investment: Outfitting the shop with ergonomic mats, proper lighting and top-tier hand tools so physical work doesn’t wear them down.
- Shop perks: Cost-price personal framing allowances or studio space usage during off-hours.



float a fragile watercolor, how to preserve an antique textile without destroying it, or how to coax a cranky under pinner into making a tight corner. On the sales floor, a seasoned designer knows how to guide a client toward museum glass without sounding pushy. They know that Mrs. Higgins gets picky about her mat margins, and that the local corporate account always needs a three-day turnaround.

When a good employee leaves, all of that unwritten wisdom walks right out the door. Clients notice, too. Art collectors and framing cus-

holds especially true in creative, craft-focused environments: people don’t quit bad jobs; they quit bad bosses.

A generous salary won’t compensate for a shop manager who micromanages every bevel cut, loses their temper when glass breaks, or takes unearned credit for a stunning custom shadow-box design. Skilled craftspeople take immense pride in their work. They want autonomy, clear communication, respect for their expertise and a boss who has their back when a customer gets unreasonable.

If your work culture is

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S. Guccione

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ART BUYING TRENDS

NO, PICASSO SHOULD NOT MATCH THE SOFA

By Litsa Spanos

There are certain design rules worth following. Measure before ordering the sofa. Don't hang the chandelier so low that your dinner guests hit their heads. And perhaps reconsider white upholstery if you have three children and a Labrador. But when it comes to art? Please stop trying to match it to the sofa.

We hear it all the time: "I love this painting, but I'm not sure it goes with my living room." Our response: Do you love it? If the answer is yes, we're already halfway there.

Art was never meant to quietly coordinate with your upholstery. It doesn't need to pick up the blue in your pillows, complement the undertones in your rug or politely disappear into a perfectly curated room. In fact, sometimes the best art does exactly the opposite.

Picture this: a gorgeous cream sofa, elegant neutral walls, beautiful lighting—and hanging above it, an enormous explosion of fuchsia, orange, emerald and electric blue. Unexpected? Absolutely. Fabulous? Even better. That painting just became the most interesting person at the party.

While your sofa has a job, so does your art. Your sofa should be comfortable. It

should fit the room. Ideally, it should survive red wine, grandchildren and that one guest who insists on eating cocktail sauce while sitting on it.

Your art has a more important assignment. It should make you feel something. It

spent decades around art: you will probably own your favorite artwork longer than your favorite sofa. Therefore, it is important to remember that art is personal, but decorating is temporary. Furniture comes and goes. Trends change. Gray becomes beige. Beige becomes

comes part of your story. Your children remember it. Your grandchildren recognize it. "That painting was always in Grandma's house." That's when you realize you weren't simply filling a blank wall. You were collecting something meaningful.

So, the next time you fall madly in love with a painting, and someone asks: "But does it match the sofa?" Smile confidently and say: "Absolutely not." And if the sofa really has a problem with it? Buy a new sofa.



Litsa Spanos is the President of ADC Fine Art in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the founder of Art Design Consultants Inc, SmartSell Membership, author "Secrets of the Art World" and founder of ACA, Art Comes Alive—one of the nation's premier art recognition and sales programs connecting artists with private and corporate collectors. Her mission is to support contemporary, living artists and her company ranks as the top 2% of women-owned businesses in the nation based on revenue. ADC Fine Art has two locations: a 13,000 square foot gallery and custom frameshop in Cincinnati, OH's west end and a gallery and custom frameshop in the heart of Ft. Thomas, KY. Visit the website to learn more located at: www.adcfineart.com.

should stop you in your tracks. Make you smile. Challenge you. Remind you of Paris, your grandmother, your first apartment, your honeymoon—or absolutely nothing you can put into words. Sometimes the best explanation for buying a piece of art is simply: "I couldn't stop thinking about it." That's enough.

Here's another little secret from someone who has

brown. Brown becomes "mocha mousse," and suddenly someone announces that burgundy is back.

Art doesn't care. The piece you truly love moves with you. It works in your first home, your next home and sometimes in a completely different room than the one you originally imagined.

Eventually, it becomes more than decoration. It be-

BUSINESS STRATEGIES

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KNOWLEDGE HAS NO HOME

By Katherine Hébert

Over the years, I have learned that much of gallery management relies on conversations, memory and a few people carrying a tremendous amount of context in their heads. I see a hidden friction with this. There is a particular kind of chaos that can develop in a small gallery without looking especially chaotic. One example might be when an exhibition is open, and the gallery is humming with sales and marketing activities. Your small team seems to know what needs to happen. Well.... Mostly.

In this article, you'll learn how relying on memory can unfortunately create extra work for your gallery and where important information tends to get lost. We'll also look at practical ways to connect decisions, responsibilities and next steps so your small team can work with greater clarity and consistency.

The goal is to help you see where friction might be happening by relying on memory, so you can create a better system and put more focus on things that make your gallery grow and succeed long term.

When someone asks, "Did we ever get that information from the artist?" or "What did we decide about

that?" or "Has anyone followed up with that collector?" Then you find that the search begins; email, spreadsheets, and meeting notes are all being searched to find answers or resources.

More often than not,

the next exhibition in planning stages, and the history behind decisions made months ago. Your team has a tremendous amount of context swirling around in their brains as they move between sales, marketing, administration, inventory, artist relationships, shipping,

feels efficient when your team is small. You can make a decision while standing at the front desk or mention a next step as you pass in the hallway. Everyone understands what happened at the time, so stopping to record it can feel unnecessary.

Then a few days pass.... You know where I'm going with this, don't you? The person who needs to act on a task may remember the conversation differently, or a decision may be clear, but the next step has no owner. Another common scenario is when someone may be waiting for information that another person does not realize they need to provide.

This kind of challenge grows as your gallery takes on more activities and opportunities. The amount of information increases, along with the connections between all that information.

I'm an advocate for bringing all the moving parts that make your gallery run like a well-oiled machine together and making them accessible in a single place. Let's say you have artists connected to an upcoming exhibition.

That particular exhibition is connected to lots of art, project dates, installation



someone just asks the person who probably knows, and that person usually does know because they remember.

This is one of the realities of running a gallery with a very small team. A remarkable amount of the business can live in the heads of the people running it. You know your artists and collectors,

and whatever the day brings.

That knowledge keeps the gallery moving, but memory should not have to carry the whole business. Relying on memory can cause a lot of problems that are not easy to fix.

Why Memory Starts to Create Friction

Talking to each other

continued on page 24

plans, and marketing. The marketing connects to collector communications. Those collectors have interests, purchase histories, and previous conversations. A decision in one area can change what needs to happen somewhere else.

Your team may know where each piece of information lives. The harder part is seeing how the pieces fit together and what should happen next. One search does not feel alarming. Multiplied across a busy week, all that looking, asking, checking, and reconstructing becomes a hidden tax on the gallery. You lose time that could be spent on sales, artist relationships, and strategic planning. You also become increasingly dependent on the person who holds the most context. That person may be you!

When every unclear question comes back to you, stepping away becomes difficult. You may delegate a task and then stay involved because your team needs you to provide details, explain the decision, or confirm the next move. You remain the gallery's information center even when someone else is responsible for doing the work. This can also create tension within a good team. A missed detail may look like carelessness when the real weakness is that the information, responsibility, and next step were never clearly connected.

Pay Attention to Where Work Moves

If you want to find the weak spots in your gallery's

operations, look at the places where information or responsibility moves from one person, role, or stage to another.

For example:

- Artist information becomes gallery work. An artist sends new images, pricing, availability, or exhibition details. Someone must record the information and connect it to the right artwork or project.

- A sale creates adminis-

trative work.

The person working with the collector may need someone else to prepare an invoice, update inventory, organize shipping, or schedule future follow-up.

These moments deserve attention because each one asks a person to understand what happened, identify what it means, and know what to do next. When the connection is unclear, work slows down or disappears beneath more urgent responsibilities.

Five Questions That Keep Work Moving

You do not need an elaborate process every time

Knowledge keeps the gallery moving, but memory should not have to carry the whole business.

Relying on memory can cause a lot of problems that are not easy to fix.

your team makes a decision. I highly recommend structured weekly reviews with the team to go over tasks and projects.

- Exhibition planning becomes marketing. Artist information, artwork details, curatorial ideas, and important dates need to become an email campaign, website update, press release, or social media content.

- A meeting becomes action. Your team makes a decision, but progress depends on someone recording what was decided, who will act, and when it needs

to happen.

During those meetings ask a few practical questions to create enough clarity for someone to move forward. These weekly reviews are also helpful to see who is overwhelmed and who might take on more responsibility. These five questions are a good place to start to provide repeatable structure to weekly team meetings.

1. What happens next? Turn the conversation into a visible action. "We should

contact that collector" expresses an intention. "Send a personal follow-up about the new work by Thursday" identifies the next move.

2. Who is responsible for that step? Choose one person to move it forward. Several people may contribute, advise, or approve, but one person should know that the next step belongs to them.

3. When does it need to happen? Use a real date whenever possible. "This week" can mean Wednesday to one person and late Friday afternoon to another. For work involving review or approval, set a checkpoint before the final deadline.

4. What information does that person need? Connect the task to the facts, files, notes and decisions required to complete it. If someone must return to you for every detail, the responsibility has only partially moved off your plate.

5. Where will everyone see the result? Agree on where progress will be visible. You might update a shared task, add a note to the collector record, or mark something as ready for review. This reduces the need for "Did this get done?" messages.

Use the "Unavailable Tomorrow" Test

Choose one important area of work happening in your gallery right now. Imagine that the person who knows the most about it is unavailable tomorrow. Could someone else under

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BUSINESS STRATEGIES *continued from page 24*

stand what has happened, find the important information, and see what needs to happen next? They don't need to know every detail, but they might need enough context to keep the work moving forward.

If the answer is yes, you probably have a resilient way of working. Bravo!! But if the answer involves a long list of questions, information hidden in personal email, or several conversations to reconstruct the story, you have found an opportunity to improve your system.

This little exercise works especially well for recurring gallery activities such as:

- Exhibition planning

- Collector follow-up
- Artwork intake and up-dates
- Artist communication
- Marketing campaigns
- Sales administration and shipping

Choose one area rather than trying to fix everything at once. It's best to start small, learn and improve. Be careful not to create more bureaucracy or another system that takes more time to maintain than the work itself. You also don't need to document every decision or conversation.

Focus on making the right information visible in the context where someone needs it. When you look at an upcoming exhibition, for example, you should be able to see the artists, artwork,

key dates, decisions, marketing activities, responsibilities and next steps associated with it. You shouldn't have to rebuild the exhibition's full story from emails, notes, spreadsheets and memory each time you sit down to work. That is the difference between storing information and using it to run the business, and it opens up so many more opportunities to manage the gallery more efficiently and effectively.

The Gallery Fuel Operating System brings your projects, tasks, artists, collectors, meetings, decisions, deadlines and supporting information into a connected workspace. The purpose is to help your team see what relates to what, who is responsible, and what

needs attention next. The system still depends on good communication and consistent habits. Its value comes from giving those habits a practical home that fits the way your gallery works.

Columnist and industry expert Katherine Hébert helps art galleries improve sales, marketing and operations. She is the founder of Gallery Fuel, a business advisory practice and bespoke gallery operating system that helps small to mid-sized galleries connect strategy to day-to-day execution, create clearer systems and modernize how they run their business. To learn more about Gallery Fuel, visit the website located at: www.galleryfuel.com.

STAFFING TIPS *continued from page 20*

The "If They Walk Tomorrow" Test

Instead of asking yourself, "What's the absolute minimum I can pay for this position?" try asking, "What happens to my shop and my business if this person quits tomorrow?"

- **Basic Prep or Assembly:** If the skills are easy to teach and a replacement can hit full speed in a couple of weeks, standard market rate is fine.

- **Lead Designers and Master Framers:** If losing them means lost sales, ruined stock, safety risks and three months of chaos, paying above market isn't an expense, it's cheap operational insurance.

And don't wait for a key employee to walk into your office with a rival offer before you adjust their wage. Counteroffers rarely

track on a spreadsheet. The true cost of turnover: ruined materials, higher insurance risks, backed-up orders and lost customer trust, is scat-

Paying a little more to keep a skilled, reliable employee is almost always cheaper than paying again and again to find, train, and fix the mistakes of their replacement.



work long-term; they tell the employee you only recognized their worth once they had a foot out the door. Your payroll line is easy to

tered all over the shop floor.

In the art and framing business, your real product isn't just wood and glass; it's craftsmanship and trust.

Sheila McCumby, owner of Strategies for Success, a small business consulting firm, connects with audiences worldwide as a popular speaker, writer, mentor and teacher. Her podcast, 'The Framing Chronicles' focuses on challenges faced by independent companies in the art and framing industry. With decades of experience as a picture framer and shop owner (since the early 90s), she's dedicated to helping small businesses boost profits and streamline operations. For more information, visit the website: www.mystrategies4success.com.

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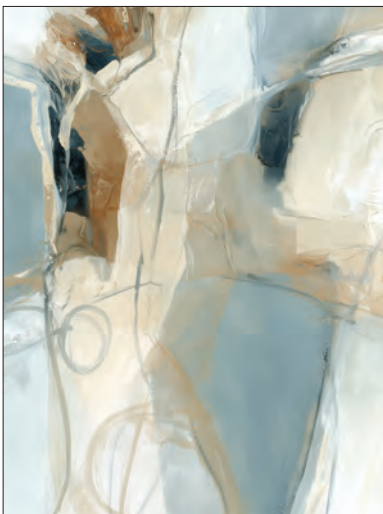


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Bentley Art Publishing, Elk Grove, CA, presents "Watson and the Shark 1778" by John Singleton Copley, available as an open edition in various sizes. retail prices start at \$16. For more information, call (925) 997-7145, www.bentleyartpublishing.com.



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"Resonate in Gold III" by Ellie Roberts is available as POD retailing from \$36 to \$435. For further information, telephone C Brand Studios, located in San Diego, at (858) 554-0102 or go to the website at: www.cbrandstudios.com.

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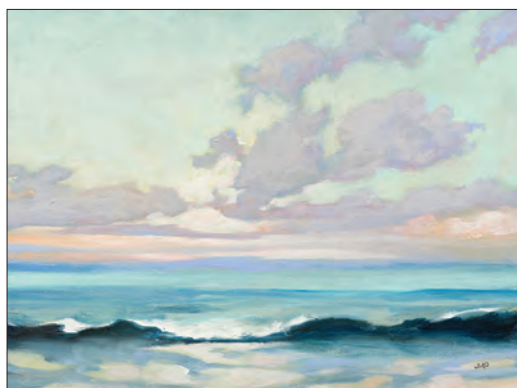
"Notre Dame Fightin' Irish Football" by James Blakeway measures 40 by 13 1/2 inches and retails for \$39.95. For



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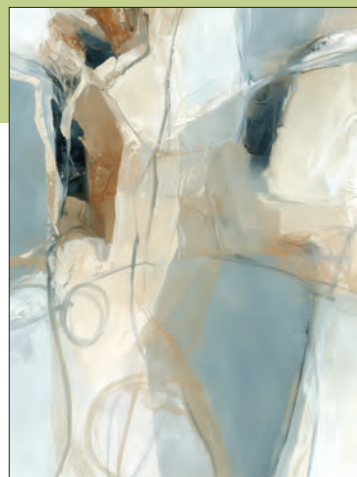
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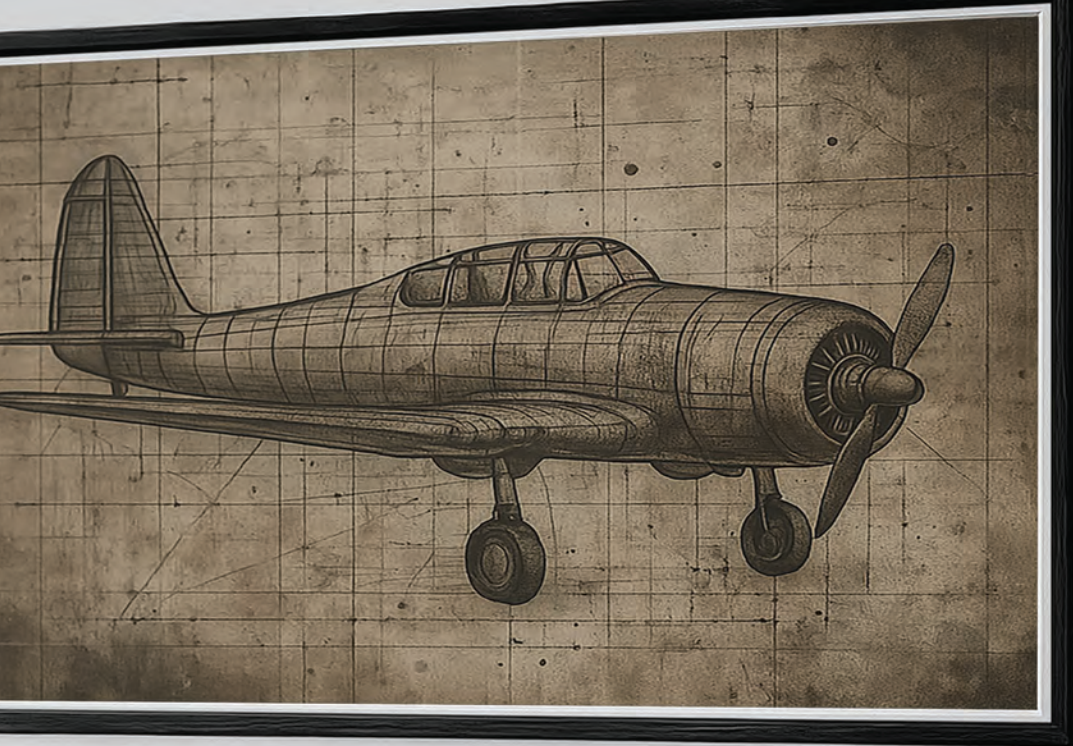
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