

World as diagram, work as dance

Curated by Tosia Leniarska

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Emily
Barker, Simon Denny, Ana Viktoria
Dzinic, Win McCarthy, Gretchen
Lawrence, Carolyn Lazard, Coumba
Samba and Diamond Stingily

03 February – 04 March 2023

Emalin is pleased to present *World as diagram, work as dance*, a group exhibition with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Emily Barker, Simon Denny, Ana Viktoria Dzinic, Win McCarthy, Gretchen Lawrence, Carolyn Lazard, Coumba Samba and Diamond Stingily, curated by Tosia Leniarska. Taking choreography as a method for mapping the body in space, the artists in the exhibition address structures of measurement, normativity and affect. They trace how social directions are arranged through objects across generations and places, how aesthetics are used in the restriction or shaping of bodies and how these are implicated in constructed space.

Their works consider how spatial and material conditions produce affects and the ways the organising of the body in turn translates to the organisation of the mind. The exhibition stems from thinking about choreography as notation of a body in movement – restricted by space, responding to limitations, self-perceiving. This echoing – these turns of translations between space and body, mind and other – speak of reflexivity between us and the environment: a dance.

The exhibition opens with *Cité Internationale des Arts Studio 1732*, a triptych of photographs by Emily Barker. It depicts the damage caused by the artist's wheelchair scraping corners of walls, enacting an almost gentle exchange of violence between person and space. The photographs were taken with a phone camera by a friend, Arnaud Wohlhauser, illustrating an expanded notion of authorship unbound by restricted access, illuminating the shifts between and within agency and reliance. Like an obstacle to movement, the connection between translation, explanation and physical presence is denied – and the image's refusal of a bodily presence is turned into a mark of violence on an infrastructural wall.

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Following from this absence of the body as a mark of retribution, Diamond Stingily's sculpture *diamond's old body* is a bronze cast of the artist's hands and feet, disembodied, only suggestive of a pose. The sculpture draws on *dead Daughter*, a body of work that invoked funerary rites, transience and loss in the context of family and belonging. *diamond's old body* positions itself as a form of embodied knowledge where movement trained in intimacy and childhood is reconstructed and frozen. Her hands and feet emerge as if to find touch but refuse all else. "To not live in violence is a privilege", the artist said in reference to her past work; and in *dead Daughter*, a book that accompanies the sculpture, Stingily describes an audience of violence around the refused body, as taunting voices surrounding her, threatening, demanding. Casting the body silently speaks to an attempt at casting away repressive constraint and isolation: the assumed position of leaving is a push of movement into abandon.

Exploring how the described body can be fragmentary, and yet whole, is Carolyn Lazard's *Leans Reverses – Channel 2*. Published in the booklet accompanying the exhibition, it is a transcript of the subtitles from their film of the same title, and functions both as a reflection of the work, existing as a fragmentary experience, and a refusal to participate in inaccessible exhibition spaces. Lazard uses accessibility as a lens through which to pull apart the roles of instruction, translation and description. The video is of a performer following a choreography under which closed captions describe the sounds produced by the body – laboured breathing, sweeping, thudding. The written form repositions viewership itself, shifting values of description in the non-normative sensorial experience of an artwork.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's *Earwitness Inventory Metal Door Instrument*, from his *Earwitness Inventory* project, continues the reconfiguration of what sound can be translated into and what type of transcription can be understood. The project is made up of objects described by the artist as instruments or mnemonic devices that replicate sounds described in testimonies. They are based on interviews – with victims of political imprisonment, with witnesses in trials, for whom sound could provide a form of evidence. Abu Hamdan's *Earwitness Inventory Metal Door Instrument* was designed to make the sounds of a variety of potential doors, searching for the specific sound which would respond to the mnemonic imagination of the witnesses. He explores the translation of visceral memory and its mediation through cultural tropes – the metallic door resembling devices used by foley artists, which are not precise but reflect a collective idea of the sound of a door being locked or banged closed. This connection between personal experience and machinic imagination, built on codes from media, creates objects that are simultaneously mechanism, memory, imagination and medium.

Speaking devices multiply in *Cityscape* by Gretchen Lawrence and Coumba Samba, where the found objects function as a medium for the translation of migratory identity. Sharing a collaborative practice, their duo installation furnishes a city as both a modernist grid and a skyline, turning cartography to choreography. Growing up in the periphery, respectively post-Soviet Estonia and Senegal, they looked towards the hegemonic, metropolitan centres that they eventually migrated to, New York and London. Both used the visual signifiers of 2000s hipsters to rehearse engagement with culture in anticipation of the difference; their aesthetic vocabulary trained and learned online and through objects that travel across borders. They explore how these subcultural objects and symbols provide structures of support and comfort – streamlining difference into code.

Stripe blinds is a broken window blind painted in colours that echo a picture of Coumba Samba's sister taken during a modelling stint in her first years in New York, before she turned to religion and family life. Samba picks up domestic objects from the city streets, painting and redomesticating them, expanding the notion of home from the indoors to include rogue material, colour and cultural reference. She explores the different strategies of assimilation and conservatism undertaken by her siblings as they moved between Dakar and New York. The accumulation of these stories in their photos, memories, behaviours, souvenirs and letters is calqued onto objects of the city by Samba's soft moulding, each transformed by different parts of this social choreography.

If Samba's painted, domestic work is like a souvenir of her sister and surrogate of home, Gretchen Lawrence's *First encounters* – a composition in faux leather belts and aluminium studs – is like a souvenir of subcultural signification, detritus from a found generation. The strips of leather mimic Minimalist paintings, except in their used, worn down and protruding form. The constellation of studs mirrors Lawrence's first encounter with pixels and circuit boards, a life-forming event, generative. Subculture itself becomes found material. Here, choreography is a reproducible sequence of movements that allows you to be in alignment with others. Lawrence and Samba's works trace this method of identity as defence, a strategy in itself – consciously wielded, manifested, instrumentalised.

At a young age, Ana Viktoria Dzinic had to learn that there is a zone of extraction where identity and image economy meet – and yet that there are ways of subverting this for one's benefit. Her two-part series is made up of sculptures, *Liberal Trauma Trophies*, and printed canvases, *Conservative Distress Displays*: ghostly reproductions of an artwork series recovered from her childhood. Systematically documenting herself as a child was instrumental in navigating the bureaucratic structure of gender reassignment procedures, causing her to develop a habit of collecting evidence. Having spent her childhood training as a male ballet dancer, she began self-mythologising her past through a canon of symbols of femininity and transformation, taking series of pictures of romanticised ballet shoes as a constructed catalogue of her past in objects. The shoes, not really hers; the stories, mistold; the memories, reconstructed. It is an exercise in the flattening of reality and determinism, storytelling moving beyond truth or validity.

Researching the vernacular ways in which images proliferate, Dzinic is interested in the medium of user-generated technologies such as home-order prints and self-made monuments. Bronze-cast ballet shoes that parents make as keepsakes for their children are layered with her manipulations: the bronze and mahogany are replicas, the drawings imitations, the aging an artifice. Dzinic creates 'merch' objects infested with ghosts – of the past, and manifestations – of the future. The naive symbols, faux framed drawings that illustrate private desires such as money, success or belonging, are taken from Seth Price's text on the motivations that bring people into the artworld. Manifestations are ideologically ambiguous. In contemporary terms, this seductive occultism aligns with the ways media proliferate online. To take an existing economy and frame it as a neutral force that can be bridled for one's personal success – here, in a depriving system, spirituality turns into user-generated technology.

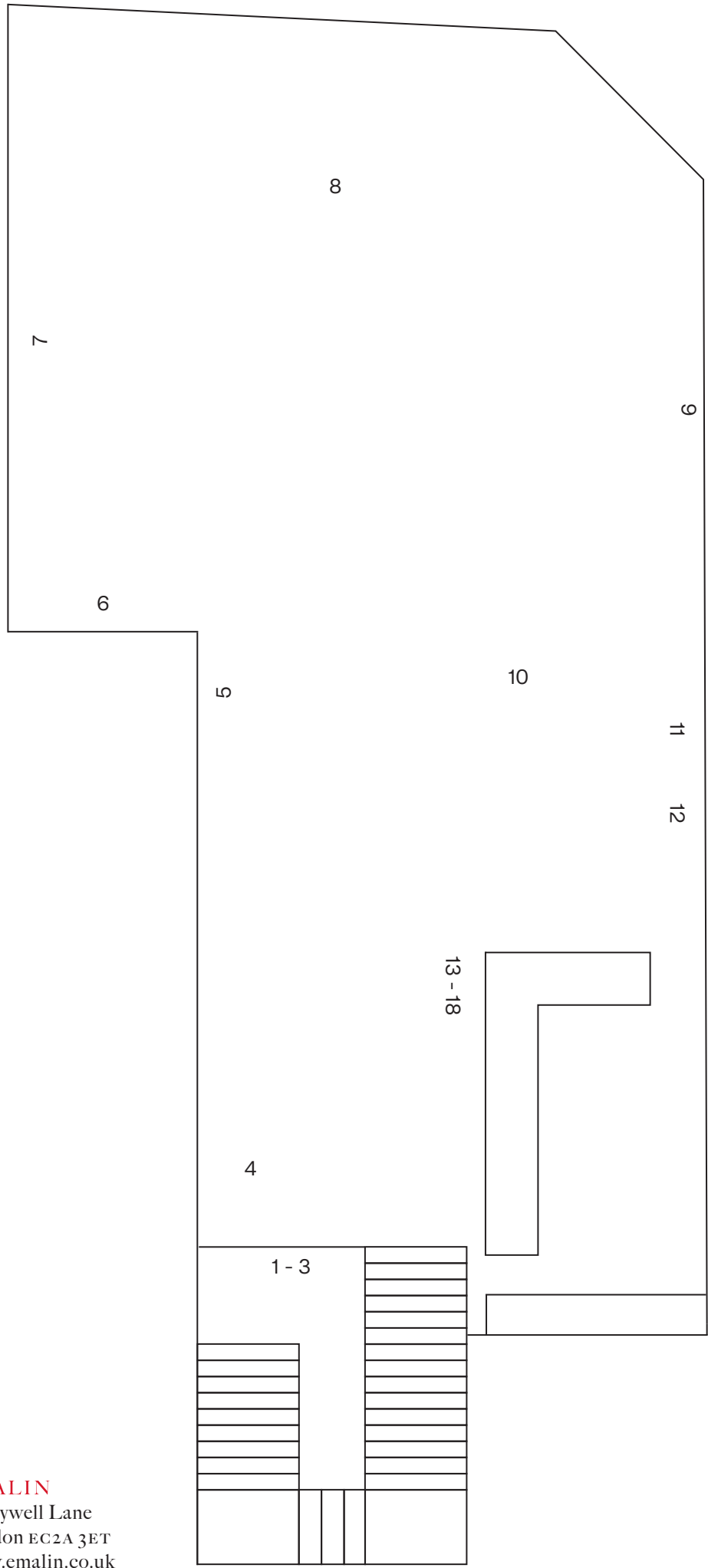
Simon Denny plays with the overlaps between ideology and technological development, or how they implicate our self-perception and social participation. His *Document Reliefs* are sculpted using stacks of A4 archival paper printed with documents showcasing structures of knowledge and ideology. In this case, the U.S. technological patent for the Amazon Worker Cage, the intellectual property safeguard for a human cage which enables workers to enter human exclusion zones in their fulfilment centres. The relief form sits at the edge between threat and ridicule. The patented cage is both a mechanical and bureaucratic structure which builds around the body of the worker like reductive architecture; but it is also comically shaped, like a toy made of office paper. Power is detached from its own self-perception, yet the cyclicity of evil's archetypes does not impact bodies restricted and reproduced by policy.

Win McCarthy's *Untitled (Orange Difference)* is part of a series of sculptures using metal rulers, stacked and welded in parallel lines, mounted on the wall. Researching the extent of reduction that a person will subject themselves to, McCarthy's rulers rehearse this need to self-measure, to quantify. Another thrashed material echo of Minimalism, the imposing height and colour of the welded metal threatens with the presence of some vaguely hostile system. The notion of measure introduces a literal normativity in space, a frame of reference against which to compare, stack evidence. The invasive clarity of measurement connects habits of obsessive quantification and accumulation of data with the structuring of identity. The force of legibility is a loss of opacity.

Where movement and information systems meet, a reduction happens. Something alive and reflexive has to be extracted in order to mediate into a comprehensive form. Choreography as a system of language is coded to translate something endlessly irreducible into notation – a synecdoche for the same reductive impulse of systemic thinking that turns the world into a diagram.

LIST OF WORKS

- 1 - 3. Emily Barker
Cité Internationale des Arts Studio 1732, 1-3, 2023
each:
digital c-print on glossy paper
25.4 × 17.8 cm (10 × 7 inches)
34.7 × 28.4 cm (13 5/8 × 11 1/8 in)
(framed)
4. Lawrence Abu Hamdan
Earwitness Inventory Metal Door Instrument, 2018
metal door
80 × 30 × 77 cm
31½ × 11¾ × 30¼ in
5. Win McCarthy
Untitled (Orange Difference), 2022
welded aluminium rulers
204.5 × 18 cm
80½ × 7⅞ in
6. Coumba Samba
Stripe blinds, 2023
window blind, acrylic and oil paint
102 × 121.5 × 7.5 cm
40 1/8 × 47 7/8 × 3 in
7. Simon Denny
Document Relief 22 (Amazon Worker Cage Patent), 2020
inkjet print on archival paper, glue,
custom metal wall mount
29.8 × 21.1 × 12.7 cm
11 3/4 × 8 1/4 × 5 in
8. Gretchen Lawrence and Coumba Samba
Cityscape, 2023
found objects
dimensions variable
9. Gretchen Lawrence
First encounters, 2022
steel plate, faux leather strips,
aluminium studs
61 × 69 × 3 cm
24 × 27⅞ × 1⅞ in
10. Diamond Stingily
diamond's old body, 2022
bronze
in four parts:
13 × 10 × 10 cm (5⅞ × 4 × 4 in)
13 × 10 × 8 cm (5⅞ × 4 × 3⅞ in)
28 × 12 × 14 cm (11 × 4¾ × 5½ in)
28 × 12 × 14 cm (11 × 4¾ × 5½ in)
- 11 - 12. Ana Viktoria Dzinic
Conservative Distress Display #1 - #2, 2023
each:
inkjet print on canvas
190 × 130 × 3 cm
74¾ × 51⅞ × 1⅞ in
- 13-18. Ana Viktoria Dzinic
Liberal Trauma Trophy #1 - #6, 2023
each:
custom bronze cast, found frames,
velvet, bronze imitation paint, mahogany
imitation paint, giclée print German
etching dyed in instant coffee
dimensions variable



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Lawrence Abu Hamdan (b. 1985, Amman, JO) lives and works between Dubai and Beirut. He received his BA at Middlesex University, London (2004) and completed his MA (2008) and received his PhD (2010) from Goldsmiths College, London. He is a recipient of the Turner Prize (2019). Recent solo exhibitions include Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, IT (2022); Toronto Biennial of Art, Toronto, CA (2022); Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE (2022); Kunstverein Nürnberg, DE (2021); Maureen Paley, London, UK (2020); Chisenhale Gallery, London, UK (2018); and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, US (2018). Recent group exhibitions include MoMA, New York, US (2023); the 12th Berlin Biennale, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, DE (2022); Kunsthalle Basel, CH (2021); the 34th Biennale de Sao Paulo, BR (2021); the 58th Venice Biennale, IT (2019). Upcoming solo exhibitions will be held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA, US (2023); and MoMA, New York, US (2023).

Emily Barker (b. 1992, California, US) lives and works in Los Angeles. Barker graduated with a BA from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, US (2010) and an MA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, US (2015). Recent exhibitions include *Quiet As It's Kept*, Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum, New York, US (2022); *Crip Time*, Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt, DE (2021); and *House Parté*, Carley Packer, Palm Springs, US (2021). Upcoming shows include *Body Politics*, Torrance Art Museum, US (2023).

Simon Denny (b. 1982, Auckland, NZ) lives and works in Berlin. He graduated with a BFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland (2004), and an MA from Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main (2009). Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Heidelberger Kunstverein, DE (2022); Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf (2020); Galerie Buchholz, Köln (2018); Serpentine Gallery, London (2015); New Zealand Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale, IT (2015); and MoMA PS1 (2015). Group exhibitions include Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR (2022); Kunsthalle Zürich, CH (2022); Kunsthalle Basel, CH (2021); MCA Chicago, US (2018); and the 9th Berlin Biennale, DE (2016).

Ana Viktoria Dzinic (b. 1994, Schwelm, DE) lives and works in London. She graduated with a BA from University of the Arts London (2019) and an MFA from Goldsmiths University London (2021). Recent exhibitions include *Trivial Pursuit*, The Entrance Gallery, New York, US (2022); *With Whom We Mutually Communicate*, Copeland Galleries & Art Tree Museum Beijing, London, UK (2022); *Just Queer*, SHOWstudio, London, UK (2018). She has performed alongside Pussy Riot, most recently at Boiler Room, London, UK (2020).

Win McCarthy (b. 1986, New York, US) lives and works in New York. He completed his BA at Bard College, US (2008). Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE (2023); Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, NL (2022); Galerie Neu, Berlin, DE (2021); Svetlana, New York, US (2019); Silberkuppe, Berlin, DE (2017); and Off Vendome, New York, US (2015). Recent group exhibitions have been held at Swiss Institute, New York, US (2022); Drawing Center, NY, US (2020); SMART Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Chicago, US (2019); Kunsthall, Rotterdam, NL (2019); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, US (2016); and Sculpture Center, New York, US (2014).

Gretchen Lawrence (b. 1997, Tallinn, Estonia) lives and works in London. Recent projects and performances include *My Spiral*, Galerina, London, UK (2022); *MoMa Bra* with Coumba Samba, Hospitalet, Stockholm, SE (2022); *Hello*, Galerina, London, UK (2022); *Associations* with Ed Fornieles, Carlos Ishikawa, London, UK (2021); *Life* with Kris Lemsalu, Goldsmiths CCA, London, UK (2019); *Sticking Dawn* with Gelitin and Liam Gillick, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, AT (2019); opening of the Baltic Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice, IT (2019); *Hydrogen Night*, Baltic Triennial, kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, LV (2018); tour visuals for Tommy Cash, Tallinn, EE (2017-2021).

Carolyn Lazard (b. 1987, California, US) lives and works in Philadelphia, US. They completed their BA at Bard College, US (2010). Recent solo exhibitions have been held at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, US (2022); Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, DE (2021); Cell Project Space, London, UK (2021); and Maxwell Graham / Essex Street, New York, US (2020). Selected group exhibitions have been held at MUMOK, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, AT (2022); Para Site, Hong Kong, HK (2022); Museion, Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bolzano, IT (2022); Museum Brandhorst, Munich, DE (2022); Swiss Institute, New York, US (2022); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, DE (2021); MoMA PS1, New York, US (2021); Museum Sztuki (MS1), Lodz, PL (2021); and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR (2020).

Coumba Samba (b. 2000, New York, US), lives and works in London, UK. Recent projects and performances include *Couture*, Galerina, London, UK (2023); *MoMa Bra* with Gretchen Lawrence, Hospitalet, Stockholm, SE (2022); *Hello*, Galerina, London, UK (2022); Pedro Youth Club Fundraiser with Gretchen Lawrence, Pedro Youth Club, London, UK (2022); *Chair Food Paper*, Biblioteka, London, UK (2022); FIELD Zine, published by XYZ Collective, London, UK (2019-2021).

Diamond Stingily (b. 1990, Chicago, US) lives and works in New York, US. Stingily studied at Columbia College Chicago, US. Her recent solo exhibitions have been held at Cabinet Gallery, London, UK (2021); Kunstverein Munich, Munich DE (2019); Galerie Isabella Borto-Iozzi, Berlin, DE (2019); *Queer Thoughts*, New York, US (2019); CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, US (2019); and ICA Miami, US (2018). Recent group shows include Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, LI (2022); ICA LA, US (2022); New Museum, New York, US (2021); NS-Documentation Center, Munich, DE (2020); Swiss Institute, New York, US (2019); Bergen Kunsthall, NO (2018); and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, US (2017).

Tosia Leniarska (b. 1997, Warsaw, Poland) is a curator and researcher based in London. She holds a BA in Philosophy and History of Art from University College London (2020) and an MA in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths (2023). She has worked at Emalin since 2019. Recent projects include programming Kem School, an alter-institutional artist residency program of critical practice and expanded choreography based in Warsaw. Other projects include *Scrolling the System*, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL (2020); *The Gnosis Show Part I and Part II*, Daisy's Room, London, UK (2021); and *Poradnik Sojusznicy*, Warsaw, PL (2021). She has contributed to publications including Buffalo, King Kong, Busch, i-D, Recens Paper and Gruppe Magazine. In February, she will be participating as a panelist on *Abakanowicz Today*, Tate Modern.

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