



*Knots and Mending: An Exploration of Interconnectivity Within Human
and Non-Human Environments*

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Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking*

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The work that has been completed for this thesis was influenced by Treaty 6 territory, home of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and other First Peoples of Canada. My work has also been heavily influenced by land in which I grew up in southwest Colorado, Home to Jicarilla Abache (Apache), Pueblos of New Mexico, Hopi Sinom (Hopi), and Diné (Navajo) Nations. I am an uninvited guest in both of these places, and I hope to tread lightly with my time spent here. Thank you for the intergenerational reciprocity of these spaces, and how they have greatly influenced my work.

I have always been drawn to natural places and the way in which these environments bring light and attention to small intricate and complex non-human worlds that are encapsulated in ecosystems that we can often not see but potentially feel as human beings. My current intent as an artist is to explore questions of interconnectivity, in hopes that the viewers of my work will feel a sense of connection to greater ecosystems in which we are all intertwined, on a macro and micro scale. These creative explorations have led me to question how the idea of both the human and non-human are framed in a contemporary context, and if this framing results in a simulated separation that limits our sense of ourselves and the world around us.

In exploring these themes, I am reminded of the intricate interconnectedness of all lifeforms and our shared responsibility to safeguard the fragile ecosystems that sustain us. This unique partnership, integrates an ecological approach, which is grounded in moral considerations for both non-human and human dynamics; aiming for balance and equality between these groups. Humans are the arbiters of ethics, having initiated this relationship. We acknowledge non-human nature as autonomous and unpredictable, beyond our control. Yet, our actions heavily influence non-human life, potentially endangering it through activities like pollution, pesticide use, mass development of land. Often, human needs take precedence over the well-being of other life forms. When considering ethical partnerships in environmental contexts, efforts should prioritize meeting essential needs and improving the quality of life for both

humans and non-human environments. This requires fostering coexistence rather than domination by either group.

The quilt room in the exhibition is a product of my experimentation with quilting techniques, resulting in several 'ground' quilts. I began this process by capturing photographs of untouched ground areas, drawing them onto a litho stone, printing and responding to each image differently. Flora and fauna weaves across irregular territories acted as a natural blanket of sorts, suggesting farm plots, zoning areas, parks, and other structured environments implemented for human consumption and enjoyment. This process establishes a connection between preserved natural moments transformed into recognizable objects, present in my life. With this body of work, I aim to emphasize the correlation between the object and place. I also draw connections between the sustained nest drawings and the ground quilts, because each object is used similarly, as a product of labor and warmth/protection.

In order to explore these questions I layer imagery from quilts, representing an aerial view of land, both in Alberta and Colorado. Folds in the fabric can be interpreted as valleys and mountains, and the quilts squares are plots of land that have been converted from vast-diverse environments. The family quilt, still tangible like the space it represents, has followed me from both of these locations. These drawings and prints, representations of both the macro and micro aspects of these vast landscapes, when in conjunction, they reveal intricate relationships between non-human and human elements.

For the lithographs drawing series, I have found that process is a fundamental aspect of this body of work. My creative method begins by collecting, observing, and documenting, through photography or sketching, natural environments such as the Edmonton river valley, and San Juan Valley. I am often drawn to objects of fragility, such as bird's nests and decaying twigs. Within my work I isolate these objects by extracting them from their complex environment, in order to emphasize the interconnectivity of the subject matter. The objects I am drawn to-explore themes of birth, regeneration, and life cycles, particularly early stages of life that are the most vulnerable. I spend a fair amount of time drawing my imagery, the details in the drawings are important to include in order to mimic what the viewer might experience seeing these objects in their natural environment.

Nests are tiny sanctuaries of life that embody a paradoxical strength. Crafted meticulously to endure the harshest of elements, they stand as robust symbols of nature's ingenuity. They shelter fragile lives amidst unforgiving conditions, a testament to evolutionary prowess. Yet, amidst this natural resilience, there exists a disconcerting truth. In our altering of ecosystems, nature itself has been compelled to adapt. I encountered a bird's nest woven intricately from strands of microplastics, a haunting sight that evoked both awe and despair. Here, in this fragile construction of life, plastic, an enduring yet destructive material, finds its insidious place. The nest, once a beacon of fragility housing new life, now bears the mark of human impact. However, these inhabitants learn to adapt to this newly available material. However, nature is not passive in the face of such challenges. It adapts, albeit reluctantly, to coexist with our presence. This adaptation is a delicate dance, where survival and symbiosis hang in the balance. The nest, now intertwined with our synthetic footprint, becomes a poignant symbol of this complex relationship, a reminder of our responsibility and the resilience of the natural world.

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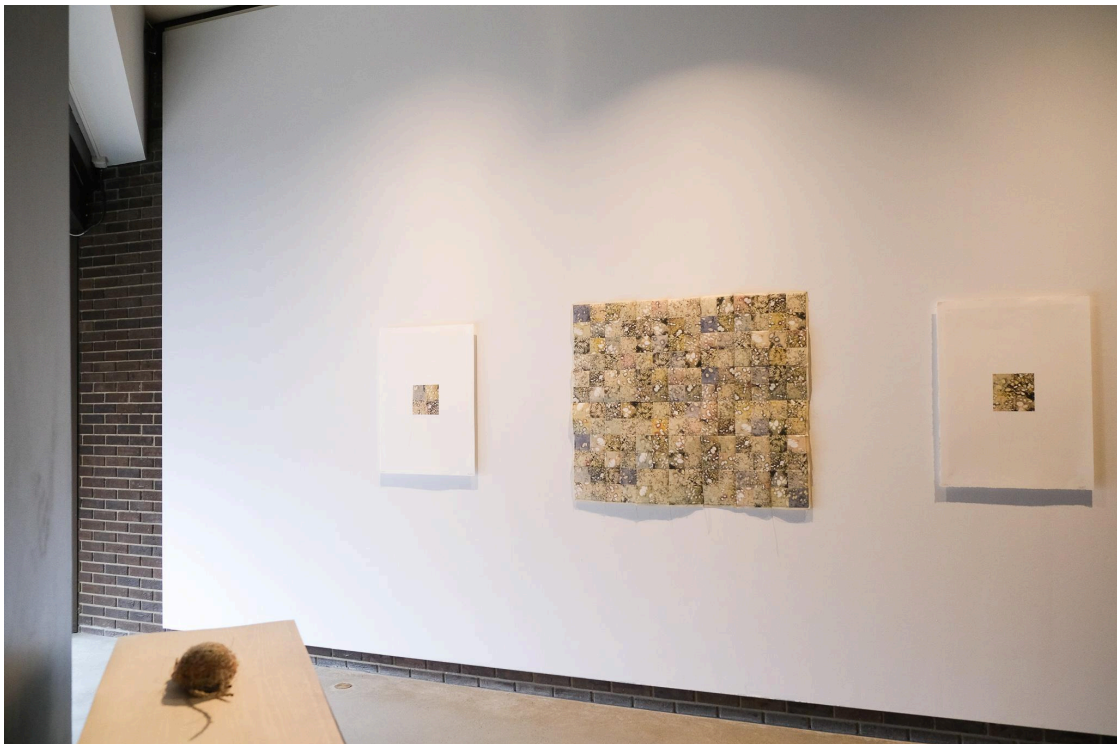
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Quilt Room, Installation View 2024





Plastic Pieces, 2023, lithograph, relief on kozo paper, mounted on Rives BFK



Vacancy, 2024, lithograph, relief on kozo paper, mounted on Rives BFK, sewn



Entanglement, 2023, lithograph, relief on kozo paper, mounted on Rives BFK



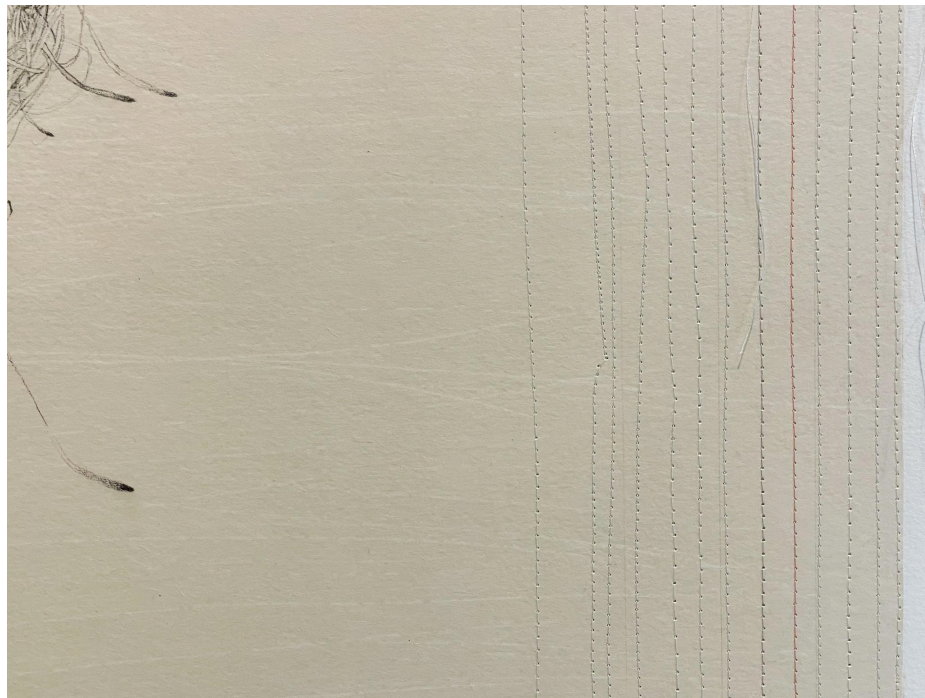
Duo, 2024, lithograph, relief on kozo paper, mounted on Rives BFK



Deteriorate, 2024, lithograph, relief on Kitakata paper, mounted on Rives BFK, sewn



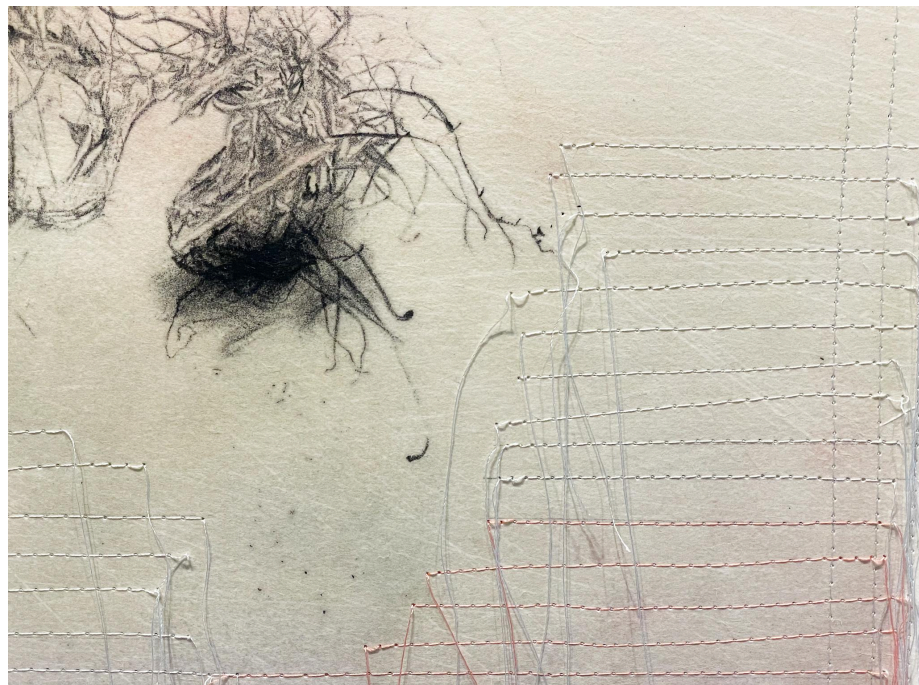
Vacancy (detail), 2024, lithograph, relief on kozo paper,
mounted on Rives BFK, sewn



Entanglement (detail), 2023, lithograph, relief on kozo paper,
mounted on Rives BFK



Duo (detail), 2024, lithograph, relief on kozo paper,
mounted on Rives BFK



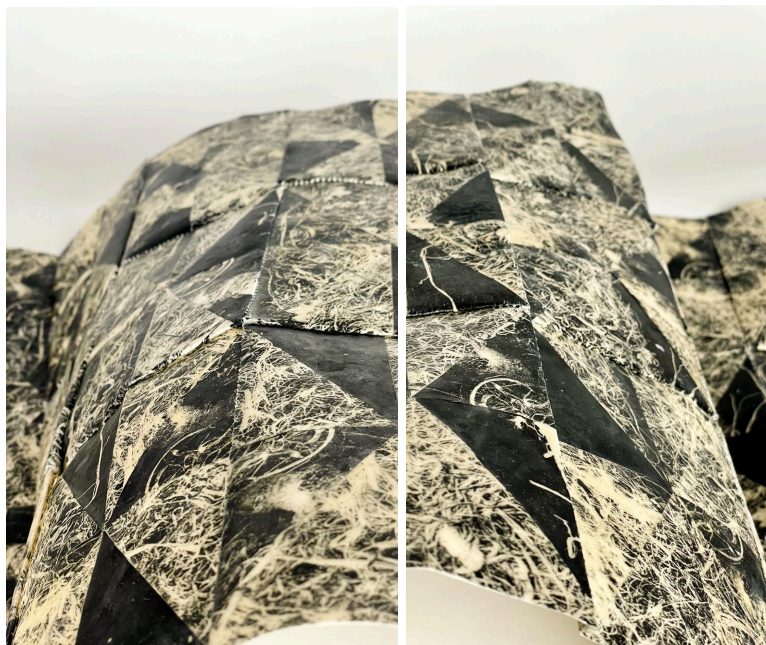
Deteriorate (detail), 2024, lithograph,
relief on Kitakata paper, mounted on Rives BFK, sewn



Sharp Objects Sting Too, 2024, lithograph, relief on kozo paper, mounted on Rives BFK, sewn



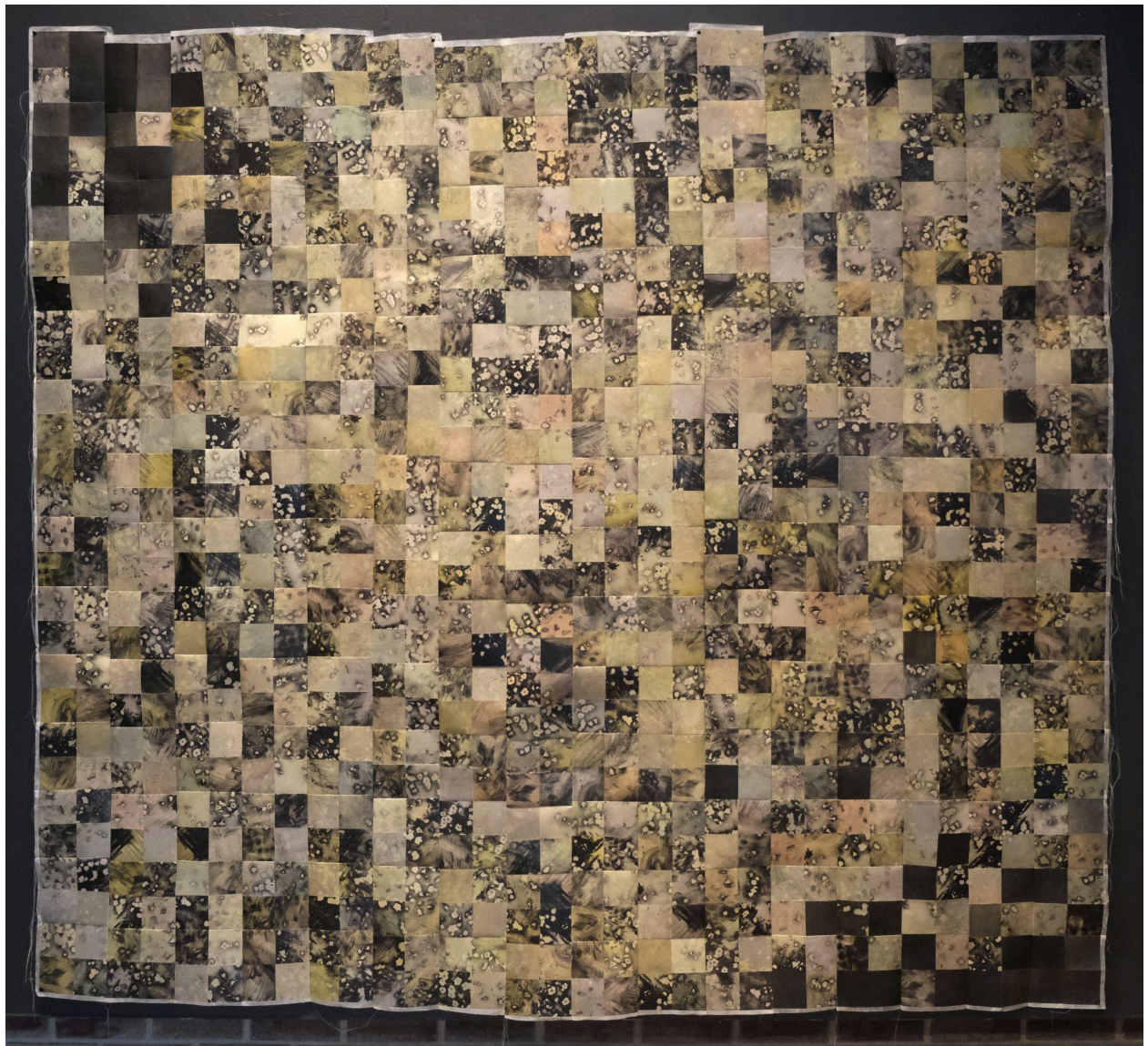
Mend, 2022, Silkscreen on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



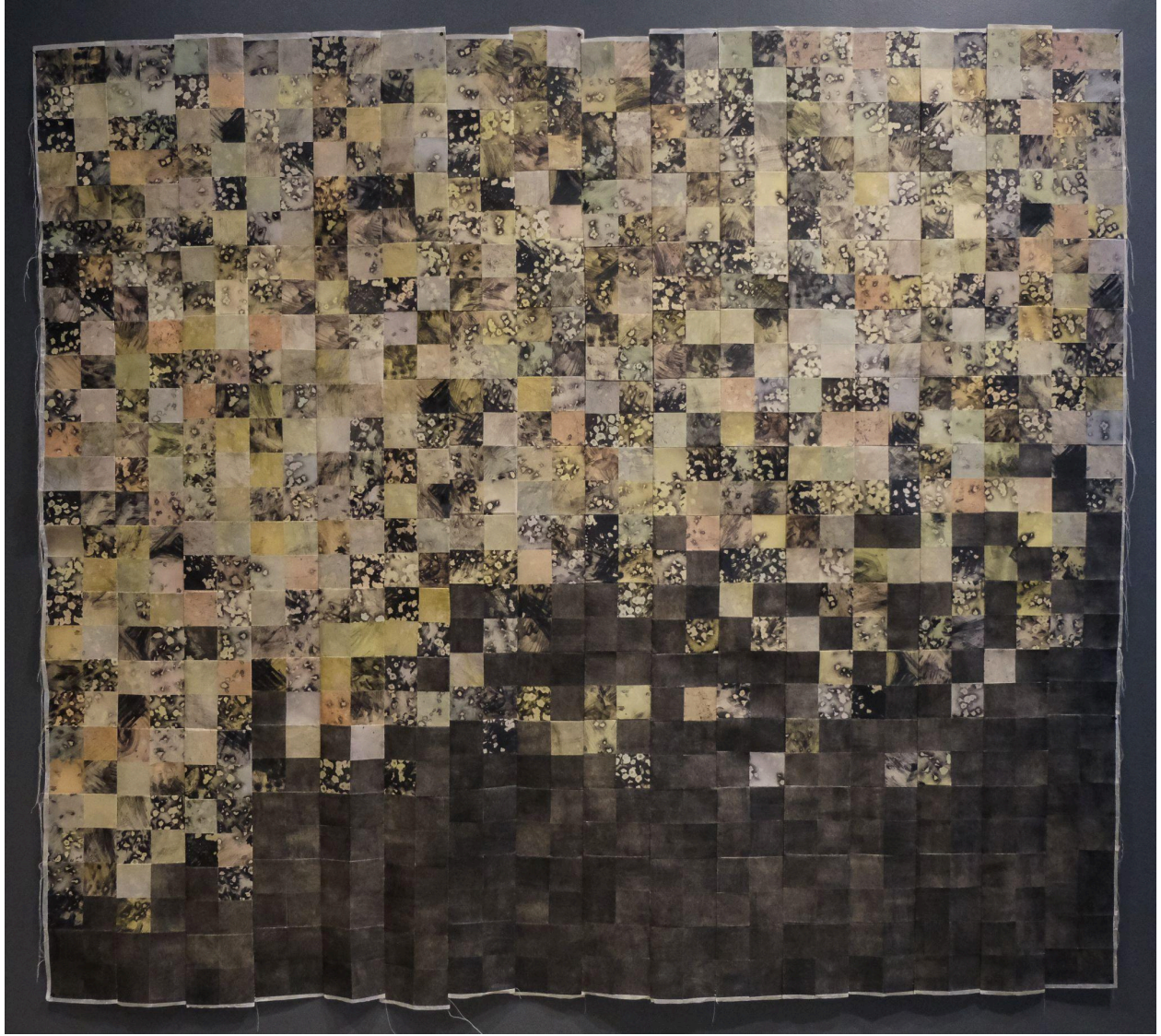
Mend (detail), 2022, Silkscreen on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



Ground Quilt III (53°31'46"N 113°31'17"W) (Installation), 2024, lithograph and monotype, on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



1/2 *Ground Quilt III* (53°31'46"N 113°31'17"W), 2024 lithograph and monotype, on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



2/2 *Ground Quilt III* (53°31'46"N 113°31'17"W), 2024 lithograph and monotype, on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



Ground Quilt II (37°17'54"N 107°50'15"W), 2023, lithograph, monotype, and hand tinting on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



Ground Quilt II (37°17'54"N 107°50'15"W) (detail), 2023, lithograph, monotype, and hand tinting on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, rivets



Isolate I, 2023, lithograph, monotype, and hand tinting on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, mounted on Rives BFK



Isolate I, 2023, lithograph, monotype, and hand tinting on kozo paper, waxed and sewn with thread, mounted on Rives BFK



Orioles Bird Nest, 2022, willow branches, grass, horsehair, plastic tarp shreds, fishing line, cellophane

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