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A TRAVELING EXHIBITION OF RELIEF PRINTS

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*"Relief"* is a traveling exhibition of relief prints (and other visual materials) assembled as an educational exhibition for the Iowa State Arts Council. *"Relief"* will begin tour in May, 1970, at Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa.

This exhibition could not have been possible without the generous and understanding cooperation of many individuals. Particular appreciation is extended to the twelve participating artists and to Jim Konrad, Bill Love and John Coleman, students, who prepared the materials for panels numbers five, nine, fourteen and twenty-one.

**Photography by Perry Garner**

## FORWARD

The ideas that have prompted this exhibition, set its direction and development, are those based upon a realization that our population has little knowledge of the graphic arts; and in particular, fine prints.

*"Relief"* brings together a unique group of twelve print-makers and a fine collection of relief prints. These prints are presented as examples of relief techniques of printing and as samples of relief prints being made today.

A series of photographs and other visual materials have been prepared and presented as an integral part of the exhibition. These prints, photographs, blocks and catalog narrative, hopefully give the viewer a minute glimpse of the materials and process used by the artist. If this exhibition will stimulate interest and contribute to a better understanding of the original creative print, then it has been useful.

## INTRODUCTION

The term print is a name applied to a category of the visual arts generally called graphic arts. Graphic arts or fine prints (woodcuts, engravings, lithographs, etchings and serigraphs) are characterized as multiple-original works of art. This means literally originals.

Original prints should not be confused with photo-mechanical reproductions. The essential difference between an original print and a reproduction rests in the word original. A reproduction is a copy of an original.

An original drawing or painting is unique; existing as one. Prints, although not unique, are none the less original. They may exist in as many numbers as the artist may set. Each is an original in the sense that it has no equal to copy.

The fine print is essentially an impression on paper from a master image, cut, incised, scraped or drawn in or upon a block, stone, plate or screen by an artist. It may be considered "hand made".

There are four major print processes sometimes called families. Each family derives its name from the method by which it is printed; relief, stencil, planographic and intaglio.

The relief process includes several distinct, yet closely related techniques; woodcuts, engravings, linocuts, plaster and plastic engravings, and paper or cardboard prints.

The main difference between each technique is that related to the particular material used for the block, the tools, and the technique for developing the material.

These techniques may be used separately or in combination. When combinations of several cutting methods are used in a single print, it is classified by the one used for the main body of the work.

The relief method of printing is simple, direct and comparatively inexpensive. The tools and requirements for making a relief print are relatively modest and may be done at home on the kitchen table. A block of wood, a sharp cutting tool, ink and printing paper are the basic needs.



## CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

- 1** **Relief:** The design is developed on a block with crayon, pencil or brush and ink. Those portions of the design to appear as white are cut away leaving the image to stand, uncut, as the original raised surface. A thin film of ink is rolled across the raised surface, and a sheet of printing paper laid over the freshly inked block. The back of the paper is rubbed by hand with a spoon or baren.

The design for the title panel reflects the multiple-original principle of the print.

- 2** **"Escape"**, color woodcut  
John Page
- 3** **"Dudgeon"** woodcut  
Barry Farmer
- 4** **"Figure-Wall"**, color woodcut  
Douglas Cumming

The mode of printing is a primary consideration for the classification of a print as relief. The materials used for the block, and the tools and cutting techniques make the classification specific: woodcut, wood engraving, linocut, plaster or plastic engraving, cardboard or paper cut. The hand method of printing remains relatively unchanged from that of the earliest prints.

The tools and cutting techniques are determined by the artist's initial choice of material for the block. Cutting techniques may be grouped into three categories: (1) cutting, gouging and carving, (2) engraving, scratching and scraping, and (3) tearing, cutting (with scissors) and gluing. Today it is not uncommon to find combinations of several materials and cutting techniques being used by the artist in a single print.

Woodcuts and wood engraving techniques are the oldest and perhaps most familiar relief forms. Linocuts, plaster and plastic engravings, cardboard and paper cuts are more recent variations on the block material. The cutting and working tools remain the same.

- 5** **Blocks for the woodcut:** Woodcuts are made on plank-grain blocks of pine, bass, beech, cherry, pear and fruit woods. Pine wood is used most often because of its versatility, ease of cutting and broad printing effects. Masonite and plywood wallboards are other wood materials popular for their larger size.
- 6** **Cutting a wood block:** The woodcut is characterized by a bold, vigorous contrast of black and white effects. The woodcut, traditionally, is described as a black line effect on a white ground.

The round and angular appearance of the cuts reflect the shape and character of the knives and gouges.

- 7** **"Winter Thistle"**, woodcut  
Bill Darr

- 8** **"Shamrock Tree"**, color woodcut  
Richard Black

Wood engravings are made on end-grain blocks of maple or box-wood. End-grain blocks are made type-high ( $\frac{7}{8}$ " ) for printing with a press. Greater printing pressure is required for taking good impressions from end-grain blocks.

- 9** **Engraving blocks:** Blocks made of plaster, plastic and gesso may also be used by the artist for the engraving technique.

- 10** **Engraving technique:** The highly polished end-grain block permits cutting into it in any direction without tearing or splintering, characteristic of plank-grain blocks. Burins and other fine gravers are used to work the design upon the block.

Engraving techniques are characterized by fine line and subtle contrasts of black and white. Traditionally, engravings are described as white line on a black ground.

Rigid characterizations of the woodcut and engraving techniques are giving way to combinations of vigorous cutting with knife and gouges alternating with delicate burin line. Scratched or scraped greys are used in the contemporary print to develop the fullest possible range of light and dark.

- 11** **"The Hunter Gracchus"**, plaster engraving  
Dennis Kaven

The linocut is a technique for making relief prints from linoleum blocks. The technique is similar in many respects to that of the woodcut. The same tools are used for both.

The linocut is distinguished by its vivid contrast of black and white patterns.

- 12** **Linoleum blocks:** Battleship linoleum and a variety of floor tiles may be used for lino blocks.

Linoleum is a soft material and may be cut with ease in any direction. The coarse composition of the material may show a brittle quality when cuts are made.

- 13** **"The Cage"**, linocut  
Robert Hodgell



An entirely new group of materials is made available to the artist through the use of collage techniques. These experimental methods use a variety of materials to build rather than carve the raised printing surface.

- 14** **Collage materials:** Cardboard, paper, body-putty and a variety of textiles are used to build a relief. These materials are torn, cut (with scissors) and glued to a base block. Each material is selected for its particular surface, pattern or textural qualities.

- 15** **"Frame Grid",** cardboard print  
Jerry Clapsaddle

- 16** **"Jesus Sat Upon It",** color woodcut  
Jack Olds

- 17** **Conditioning the ink:** The printing ink is conditioned for the roller by drawing it across a marble or plate glass ink-slab several times with a stiff putty knife. This conditioning draws the ink to a thin film while preparing it for the inking roller.

The inking roller, called a brayer, is made of synthetic rubber. The ink is further worked with the brayer, rolling it out to an even film on the ink-slab.

- 18** **Inking the block:** The roller is passed across the surface of the block, transferring ink from the ink-slab to the raised portions of the block.

- 19** **Printing the block:** Printing paper, cut to size, is laid over the freshly inked block and rubbed with a spoon or baren. Hand rubbing with a spoon is the most common method of printing.

A corner or end of the paper may be raised to examine the progress of the printing. More ink may be rolled onto the block by alternately lifting one end of the paper and then the other. The entire print may be examined in this manner before it is lifted from the block.

A variety of hand made printing papers is used for printing and may range from the thin Japanese rice papers to heavy rag papers. The quality of the paper adds to the overall quality of the print.

- 20** **"Religious Environment",**  
Robert Marcussen

- 21** **Color blocks:** Color prints require a separate block for each color. The technique for working the color block is similar in all respects to that for black and white prints.

Each block is responsible for a color; and only when they are combined in printing, do they form a complete design.



**22** **"Still Life-Landscape"**, color woodcut  
John Coleman

Registration of the separate color blocks is a major problem when making color prints. The first block cut by the artist is called a key-block and has a strip of wood at one end called a key-strip.

The key-strip is a strip at one end of the block about one inch wide. This strip is separated from the design by several inches of margin. Small holes are made in the key-strip near the corners of the block for key-pins.

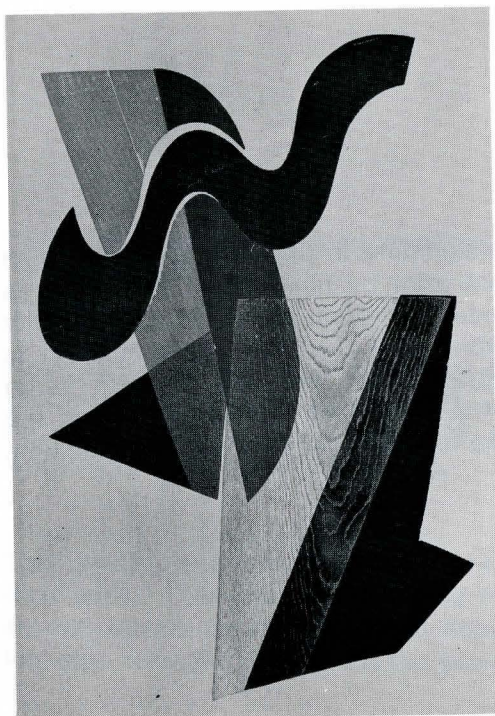
The key-block is inked and an impression made on wax paper. This impression is offset onto each color block to be cut. The impression of the key-strip is thus transferred to each block, fixing an exact relation between the key-strip and the design on all blocks.

**23** **Hooking paper over key-pins:** Key-pins (small nails with the head removed) are inserted into the holes in the key-strip for printing. The paper is hooked over the pins and lowered to the inked block for printing.

**24** **"Elm Hill"**, color woodcut  
Orville Running

The artist signs his signature to the print as a guarantee that it is an original print by him. When an edition is limited, the artist uses a system of notation to identify each print by number in the edition. This notation is generally written (5/25); thus, meaning the fifth in an edition of twenty-five. The first number identifies the print; the second, the total number of prints in the edition.

**Biographical sketch of artist**



"Escape" color woodcut

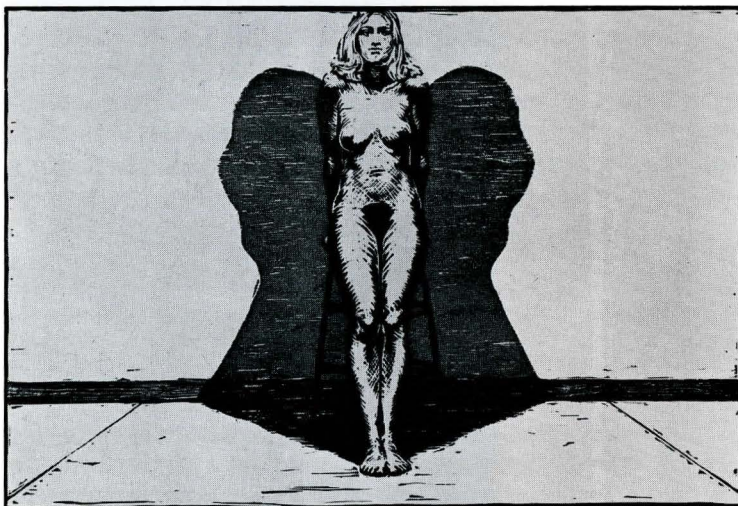
**JOHN PAGE** was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1923 and lives in Cedar Falls, Iowa here he has been professor of art at the University of Northern Iowa since 1954. During 1960-61 he was temporarily away while serving as department head at the University of Omaha, and during 1968-69 was granted a "PDL", Professional Development Leave, by the University of Northern Iowa to devote full time to his art. He received a Bachelor of Design degree from the University of Michigan and an M.F.A. degree from the University of Iowa. He studied at the Pratt Graphic Art Center, the Art Students League in New York, and at the Minneapolis School of Art where he was a Pillsbury Scholar. He has exhibited nationally since 1950 and is represented through purchase prizes in collections of the Carnegie Institute, Walker Art Center, Seattle Art Museum, Library of Congress, Des Moines Art Center and many others.



"Dudgeon" woodcut

**BARRY FARMER** was born in Vinton, Iowa in 1942 and is currently residing in Hayfield, Minnesota where he has recently completed nine months of independent work with two-dimensional art media. He received a B.A. degree from the University of Northern Iowa in 1965 and is currently completing arrangements to begin work at the University of Northern Iowa for his M.A. degree.





"Figure-Wall" color woodcut

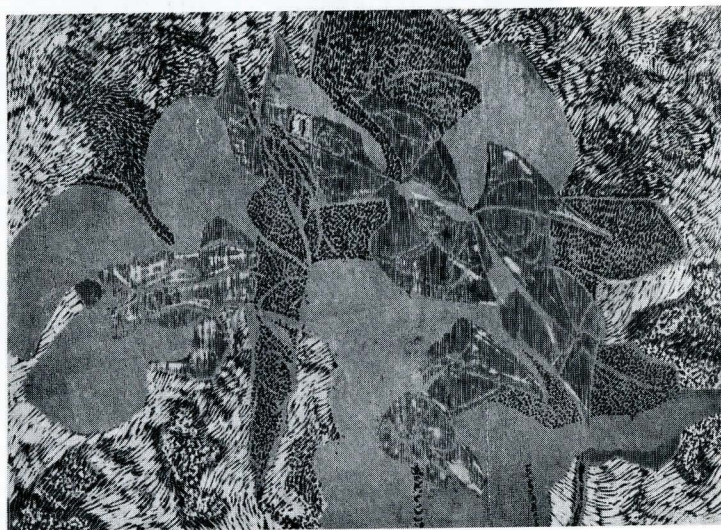
**DOUGLAS CUMMING** was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa in 1943 and grew up in Eagle Grove. He now resides in Menomonie, Wisconsin where he is assistant professor of art at Stout State University. He received a B.F.A. from Drake University and his M.F.A. degree from Indiana University in 1967. At Indiana he was teaching associate to Rudy Pozzatti. His prints and drawings have been included in many national exhibitions and was awarded a purchase prize in the 21st National Print Exhibition by the Library of Congress in 1969. His prints have also been seen in "Young Printmakers '67" and "American Graphic Workshops" at the Cincinnati Art Museum. His work is represented in many public and private collections.



"Winter Thistle" woodcut

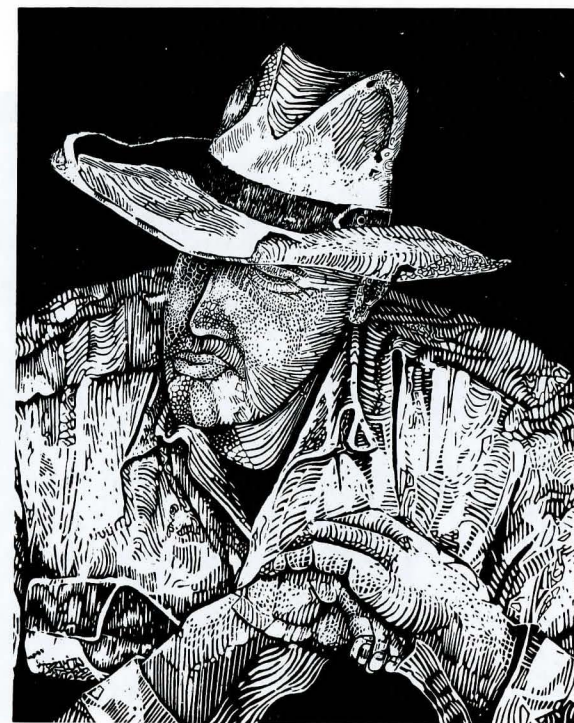
**BILL DARR** was born in New York City in 1920 and spent his childhood years in New England and California. His professional training was obtained at Pomona College, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Wesleyan University and Yale University where he received his M.F.A. degree. He taught in New England for twelve years at Amherst and Smith Colleges in Massachusetts and the Hartford Art School in Connecticut before moving to the midwest in 1962. He was chairman of the art department at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana from that time until 1968 when he moved to Des Moines to assume the position of chairman of the art department at Drake University. He has exhibited widely, and his paintings and prints hang in many private collection and several museums.





"Shamrock Tree" color woodcut

**RICHARD BLACK** was born at Farnhamville, Iowa in 1932, and lives in Des Moines where he is associate professor of art at Drake University. He received a B.F.A. degree from Drake University and his M.S.A.E. degree from the University of Wisconsin. He has been a free-lance artist and taught at Illinois College while serving as director of The David Strawn Art Gallery in Jacksonville, Illinois. Since 1960 he has taught drawing and printmaking at Drake. In 1968 he was awarded a Drake Research Grant in printmaking. His prints have been represented in major national and international print exhibitions and have received many awards and purchase prizes, and are included in many private and permanent collections.



"The Hunter Gracchus" plaster engraving

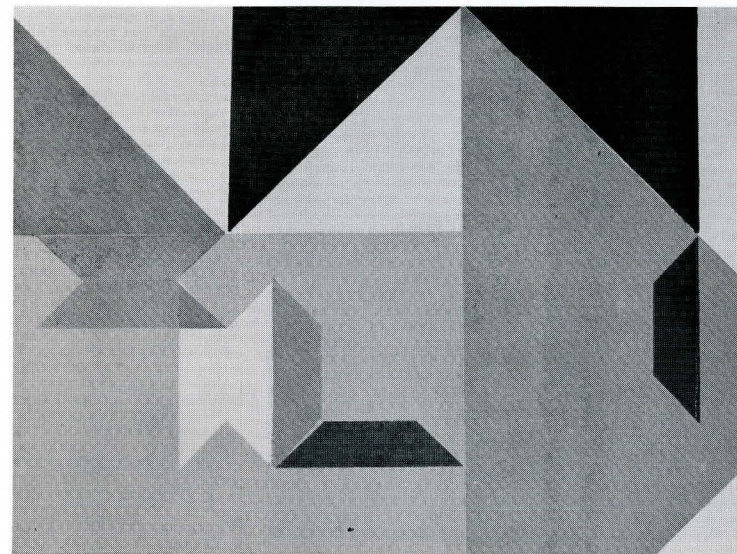
**DENNIS KAVEN** was born in Avoca, Iowa in 1944 and is presently living in Knoxville where he teaches art at the Knoxville high school. He received his B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees from Drake University. He will assume the duties of instructor of art at Grandview College in Des Moines in the fall of 1970. His work has been represented in many national print exhibitions and has received the graphic award at the Iowa State Fair as well as other prizes.





"The Cage" linoleum cut

**ROBERT HODGELL** was born in Mankato, Kansas in 1922 and is now living in St. Petersburg, Florida where he is associate professor of art and artist-in-residence at Florida Presbyterian College. He holds the Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin. His professional training also includes graduate work at the University of Illinois, Iowa and in Mexico. He was resident-artist and instructor at the Des Moines Art Center for four years. He has worked in Illinois and Wisconsin as a free-lance book and magazine illustrator and was art director of Extension Division Publications for the University of Wisconsin, and in Pakistan under UNESCO as an "expert" in book illustration. He is well known through reproductions of his prints in "Motive" magazine during the last twenty-five years. His work is represented in the Library of Congress, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Des Moines Art Center and many other colleges and universities where he has had many one-man shows.



"Frame Grid" cardboard print

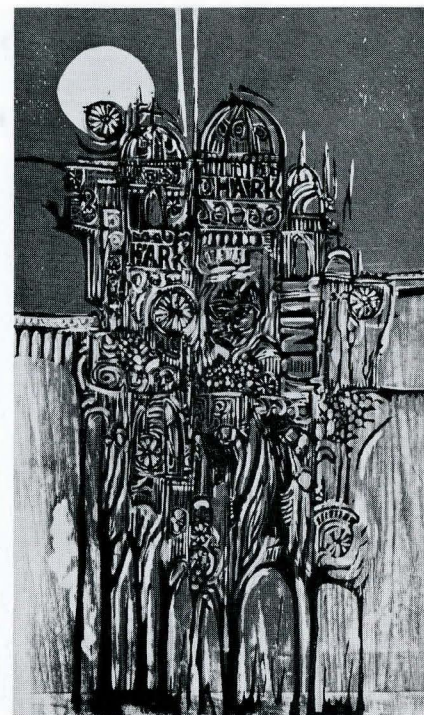
**JERRY CLAPSADDLE** was born in Conrad, Iowa in 1941 and is now living in Kingston, Rhode Island where he teaches graphic art at the University of Rhode Island. He received a B.F.A. degree from Drake University and his M.F.A. degree from Indiana University where he was a graduate teaching associate from 1965 to 1966. He taught at the University of Hawaii before moving to Kingston. He has exhibited in major national exhibitions and has had many one-man shows in Rhode Island and Honolulu. His work has been reproduced in numerous publications and is included in many public and university collections. He is currently represented by Galleri C. M. Cassé in Paris.





"Jesus Sat Upon It" color woodcut

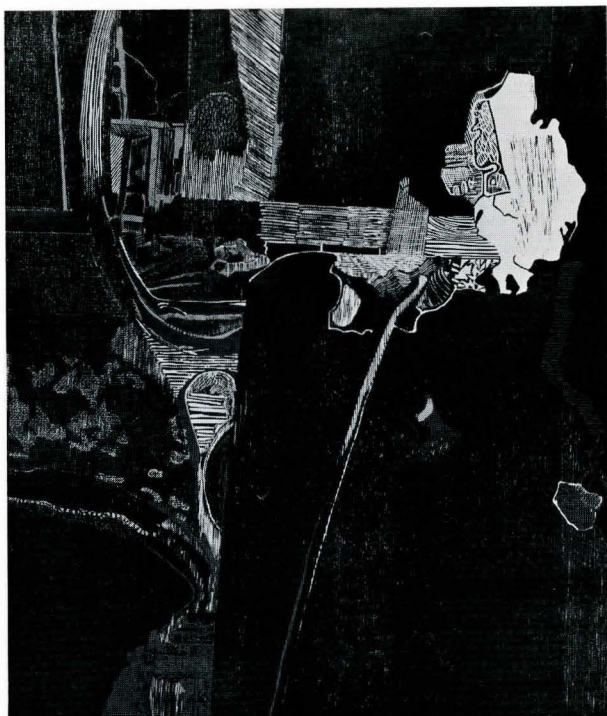
**JACK OLDS** was born in Marquette, Michigan in 1928 and lives in Des Moines where he is executive director of the Iowa State Arts Council. He attended the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee where he received his B.S. degree and the University of Wisconsin at Madison to receive an M.A. degree. He taught art for twelve years in the public systems at Janesville and Brookfield, Wisconsin before joining the faculty at the University of Northern Iowa. His work has won numerous prizes and awards and has been included in many national print and drawing exhibitions.



"Religious Environment" color woodcut

**ROBERT MARCUSSEN** was born in Cedar Falls, Iowa in 1936 and now resides in Waverly, Iowa where he teaches art at the Waverly Schell-Rock Community high school. He attended the University of Northern Iowa where he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees. He will be teaching painting and printmaking at Wartburg College in the fall of 1970. He has had one-man shows in Iowa, Minnesota and Illinois, and a two-man show at the Rochester Art Center. His work is represented in permanent collections of the Waterloo Galleries, Luther College and the Modern Woodman Building in Rock Island, Illinois.





"Still Life-Landscape" color woodcut

**JOHN COLEMAN** was born in Des Moines in 1932 and now resides in a farm house at Winterset, Iowa. He is currently a graduate assistant in painting at Drake University and received a B.A. degree from Conception, Mo., and a B.F.A. degree from Drake University. His work includes designing and helping to execute the epoxy faceted glass windows in St. Pius X church in Urbandale. His prints have been included in "Young Printmakers 1970" in Indianapolis and other national print exhibitions.



"Elm Hill" color woodcut

**ORVILLE RUNNING** was born in Veblen, South Dakota in 1910 and now resides in Decorah, Iowa where he is professor of art and head of the art department at Luther College where he has been since 1946. He holds a B.A. degree from St. Olaf College and has studied at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul and the Art Institute of Chicago. He has received grants for study at the University of Iowa where he received his M.F.A. degree, and at the Art Students League of New York. He has had parishes in Tacoma and Chicago. His work has been shown in many college and university print shows in Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota, and is contained in college and private collections.

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