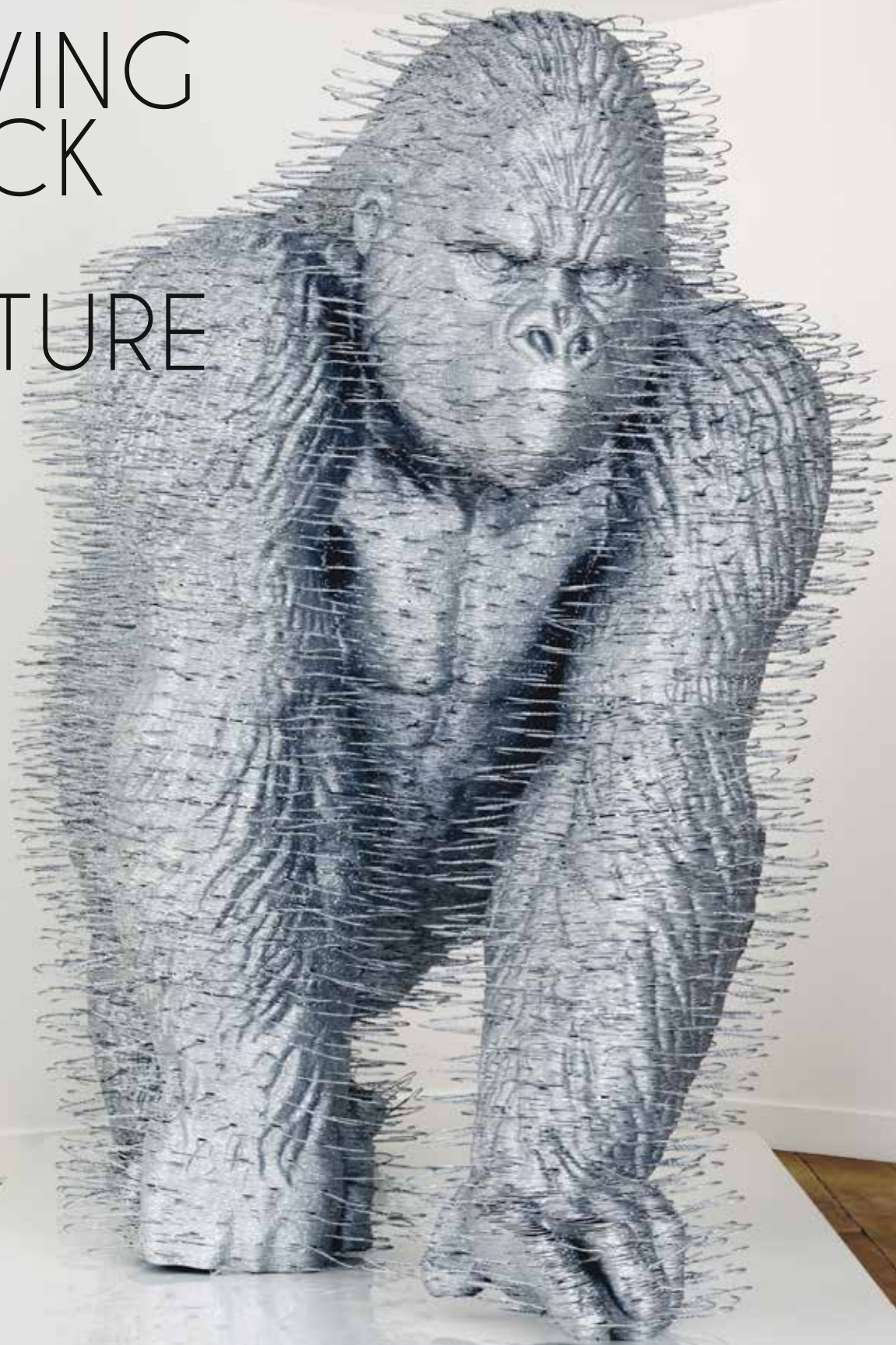


GIVING
BACK
TO
NATURE



GIVING BACK TO NATURE

in support of **animals**


We, at Opera Gallery Beirut, are proud to announce our new partnership with the association Animals Lebanon for our exhibition Giving Back to Nature. This show intends to illustrate the force of nature and wildlife through art and to show the importance of animals not only in Nature but also in Art.

Animals have crossed the border between humanity and the primitive world. Men have always tried to understand the nature of animals and the look they have upon them has deeply changed. Cavemen's drawings, recreating animals' images brought them closer to their own world. The mysterious paintings on the walls of the Lascaux's caves bear witness to some of the first efforts of humanity to control and evoke the place of animals.

In Ancient Egypt, many gods were given an animal shape, such as Bastet, the cat headed goddess, god of home, childbirth and fertility. What has connected animals and humans in the depiction of the divine world? Egyptians were able to give attributes or symbols in their representation of Gods. Just as Bastet was, cats were highly respected for their ability to kill vermin and keep the crops save. Imposing such an image onto the Gods made it easier for people to perceive the essence of their power and to identify it. When the temple of Bastet was opened in Bubastis, Egypt, thousands of cats were found mummified.

Amulets, totems, symbols; whilst these objects were prolific in the Egyptian culture, they were only associated with their Gods. Egyptians included animals in their daily life; however, it was within tribal cultures that these objects were associated with animals and nature over all-else. The ancestry of tribal families is represented through these totemic statues from America, and can also be seen throughout Africa, all the way to the small island of Oceania. Animals were deemed as being connected with the spirits of Gods, and so the families gave them personality traits; for example, the totem of the buffalo infers confidence to achieve one's goals, or the wolf totem infers the notion of freedom of spirit. Since they were connected with these animals almost on a daily basis, tribal societies considered each animal as a symbol of a human spirit, and so treated them with absolute respect. As a result, this forged a kind of harmony between men and nature.

However, when it came to the Medieval era, man had instead developed a completely different sentiment towards beasts. Before the advent of the primary monotheistic religions, Greek society used to associate animals to the mythological allegorical stories of the time. However, Christian, Islamic and Jewish communities placed these stories into religious allegories so it matches their belief system. Combining these allegories with their own observations acted as a catalyst for the creation of the books of bestiary.

Since the illustrators based their drawings on written description and not experience, the forms appeared in a disparate manner. Animals were portrayed in a very extraneous manner, where fishes looked like whales, ostriches like hooves, and so on.

Whilst naturalistic societies were in daily contact with nature and the wild, they understood animals through experience, what brought a sense of mutual respect and coexistence in their culture. The western world, on the other hand, always maintained his role of observer towards nature. The members of these societies had animals around them, considering them as pets and not as spiritual beings. This is depicted in the works of Albrecht Dürer, such as the Young Hare, in Fabritius' Goldfinch, and in particular, in George Stubbs' majestic horses, that show an empiric observation towards the beauties of nature. Realistic but without feelings, they are images of idealized forms.

The quickly changing modern society impacted many aspects of the human-life; this statement is also true for Art. Franz Marc is a German painter of the early twentieth-century; especially know for his animals' paintings. He reinterpreted nature around him and found a way to escape the anxiety of the modern world through is art. He looked at animals to find a spiritual guidance. Depicting animals with abstract intention to represent feeling was a major stepping-stone towards the new mindset of Altruism.

Post-war and contemporary works of art gave animals the opportunity to gain a major role in the creation process of artworks. With the scientific recognition of Altruism, the meaning and the perception of animals in were redefined. This notion made artists re-approach the role of animals in their artistic depiction, with a revolutionised mindset that questioned preconceived ideas about animal welfare.

Animals have aesthetic, graphic and symbolic values. They stand as mere objects helping us to understand the connection between the human nature and the primitive world. Contemporary art reflects a constant idealistic representation of animals, purely examining naturalistic approaches. Artists try to reuse the animal figure, impose upon them their own ideas and emotions, so that we might better understand the connection between humanity and animality, all the while bringing attention to the moral and ethical duties that mankind has towards them.

With the foreboding ecological circumstances, humanity has to understand that Earth is our only home, this place not only gives us shelter, but also many other species who are just as sentient as us. Hopefully, not only the recent developments in animal welfare laws and science will open our eyes, but also will demand common sense and sensitivity.

We hope this exhibition will give you the will to persevere with the fight of Animals Lebanon via your everyday life actions, in order to end the abuse of animals, the zoos' brutalisation of them, and to awaken a real change in our culture.

It is often said that art delivers messages; it changes the way people act or think. Giving back to nature is a first step towards these changes, showing the beauty of these animals and of our country.

Please come and enter in this wild exhibition and support with us the work of Animals Lebanon.

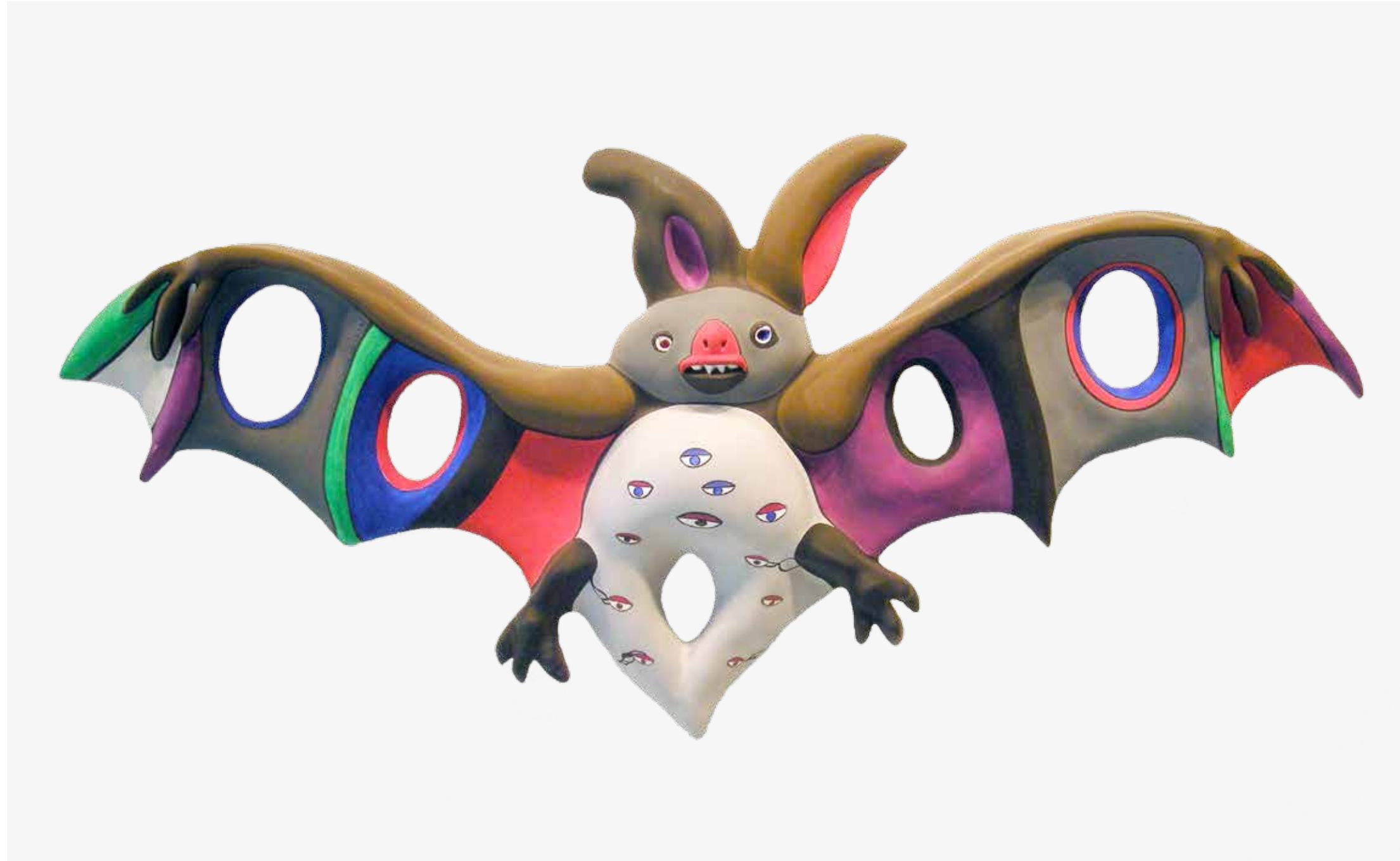
Gilles Dyan
Founder & Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Salwa Chalhoub
Director
Opera Gallery Beirut

Alexander Calder 1898 - 1976

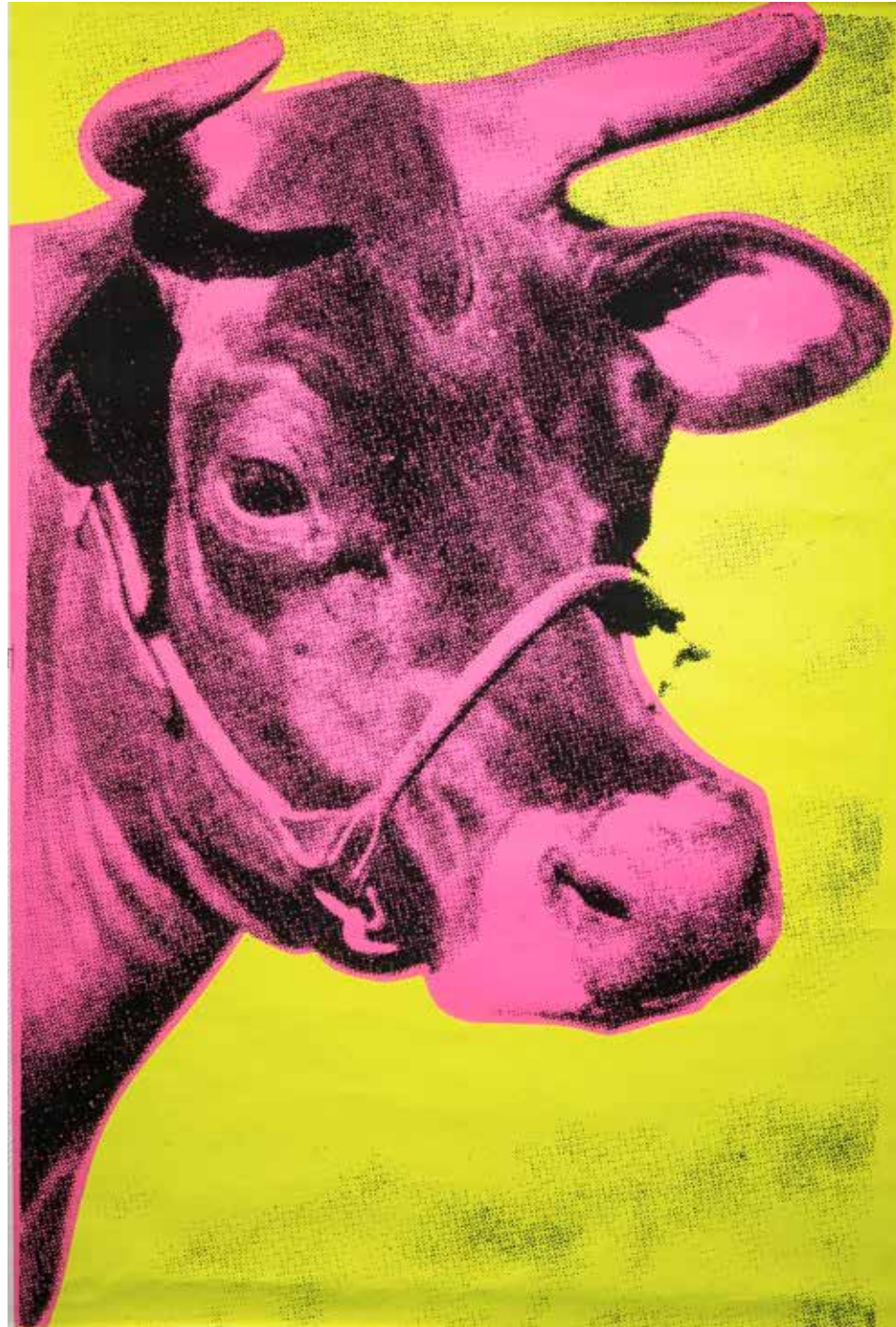
Butterflies, 1964
Gouache on paper
53 x 74.9 cm - 20.9 x 29.5 in.





Chauve-Souris (Bat), 1997-1999
Fiberglass
Edition of 150
160 x 72 x 13 cm - 63 x 28.3 x 5.1 in.

Andy Warhol 1928 - 1987



Untitled (Cow wallpaper), 1989
Lithograph
115 x 76,2 cm - 45.3 x 30 in.

Yue Minjun b. 1962



Pine Tree - Planche No. 20
Lithograph
Edition of 130
120 x 80 cm - 47.2 x 31.5 in.

Jeff Koons b. 1955



Balloon Dog (Yellow), 2015
Porcelain
Edition of 2 300
26,7 x 26,7 x 12,7 cm - 10.5 x 10.5 x 5 in.

©Jeff Koons



Right page
Split Rocker (vase), 2012
Porcelain
Edition of 3500 + 150 AP
35 x 33 x 38 cm - 13.8 x 13 x 15 in.

© Antonin Bonnet

Damien Hirst b. 1965



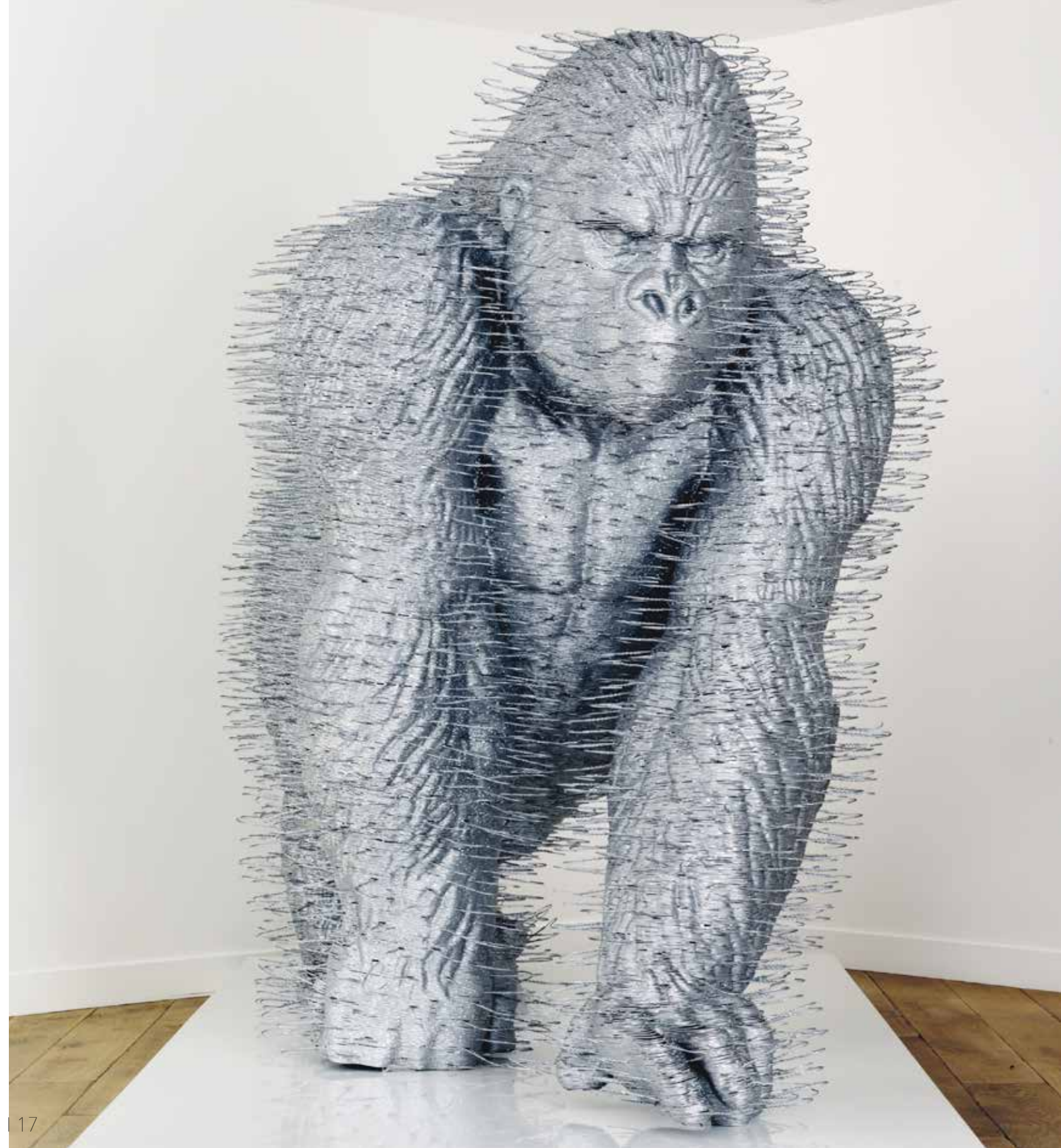
Butterfly Spin Painting, 2009
Acrylic on paper
54 x 68.6 cm - 21.3 x 27 in.

David Mach b. 1956



Bald Eagle
Postcards and photography on wood
183 x 183 cm - 72 x 72 in.

Silver Back, 2007-2008
Coathangers
Edition of 3
200 x 125 x 290 cm - 78.7 x 49.2 x 114.2 in.

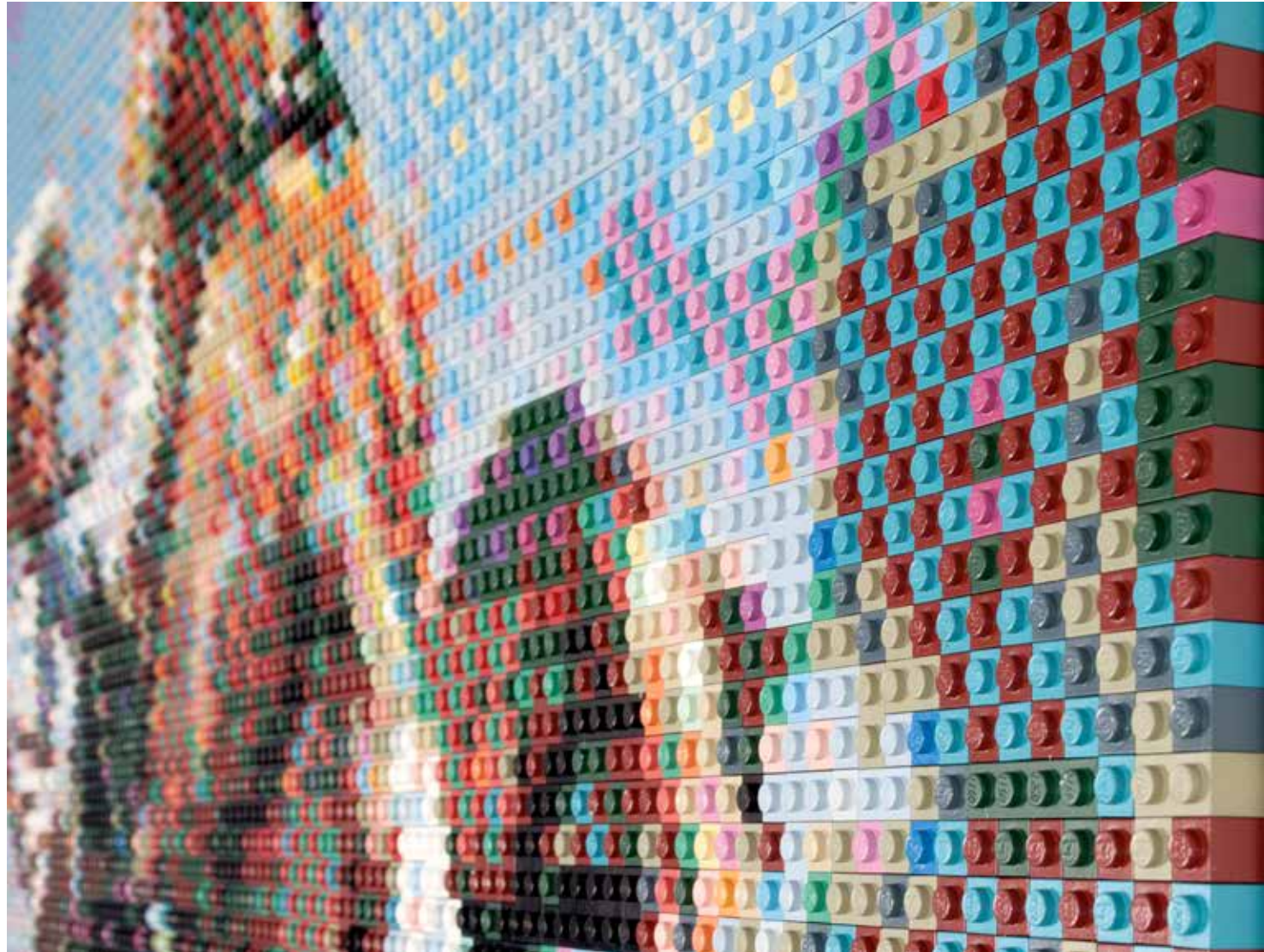


Mr. Brainwash b. 1966



Minnie
Stencil and mixed media on wood
106,7 x 106,7 cm - 42 x 42 in.

Joe Black b. 1973



Right page
War Horse (Lego), 2012
22.000 spray-painted lego bricks on aluminium
195 x 156 x 6 cm - 76.8 x 61.4 x 2.4 in.

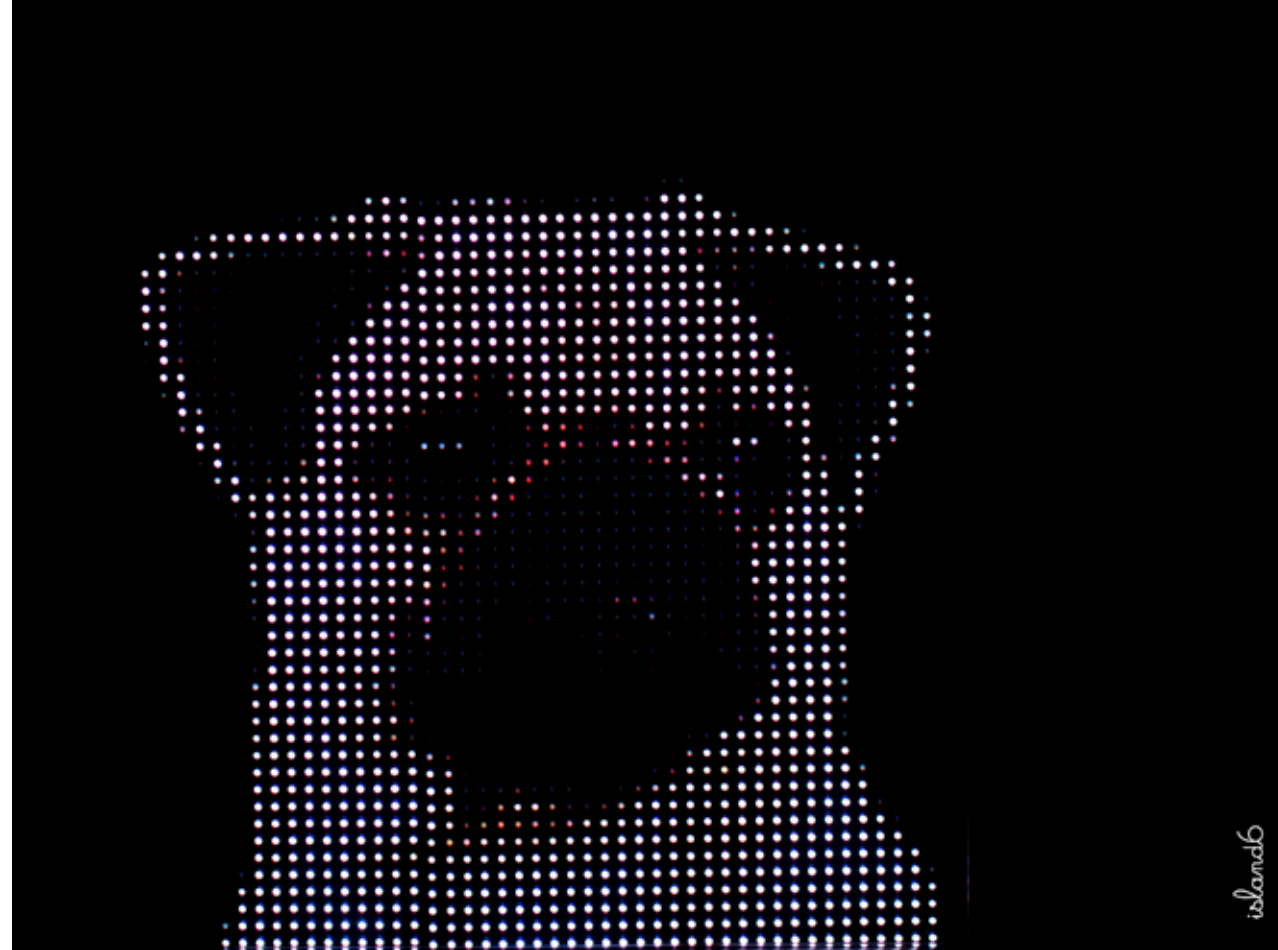


Fabienne Arietti b. 1956



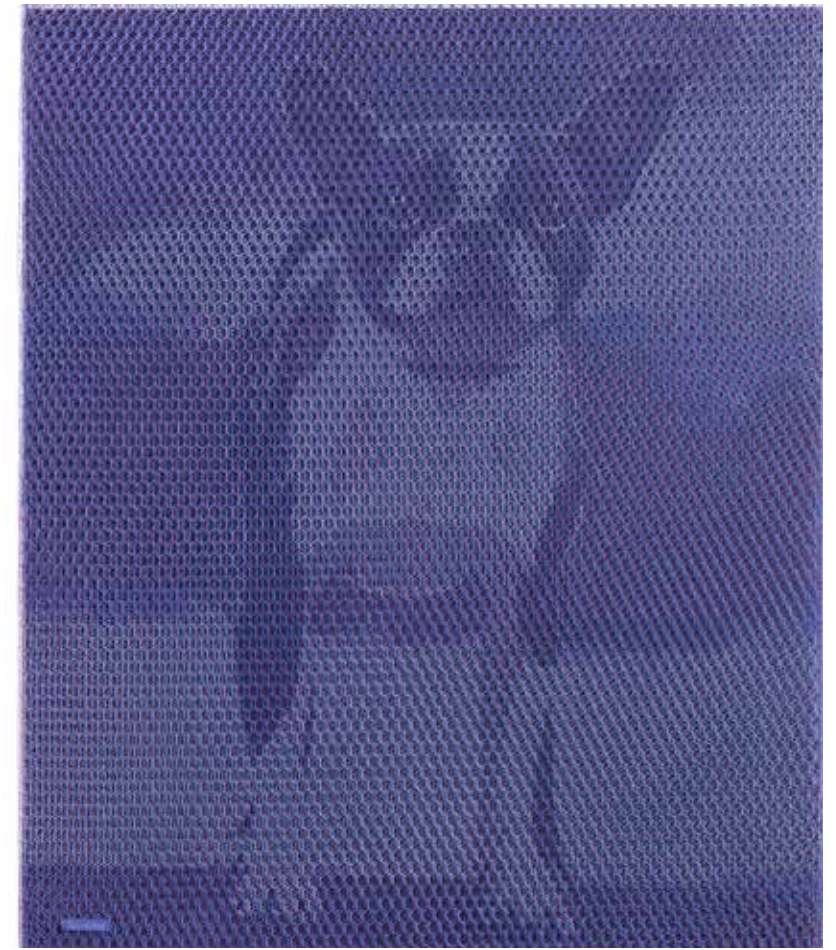
Dog Chrome, 2017
Resin, unique piece
48 x 48 x 32 cm - 18.9 x 18.9 x 12.6 in.

Liu Dao founded in 2007



Wrinkled Spectrum
LED display, acrylic painting paper collage
60 x 60 x 9 cm - 23.6 x 23.6 x 3.5 in.

Paul Alexis b. 1947



Le Chien de Julien, 2012
Canvas and steel
140 x 115 cm - 55.1 x 45.3 in.

Richard Orlinski b. 1966



Crocodile rouge, 2006
Resin
Edition of 500
110 cm - 43.3 in.

Hiro Ando b. 1973



Robotcat (White)
Resin - Edition of 20
100 cm - 39.5 in.

Kossi Aguessy 1977 - 2017

Monumental Failure, 2016

Soft candy coated casted
aluminium, mirror polished
stainless steel

Edition of 8

60 x 30 x 30 cm - 23.6 x 11.8 x 11.8 in.



Pierre Matter b. 1964



Big Méca Ray, 2013
Bronze
Unique piece
183 x 162 x 80 cm -
72 x 63.8 x 31.8 in.

Arman 1928 - 2005



Jazzy Jaguar, 2004
Sliced saxophone in brass and
bronze jaguar on a wood base
Edition of 99
59 x 73 x 15 cm - 23.2 x 28.7 x 5.9 in.

Thierry Bisch b. 1953

Chevaux Mongols, 2008
Mixed media on canvas
170 x 150 cm - 66.9 x 59.1 in.



Yassine Mekhnache b. 1979



**The Conference of the Birds,
brown falcon, 2016**
Hand embroidery, ink and oil
on canvas
200 x 160 cm - 78.7 x 63 in.



The Conference of the Birds - Conscience, 2016
Hand embroidery, ink and oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm - 59.1 x 59.1 in.

Pascal Haudressy b. 1968



The Frog and the Bird, 2014
Resin and video installation
150 x 240 cm - 59.1 x 94.5 in.

Mauro Corda b. 1960



Grand Guépard-Cobe, 2017
White bronze
Edition of 8
130 x 215 x 40 cm - 51.2 x 84.6 x 15.7 in.



Tête de Girafe-Cerf, 2015
Cast iron
Edition of 8
170 x 130 x 85 cm
66.9 x 51.2 x 33.5 in.

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