

NORA GRIFFIN

published in conjunction with the exhibition

Modern Love

February 7 to March 13, 2016

Louis B. James
143b Orchard St
New York, NY 10002

*featuring excerpts from a conversation between the artist and
Peter Gallo*



Coff
constrata

Strong feelings

Sci-fi scorpia

"one day at a time"

Kamikaze
Harlequin
Romance

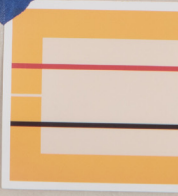
Sacred
and Profane
Love Machine

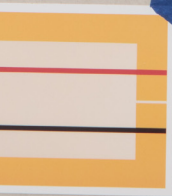
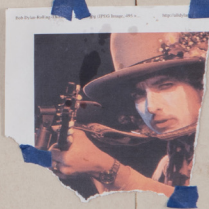
Take the R train
My nose of love is out of control
NIGHTWATCHMAN
(RG)

33
Mercury Rising - Grand Street
- Right as Rain
- True like Blue

AQUA PLUS
- LIBRA

Look the savage glitter of downtown





Painting
15 a clock

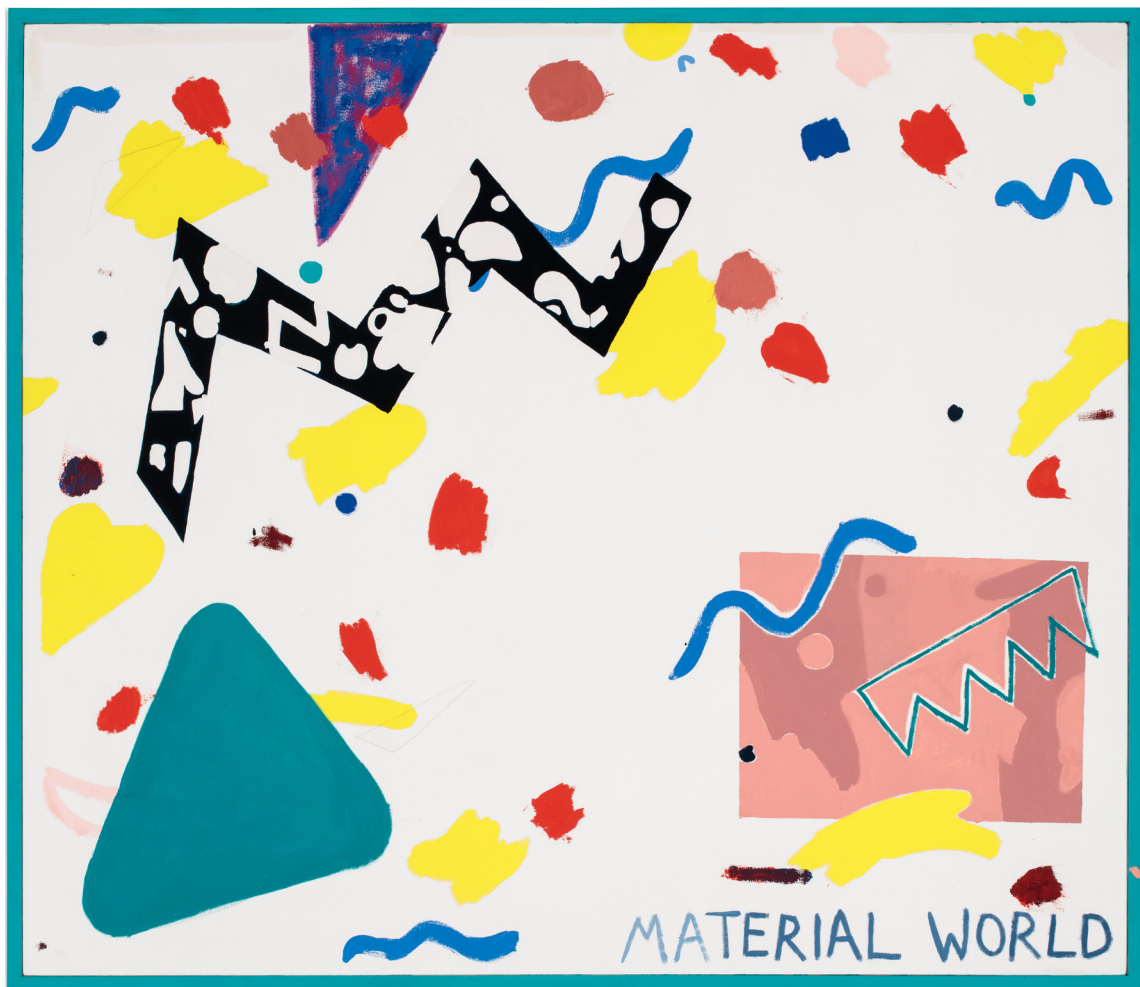


TRG

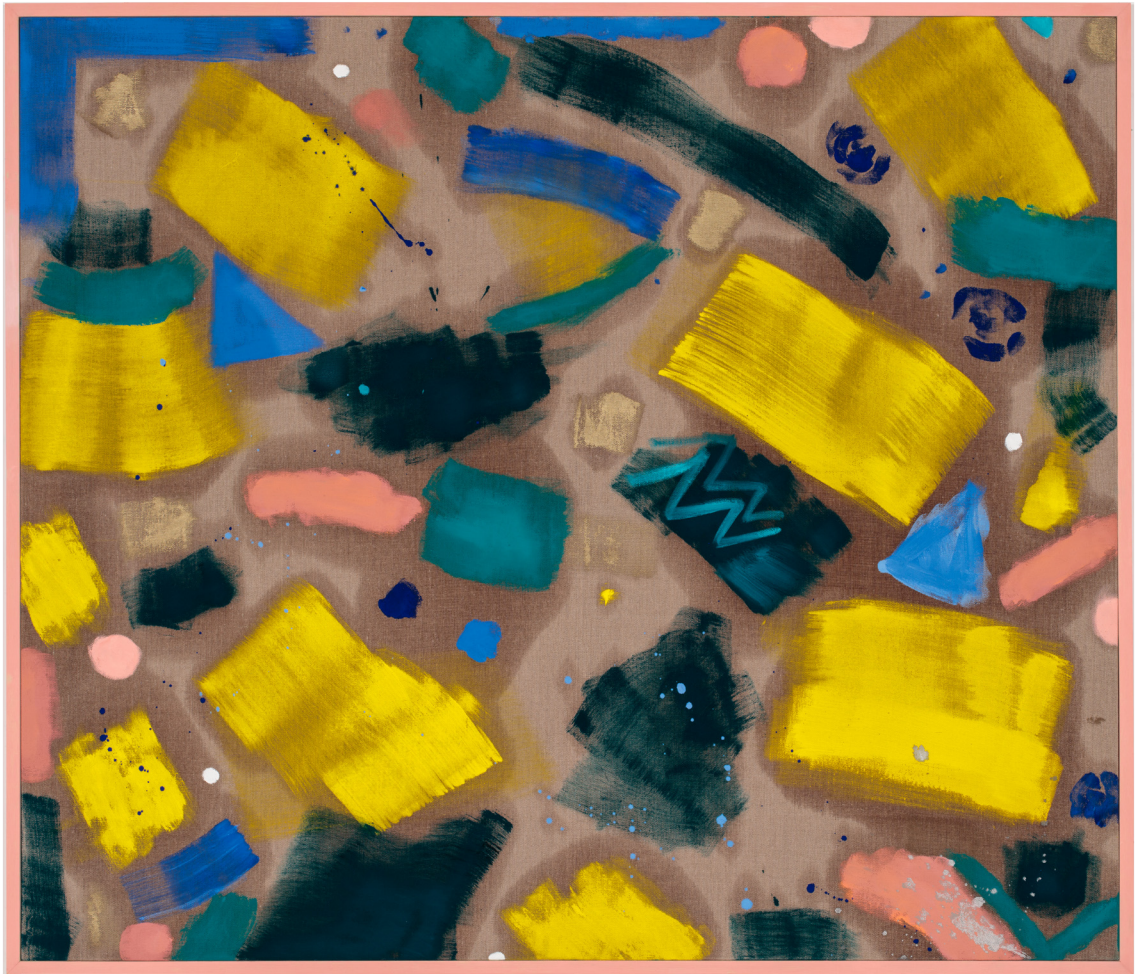
Kamikaze Harlequin, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 37" x 41"



Material World, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 50.5" x 58.5"



Laight Street, 2016
oil on linen, wood frame, 50.5" x 58.5"



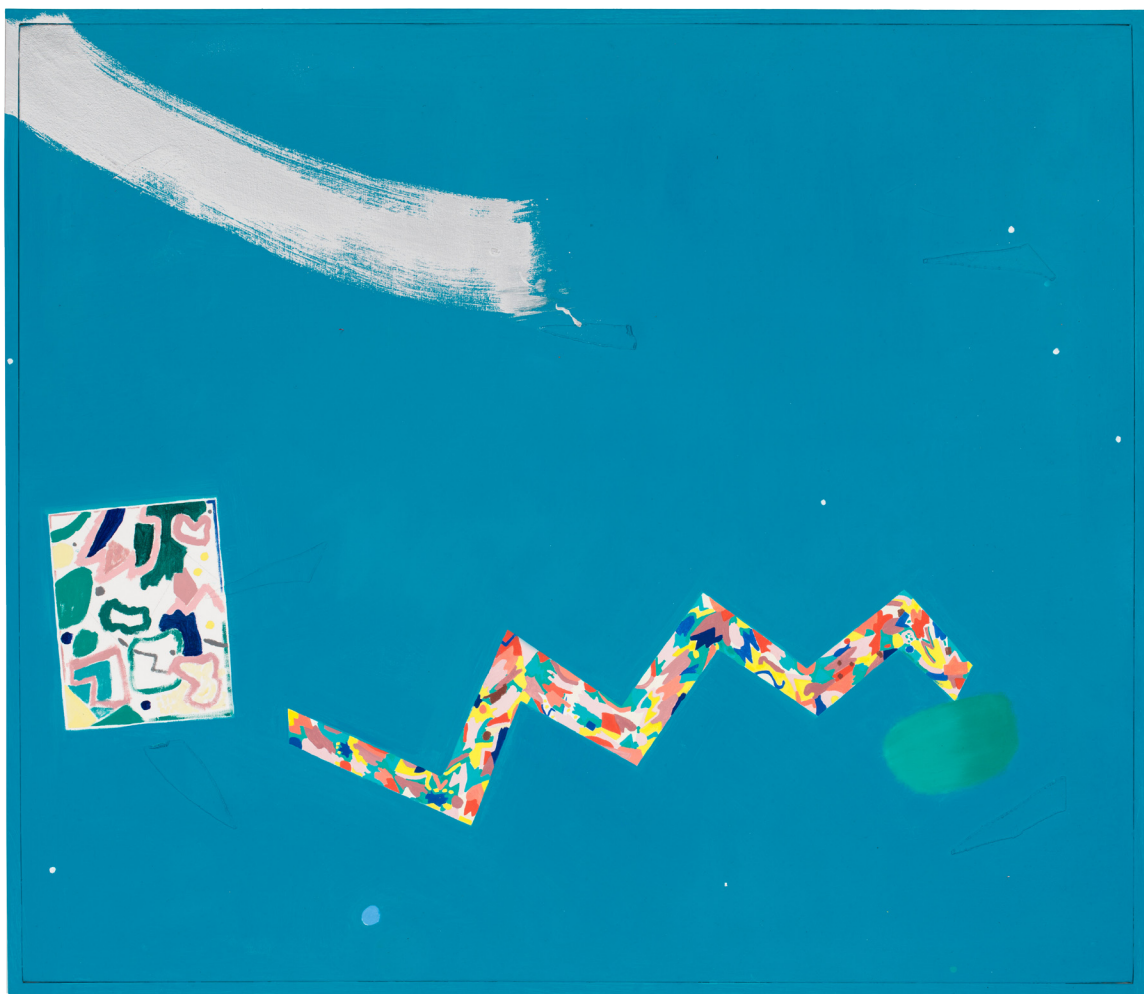
Diamond Heart, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 50.5" x 58.5"



A Simple Twist of Fate, 2015
gouache on paper, 16" x 20"



Aquarius, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 50.5 x 58.5"



Dominant Color, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 50.5" x 58.5"



Painting Culture, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 37" x 41"



Sci Fi Scorpio, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 37" x 41"



Grand Street, 2015
gouache on paper, 16" x 20"



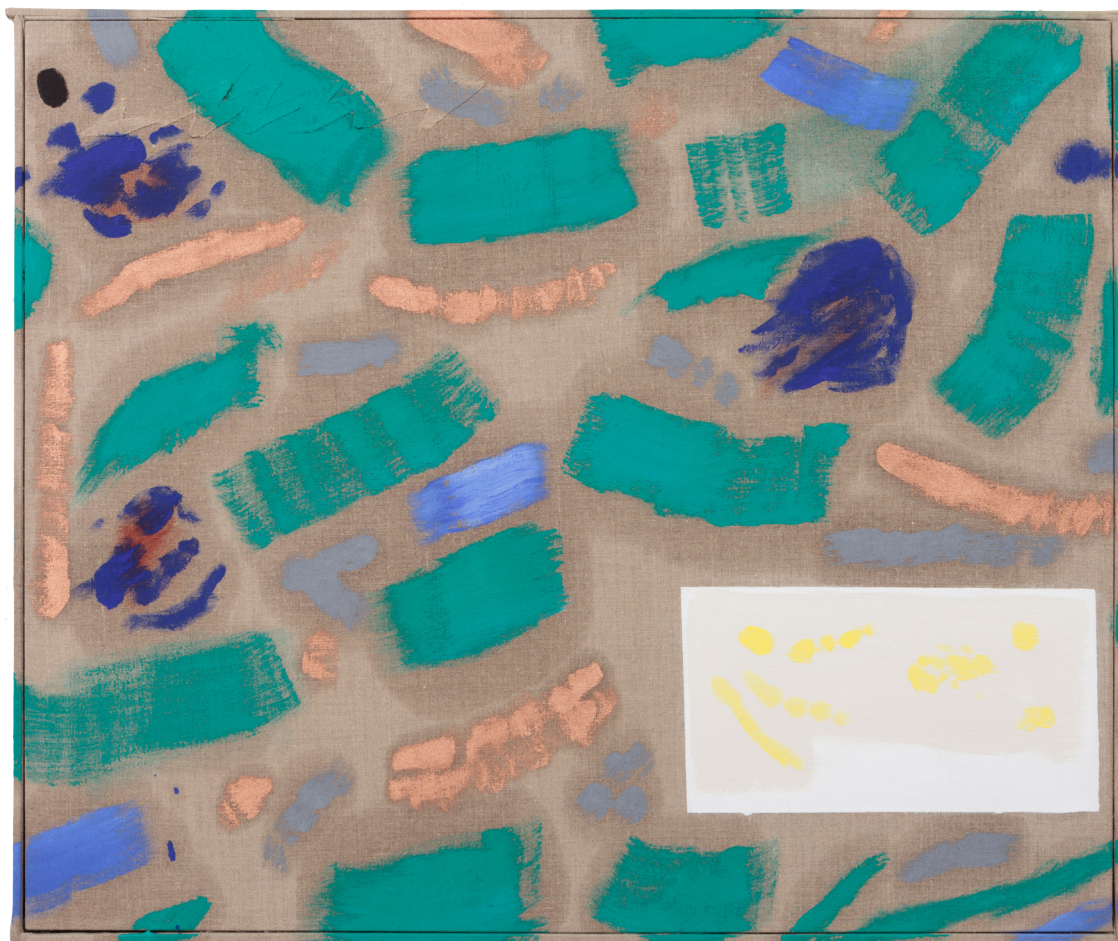
1982, 2016
oil on canvas, wood frame, 50.5" x 58.5"



West Broadway, 2015
oil on canvas, 52" x 54"



Incense and Peppermints, 2015
oil on canvas, 32" x 37"



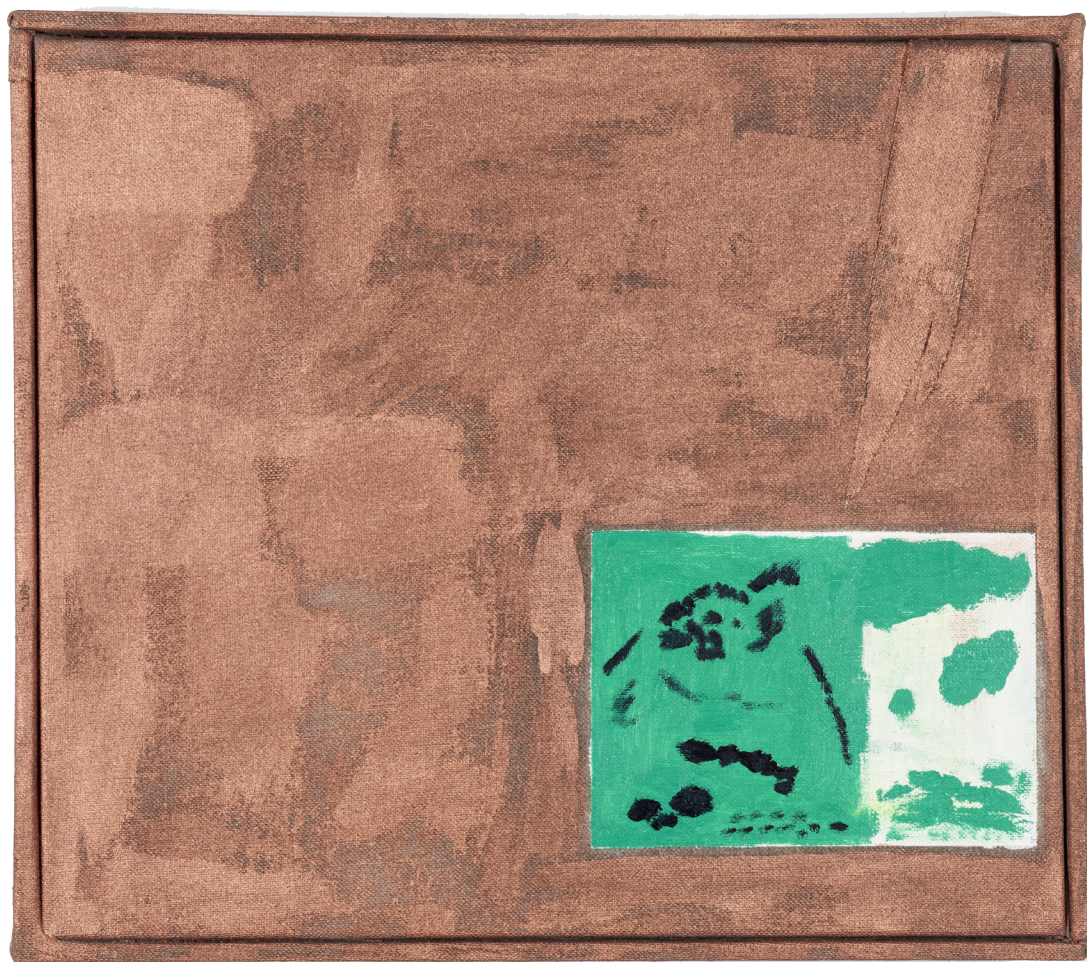
Seven Days, 2014
gouache on paper, 20" x 20"



Slaves of New York, 2015
gouache on paper, 12" x 12"



Western, 2014
oil on linen, wood frame, 15" x 17"



Yellow Painting, 2015
oil on linen, wood frame, 15" x 17"



Diamonds and Rust, 2015
gouache on paper, 20" x 20"



DIAMONDS AND RUST NG

White Desert, 2014
oil on linen, 25.5" x 32"



Painting, 2015
oil on canvas, 54" x 72"



Questions from Peter Gallo to Nora Griffin

Peter Gallo: Nora, I'm looking at an image you sent me of your studio wall. It seems to be very carefully arranged. There are references to Muybridge (your watercolor renderings from his contact sheets); a printed reproduction of Manet's flute-playing Fifer; white brush marks that call up Ryman; and a real lute, which could be a reference to Watteau or Cubism. It seems to me that it's not only a wall in your workspace, but also an artwork in itself. I would suggest that it is an allegory of painting in the broadest sense. Does this ring true?

Nora Griffin: Yes, the space where the painting ends and the wall begins is always shifting, and meaning vibrates between the two. I write notes to myself and tape up images that may find their way into the paintings. These images and words are like talismanic encouragements, a way to keep me company while I work. I like what Ron Gorchov once told me, that the time spent not painting is just as important as painting. So, I guess this wall is an accumulation of that charged "non-painting" time.

PG: Roland Barthes suggests that forms have lives of their own, and it is the artist's "responsibility" to forms to take care of

them and keep them alive. What is your relationship to forms in painting?

NG: I learned about forms when I was very young. The first heart I ever painted had a round bottom. I was happy with it until another kid showed me what a “real” heart looked like, how it came together at a sharp point on the bottom. This stayed with me as a powerful idea: The perfection of form. Another early memory of forms occurred at day camp. Clay reliefs of a cow in a field were distributed with paints and some forgotten instructions. The girl next to me covered the entire object, the cow and the landscape, with a mess of blue and white. An adult bluntly told her that she’d misunderstood the project. The girl paused for a moment, kept painting, then replied smiling, “but it’s a blue cow.” I like when perfection and irony converge in painted forms. I wouldn’t want to make a painting that was lacking in one or the other.

PG: I love how in *Diamond Heart* you extend the camouflage-like pattern into an open yellow field, and a piece breaks off to form a heart shape. It’s not pastiche, it’s something else, what is it? Is that a message to someone?

NG: No doubt it’s a message, but I’d be betraying the painting if I tried to articulate it! Paintings are coded. Accessing the

code could take 5 minutes, 5 days, or 5 years. Sometimes it takes 50 years or 5,000. The painting will wait for a very long time. These new paintings come from a desire to see different modalities of painting existing in the same canvas, touching each other, but not over-lapping. I think you're right, what I'm doing is not pastiche; it's more like an absorption of influences that translates into my personal lexicon.

PG: What does Modernism mean to you?

NG: I think of Modernism as a sensibility that conjoins the emotional inner world to the world of culture. Abstract art was invented to give form to this new sensibility. It's a look that can be found in the eyes of Manet's portrait of the painter Berthe Morisot. The glassy knowledge in her gaze is somehow made more real by the fiction of the paint. In the 20th century subjectivity changed decade-to-decade; but today the rate feels more like minute-to-minute, click-to-click. Your question about forms is relevant here, because Modernism is a belief in the efficacy of forms; the translation of emotion or thought into a form.

In Real Time, 1987

I remember walking on Bond Street with my mom when I was five years old. There was a school assignment to walk around your neighborhood block and record what you see. We didn't find anything besides white sunlight on the pavement, no other people, and the only things of interest to record were a fire-house and a heap of black garbage bags that made a small fortress wall against the side of the Time Café.

Other Titles

In Real Time

Commedia dell'arte

Coffee Cantata

At the Don Juan Deli

Cast-Iron Drugstore (for John Ashbery)

Jack of Diamonds

New Moon

Gangster of Love

Arabic Violins and Strauss Waltzes

Mozart and Pancakes

Sunset Park Sunset

Boulevard Magenta

Kamikaze Harlequin Romance (Spaghetti Western)

Painting is a Clock

Leonard Cohen in Cassis

Fluorescent Moment

For Bessie Smith

Mercury Rising

For George Harrison

Great Jones Street

At the Bar Tano Bar

Nora Griffin was born in New York City in 1982, and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. She has an MFA from Columbia University and a BA from Oberlin College. Recent group shows include: Intimacy in Discourse: Unreasonable Sized Paintings, curated by Phong Bui, at SVA Chelsea Gallery, EXPO Chicago with Louis B. James; Oysters with Lemon at Ventana244, Brooklyn, NY; NADA NY with Louis B. James; Sargent's Daughters at Sargent's Daughters, New York, NY; Off-White Desert at Louis B. James, and Come Together: Surviving Sandy, curated by Phong Bui, at Industry City, Brooklyn, NY. Nora writes for Art in America and The Brooklyn Rail and has written catalog essays for Eleanor Ray and Ruth Root. Her fellowships include the Edward F. Albee Foundation in Montauk, NY; and the BAU/Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France. She has taught at Columbia University and School of Visual Arts in New York, and has been a visiting artist at the Hoffberger School of Painting at Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, and The Cooper Union in New York.

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**Louis B.
James**

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