



UTRGV™

Festiboa

ECHOES OF IDENTITY: VOICES THROUGH TIME AND CULTURE

FEBRUARY 1ST - FEBRUARY 28TH, 2026





JEFFREY WARD

Dean, College of Fine Arts

FESTIBA 2026 WELCOME

Message from the Dean

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley College of Fine Arts is proud to bring you FESTIBA 2026, where you will experience a broad spectrum of how the Arts and storytelling have a profound impact on our lives and help define our humanity. There are so many wonderful sessions, but I will share a few highlights. . .

The 2015 Texas Poet Laureate Carmen Tafolla, author of more than 40 books and short stories, will share photos and stories of how a young kid from an impoverished barrio found her way to standing ovations worldwide on February 5 at 6:00pm at the Marian F. Monta, PhD Studio Theatre in Edinburg (Liberal Arts Building South 107).

An art exhibition in the lobby of the Performing Arts Complex on the UTRGV Edinburg campus entitled The Art of Reading is curated by Samuel Rodriguez, Art and Film professor at Monterrey Tec and at MARCO Museum of Contemporary Art. Originated and curated by Samuel Rodríguez Medina, the exhibit features the art of Central and South American painters, inspired by the writings of such authors as Anne Frank, George Orwell, Juan Rulfo, Walt Whitman, Lewis Carroll, Alejandra Pizarnik, Oscar Wilde, Aldous Huxley, Jaime Sabines, Federico Garcia Lorea, Albert Camus, Nikos Kantsantzakis, among others.

UTRGV Ballet Folklórico will present Alegria 2026 on February 6-7, 13-14 (7:30pm) and February 8, 15 (2:00pm) at the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex in Edinburg. Under the direction of Miguel Peña, the ensemble received the “Best Performance” award at the 2025 American College Dance Association’s National Gala in Washington D.C. and was invited to perform at the storied Jacob’s Pillow in the Berkshires.

UTRGV’s Ballet Folklórico will also share the stage with the UTRGV Symphony Orchestra and Mariachi Aztlan and Mariachi Nuevo Santander in “Revueltas: La Noche de los Mayas” on February 10 at 7pm at the TSC Performing Arts Center in Brownsville and February 25 at 7pm at the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex in Edinburg.

FESTIBA will culminate in the Mariachi Festival Grand Concert on February 28 at 7pm at the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex in Edinburg. Featuring Mariachi Los Camperos, Mariachi Aztlan and the winners of the middle and high school competitions.

I look forward to seeing you at these and all of the amazing events in FESTIBA 2026!

FEBRUARY 1ST - 28TH, 2026

ECHOES OF IDENTITY: VOICES THROUGH TIME AND CULTURE

The Festival of International Books and Arts (FESTIBA) was established in 2006 to promote the importance of literacy, culture, and the arts to students, parents, educators, and community members throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Each year, FESTIBA celebrates the transformative power of the arts to connect, inspire, and educate.

This year's theme, Echoes of Identity: Voices Through Time and Culture, invites us explore how literature, music, and the arts capture personal and collective identity, echoing stories passed down through generations and across borders. It invites reflection on heritage, language, tradition, and the evolving narratives that shape who we are.



PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX:

SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ: DISTINGUISHED GUEST ARTIST EXHIBITION

The Art of Reading Exhibition curated by Samuel Rodriguez. This project is designed to bring the viewer closer to an experience of art and to the experience of literature. Everyone is welcome: students, libraries, teachers, authors, children, painters, artists, and everyone who needs to stimulate their imagination.

Dates: February 2 - 27

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

(gallery is open from 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. only on evenings when an event is scheduled at the Performing Arts Complex.)

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Performing Arts Complex Exhibit Hall

VISUAL ARTS BUILDING GALLERY:

KELSIE GARZA MFA EXHIBITION

Work is shaped by rural ranch life and honors the beauty, labor, and traditions of caring for land and animals through a contemporary lens. Using oil and acrylic paint, ceramics, found objects, and family textiles, they layer memory and material to create work that feels familiar through shared emotions of love, care, and belonging. Through hand-built ceramics, sewn fabrics, and painting from memory, they connect past and present while inviting viewers to reflect on their own ties to land, labor, and family.

Dates: February 2 - 13

Opening Reception: February 2 | 6:00 p.m.

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Visual Arts Building (EVABL)



CHARLES & DOROTHY GALLERY:

“THE CIGAR BOX” EXHIBITION

Cigar Box Curiosities conveys the deeply personal yet interconnected nature of artmaking. Although many of the cigar boxes donated by the Elephant Cigar Lounge are identical due to mass production, the artists have transformed them through sustainable and resourceful practices into unique expressions of their creativity. We invite the audience to consider what more we could transform into sustainable expressions of our borderland identity.

Dates: February 2 - 13

Opening Reception: February 2 | 5:00 p.m.

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
Charles and Dorothy Clark Art Gallery

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY GALLERY:

AMANDA L. KILLEEN, DPM EXHIBITION

“THE AREA OF INTEREST: ACKNOWLEDGING HUMANITY IN CLINICAL PHOTOS”

Join us for a photo essay drawn from clinical encounters, where the focus extends beyond the subject of the image itself. While clinical photographs are typically created to document a specific “area of interest,” these images reveal surrounding details that quietly insist on being seen.

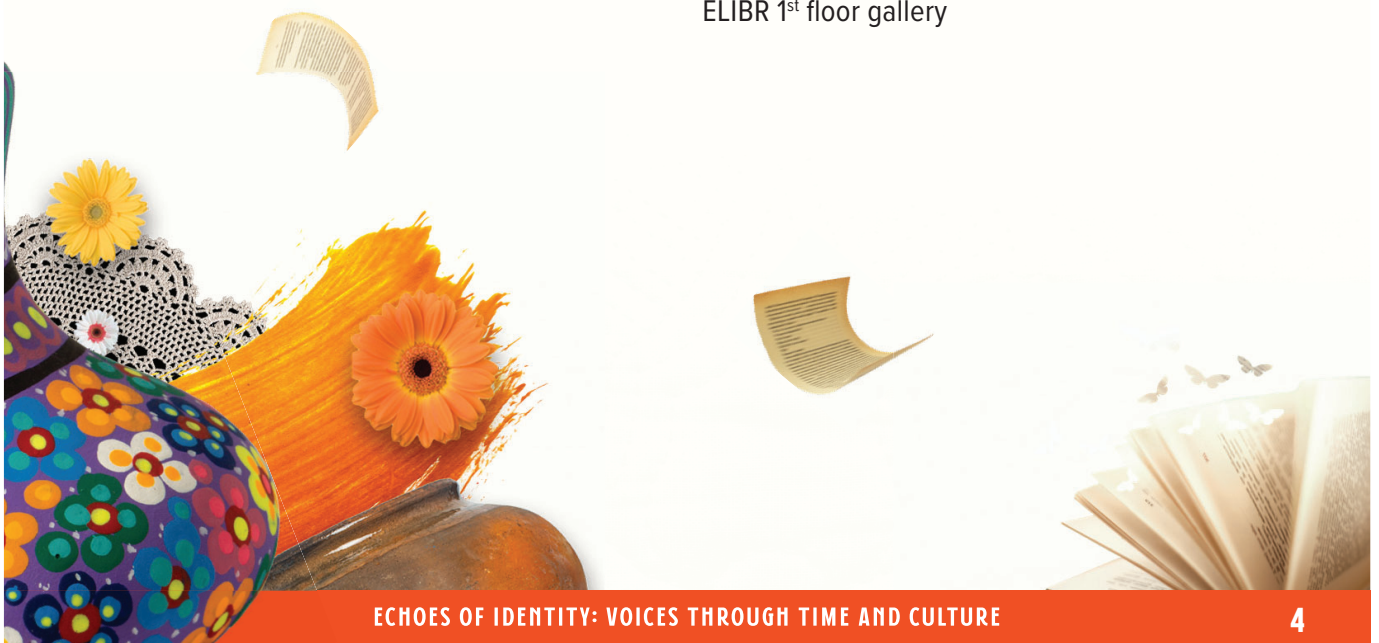
Together, the photographs invite viewers to pause and consider how identity, history, and human presence persist within clinical spaces, even when not intentionally captured. This work does not aim to direct interpretation, but to create space for observation — encouraging reflection on how we see patients, how context shapes care, and what remains visible when attention widens.

Dates: February 2 - 27

Time: Open during the library’s
regular business hours.

utrgv.edu/library/about-us/hours

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
ELIBR 1st floor gallery



MONDAY FEBRUARY 2ND - SUNDAY FEBRUARY 8TH

SPAIN: STEREOTYPES, MYTHS AND TRUTHS

Flamenco, bullfighting, paella, siesta! Have you ever wondered how much are these aspects truly representative of Spain/Spanish cultures today?

Presenter: Dr. Cristina Sánchez-Conejero,
Department of Spanish, UTRGV

Date: February 3

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Zoom: utrgvarts.tiny.us/spain

CARMEN TAFOLLA

Presentation by State Poet Laureate of Texas 2015, Dr. Carmen Tafolla. The author of more than 40 books and many many writings spanning from short stories to historical non-fiction, and from poetry to children's books and novels-in-verse, Tafolla shares with us photos and stories of how a young kid from an impoverished barrio found her way to standing ovations worldwide.

Date: February 5

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
ELABS 107 Marian F. Monta, PhD Studio Theatre

THE CENTER FOR LATIN SOUTH TEXAS LITERACY SYMPOSIUM AT FESTIBA

FESTIBA's Librarians and Educators Day collaborates the South Texas Literacy Coalition to present the South Texas Literacy Symposium, a professional development conference for local literacy providers. This free conference is sponsored by Literacy Texas. This symposium is offered free of charge to educators, volunteer tutors, ESL teachers, and other library and nonprofit professionals who work in the fields of adult and family literacy.

This year's symposium features FESTIBA 2026 Distinguished Artists:

Carmen Tafolla: Poet and award-winning author

Samuel Rodriguez: Curator of
"The Art of Reading" Exhibition

Date: February 6

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Ballroom
To register, visit literacytexas.org/SouthTX



JUAN PABLO ANDRADE, PIANO

Join us for an evening of exceptional piano performance with Dr. Juan Pablo Andrade, an award-winning Costa Rican pianist. Dr. Andrade has appeared as soloist with numerous symphonies, served as a visiting professor at several universities, and currently holds the position of Full Professor of Piano at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Date: February 6

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Brownsville Campus,
BMSLC 1.217 | 1 W. University Blvd.,
Brownsville, Tx 78520

ALEGRIA 2026 - BALLET FOLKLORICO

UTRGV Ballet Folklórico proudly presents Alegría, a breathtaking display of traditional Mexican dance and music that will leave you mesmerized!

Directed by Miguel Peña, our talented dancers will bring to life the rich cultural heritage of Mexico through their graceful movements and vibrant costumes. Prepare to be captivated by their impeccable choreography and infectious energy!

Evening Performance:

February 6 - 7 | 7:30 p.m.

Matinee Performance:

February 8 | 2:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
Performing Arts Complex

Tickets: utrgvarts.tiny.us/alegria

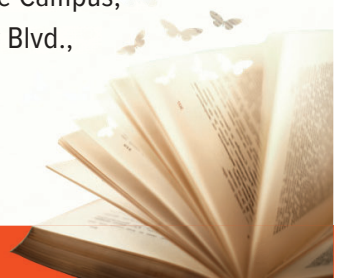
LEAH HOLLINGSHEAD, SOPRANO AND MAGGIE HINCHLIFFE, PIANO

Reframing the Narrative of Cowboy Culture in the American West. Join us for an afternoon recital featuring soprano Leah Hollingshead and collaborative pianist Maggie Hinchliffe! Their repertoire includes Libby Larsen's Cowboy Songs, a compilation of Copland art songs, a song cycle titled "Songs From the End of the Frontier" by Tejano composer Alex Shawver that premiered in spring 2024, and arrangements of Mexican ranchera music.

Date: February 7

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Brownsville Campus,
BMSLC 1.217 | 1 W. University Blvd.,
Brownsville, Tx 78520



**MONDAY FEBRUARY 9TH -
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15TH**

UN GATO ES UN HAIKU: EL POEMA BREVE COMO FORMA DE ATENCIÓN

Presentación del libro *Un gato es un haiku* (edición bilingüe) de Elvia Ardalani. La autora explora el haiku como una forma de atención al instante y a la presencia animal. A través de la lectura de poemas y una breve reflexión sobre el proceso creativo, el evento invita a una experiencia literaria de silencio y mirada en torno al poema breve.

Book presentation: A Cat Is a Haiku (bilingual edition) by Elvia Ardalani. The author explores haiku as a form of attentiveness to the moment and to animal presence. Through the reading of poems and a brief reflection on the creative process, the event invites a literary experience of silence and observation centered on the short poem.

Presenter: Dr. Elvia Ardalani,
Department of Spanish, UTRGV

Date: February 10

Time: 2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
EEDUC 2.502

UTRGV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - BROWNSVILLE

The UTRGV Symphony presents a preview concert of its debut program of leading Mexican composers for the Texas Music Educators Convention in San Antonio, featuring music from the 1939 Mexican film *La Noche de los Mayas*, also *Kauyumari* by Gabriela Ortiz, and *Concierto de Minería* by Samuel Zyman with flute soloist Nicaulis Alliey. Don't miss this evening of breathtaking artistry and orchestral brilliance! Directed by Norman Gamboa, Director of Orchestral Activities at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Date: February 10

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: TSC Performing Arts Center,
90 Taylor Ave., Brownsville, Tx 78520



UN GATO ES UN HAIKU: EL POEMA BREVE COMO FORMA DE ATENCIÓN

Presentación—charla virtual del libro *Un gato es un haiku* (edición bilingüe). Conversación y lectura con la autora sobre la capacidad del poema breve. El encuentro será un conversatorio con la profesora Ana Isabel Ortiz como moderadora y con Francisco Macías-Jones, traductor del volumen, quienes acompañarán la lectura y dialogarán sobre el proceso creativo y el paso del poema entre lenguas.

Virtual presentation and talk for the book: *A Cat Is a Haiku* (bilingual edition).

A conversation and reading with the author about the expressive power of the short poem. The event will take the form of a roundtable discussion moderated by Professor Ana Isabel Ortiz, with Francisco Macías-Jones, the book's translator, who will join the reading and discuss the creative process and the movement of the poem between languages.

Presenter: Elvia Ardalani (author), Department of Spanish, UTRGV, Francisco Macías-Jones (translator), Ana Isabel Ortiz (moderator).

Date: February 12

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Zoom: utrgvarts.tiny.us/haiku

ALEGRIA 2026 - BALLET FOLKLORICO

UTRGV Ballet Folklórico proudly presents *Alegría*, a breathtaking display of traditional Mexican dance and music that will leave you mesmerized!

Directed by Miguel Peña, our talented dancers will bring to life the rich cultural heritage of Mexico through their graceful movements and vibrant costumes. Prepare to be captivated by their impeccable choreography and infectious energy!

Evening Performance:

February 13 - 14 | 7:30 p.m.

Matinee Performance:

February 15 | 2:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Performing Arts Complex

Tickets: utrgvarts.tiny.us/alegria

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Performing Arts Complex



**MONDAY FEBRUARY 23RD -
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28TH**

ANCIENT LANDSCAPES OF SOUTH TEXAS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT - A GEOHERITAGE DOCUMENTARY FILM

The award-winning documentary film Ancient Landscapes of South Texas: Hiding in Plain Sight was produced by the CHAPS Program at UTRGV and highlights millions of years of Lower Rio Grande Valley history that include volcanic eruptions, 27-million-year-old petrified logs, 43-million-year-old giant oyster shells, and projectile points crafted by humans for over 15,000 years. The film also illuminates the unique landscape of our region and helps curious minds to understand the natural processes that formed South Texas. The producers of this film will be on hand to introduce the film and provide their unique insight into the inspiration behind this project and their overall goal to promote the largely overlooked geological and cultural history of the LRGV.

Presenter: Juan L. Gonzalez,
Roseann Bacha-Garza, Christopher L. Miller,
and Russell K. Skowronek.

Date: February 23

Time: 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
EHABE 1.102

Date: February 24

Time: 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Brownsville Campus,
BSABH 1.108

UTRGV SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - EDINBURG

UTRGV Symphony Orchestra is proud to present "Revueltas: La Noche de los Mayas" with special guests UTRGV Ballet Folklórico, Mariachi Nuevo Santander and Mariachi Aztlan! Don't miss this unique performance that combines traditional folkloric dance with an orchestral rendition of classic mariachi. Directed by Norman Gamboa, Director of Orchestral Activities at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Date: February 25

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
Performing Arts Complex

PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC ECHOING INDIVIDUAL STORIES OF MEXICAN SONG HERITAGE

Featuring by Dr. Liudmila Varlamova and students of class piano Keyboard Skills for Vocalists and Piano class will explore and perform the popular Mexican songs for voice - instrumental solos and piano accompaniments.

Presenters: Dr. Liudmila Varlamova and
students of class piano.

Date: February 26

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
EPAC B1 131

Zoom: Contact liudmila.varlamova@utrgv.edu
to request Zoom link



NICOLE ASEL, MEZZO-SOPRANO AND JOHN LINDSAY, TENOR

Nicole Asel, mezzo-soprano and John Lindsay, tenor will perform a guest artist recital.

Date: February 28

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
Performing Arts Complex

FRIDAY - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH & 28TH

FEATURED MARIACHI ARTIST

We are thrilled to welcome our FESTIBA 2026 Special Guests **Mariachi Los Camperos!** Founded in 1961 by Natividad “Nati” Cano, the Grammy Award–winning ensemble has played a pivotal role in elevating mariachi music worldwide. From becoming the first mariachi group to perform at Carnegie Hall to collaborating with Linda Ronstadt, Mariachi Los Camperos continue to honor tradition while shaping the future of the art form. Today, under the direction of Jesús “Chuy” Guzmán, their legacy lives on through rich, elegant, and inspiring performances.

MARIACHI LOS CAMPEROS DE JESÚS “CHUY” GUZMÁN



FESTIBA 2026 MARIACHI FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 27TH & 28TH

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Mariachi Los Camperos de
Jesus “Chuy” Guzman

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH

WORKSHOPS

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Mariachi
Conference Check-In

9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.: Presentation of
Repertoire for Workshops with
Mariachi Los Camperos & Mariachi Aztlán

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Instrumental
Workshops with Mariachi Los Camperos and
Mariachi Aztlán

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: Directors’
Masterclass with Freddie Sandoval:
Differences In the Approaches to Live and
Studio Sound Engineering

12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.: Lunch on your own

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.: Students’ Masterclass
with Mariachi Los Camperos: Demonstration of
Style and Interpretation of the Son, Huapango,
Bolero, and Ranchera

2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Instrumental Workshops
with Mariachi Los Camperos and Mariachi Aztlán

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.: Directors’ Masterclass
with Jesús “Chuy” Guzmán Interactive Coaching
Session: Feedback and Guidance on Technique,
Interpretation, and Expression

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Vocal Competition
Finalists for Middle School and High School

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
Performing Arts Complex

Tickets at: utrgvarts.tiny.us/vocal

\$10 Admission

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28TH

GROUP COMPETITION & GRAND CONCERT

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.: Middle School and
High School Group Competition

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.:

FESTIBA 2026 Mariachi Festival Grand Concert:

- Mariachi Los Camperos de
Jesus “Chuy” Guzman
- Mariachi Aztlán
- Mariachi Juvenil Aztlán
- High School Competition Grand Champion
- Middle School Group Winner
- Middle School & High School
Vocal Competition Winners

SPECIAL GUESTS:

UTRGV Ballet Folklórico

\$50.00 registration fee.

Individual concert tickets are \$20.

For more information and registration, visit:

utrgv.edu/festiba

Please note: Workshop Registration fee
does not include a concert ticket.

Location: UTRGV Edinburg Campus,
Performing Arts Complex

Tickets at: utrgvarts.tiny.us/group

General Admission | \$20

VIP seats | \$40

UTRGV Faculty/Staff/Senior 65+, Children | \$10



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28TH

MAYOR JOE V. SANCHEZ MEMORIAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Mayor Joe V. Sánchez was a longtime mayor of Weslaco, superintendent of schools, a veteran, and an author. The annual book festival was created in his memory to promote literacy, the arts and culture throughout the community and beyond while celebrating creativity. This will be a free event open to the public and student performances, authors panels, arts and crafts stations, vendors, free food and books.

Date: February 28

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Location: Mayor Joe V. Sánchez Public Library
525 S Kansas Ave, Weslaco, TX 78596



FOR TICKETS VISIT

UTRGV ARTS SHOWPASS

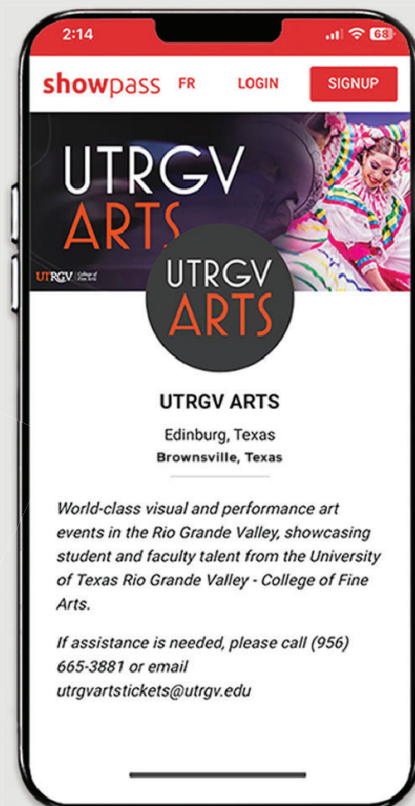
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UTRGV 2025-2026

SEASON EVENTS!

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BOOK AND EXPERIENCE
UTRGV ARTS.



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UTRGV.edu/FESTIBA



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