

LIVE MUSIC IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE FINNISH HOTEL CRUISE LINES AND SHARM EL SHEIKH'S RESORTS ENTERTAINMENT

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to focus on the tourists, singer-musicians' and hotel managers' experiences with live music in Finnish hotel cruise lines and Sharm EL Sheikh's seaside resorts. The tourist, singer-musician and hotel manager relations --although an integral part of the tourist experience--have received little attention in past tourism and music studies. Thus, the purpose of this research will be to show that by observing these different informants performance rituals, interactions, and attitudes towards local entertainment in the tourist industry, we could offer insightful guidelines to better understand the cultural significance of live music in the tourist experience, often produced by a complex nexus of socio-political factors. The research will furthermore, try to encompass new grounds by focusing on the sociocultural and aesthetic meanings of live (popular, folk and world) music performances, from a tourist rather than popular music perspective. Themes, such as *liminality*, the *flow*, and *imagined communities* will thus be crucial in assessing the socio-culturally different or similar performer-audience meanings and experiences with live music in the two "worlds apart" entertainment settings. The multi-sited ethnographic framework in this research, will compare the host-guest experiences for the two *world apart* sites, and study the future impacts of world systems on changes in local music production and on attitudes towards live music performances. While Cohen (2002) asks, what can popular music tell us about cities the purpose of this paper is to ask what does the hotel industry tell us about popular music?

Keywords: hotel industry, performance, popular music

1. Introduction

The complex relationship between *tourism, performance—identity* has received its share of light in the works of Turner (1979), Smith (1989), Urry, (1990), Aldskogius (1993), Matheson (2008), MacCannell (1999), Carson (2004) and Cohen (2007). But while, the focus has rested on the performing arts and cultural tourism, it has mainly been inspired by works on festivals and concerts, the profane breath taking music spectacles of the post-modern

Disney theme parks, or even on the sacred pilgrims of sightseeing, and the religious rituals. As a result, many local entertainment forms, in the everyday lives of the tourists have gone unnoticed.

It is the role of this paper to focus with the help of these past papers, on two particular forms of local entertainment practices, prevalent in the everyday lives of the Finnish cruise lines and Egyptian hotel industries. Even

though the works of Urry (1990) and Hughes (2000) reflected upon the decrease in the quality and quantity of live music performances in worldwide seaside resorts after the mid twentieth-century, the performances and interactions between the musicians, tourists and hotel managers, and the theme of popular music have still remained in the shadow. It is with the study of two research questions, a) *What is the cultural significance of live music performances,* and b) *What are the social, cultural, aesthetic criteria for evaluations of live music performances,* that this paper will aim to reveal a new full inspection of the set of meanings behind the *hotel industry, performance, and popular music connection.*

The professional and amateur everyday life entertainment practices of the two world's apart hotel-resort settings used in this research, will hopefully uncover interesting thoughts on the similarities and differences in the Finnish hotel cruise lines and Sharm EL-Sheikh's seaside resorts local entertainment practices. In other words, on the popular, folk and world music entertainment practices in these two distinctive tourist settings.

The core of this paper derives its purpose from, the performance, symbolic interactionism, structuralism, distinction, cultural imperialism and world system theories. The main approach here will be to use these theories in such a format that rituals, drama, and symbols connected to performances are explored as strategic outcomes of different touristic functions and not simply as mere products of western popular entertainment. Goffman's (1959), Adorno's (1970,1997), Turner's (1979), Fabbri's (1982), Frith's (1996), MacCannell's (1999), Hughes, (2000), Cohen's (2007), Bennett's (2005), Whiteley's (2004), and Finnegan's (1989) works will help me in this.

Bennett's (2005) and Finnegan's (1989) studies, with their focus on the local and everyday life entertainment practices, will work as tools in observing the Finnish cruise lines and Sharm EL Sheikh's hotel-resorts tourists', performers' and hotel managers' everyday life entertainment rituals, interactions, and attitudes towards different musical worlds. Most importantly, unlike many past studies this paper will confine its focus on the local enter-

tainment practices of both the professional music practitioners as well as on the more amateur musicians performances. Both whose social practices involve a whole group of hosts other than just performers (e.g. hotel managers), and whose performance efforts have implications for national culture (Finnegan, 1989).

Furthermore, by integrating these scholars world views on the front and back stage performances rituals, drama, and symbols this paper will be able to answer the two research questions respectively.

a) *The Performance and Symbolic interactionism Theory: A set of rituals and drama*

First of all, this research will follow in the footsteps of Frith's (1996), Fabbri's (1982), Finnegan's (1989), Abercrombie's (1998), Adorno's (1970, 1997), Cohen's (2007) and Whiteley's (2004) analyzes on the performance rituals of different musical worlds, and their categorizations of different musical worlds and audience rituals into good or bad, authentic or inauthentic, professional or amateur, serious or fun, folk or popular, simple or mass diffusive, and black or white. While Frith (1996), Fabbri (1982), Adorno (1970,1997), Whiteley (2004), and Cohen (2007) look at the performance rituals of different genres of music, Abercrombie (1998), on the other hand, examines in particular the distinct types of audience rituals. In other words, for Abercrombie (1998) the western idea of physical separation between the performer and audience depends not as much on the musical world, the audience belongs to, but rather on the audience type, and on whether the audience is simple or mass-diffusive. For the mass-diffusive, art performances exist usually as a secondary interest. However, popular music can consist of both types of audiences.

Hughes (2000) brings out a similar argument to his study on arts, performance and tourism as Abercrombie. However, he takes the argument a step further, as he links audience rituals with particular categories of tourists e.g. core arts or peripheral arts tourists. Hughes (2000), believes that for the core art tourists (festival and concert oriented audiences), there are a clear set of behavior rules, ritu-

als and an ongoing ceremony open to the public, whereas, for the art-peripheral tourists (more hotel- popular entertainment oriented audiences) performances are more about tedious rituals, less ceremonial and the distance between the audience and performer for the art-peripheral tourists performances tends to be greater.

While, King's (1995) study is purely on social rituals in the tourist industry, she illustrates exactly the way performance and social rituals in tourism actually create a greater distance between the audience and the performers (i.e. guests and hosts).

Hughes interpretation makes a unique connection in itself between tourism, performance and identity. However, the purpose of my paper will be to explore whether this dichotomy that Hughes proposes of a high culture and more popular entertainment, in other words, core art- and art peripheral tourists can also be applied to the hotel industries such as the Finnish hotel cruise line and Egyptian seaside resort- hotels local everyday life entertainment practices. This question will be among others answered, with the help of Finnegan's (1989) study on the distinction between the amateur and professional local performers, and which revealed some ambiguities in the divide between the professional and the amateur or the high culture and more popular forms of entertainment.

Back to the performance rituals, MacCannell (1999), whose ideas are largely shaped by Turner's (1979) concepts of pilgrims and sacred performances of tourist and religious rituals, will add a tourist dimension along with Turner's approach to the interpretations of the musical world's performance rituals in the front and back stages of the Finnish and Egyptian tourist settings. MacCannell (1999) examines the sacralization of natural or cultural objects in modern tourist settings and the way this sacralization is nurtured with the performance rituals of the guests and hosts. Thus, in this sense, MacCannell's theory will be valuable as it will determine the role of sacralization in the Finnish and Egyptian tourist settings performance rituals that might influence the performer's, tourist's and hotel manager's experiences and attitudes towards popular mu-

sic and local entertainment. For example, markers of the tourist settings MacCannell (1999) mentions are one of the producers of this sacralization, also an important link between the tourist and the site. Moreover, according to Abercrombie (1998), because mass diffusive (art -peripheral) settings are more about work rituals, they lack markers such as proper advertisement of the musical events unlike it is the case for the simple and core-art audiences **Figure 1**.

Goffman's (1959), MacCannell's (1999), Turner's (1979) and Finnegan's (1989) studies will also be useful in the study of the connections between the front and back stages performance rituals on the one hand, and drama on the other. Studying drama in the front and back stage of performances will offer useful techniques to explore the everyday life entertainment of the two diverse tourist settings and of course the connection between hotel industry, performance—and popular music in the Finnish cruise line hotels and Sharm EL Sheikh's seaside hotel-resorts.

These famous authors reflect upon the performance ritual practices which might lead to drama between the performer and audience. For example, if the audience or performer is careless about his self presentation or the self of the other drama might occur. Drama might also rise when an audience breaks the rule and enters the back stage intentionally or accidentally. Edensor (2001) reveals the dangers in crossing the front and back stage boundaries. In Cheshire, tourists were excessively pressured to participate on the front stage with the real actors rehearsals, and many were thus disappointed.

The breach of the performance rituals and the rise of drama as a result of the breach can be portrayed with a conflict that occurred between Johnny, one of my M.A. field work musician informants working in a four star hotel in Hurghada, and a Russian tourist. The Russian tourist entered Johnny's sacred front stage. And when Johnny refused to play Russian music for the tourist, the Russian man shook Johnny's elbow, and in turn Johnny twisted the man's arm, lightly.

In short, the performance and symbolic interactionism theories that have been founded

by Margaret Mead and Herbert Blumer, will assist me in looking at the front and back stage performances, audience rituals and at drama occurring in these two types of stages. By integrating this micro approach, the research will thus be able to examine the similarities and differences in the social practices and interactions between the performer-audience, performer-performer, audience-audience, and performer-hotel manager, in the Finnish hotel cruise line and Sharm El Sheikh's seaside resorts local/national entertainment industries.

Most importantly, the research will then be able to answer the two primary research questions: a) what is the cultural significance of live music? b) What are the social, cultural, and aesthetic criteria for the evaluations of live music performances? Lastly, it will hopefully be able to bridge the gap in the present literature on the hotel industry, performance—popular music and with the comparative study on local entertainment in the Finnish cruise line and Egyptian hotel industries it will thus reveal the role of popular music in the two world apart hotel industries.

b) The structuralism and distinction theories: Systems of signs and Distinction

This paper has tried so far, to present shortly the benefits of exploring the performance and audience rituals, and drama, and studying the cruise line and hotel industries that shape popular music and local entertainment practices. The structuralism and distinction theories likewise will provide a more in depth study of the hotel industry, performance --and popular music connection. This section of the paper is perhaps the most important one, as it tries to deconstruct more fully the many meanings of popular music and local entertainment in the hotel industry, as different systems of signs.

Influenced by the famous French sociologists Claude Levi Strauss (1908-2009) and Bourdieu's (1984) ideologies of Distinction, the two theories will aim to shed light on the complex set of larger structures and systems of symbols in the front and back stage performances such as the different musical worlds, liminality, cultural imperialism, the flow, and imagined communities, all which shape the

tourists, musicians and hotel managers local entertainment practices similarly or differently for the Finnish cruise lines and Egyptian seaside hotel- resorts. Naturally, these different symbols will distinctively shed light on the cultural significance of live music performances and on the social, cultural and aesthetic criteria for the evaluations of live music performances.

Fabbri (1982) breaks the different musical worlds into traditional, pop, rock, sophisticated Italian canzone d'autore, political and children's music. He illustrates the way music carries different meanings, symbols for different people that define the music genre itself. For example, in Britain and America popular music would consist of rock or pop genres, in other countries such as in Italy (even in Egypt), folk or traditional music could be considered also as popular music. One example, of this Fabbri (1982) says, is the "canzone d'autore or the "author's song" which crosses in Italy the boundaries between the traditional and the pop song because of its highly unique vocal and pronunciation style, for instance. Traditional songs have an another distinction, while they focus mainly on drama in their lyrics, and the tone of the song is rather serious, on the other hand for more dreamy and fantasy related pop songs the listener is more likely to identify with the character of the song (Fabbri, 1982).

Finnegan (1989), Cohen (2007), and Frith (1996) also examine some of the symbols behind different musical worlds. Like Fabbri (1982), their works respectively shed light to the frontier problems of different genres of music for separate musical world audiences and cultures. Their research projects set apart clearly the symbols describing the different musical world performances and settings, different music expressions of the professional and amateur performers, values and practices of the audience, set of instruments, and the social networks typical to the particular style of music.

However, the main argument in Finnegan's work is that whilst distinct musical worlds have their own symbols separating the audiences or performers from one another, the boundaries between the professional and amateur musicians are often ambiguous. For example, for

participants in the classical world, the beauty, good coordination and high standard of local amateur group performances, are often as good as those of the more national professional performances. Likewise, for the folk world, Finnegan states (1989) the local amateur folk performances are not pure imitations of professional folk bands but exist in their own right producing a high sense of identity and romanticism for the highly educated professional folk audience. Therefore, as Finnegan puts it: 'What was classified as within this classical tradition depended not so much on an objective set of criteria as on cultural conventions about the appropriate forms and contexts of music'.

In other words, in Finnegan's world view about local amateurs in Milton Keynes the distinction between the high culture and the more popular forms of entertainment dissolves. Proof of its ambiguity, becomes apparent in the manner in which most of the high standard amateur musicians are self taught and have little institutional schooling in music apart from the classical performers.

While, Finnegan (1989) questions the objectives of a set of criteria or the relevancy of any proper distinction between the high culture (national professional musicians) and more popular forms of entertainment for the Milton Keynes local amateur music settings, her work seems to somewhat resonate on Adorno's (1970, 1997) values of the ever changing society from high culture to mass popular, in which there are no real distinctions in criteria only in the social and cultural aspects of the musical worlds. Bourdieu's (1984), Frith's (1996) and Cohen's (2007) works on the other hand, stand closer to Hughes (2000) world view, and reflect upon the symbols and boundaries between the high culture and the more popular types of entertainment. These authors illustrate, the way there exists some set of criteria for performances, often related to class hierarchies or pure lifestyle.

However, looking back at the tourist-hotel industry we can see that it has its own systems of signs and symbols that influence the type of local popular music entertainment in a tourist setting. It becomes extremely useful then to integrate Turner's (1979) concept or symbol of liminality in this paper. Applying "liminality" in

this study might reveal on how in the hotel industries audiences and performers might experience popular music and entertainment, the musical worlds or even the boundaries between the high culture and popular culture very differently than at home. In other words, in the different hotel settings, liminality can have a direct impact on performance rituals, popular music, and identity.

Turner (1979) describes liminality as a rite of passage in tourism with three phases: separation, transition and incorporation. The transition phase is the most important one, as it can consist of a lot of ambiguity and insecurity in the tourists or performers, on the one hand, and of high peak flow experiences, on the other. Most performance rituals in the hotel experiences thus are driven by liminality. Liminality is also partly the driver for what MacCannell (1999) refers to as the sacralization of performance rituals or to Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) the flow of experiences.

Some of the challenges in liminality are that it easily blurs the boundaries between work and play or ritual and theatre. Smith (1989), for example, pinpoints that the leisure-work distinction in liminality often decreases the hosts and guests into mere objects in interaction. The hosts of course, continuously being at the service of the guests and especially in the Third World are at a disadvantaged status. Hence, liminality in the hotel experience might actually produce totally different experiences with popular music and widen the gap between the audience and performer when ceremonial performances, and local entertainment tends to become more about rituals or touristic encounters than about theatre or spectacles. However, this distance may vary from one culture, performance, and hotel setting to another. Therefore, it is interesting to compare the Finnish cruise line experiences with rituals and ceremonies with those of the Egyptian seaside hotel-resorts.

c) Cultural Imperialism and World System Theories

The cultural imperialism and world-system theories are connected to the theme of liminality. Bennett (2005), Adorno (1970, 1997) and

Wallerstein (2004) all shed light to the core-nations exploitation of the periphery nations and their local production of arts. This exploitation often occurs in the social relations between the different employers in the hotel industry and in the leisure-work distinction, objectification of the performers and audiences, but also in what Adorno (1970.1997) has called the over productivity of western mass culture commodities. The result as Hall (1994) mentions is that "we are no longer moved by the experiences arts have to offer, we consume them."

While, Hall (1994) and Featherstone (2002) also have looked at the larger structures, symbols of consumer cultures and their effects on arts, Urry (1990) also believes that resorts and entertainment have increasingly become less about profane high culture music spectacles and more about other type of entertainment with the tourist gaze.

During my MA fieldwork in Hurghada I followed a conversation between an Egyptian musician and his Egyptian music manager. According to the musician and music manager, the days of the high culture and golden era were over in the Egyptian hotel industry. I sensed nostalgia in their voices.

Edouard, the musician, commented: "There is no respectable place to work in anymore." "No, there are still a few places" said, the manager. Edouard continued, "A few, where are these? Most places are now doing it for money". The manager replied, "True, the musicians of today are living the last days of the golden age. It is the management in the hotels which has gone bad."

Cohen (2007) and Bennett (2005) look at how developments in global capitalism have affected the relationship between popular music and the city, and thus on the global in the local. While the global in the local will be apparent also in this paper, however, the focus here instead will be on the manner in which liminality and developments in the global capitalism, cultural imperialism and the world systems are reshaping popular music entertainment in the local hotel industries.

Appadurai (1986) states the "politics mediate the level between a commodity being exchanged and its value." Thus, what also must

be looked at are the different socio-politic effects in the cruise and hotel industries, and how they similarly or differently are shaping the value of arts for the Finnish Cruise lines and Sharm EL Sheikh's entertainment practices with popular music.

d) Liminality and the flow

We have already grasped the way certain features of liminality can widen the gap between the performer and audience, such as with the leisure/work distinction or even with the exploitation of the hosts local culture productions in the tourism-hotel industries.

Nevertheless, regardless of the challenges that liminality produces, most importantly, the transitional stage, often encourages the flow experience with positive feelings towards local popular entertainment, and may thus blur further any common objective set of criteria of "high culture" and "more popular form of entertainment" as the distance between the performer and the audience gets smaller. Csikszentmihalyi (2000) states that for the flow to happen between different individuals they both have to be action oriented like the performer and the audience and the social and cultural expectations of the performer have to match those of the audience. However, in liminality and in the tourist experience, the flow can often have a different impact on the audience's social practices and many people can enjoy different genres of music, cross the boundaries of the musical worlds that they usually wouldn't necessarily enjoy listening to at home. Moreover, as **Figure 2.** reveals tourists in flow during music performances might be influenced by cultural stereotypes or imagined communities very differently than when back home.

As Harrison (2003) mentions, during the flow in the transition stage of travel most tourists are in a state of loss of consciousness over their bodies and minds, they can forget the most painful experiences of travel or let go more easily of their social cultural expectations and self discipline mainly because of the leisure-work division in liminality and because of the tourists role as players in the tourist settings. In other words, the flow of experience in

liminality can turn the art peripheral tourist into the core- art tourist. Furthermore, a heavy metal fan, or a Finnish tourist seeking some high culture entertainment in the Finnish cruise lines can suddenly enjoy a local musician's interpretation of Bryan Adams song Heaven in Sharm EL Sheikh's hotels. In this sense then, tourism and hotel industries install a new set of meanings to performances and popular music and the usual boundaries between the simple audience and mass diffusive or the core art and art-peripheral audience become vague.

e) Liminality and the imagined communities

Focusing on larger structures, the symbols of liminality, and on the imagined communities will have its own advantage for exploring the similarities and differences in local entertainment practices and attitudes towards popular music in the Finnish Cruise Lines and Sharm EL Sheikh's hotels resorts. Anderson (1991) believes that somewhere in this imagined world resides a profound comradeship among the same nation's citizens. Turner's (1979) concept of *communitas* is rather similar. He believes that persons actively relate to one another through the social, historical and cultural factors. This on the other hand, as Dunaway (2003) mentions with the modern world-system might produce contradictory feelings as the world -system often places people into different race categories, and produces clashes in imagined communities.

Tourism and the hotel industry are products of the world- system in which the clashes in imagined communities often become apparent in popular music and local entertainment. Liminality as we have seen with the flow can alter the imagined communities and thus change its shape. Nevertheless, liminality is strongly connected to the imagined communities and the cultural memories and myths of popular, folk or world music. Furthermore, it is because of the imagined communities, in the first place, that the Global becomes apparent in the local (Cohen, 2007).

Although the world system might also have its negative effects on the imagined communities and thus on the local production of music,

on the other hand, the imagined community is also a source of productivity and creativity for popular music in the hotel industry. One example, of this can be portrayed with the popular Egyptian music and the Spanish Tinge, in which flamenco guitar sounds are interwoven with traditional Egyptian musical styles in the local amateur/professional performances in Sharm EL Sheikh's hotel industry.

2. Images



Figure 1. National, local, highly advertised Finnish cruise line entertainment.



Figure 2. Local, little advertised entertainment. Ghazala Hotel, Sharm EL Sheikh, 1997. Liminality in action-a highly celebrative art-peripheral audience.

3. Research Methods and Conclusions

This research will use multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork as its method. Even though a model of mixed methods would have been useful, however, because the main aim is to focus on the larger systems of signs (i.e. symbols), which will cover the biggest part of the paper, I came to the conclusion that relying fully on the ethnographic method would be more practical.

The multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork approach will be relevant for several reasons. First and foremost, as it studies the world systems impacts on changes in local cultural production and compares *world apart* sites (Marcus, 1995). Furthermore, while comparing these two *world apart* the Finnish cruise lines and Sharm EL Sheikh's seaside resort-hotels at the same time the study will hopefully be able to support the opportunity for an exchange of knowledge for the distinct cultural fields of arts in the Finnish and Egyptian *world apart* tourist sites.

The ethnographic method will consist of participant observation, semi structured and unstructured interviews. Moreover, it will contain self-reflexive and narrative dialogue techniques, visual and sound techniques, in other words, photography and video recording to capture and then later interpret the smallest of details in the performances. Moreover, whereas there will be no questionnaire to generalize the informants responses into nationality, age, gender, social class and level of education categories, these variables will still be included and analyzed with the rest of the data.

The participants from the Finnish Cruise lines (Viking Grace and Baltic Princess) and Egyptian five and four star hotel-resorts in Sharm EL Sheikh (Ghazala Hotel, Marriott hotel, Fayrouz Hotel, Four Seasons Resort, Hyatt Regency Sharm EL Sheikh) will be selected by convenience sampling. The Finnish respondents I will be interviewing in the Viking Grace and Baltic Princess cruise lines will consist of five men and five women entertainers, five men and five women tourists, and of two cruise line managers for each of the cruise line companies. Likewise, the respondents I will be interviewing in Sharm EL Sheikh's five and four star hotels will consist of five men and five

women entertainers, five men and five woman tourists, and of two hotel managers in each of the five resort-hotels.

The interviews and fieldwork in both of the Finnish Cruise lines will take place on two separate occasions, each occasion lasting for a maximum of two nights. Whereas the interviews in Sharm EL Sheikh will take place on one occasion only but over a longer span of time. Moreover, the respondents will be chosen according to different age groups: a) 15-25, b) 25-34, c) 35-44, d) 45-54, e) 55-64, f) 65-74, and g) 75+ to get a complete picture of the local popular music entertainment practices in the cruise lines and the hotels. Studying the educational background will also be important and this will include the following categories a) Secondary School b) Graduate c) Post Graduate d) Other.

Even though, the primary aim in this research is to study local entertainment practices in the cruise line-hotels, it will also be beneficial for me to explore the other forms of performance and entertainment in the cruise lines and hotels which are connected to the live music entertainment performances and attracting people. These consist of the food and drinks, advertisements, the sea and exotic environment.

While I will be analyzing the data by using coding techniques, I will be careful not to break the code of ethics, and thus make sure that by coding the photographs and recordings, I will be able to protect the confidentiality of my informants.

Furthermore, whereas the challenges in getting the consent of informants for interviews might be more applicable to Sharm EL Sheikh's hotels, there are still many questions I will have to ask myself before entering the field. For example, to what extent must I hold to the ideology of free consent and is being a researcher at times more important than being ethical? What if I have trouble accessing tourists in some of the hotels? Should I still continue doing informal interviews in the hotels without the consent of the management? Being prepared to meet these challenges might save me from many difficult situations later in the field.

Finally, for my concluding remarks, I would like to add that this paper has tried to grasp the different directions, in other words, the different theories and the way these theories should help me answer the two research questions. Most importantly, this paper has tried to argue that the main goal is to study live entertainment in two world apart tourist destinations and to study the cruise line's and hotel's relationships to popular music.

While the intention here has not been to shed excessive light on the division between high culture and the more popular forms of entertainment in the hotel industry, however, by observing the connection between *hotel industry, performance, and popular music*, the work will naturally reveal whether a distinction exists between the high culture and more popular forms of entertainment, in the Finnish cruise line and Egyptian hotel settings. One thing for sure, while the Finnish cruise lines offer national and local professional entertainment, the entertainment in Sharm EL Sheikh consists primarily of local amateur and professional musicians to whom popular music is more about cover songs than original and nationally played artworks.

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