

Luke Burton
Westminster Coastal

2024

**BOSSE
& BAUM**

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Luke Burton's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery, *Westminster Coastal*, delves into the intersection of politics, personal narratives, and cultural symbolism, and questions the role of art in political discourse. An installation of office furniture, paintings and vitreous enamels combine to suggest an ambiguous department of the Civil Service.

At the heart of *Westminster Coastal* are two large paintings. These works combine seemingly disparate imagery from Westminster's multifaceted identity: an ancient archaeological site, a symbol of government power, and a patchwork of neighbourhoods. The paintings subtly integrate portraits of civil servants, blending official imagery with personal moments of crisis, such as Sir Philip Rutnam's resignation speech. Oversized chandelier droplets morph into something more brutal, while Celtic artefacts double as decorative and warlike objects. Burton's exhibition is a narrative of Westminster's history of violence seen through a decorative lens, with this duality of lightness and historical gravity creating an ambivalence throughout the work.

Crosswords serve as a metaphor for the relationship between language and art, blending abstract, geometric, and decorative forms to communicate a coded visual language. This interplay is a pivotal aspect of Burton's work, resonating with a style that oscillates between realism and mannerism. In the exhibition, lustrous vitreous enamel sculptures are displayed as archaeological artefacts within a crush of abandoned office furniture. These enamels are reminiscent of heraldry, alluding symbolically to gestures of power and violence, whilst in their Byzantine 'costume' hinting at Westminster's mediaeval history. On closer inspection, they are found to be resting on a range of food and packaging, from miniature Twiglet plinths to the inside of bejewelled Monster Munch packets. These theatrical combinations of references suggest an uncertain scene – part archaeological dig, part Civil Service office, part gallery space.

Burton's work explores the complex relation of politics to painting, posing the question: what does political painting look like? And, further, are not all paintings inherently political? His own experience of living in the borough of Westminster for the past three years allowed the artist to see the everyday world of the political machine and imagine the more prosaic workhorse of government, the Civil Service. A period of immense Government intervention during Covid paradoxically led to a profound breakdown of other essential functions of society. This left the Civil Service in a perpetual state of bureaucratic freeze, in which it became increasingly difficult to 'do' politics. *Westminster Coastal* is a thought-provoking exploration of our always interwoven political and personal realms, inviting viewers to contemplate the intricate relationship between art, politics, and history.





Luke Burton (b. 1983, London) studied at Chelsea College of Art and Design, BA, London (2002 – 2005) and MA at the Royal College of Art, London (2011-2013). Recent selected solo and group exhibitions include: Father Tongue, Why Not Gallery, Tblisi, Georgia (2023); 20, Union Gallery, London (2023); Lotte Art Fair, Gallery Woong, Busan, South Korea (2023); Open Studios, British School at Rome, Rome (2023); Girton College, Cambridge University, Cambridge (2022); Solo Show, OOF Gallery, London (2022); Art-O-Rama, Bosse and Baum, Marseille, France (2022); Stand with Ukraine, Hales Gallery, London (2022); Capital Spring Returns, Gallery Woong, Seoul (2022); BLOB, TJ Boulting, London (2022); The Dinner Table, San Mei Gallery (2021); The Artist Oracle, White Crypt Project Space, London (2021); Art Asia, Gallery Woong, Seoul (2020); Impossible Weather, Bosse & Baum, London (2020); Off-site, Bosse & Baum x Sid Motion Gallery, London (2020); Milton Keynes Art Centre, Milton Keynes (2020); KIAF, Gallery Woong, Seoul (2020); Podium Sales, Picnic Gallery, London (2019); CAMEO, A-dash, Athens (2019); Out of Office, PADA, Lisbon (2019); Outlines Roughly the Size of a Suit, with Victor Seaward, Union Gallery, London (2019); P is for Portrait, Pitt Studio, Worcester Art Centre (2019); The Lotus Eaters, Aindrea Contemporary, London (2018); Becoming Sweet New Styles Bosse & Baum, London (2018); Sweep / Landskip, Kinokino Kunstal, Stavanger, Norway (2018); Granpalazzo, Ariccia, Rome (2017); Print Department, Division of Labour, London (2017); Waves, Turf Projects, London (2017). Luke Burton has completed the following selected residencies: Abbey Fellowship, British School at Rome, Rome, Italy (2023); Alkinois, Athens, Greece (2022); Girton College, Cambridge University (2020); A-DASH, Athens, Greece (2019) among others. Luke Burton is currently on a residency at Eltham College, London and has an upcoming solo exhibition at Gerald Moore Gallery, London in April 2024.



About the Gallery

Bosse & Baum was founded in 2014 by Alexandra Warder and Lana Churchill. The gallery is located in the postindustrial Bussey Building, in Peckham, South East London. Bosse & Baum is a commercial gallery seeking an active role in shaping art discourse by giving a platform to contemporary positions; representing an international roster of emerging artists whose work challenges dominant historical narratives and is socially engaged. We work to facilitate broader social access to art and contribute to the wider critical conversation on contemporary art through a public programme of exhibitions, talks and performances. We encourage inclusive participation and conversation within the gallery, whilst supporting the growth of the gallery's artists into a broader dialogue that includes private and institutional collections.





Text by Octavia Bright

Politics is like weather – you can ignore it if you want, but eventually at some point it will ruin your day. It can be ‘good’ and it can be ‘bad’. What constitutes ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is more subjective than we like to think. Its impact is uneven: what amounts to a small annoyance for the well protected can be devastating for those who aren’t. Most of us accept it without really knowing how it works. In both cases, the general outlook seems to be getting worse.

People have been painting the weather forever, but painting politics is trickier. How do you use pigment to represent a system of governance? How do you show its mechanisms, its scope, its violence? Its pomp and its circumstance? Its absurdity? How do you paint the opaque bits of its very specific language? Or the way it touches everything from the most mundane, such as the food we eat, to the most consequential, things like citizenship, healthcare, and human rights? And what about the fact that those in power so often treat the whole thing like a game?

Language is where politics starts, so why not begin with a word? Westminster: a borough, a palace, a metonym for Parliament. A place where people live, that tourists visit, where government happens, and has for centuries. Westminster has historical baggage.

In front of the High Altar inside Westminster Abbey lies a bejewelled pavement. Commissioned by Henry III and decorated with an intricate pattern of inlaid coloured stone and glass, every monarch has been crowned there since the twelve hundreds. Beneath the seat of power (beneath the royal arse), you’ll find opalescent shards. If we decorate what’s precious, does this encourage us to treasure our subjugation?

Half a mile away, those same jewel tones glow on the pavements on Marsham Street, where on good weather days sunlight illuminates a canopy of coloured glass. It fringes a long, white building made up of lines and grids and cubes, which looks a bit like a crossword. The people puzzling away inside are concerned with Law and Order, working under the sign of an oxymoron: the Home Office. A home is where you live and an office is where you work. A home is where you relax and an office is where you submit yourself to hierarchies of productivity and systems of power. (Apart from when the pandemic arrived and collapsed the boundary, indefinitely making offices of all our homes.)

Behind the bejewelled facade, anonymous bureaucrats follow procedures to decide who gets to be at home here. They're officious about the meaning of home inside that office (it's not very homely inside that office). Who are they, these besuited cogs, steadily powering the machinery of the state? What do we call them? Like 'home' and 'office', it's the absurdist vocabulary of government that brings together the 'civil' and 'servant' of their title. A civil servant claims political impartiality - always measured and polite. But does a servant have the freedom to be uncivil? And is it really possible for a person to leave their partiality behind?

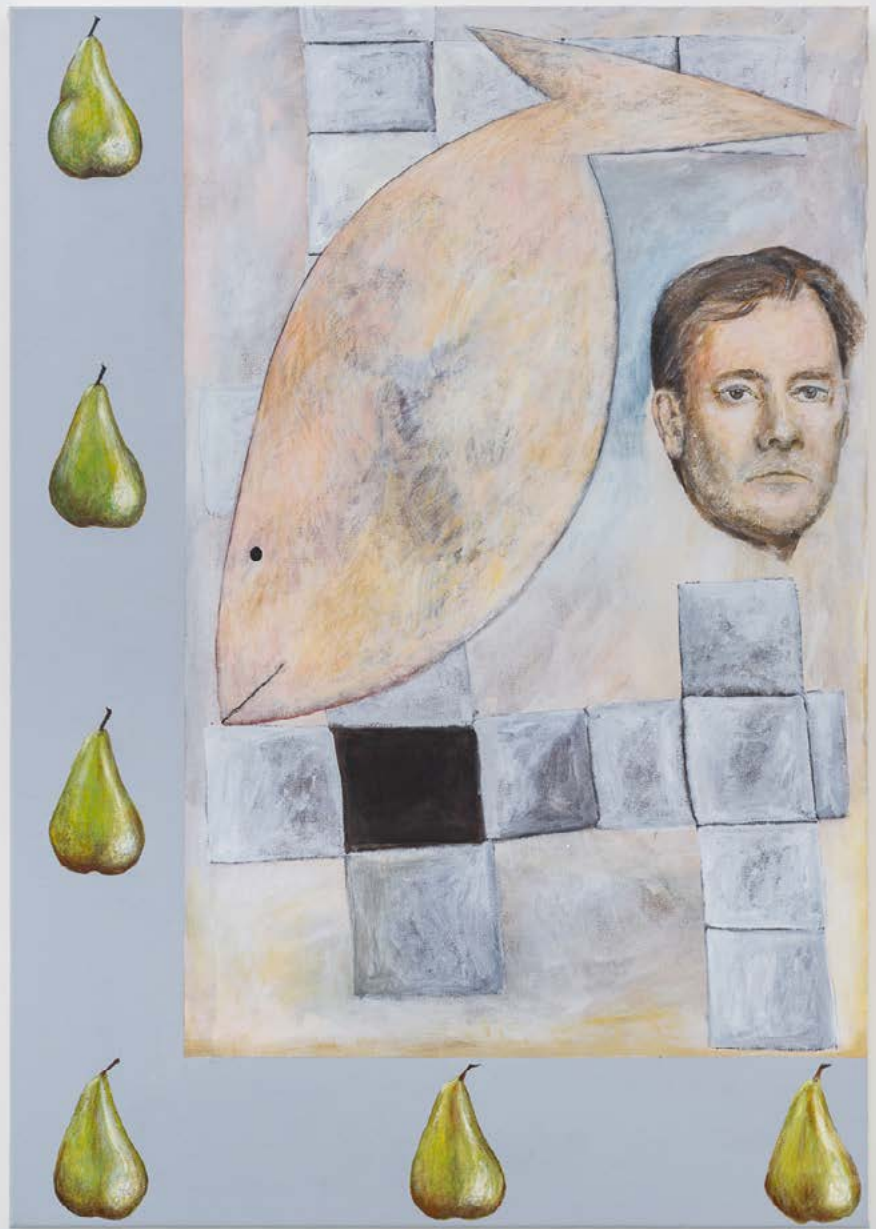
What happens if you give a face or two to these shadowy attendants of order? Portraits of political men sit in a long lineage of white masculine features committed to canvas or stone. Inside the Home Office of course they're not all white men, but the big bosses usually are. If you pick a few of them out of the line up, will anyone recognise their faces? Their individual humanity? Will anyone recognise the toll taken by this kind of work? The current head of the Civil Service, Simon Case, has been signed off on medical leave, and in 2021 his colleague Sir Philip Rutnam was awarded a large payout by the government after making bullying claims against the Home Secretary, Priti Patel. Inside her Home Office, whose humanity do they recognise, anyway?

Looking at the body politic, we might consider what fuels it. Hurried breakfasts in boardrooms, endless apples, baskets of croissants no longer a treat but a commonplace, their crumbs delicately adorning lapels. In the mornings, perhaps the home invades the office. Later in the day, do the bins in there overflow with the detritus of modern day treasures, glistening empty packets of boldly named snacks? Future relics, un-biodegradable. In spite of their efforts, have the Space Raiders infiltrated the system? A bureaucracy is a hungry beast. It feeds on rules and regulations, digesting ideology and spewing it out as law and order, sowing the government's seeds. It leaves a trail of dusty filing cabinets. When you're on the receiving end of its unfeeling conclusions, any of its cross words, a bureaucracy is at best a puzzle, at worst a monstrous, arbitrary machine.

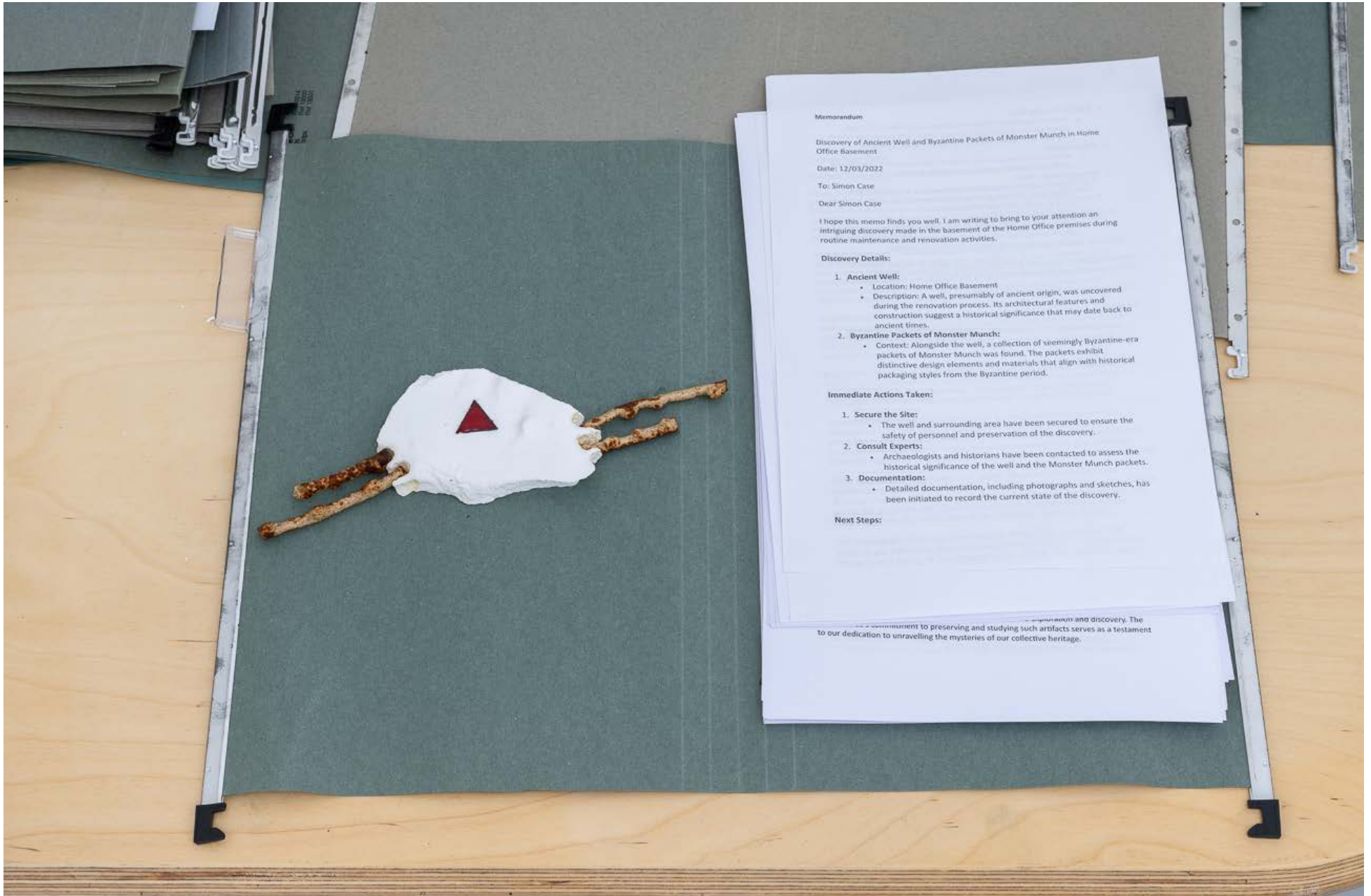
So, how do you paint all that? Politics and painting are systems of representation, one of few things they have in common. Both are open to interpretation, and given meaning by the sense we choose to make of them. In which case, maybe the way to paint politics is simply to start by painting something, anything at all.







Luke Burton
Sir Crawford Dunlop Falconer Nine Letters First Letter 'F', 2024
oil and acrylic on linen
100 x 70 cm



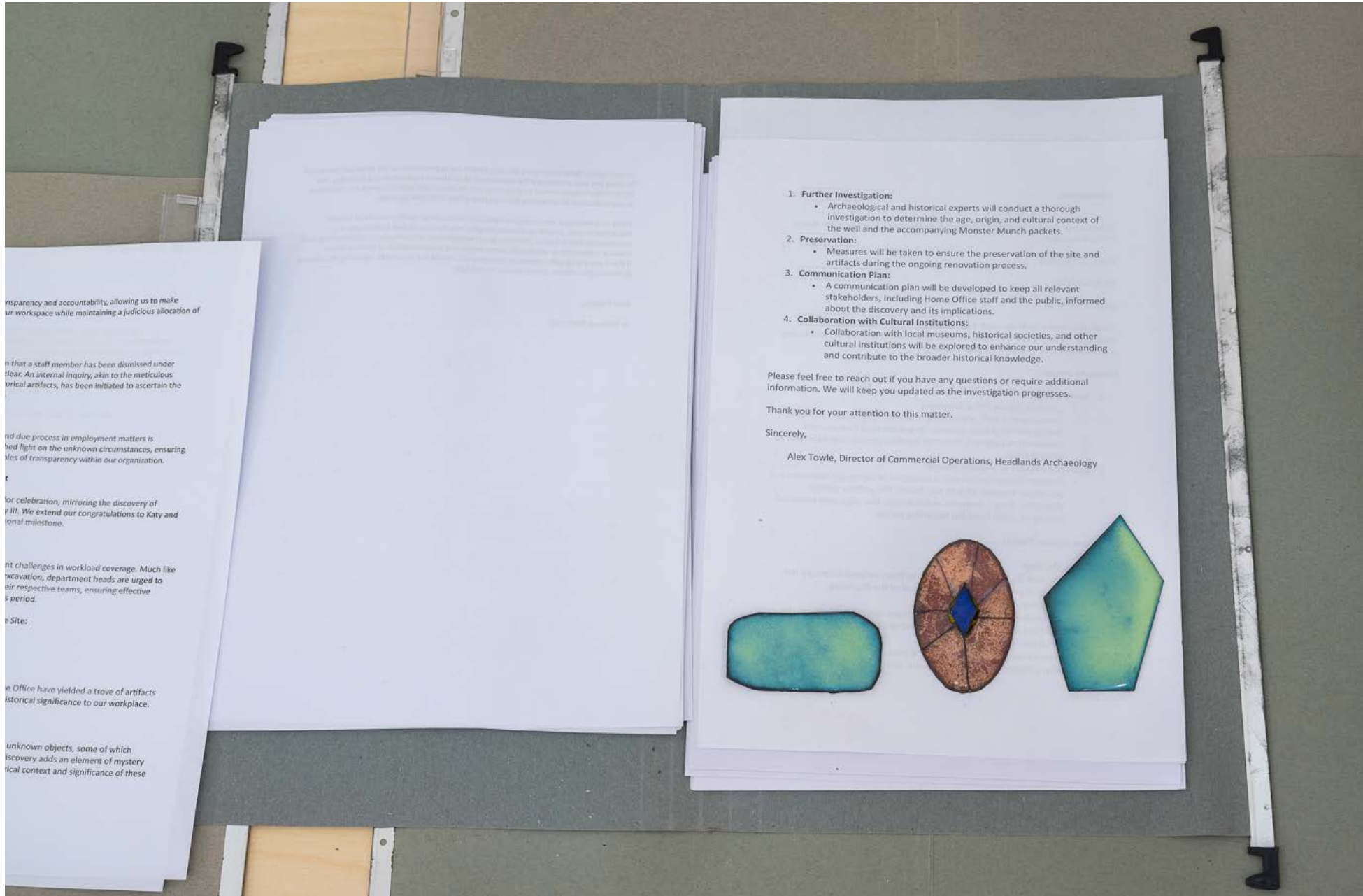
Luke Burton
Four-fingered Starting Point, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, plaster, Twiglets
1 x 24 x 9 cm



Luke Burton
Lion, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, lion bar wrapper
2 x 19 x 10 cm

Luke Burton
Grounds, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, coffee cup
11 x 10 x 8 cm





transparency and accountability, allowing us to make our workspace while maintaining a judicious allocation of

that a staff member has been dismissed under unclear. An internal inquiry, akin to the meticulous archival artifacts, has been initiated to ascertain the

and due process in employment matters is shed light on the unknown circumstances, ensuring a level of transparency within our organization.

for celebration, mirroring the discovery of a milestone. We extend our congratulations to Katy and the team on this significant milestone.

current challenges in workload coverage. Much like an excavation, department heads are urged to support their respective teams, ensuring effective coverage during this period.

Site:

The Office have yielded a trove of artifacts of historical significance to our workplace.

unknown objects, some of which whose discovery adds an element of mysterious historical context and significance of these

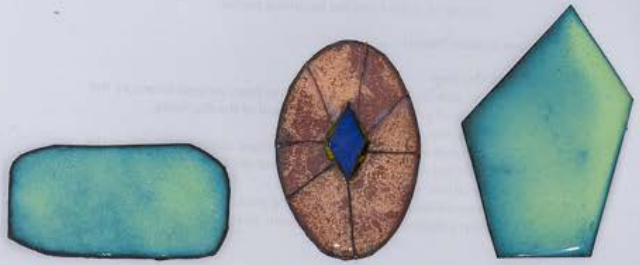
- 1. Further Investigation:**
 - Archaeological and historical experts will conduct a thorough investigation to determine the age, origin, and cultural context of the well and the accompanying Monster Munch packets.
- 2. Preservation:**
 - Measures will be taken to ensure the preservation of the site and artifacts during the ongoing renovation process.
- 3. Communication Plan:**
 - A communication plan will be developed to keep all relevant stakeholders, including Home Office staff and the public, informed about the discovery and its implications.
- 4. Collaboration with Cultural Institutions:**
 - Collaboration with local museums, historical societies, and other cultural institutions will be explored to enhance our understanding and contribute to the broader historical knowledge.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or require additional information. We will keep you updated as the investigation progresses.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Alex Towle, Director of Commercial Operations, Headlands Archaeology



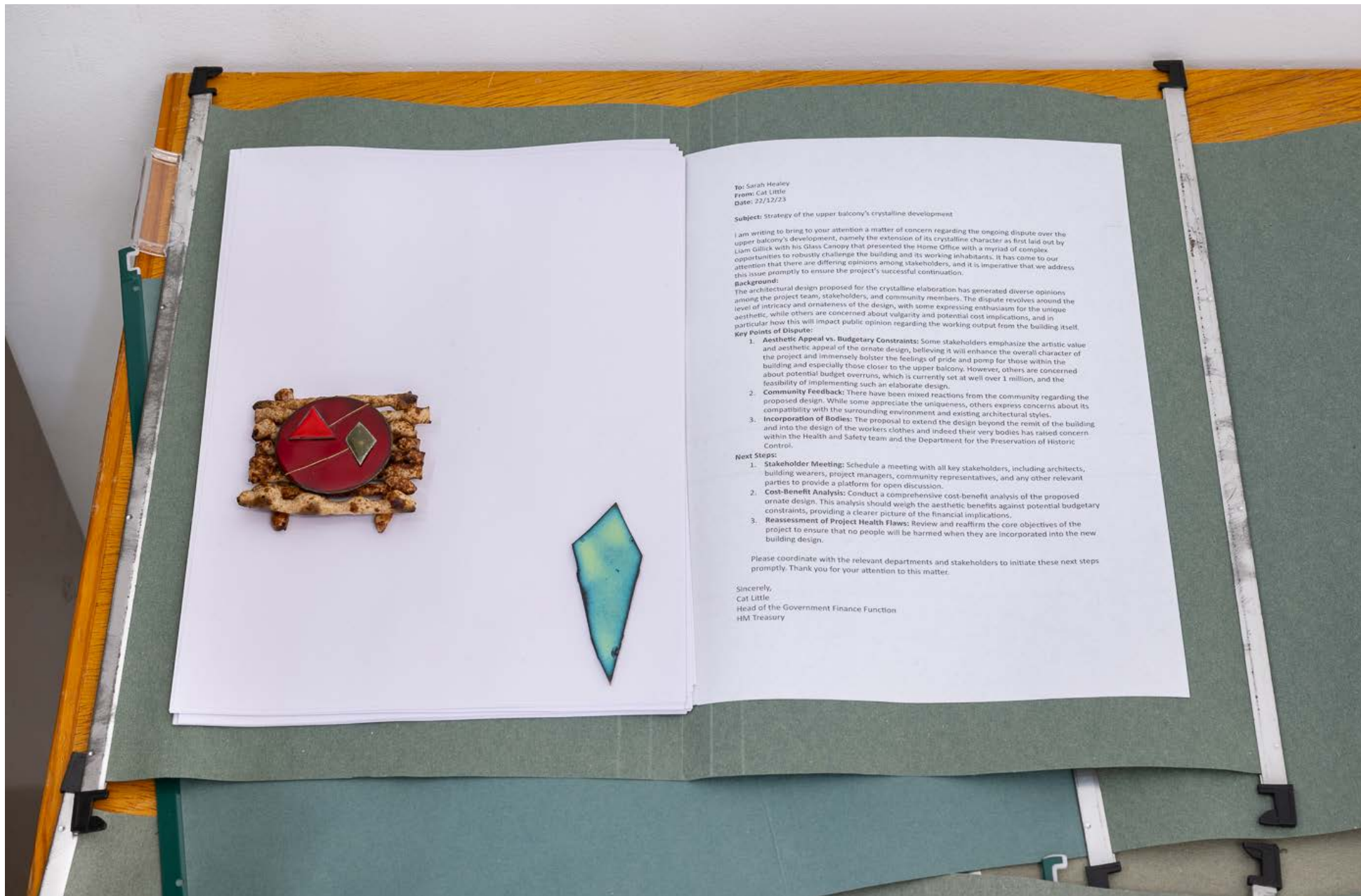
Luke Burton
Apotropaic Triad for Riverside Build, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper
9 x 29 cm



Luke Burton
Cloisonné Canapé Twiglet Canopy, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, Twiglets
2 x 6.5 x 8 cm



Luke Burton
London Dial, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets
8 x 7.5 x 7 cm



Luke Burton
Maroon Marooned, and *Celadon Obelisk*, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets
2 x 8.5 x 8 cm, and 9 x 3 cm

Subject: Response to Your Concerns Regarding Property Portfolio and Budget Allocation

Dear Mark Sedwill,

I trust this message finds you well. I have carefully considered your concerns outlined in your previous letter and would like to present a compelling case for the strategic direction I propose regarding our property portfolio and budget allocation.

Firstly, I firmly believe that directing our efforts towards the development of key areas such as Marsham Street, Horseferry Road, Thames River North side next to Millbank, and other zones in Westminster is not only financially sound but also aligns with our vision for urban revitalization. These locations provide a unique opportunity to build private rental properties and public spaces that will significantly contribute to the overall improvement of the community.

To this end, I propose focusing on at least ten specific zones for potential development. The selected zones should be carefully chosen to maximize the impact on the private and public sectors. The following zones are recommended:

1. Marsham Street
2. Horseferry Road
3. Thames River North side (next to Millbank)
4. Victoria Embankment
5. Victoria Tower Gardens
6. St. James's Park
7. Westminster Cathedral precinct
8. Pimlico Gardens
9. Smith Square
10. Dean Bradley Street



Now, in terms of the budget allocation, I propose a budget of £43 billion to be distributed across various priority areas, ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable approach to development. The breakdown is as follows:

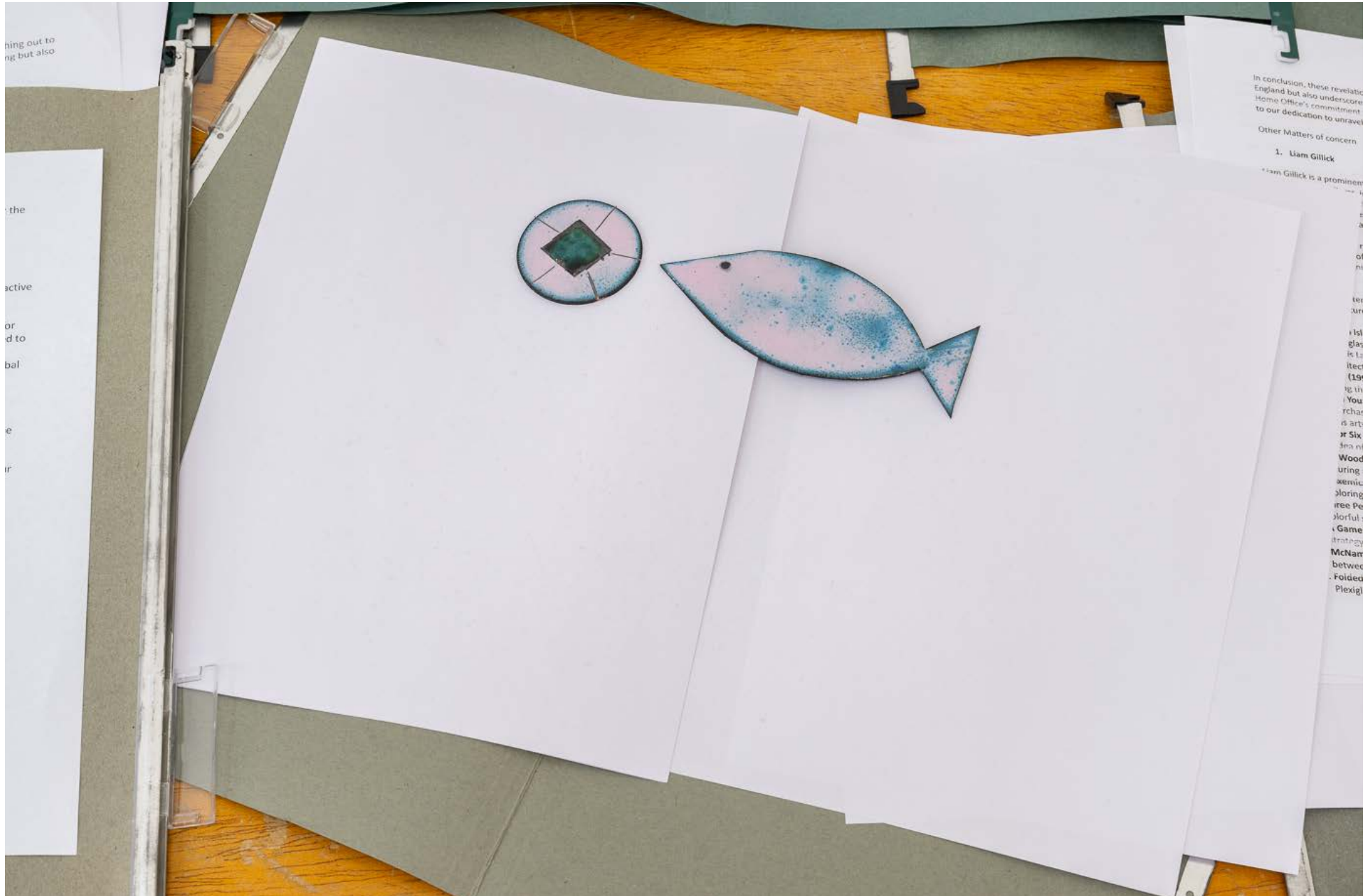
1. **Private Rental Properties (50%):** £21.5 billion
 - Focus on high-quality, energy-efficient residential complexes.
 - Attract private investors for long-term sustainability.
2. **Public Spaces and Hospital Car Parks (25%):** £10.75 billion
 - Create vibrant public spaces that enhance community engagement.
 - Develop hospital car parks to address the growing demand for accessible healthcare facilities.
3. **Landlord Accommodation (15%):** £6.45 billion
 - Establish accommodations for landlords to incentivize property ownership and management.
 - Support local landlords in maintaining high standards for rental properties.
4. **Infrastructure and Sustainable Development (10%):** £4.3 billion
 - Invest in eco-friendly technologies for energy-efficient buildings.

Luke Burton

Night Sky Amulet for Administrative Tasks, 2024

vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets

2 x 7.5 x 8 cm



Luke Burton
Westminster Shield and Votive Verdigris Fish, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper
18.5 x 5.5 cm

To: Sir Phillip Rutnam
From: Sir Alex Chisholm
Date: 07/02/24

Subject: Resignation

I regret to inform you that a scandal has emerged concerning the West Coast rail fiasco, leading to your resignation being widely reported in the media. There was no mention of bullying, nor do we have any further information about below mentioned PP, her whereabouts, or feelings at the time of writing. The situation demands immediate attention, and a strategic response is crucial to mitigate further damage.

What we can put our names to is the fact that the West Coast rail scandal and your resignation have received extensive media coverage, leading to public speculation and concerns. Public perception is critical at this juncture, and addressing the situation with transparency and a clear action plan is paramount. Without your assistance this will be impossible, and our provisions will become unstable, leading to collapse and total chaos. As such, dear Sir Phillip, we ask that you communicate with internal stakeholders in a timely and clear manner, to avoid any decline in morale and productivity.

Immediate Action Steps:

- Crisis Management Team:** Assemble a crisis management team to evaluate the current situation as it stands, disregarding any information that arises in the context of PV and/or claims of mistreatment, and develop a communication strategy.
- Media Response:** Prepare a concise and transparent statement addressing the West Coast rail scandal and your resignation. We will throw money at this and are able to hire [X] more bodies for the sole purpose of clearing up.
- Employee Communication:** Disseminate an internal communication to employees, assuring them of the organization's commitment to transparency and providing any necessary guidance during this transition. No further funds available here.
- Stakeholder Outreach:** Proactively reach out to key stakeholders, partners, and constituents to communicate the organization's commitment to rectifying any issues arising from the West Coast rail scandal.

I recommend a swift and coordinated response to effectively manage the fallout. If you have any specific preferences or additional information needed, please

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Sir Alex Chisholm
Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service
Cabinet Office



Luke Burton
Lambeth Dial Twiglet Canopy, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, Twiglets
2 x 7 x 10 cm

enrich our appreciation for the historical tapestry of
ince of continued exploration and discovery. The
and providing such artifacts serve as a testament



Luke Burton
Bejewelled Raft, 2024
vitreous enamel, silver leaf, copper, Twiglets
4 x 7 x 7 cm



Luke Burton
Home/Office Cross(words): The Resignation of Sir Philip Rutnam, 2023-24
oil and acrylic on linen
150 x 250 cm





Luke Burton
Monster, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, Monster Munch packet
6 x 29 x 29 cm





Luke Burton
Small Solvency, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, glass, plaster
3 x 15 x 8 cm





Luke Burton
Equity Plaster Solution, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, plaster, Twiglets, glass
3 x 32 x 19

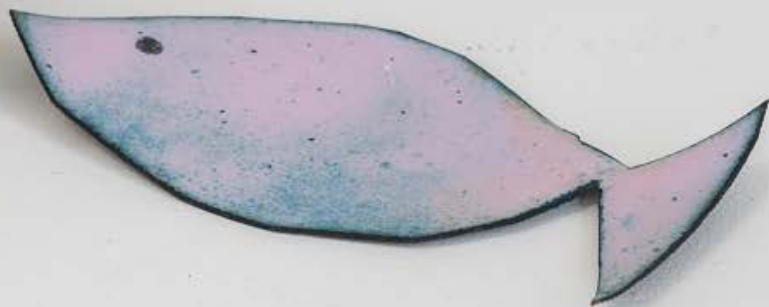


Luke Burton
Vermiculated Lozenge Twiglet Canopy, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets, brass
10 x 9 x 12 cm



Luke Burton
Rubicon Coaster, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Rubicon drinks can, brass, silver leaf
7 x 6 x 25 cm







Luke Burton
Westminster Coastal, 2022-24
oil and acrylic on linen
150 x 250 cm







Luke Burton
Printer with Broken Boss, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, plaster, glass
3 x 31 x 28.5 cm,



Luke Burton
Desk Tidy with Emerald Boss and Broken Raft, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, silver leaf, Twiglets, glass, paper
3 x 27 x 12 cm

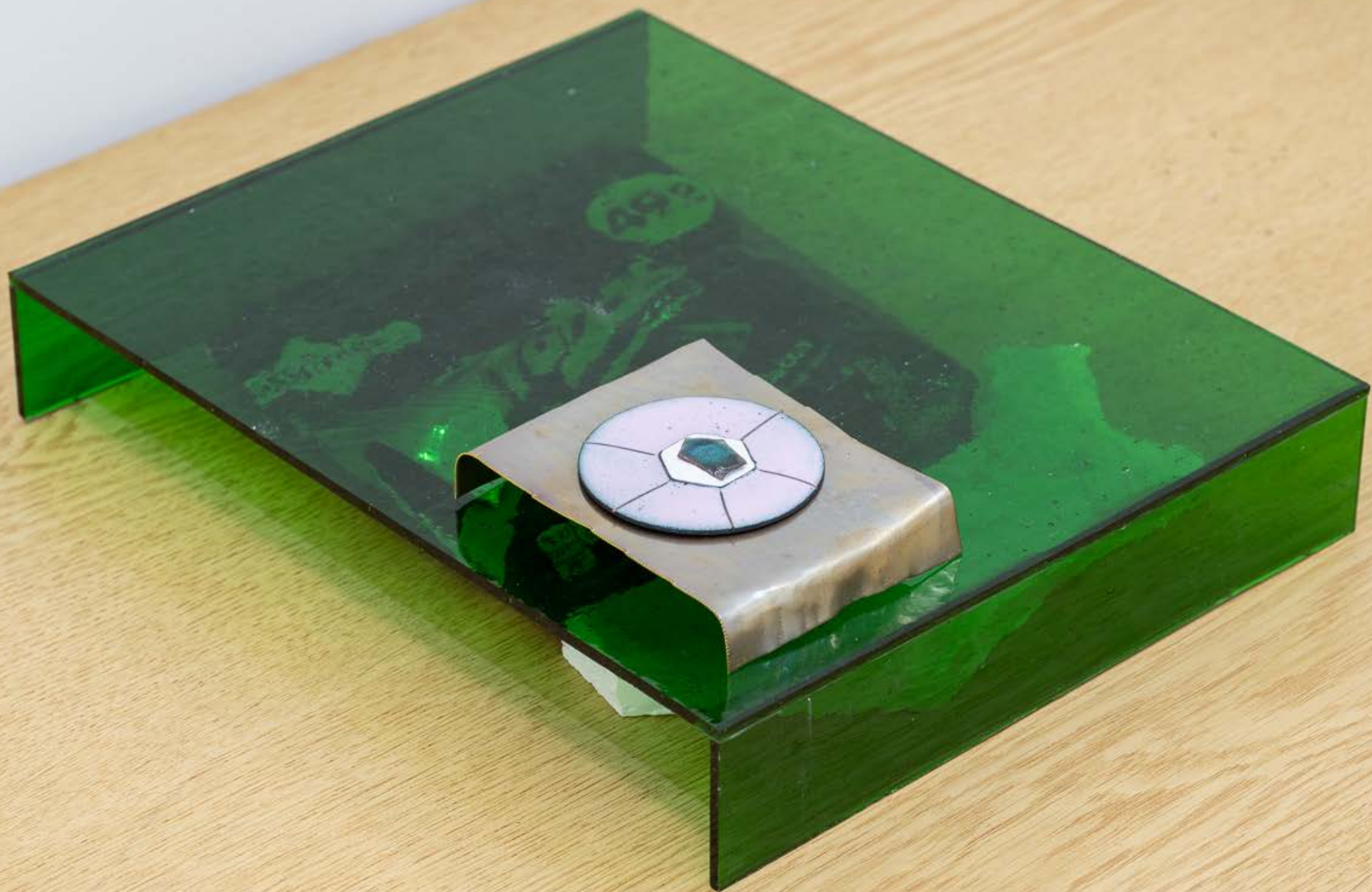




Luke Burton
Emerald Raft, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets
7 x 8 x 9 cm



Luke Burton
Frazzled Pink Boss, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, silver leaf, brass, plaster, glass, Frazzles packet
6 x 19.5 x 24 cm

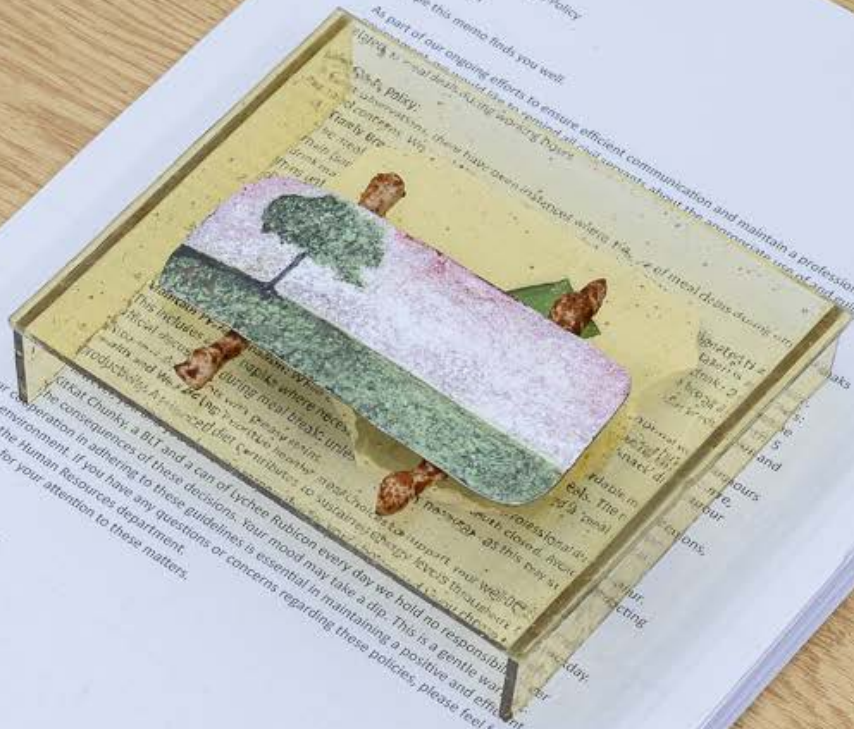




Luke Burton
Brownfield Site Bite, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets, plaster, glass, paper
3 x 15 x 12 cm

To: Simon Case CVO
From: Antonio Romeo
Date: 21/1/24
Subject: Meal Deals Policy

Dear Simon,
I hope this memo finds you well.
As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure efficient communication and maintain a professional work environment, we should be reminded all stakeholders about the appropriate use of our guidelines.



Meal Deals Policy
This includes...
Your cooperation in adhering to these decisions...
Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,
Antonio Romeo
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Justice



Luke Burton
Underwriter, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets, brass
6 x 39 x 39 cm





Luke Burton
Byzantine Gavel For Aesthetic and Administrative Order, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass, wood
39 x 39 x 13 cm





Luke Burton
Pink Triad Nation State Coastguard Regiment, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, brass
18 x 6 cm



Luke Burton
Civil Cameo, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, paper, Twiglets
9 x 8 x 8 cm



Luke Burton
Sticking Plaster_Broken File, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, plaster
3 x 56 x 38 cm



Luke Burton
Pink Boss, 2024
vitreous enamel, copper, Twiglets, brass
7 x 7 x 6 cm



Luke Burton
Space Raiders Paper Weight, 2024
glass, Space Raiders packet
19.5 x 15.5 cm



Luke Burton
Sir Mark Sedwill Root and Branch Reforms Act, 2024
acrylic on canvas
100 x 70 cm



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