



This is Navalny
Evgeny Feldman

The Legacy of Alexei Navalny

Alexei Navalny, a lawyer turned anti-corruption crusader, became the face of Russia's fight for democracy. Through his investigations, he exposed systemic corruption at the highest levels of government while mobilising mass protests against Vladimir Putin's regime.

In 2020, Navalny survived a near-fatal poisoning and chose to return to Russia, where he was immediately arrested and later imprisoned on politically motivated charges. His death in February 2024, following years of inhumane treatment in a Siberian gulag, marked a turning point in Russia's history.

Despite his loss, Navalny's legacy continues to inspire global movements for democracy and human rights. His courage and ideals are at the heart of this exhibition, a reflection of his optimism and unwavering belief in a free Russia.



Yes or no?

Navalny speaks at a 100K+ big anti-Putin rally after he was released.

December 24, 2011

This is Navalny: Iconography of Political and Personal Resistance

Exhibition Catalogue Essay

Marking the solemn one-year anniversary of Alexei Navalny's death in a Siberian penal colony, Evgeny Feldman's photography exhibition *This Is Navalny* – the inaugural exhibition for Goldstone Gallery – stands as a powerful tribute to Russia's opposition leader. The exhibition features over a decade of Feldman's work documenting Navalny's extraordinary journey. Feldman's evocative lens captures not only the life and activism of a man who challenged authoritarianism but also the resilience and courage of a movement that continues to fight in his absence. Through these photographs, Feldman navigates the intersection of political resistance and personal sacrifice, offering a nuanced portrayal of Navalny's enduring legacy.

Feldman's work serves as a visual account of Navalny's political journey: from his emergence as an anti-corruption advocate to his role as a symbol of resistance against Vladimir Putin's regime. Feldman captures the energy, tension, and human cost of political defiance. Through his lens, Feldman seeks neutrality while not aligning himself with the movement as he documents an unfolding historical narrative.

The exhibition spans across four gallery rooms highlighting Navalny's activism and the evolving landscape of Russian opposition politics. Early campaign images highlight a rare moment of optimism and grassroots mobilization, while later works depict the increasingly repressive measures taken by the state. Feldman's attention to detail and ability to capture fleeting emotions lend the photographs a sense of immediacy, drawing viewers into the unfolding narrative.

Feldman's work is not merely a document of events; it is a call to preserve memory and foster understanding. Photography, traditionally viewed as a neutral medium, becomes in Feldman's hands a powerful tool of resistance and testimony. His images remind us that even in the face of defeat, the act of bearing witness carries profound significance. By focusing on Navalny's actions, expressions, and interactions, Feldman humanizes the opposition leader, presenting him as a courageous individual driven by conviction rather than as a distant political figure. This humanizing impulse aligns Feldman with the traditions of photographers such as Robert Capa and Dorothea Lange, whose works immortalized historical upheavals while never reducing their subjects to mere symbols. Like Capa and Lange, Feldman blends artistic sensitivity with journalistic integrity, ensuring his subjects retain their complexity and are presented within their full historical context.

In one of Feldman's most iconic images, Navalny and his closest allies stride forward with purpose, their movements imbued with an almost cinematic energy. Taken from a low angle, the photograph elevates its



The barred one

Alexei Navalny and members of his campaign and Anti-corruption foundation staff head to Russian Central Election Commission session in Moscow, Russia. The government has passed a law that prohibits anyone with a criminal conviction from running for office. Navalny's conviction in Kirov trial was reaffirmed by another judge despite ECHR acquittal and he was barred from being in the ballot.

December 25, 2017

subjects, transforming them into symbols of resilience and hope, with Navalny's red tie sharply contrasting the swirling snowflakes, a vivid marker of his defiance. Yet this heroic image exists alongside others: the raided, vandalized apartment filled with simple, homely belongings, or tender moments shared with his wife. Feldman's work captures this duality, portraying Navalny not only as a symbol of resistance but as a man grappling with vulnerability and fear, thus challenging the reductive narratives of authoritarian propaganda that often strip dissidents of their humanity.

Feldman's photography consistently juxtaposes the fervour of public demonstrations with moments of personal reflection, conveying both individual and collective experiences. His images recall the emotionally charged work of Sebastião Salgado, whose photographs of human struggle evoke a deep empathy for the subjects they depict. In a similar vein, Feldman invites the viewer to witness not only the grand political spectacle but also the intimate, quiet moments that punctuate the lives of those resisting oppression.

The mercurial nature of Navalny's character is reinforced through Feldman's compositional choices. Rather than static portraits, Feldman captures Navalny in perpetual motion, his gaze never fixed on the viewer but always directed outward—toward the next rally, the next challenge, the next horizon. This dynamic framing conveys a sense of urgency and determination, drawing the viewer into the momentum of events and positioning them as an engaged witness rather than a passive observer. While Navalny's dynamic presence dominates the frame in many of the photographs, the blurred, faceless masses of police and guards often loom ominously in the background or more often, in the foreground. These recurring motifs serve as visual metaphors for the oppressive machinery of the state.

Engaging with the aesthetics of composition, light, and atmosphere to create images that resonate emotionally and symbolically, Feldman's photography goes beyond the immediacy of photojournalism. The deliberate use of chiaroscuro, dynamic framing, and temporal stillness in Feldman's photographs transforms them into visual narratives that transcend their documentary origins. Images of protestors lit by the glow of streetlights or framed against imposing architecture emphasize the symbolic tension between individual agency and systemic oppression. Such aesthetic choices elevate Feldman's work, making it not merely a record of events but a meditation on the emotional and philosophical dimensions of political resistance.

Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, distinguishes between the studium—the cultural, historical, or political context of a photograph—and the punctum—the detail that pierces the viewer on a deeply personal level. Feldman's work exemplifies this duality, offering an intellectual engagement with the political landscape of Russia while also evoking visceral emotional responses. The studium of Feldman's photographs lies in their documentation of Navalny's activism and the broader struggle against authoritarianism. Through these images, viewers engage with the political narratives of resistance, defiance, and surveillance that shape the



Search

Alexei Navalny's apartment in Moscow, Russia is seen after a police raid. This search happened to be first of at least a dozen that happened at Navalny's home and office.

June 11, 2012

opposition movement. Yet it is the punctum—the fleeting, intimate details—that imbue these photographs with enduring emotional power. A tear in a protester’s eye, the soft glow of light illuminating a banner, or the momentary vulnerability captured in Navalny’s expression transcend the specific political context, resonating with universal themes of courage, loss, and hope.

As Feldman writes in his recent book *Dreamers and Cosmonauts*, “We marched in protests, searched for the truth, wrote manifestos, delivered final statements, declared hunger strikes, refused to cooperate with the state, resigned in protest, tried to reach out to others, or simply created. Let it be that it all led to nothing. Let it be that now we are scattered across the world, stripped of the professions we loved, living with a sense of guilt. But we - existed.” His words resonate deeply with the role of photography as a witness to history. Each photograph stands as irrefutable evidence of what once transpired, offering a profound affirmation of existence. In a world where words falter and memories fade, the photograph persists—a testament to the courage of those who resisted, ensuring that their actions endure.

This is Navalny not only reveals the public face of resistance but also the deeply personal toll of living under an authoritarian regime. It chronicles the bravery of protesters flooding the streets, artists creating powerful visual statements, and activists confronting power. Yet it also bears witness to the quieter, more intimate realities of resistance: the homes left behind, the families fractured, the friends imprisoned. Feldman himself was forced into exile in Latvia in 2022, underscoring the personal stakes involved in documenting dissent under authoritarian regimes.

This exhibition is more than just the history of a political movement; it is the history of loss, endurance, and resilience. The absence of Navalny—a figure whose unwavering resolve inspired hope even in the darkest moments—looms large. His death a year ago left a profound mark on the movement and on those who believed in his vision. Yet, through Feldman’s work, his legacy persists, a testament to the idea that the struggle for freedom, no matter the cost, is never truly in vain.

Dr. Ksenia Radchenko
February 2025



The crowd of Navalny’s supporters is seen in the centre of Moscow as they participate in an unsanctioned rally for boycotting upcoming presidential elections that Navalny was not allowed to participate in.

January 28, 2018

Boycott

Evgeny Feldman: Chronicler of Russia's Freedom Movement

Evgeny Feldman is renowned for documenting political and social upheavals. From 2011 to 2022, Feldman closely followed Alexei Navalny's evolution from an anti-corruption blogger to a prominent opposition leader challenging Vladimir Putin's regime.

His photographs provide a visceral, unfiltered look into Navalny's life: electrifying speeches at mass protests, quiet moments of reflection, arrests, brutal crackdowns, and the relentless persecution Navalny endured. Feldman's work also reveals the resilience of Navalny's movement, offering viewers an intimate glimpse into both the public and private sides of a historic struggle for democracy.

Feldman's photography has been widely published, contributing significantly to international awareness of Navalny's activism and the broader political landscape in Russia. As a contributor to *Meduza*, Russia's leading independent news outlet located in exile in Latvia, Feldman has played a key role in amplifying the voices of those challenging state oppression.



Evgeny Feldman writes:

“When I first saw Alexei Navalny, I hated the guy. In 2011, I was a young photographer starting at the liberal newspaper Novaya Gazeta. I covered the radical opposition, which meant photographing covert actions with a handful of participants, attending presentations of pompous coalitions with only a few hundred attendees, or capturing rare rallies with thousands. I loved it.

At that time, Navalny was a scandalous blogger cursing the ruling party during interviews and launching his anti-corruption campaign. Worse still, he was engaging with nationalists. His idea was simply to co-opt someone new to the opposition and change its ways to make it more effective. He seemed too radical, too active, too political! My attitude changed a few months later when his tactics proved effective. The Kremlin attempted to steal the parliamentary election, and Alexei managed to unite the already active liberals with the angry internet users. A wave of protests ensued, and suddenly, hundreds of thousands filled the squares.”

“Early on, I felt he was someone I needed to be near to witness history. The more I covered him, the more we learned about each other. I admired his unbreakability, and he allowed me as much access as I wanted.”

“Navalny faced many challenges during that campaign. His volunteers were attacked, his staffers jailed, and he himself was sprayed with a caustic liquid, nearly losing his eyesight. Despite this, we criss-crossed Russia for a year. Navalny gathered tens of thousands of supporters in cities that had never seen a proper protest.

Although he was denied a spot on the ballot, his movement kept growing. The problem was, unbeknownst to us, government-sent murderers were shadowing us, studying Navalny’s habits and patterns. In 2020, they received the signal to poison Alexei.”

“I wasn’t nearby when he collapsed on a plane and was miraculously saved by doctors in Omsk. Alexei was transferred to Germany and imprisoned immediately upon his return. I was forced to leave Russia.”

“We wrote to each other extensively while he was kept in unbearable conditions. Navalny remained optimistic, encouraging me and others to act and not succumb to despair. His letters continued to arrive for two months after his death in a penal colony on the Polar Circle.”



The green face

Alexei Navalny, his face splashed with a caustic green liquid and acid after a pro-Kremlin activist’s attack, looks into the camera on a way back to his office from the hospital in Moscow.

April 27, 2017



Barnaul

Alexei Navalny welcomes his supporters at a presidential campaign rally hold in extreme cold in Siberian city Barnaul.

December 8, 2017



Confetti

Alexei Navalny, his wife Yulia (on the left) and daughter Darya (on the right) react as they see confetti being released at a formal gathering to nominate Alexei to run for president.

December 24, 2017



Anger

In Vladivostok, on Russia's Far East, Navalny's wireless microphone was jammed by the police. Visibly angry, he switched for a wired one.

September 23, 2017



Khabarovsk

Alexei Navalny speaks under heavy rain to thousands of locals in Khabarovsk, Russia, some 8300 kilometres from Moscow. For the first time in modern Russian politics, Navalny's insurgent campaign was meant to last for 18 months and have the candidate fly all over the country several times speaking directly to the voters.

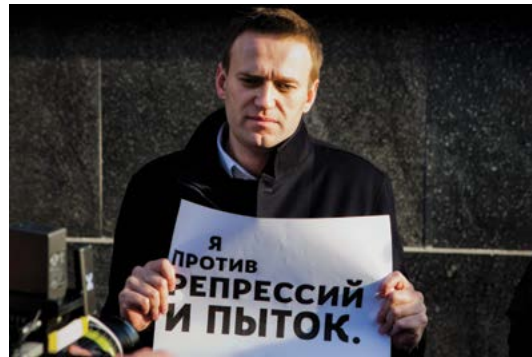
September 24, 2017



The mirror

Alexei Navalny, frightened, looks in the mirror after he was attacked with a caustic green liquid in Barnaul, Russia.

March 20, 2017



Picketing

Navalny participates in a chain of single-person pickets to protest arrest and torture of activist Leonid Razvozhayev. He holds a sign saying 'I oppose repressions and torture'.

October 27, 2012



Supporter

An elderly woman looks admiringly at Alexei Navalny signing autographs at a campaign event in Moscow, Russia.

August 21, 2013



Leaders

Alexei Navalny and Boris Nemtsov are seen in a TV studio prior to debates as they run for the Opposition council.

October 12, 2012



Mourning

Alexei and Yulia Navalny, surrounded by supporters, participate in an annual mourning march for slain opposition politician Boris Nemtsov. This is the last rally Navalny participated in.

February 29, 2020



Preparation

Yulia and Alexei Navalny are seen in their hotel cottage while preparing for a big policy speech in front of campaign stuff.

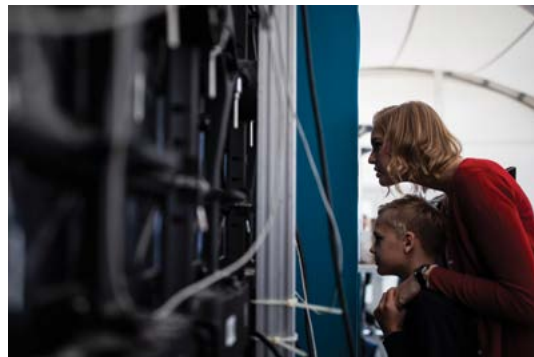
August 29, 2017



Helping hand

Alexei Navalny's wife Yulia prepares him for a press conference in Yekaterinburg, Russia.

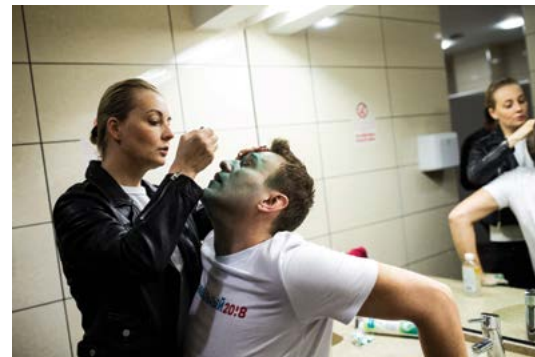
February 25, 2017



Children

Alexei Navalny's children, Dariya and Zakhar, look through the slit from the backstage to see how their father is nominated for president.

December 24, 2017



Eyesight

Yulia Navalnaya helps her husband after he was attacked with green liquid and acid by a man believed to be a pro-Kremlin activist. His eyesight was damaged severely in the attack.

April 27, 2017



Couple

Alexei Navalny and his wife Julia enjoy a moment on a street in Kirov, Russia as Navalny's supporter stands nearby. After Navalny emerged as an opposition leader, he was slammed with various criminal cases and was trialled in Kirov on trumped-up embezzlement charges.

May 16, 2013



Denied

Alexei Navalny, with his wife and son, are being escorted by the police from a rally in Moscow, Russia. Navalny, his face still damaged by the attack that happened a month earlier, was constantly harassed by the police.

May 14, 2017



Police line

Policeman is stationed on Tverskaya street in Moscow on Russia Day as Navalny leads a protest rally.

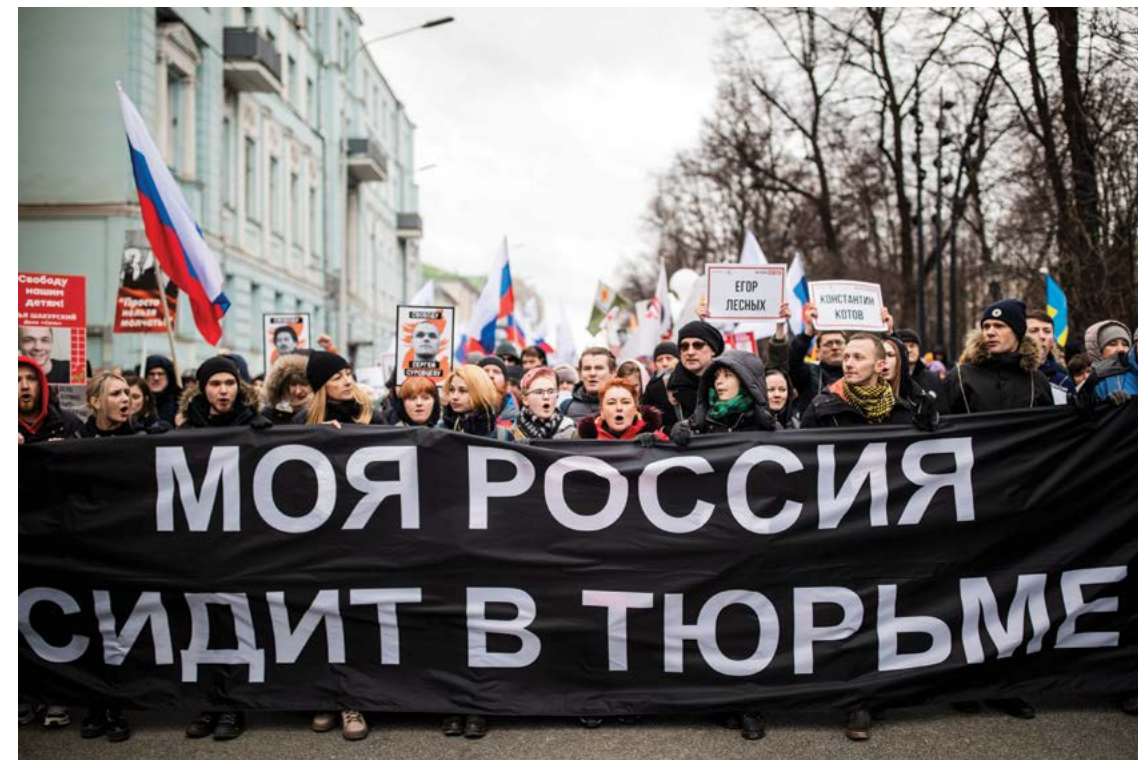
June 12, 2017



Sharya

Alexei Navalny speaks to locals in Sharya, a small Russian town of 35000 some 660 kilometres from Moscow. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, the opposition movement hit a new low. Navalny campaigned in support of a liberal party PARNAS across Kostroma oblast. PARNAS failed to reach 5% threshold.

September 4, 2015



My Russia is imprisoned

Protesters gather for a mourning rally in memory of slain opposition politician Boris Nemtsov. They hold a banner quoting a punk song saying 'My Russia is imprisoned'.

February 29, 2020



Forced protest

Muscovites gather for a protest rally as the city government has announced a compulsory buyout for apartments in order to rebuild residential areas.

May 14, 2017



The view

Muscovites gather for a huge protest after the government tried to steal the parliamentary elections. For the first time in decades, tens of thousands rallied in Russia to demand fairness and accountability from the Kremlin. Navalny, who was among those initiating the protest, was arrested a few days prior, and his letter was read from the stage.

December 20, 2011



Fresh president

A protester holds a sign saying 'The president has to be fresh' as he participates in a rally that will end up in a police crackdown.

May 6, 2012



Balloons

Alexei Navalny campaigns on a boulevard in Moscow as he's running for mayor. Pro-government activists tried to cut out the wires and Navalny was arrested at the end of the rally.

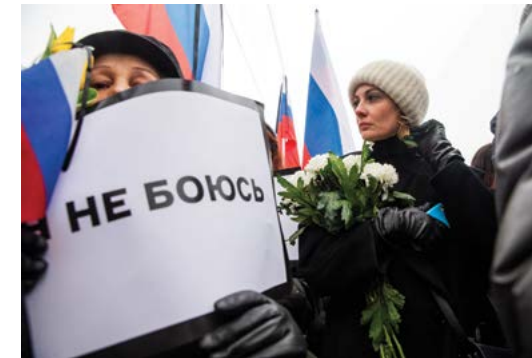
August 25, 2013



One for all and all for one

A woman holds a sign saying 'One for all and all for one' as Muscovites protest Navalny's detention after he returned to Russia.

January 23, 2021



Not afraid

Yulia Navalnaya participates in a mourning march a few days after the killing of Boris Nemtsov. Alexei was arrested a week before and was unable to join.

March 1, 2015



Freedom

A woman joins pickets at the FSB headquarters holding a sign calling to free political prisoners.

October 24, 2012



Police stare

Riot police officer stares aggressively as he disperses the crowd of protesters.

July 27, 2019



Fight

Riot police officers attack the crowd at a protest rally in support of Alexei Navalny in Moscow, Russia.

January 23, 2021



May 6

Policemen fight the crowd at a protest rally on a day before Putin's third presidential inauguration.

May 6, 2012



Pull

Policemen pull Ruslan Shaveddinov, Navalny's campaign worker, from a crowd as protest goes on in Moscow.

June 12, 2017



Resisting

Navalny's investigation into prime minister Dmitry Medvedev's embezzlement schemes was seen by tens of millions in Russia. It caused a wave of street protests. Navalny resisted being arrested for a few moments, and then his supporters attempted to stop the police bus from leaving.

March 26, 2017



Crosses

As Navalny was arrested, his campaign's meetings with volunteers were run by Leonid Volkov. In Rostov the hotel he rented for a meeting was blocked by Cossacks, a paramilitary group. Cossacks attempted to attack Volkov and battered a guard (pictured here) as well as several journalists and volunteers.

April 8, 2017



Cordoned

Riot police officers cordon protesters off as Muscovites gather to demand free registration of opposition politicians for city parliament elections.

July 27, 2019



Welcome to Moscow

Riot police officers in full gear stand in the arrival hall of Moscow Vnukovo airport. Alexei Navalny was poisoned in August 2020 with Novichok by alleged government agents. He was taken to Germany to be rehabilitated. As it was landing, his flight was rerouted to another airport and Navalny was arrested at the border.

January 17, 2021



Free in the court cage

Alexei Navalny is seen in a prison cage as he is about to be sent to a penal colony. Navalny was sentenced to serve 2 years 8 months and since then he had five new criminal cases opened up against him.

February 20, 2021



Brothers

Alexei Navalny looks gloomily at his brother Oleg, who was placed in a court cage in Moscow, Russia. Both brothers were found guilty of fraud in the trumped-up 'Yves Rocher' case. Oleg was sent to a penal colony for 3.5 years and Alexei got suspended sentence.

December 30, 2014



The last one

Alexei Navalny speaks via a video link from a prison during a court session in Petushki, Russia, some 120 kilometres east of Moscow. This is the only way for him to have been seen.

December 28, 2021



Handcuffed

Alexei Navalny, handcuffed to a policeman, gestures to the press as he waits for an appeal hearing after his arrest at a anti-government rally in Moscow.

March 30, 2017

GOLDSTONE GALLERY: A Platform for Hidden Voices

Goldstone Gallery, opening in February 2025, is a pioneering contemporary fine art space devoted to amplifying censored, silenced, cancelled, and muted voices. It provides an opportunity in a safe space for fearless freedom of expression and tolerance in the art world.

The Gallery was conceived by long-time gallerist **Dr Diane Mossenson** and is run by renowned artist **Nina Sanadze** in collaboration with **Diane** and **Dan Mossenson**.

Drawing from her own experience of being cancelled as a Jewish artist, Nina Sanadze recognised the urgent need for a space that champions silenced and hidden voices. Over 15 months, she observed a troubling shift, as many art spaces became increasingly unwelcoming to Jewish creatives and independent thinkers. This realisation inspired a proactive response: the creation of a gallery dedicated to amplifying hidden voices, restoring their presence in cultural conversations, and initiating the process of reinstatement.

The Gallery, housed in a space previously operated as a contemporary art venue by Diane and Dan Mossenson, is named in honour of Lance Sergeant Aaron Goldstone. Goldstone's parents were grocers who ran the first business at 41 Derby Street, Collingwood, in 1906. At the age of 23, Aaron enlisted to serve in WWI and tragically lost his life in Belgium in 1916, leaving no grave to mark his sacrifice. To honour his legacy as a courageous Jewish Australian, plans include the installation of a commemorative plaque at the gallery site.

Jewish individuals have made extraordinary contributions to the freedom and development of Australia. As proud citizens, they deserve equal representation and inclusion in the arts and broader society.



Voice

A man covers his mouth with a medical mask and a sign saying 'Give back my voice' as Muscovites protest election fraud.

December 10, 2011

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Mossenson Art Foundation



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