HACHSHARA — Models of Subsistence

Design statement for a series of three posters – By Amir Cohen (Aug. 2025)

This **poster series** is conceived as a single visual system dedicated to two intertwined themes: the historic movement of **Hachshara**—pre-immigration agricultural training that shaped kibbutz culture—and the often-underacknowledged leadership of **women** within those processes. The series is published in Berlin by *FAIR* and accompanies a simultaneous round-table in Berlin, Havelberg and Tel Aviv, which links Hachshara's legacy to contemporary models of community-based agriculture (CBA).

Visual architecture

Across all three posters, a **typographic field** runs along the top in undulating lines. The wave reads as a **flag in the wind**, a collective banner under which artists and activists advance—pioneers at the head of the column. A slender **curved line** sweeps down through each composition, a segment calculated from the **golden ratio** that operates as an implied mast and directional vector, guiding the eye from the banner to the centre.

At the core of each poster sits a **white typographic wreath (ring form)** constructed from modular typographic flowers. It is *burned into* the underlying image so that image and wreath become one surface. The wreath is a double sign: it recalls the historical training groups—the kibbutz collective—and it frames a present-day circle of community, the contemporary commons. Its ornamental vocabulary is quoted from the embroidered motifs of the so-called "Russian shirt" of the 1920s–30s (a V-neck floral trim), re-coded here as pixels and type. The magenta letters **H-A-C-H-S-H-A-R-A** orbit the composition like cardinal points, spelling the movement and asserting its geography.

The three centres

Each poster is anchored by a distinct central image that carries a **conceptual** role and a **compositional** one.

1. **Bread, garment, spade**
   The first composition juxtaposes a loaf of bread, a work garment and a spade—three elemental objects that honour the pioneers of Hachshara. Together they articulate subsistence (bread), communal identity (clothing) and labour (tool). Functioning as a still life of purpose, they also provide an armature of diagonals and weights around which the **wreath** tightens, binding the parts into a single working mechanism.
2. **The yellow dress**
   At the centre of the second poster is a dress—deliberately suspended between the **practical and the abstract**. Its yellow tone resonates with sun, wheat and endurance.

The dress insists on women's agency—not as an afterthought but as the **structural protagonist** of the image. Here the **wreath** reads as both a ceremonial emblem and an assembly, foregrounding female leadership within training farms and communal life.

3. **Soil on white cloth**
   The third poster stages a mound of earth atop a pressed white cloth. The pairing fuses two worlds—**agrarian matter** and **urban domestic order**—and lets their friction show. Soil spills beyond the **wreath's** boundary, challenging the aesthetics of control while proposing care and cultivation as forms of design.

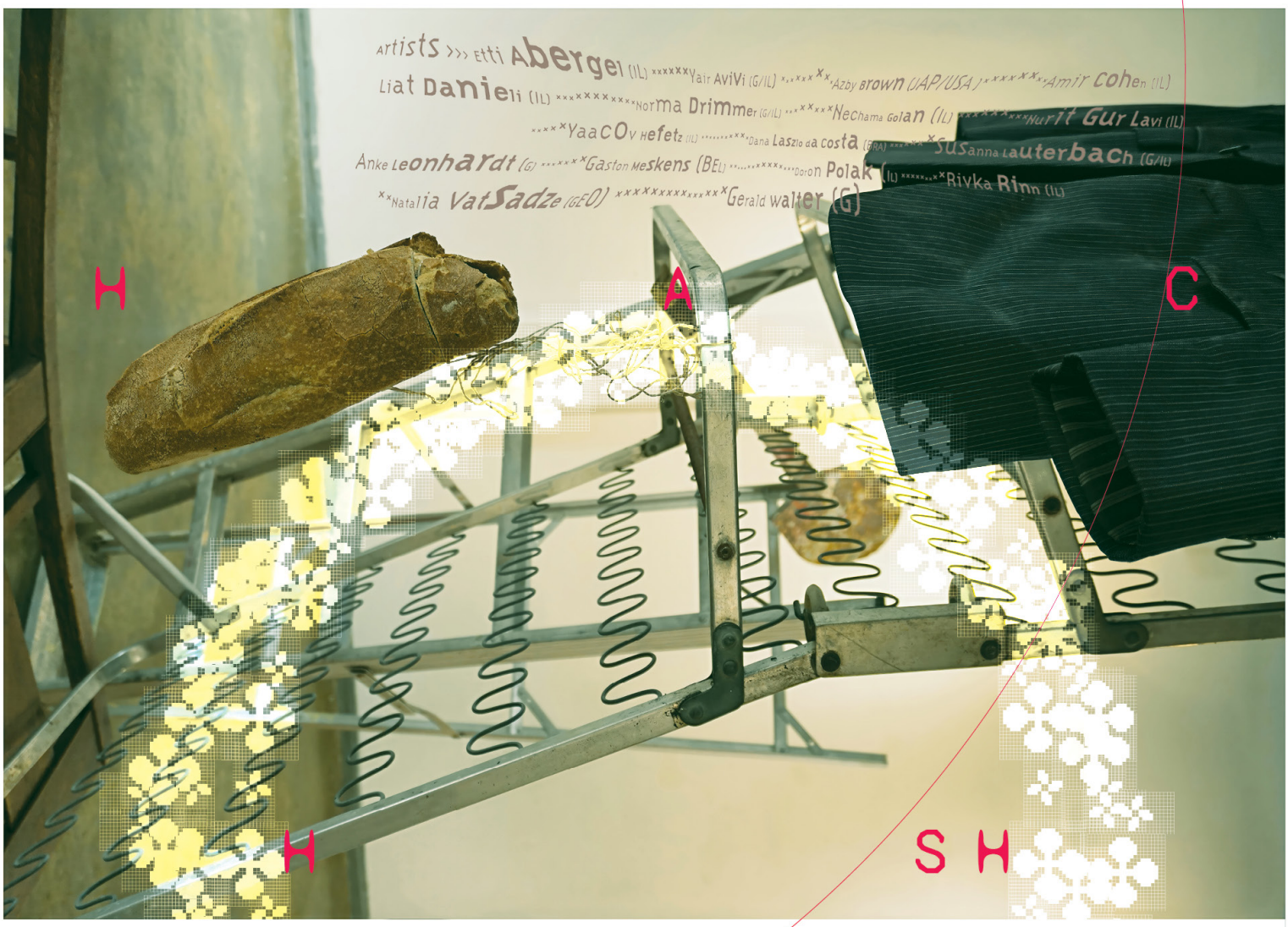
Reading, rhythm and tone

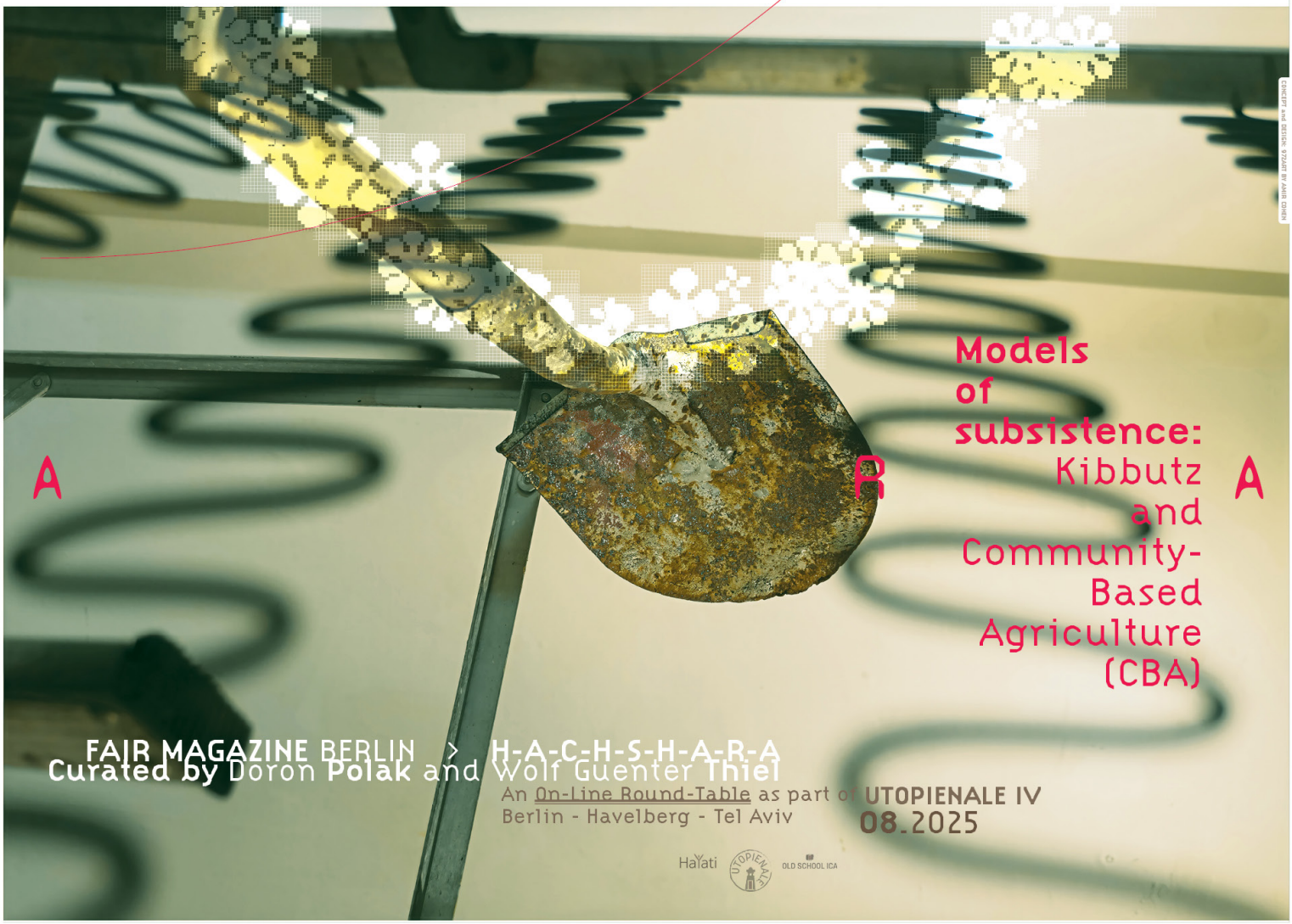
The system is designed for **serial reading**: a banner that calls, a line that leads, a wreath that congregates, and a centre that anchors meaning. Palette and texture move from metal and grain to fabric and earth, tracing a passage from production to nurture. The repeated **wreath** unifies the set while the three centres expand the argument: subsistence is made, worn and grown.

Historical and contemporary echoes

Hachshara prepared young people—women and men—for agricultural settlement through manual work and ideological study. By mirroring those practices with current **CBA** initiatives in Berlin and beyond, the series positions the project not as nostalgia but as **continuity**: common labour, common knowledge and common purpose. The imagery, therefore, does not illustrate history; it **operationalises** it for the present—calling a new circle to form around nutrition, health and meaning.

In sum, **the series** offers a visual grammar of **flag, mast, wreath and centre**. It honours the women who led and sustained collective transformation, and it frames Hachshara's spirit as a living template for today's community-based economies.





Models of subsistence: Kibbutz and Community-Based Agriculture (CBA)

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Curated by Doron Polak and Wolf Guenter Thiel

An On-Line Round-Table as part of **UTOPIENALE IV**

Berlin - Havelberg - Tel Aviv

08.2025

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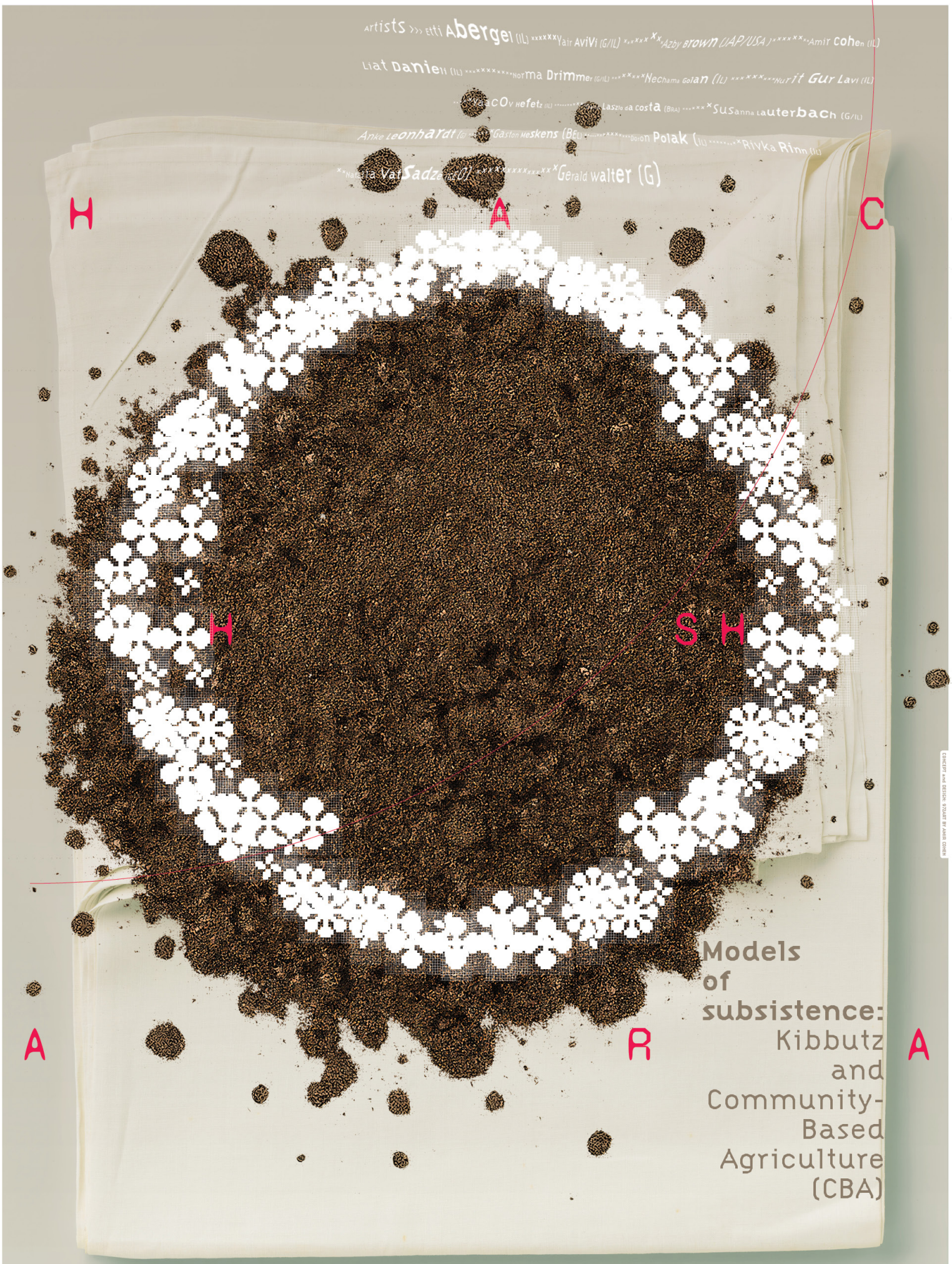
CONCEPT and DESIGN: 97ART BY AMIR COHEN



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artists >>> Etti Abergel (IL) Yair Avivi (G/IL) Azby Brown (JAP/USA) Amir Cohen (IL)
Liat Danieli (IL) Norma Drimmer (G/IL) Nechama Golan (IL) Nurit Gur Lavi (IL)
Yaacov Hefetz (IL) Dana Laszlo da Costa (BRA) Susanna Lauterbach (G/IL)
Anke Leonhardt (G) Gaston Meskens (BEL) Doron Polak (IL) Rivka Rinn (IL)
Natalia Vatsadze (GEO) Gerald Walter (G)

H A C H S H A R A

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