

**Key Words:** institutional design, complex system, emergence, democratic, open, platform, collective action, inclusive, regulatory sandbox, civic innovation, labor as performance, agora, collective intelligence, institutional critique, voluntary surveillance, sovereignty, living institutions, behavioral practices, institutional inertia, new constitution, trust, radical design, legitimacy, breaking point in history, timely intervention, Zeitgeist, incremental learning, radical design, ideology, constitution, non-human narratives, algorithmic governance



# Presense

OPEN!

La Biennale di Venezia  
2020

# Abstract

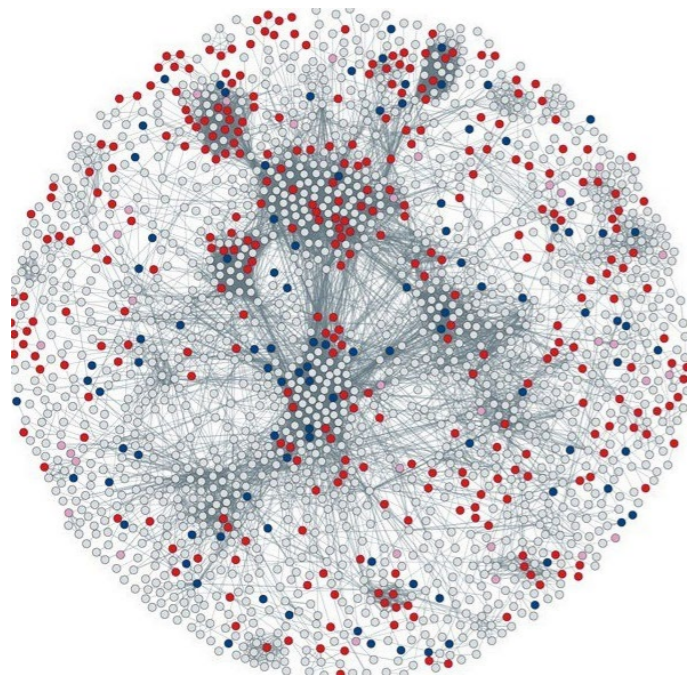
In turbulent times of constitutional change in Russia, the Russian pavilion in Venice needs to reimagine its institutional purpose - it needs a constitution. This proposal provides a framework for operation, where the pavilion is turned into a regulatory sandbox. The goal of the controlled environment, which is based on digital presence of different stakeholders, is to provide a platform for discussion which will end in the formulation and acceptance of the new constitution for the pavilion for 10 years.

**pavilion is turned into a regulatory**

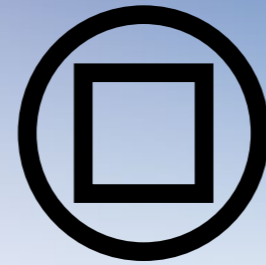


**sandbox**

Emergence refers to the formation of collective behaviors in complex systems - what parts of a system do together that they would not do alone. Re-imagining of an institution is only possible through new emergence. Institutional design is a tool to turn a complex system of actors, stakeholders, meanings, beliefs, and laws into something new.



If the theme of the pavillion is OPEN! - it must be inclusive. The pavillion must become a place for democratic, open exchange of ideas for action.



Russian Zeitgeist of today is guided by constitutional reforms. Inertia embraced by the institutional architecture of the Russian pavilion needs a timely intervention. Breaking points in history provide opportunity for radical institutional design - no time for incremental learning.

The architectural essence of the pavillion, with all the shapes and meanings associated, makes it a resemblance of a polity - the pavillion state. If treated as a state in itself that wants to be re-imagined, it should be done through an open dialogue. The space, thus, should be treated as an Agora - a place for collective decision-making.

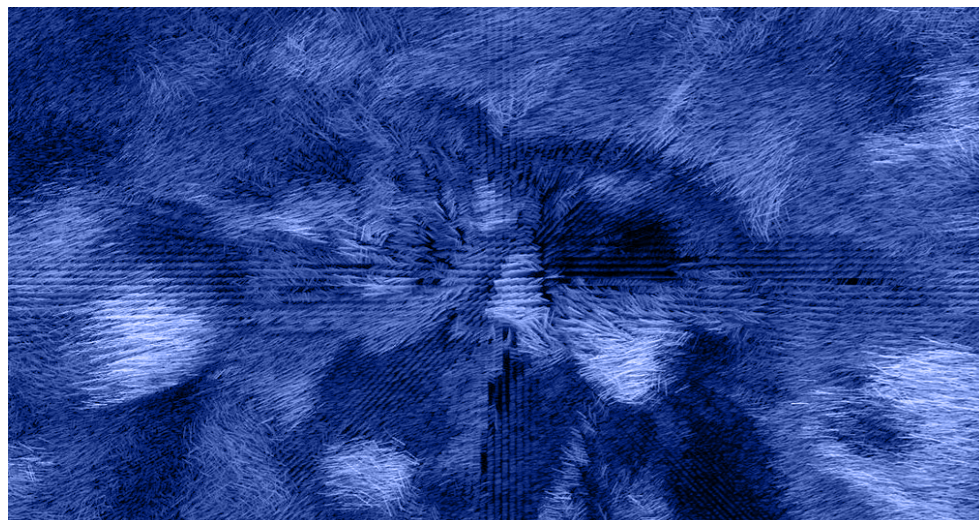


# Theory

Constitution as a legal frame can serve as a vehicle for making the processes associated with the Russian pavilion and country's participation in the biennale more structured and transparent. Codification of the vision, positioning, and technicalities will help future generations of participants of the biennale align their ideas under a bigger theoretical frame, create an archive of intertwined and interdependent ideas,

and navigate complicated bureaucratic process.

In order to avoid any human bias, the text of the actual document will be written by a machine learning algorithm trained on text data gathered from discussions between the stakeholders.

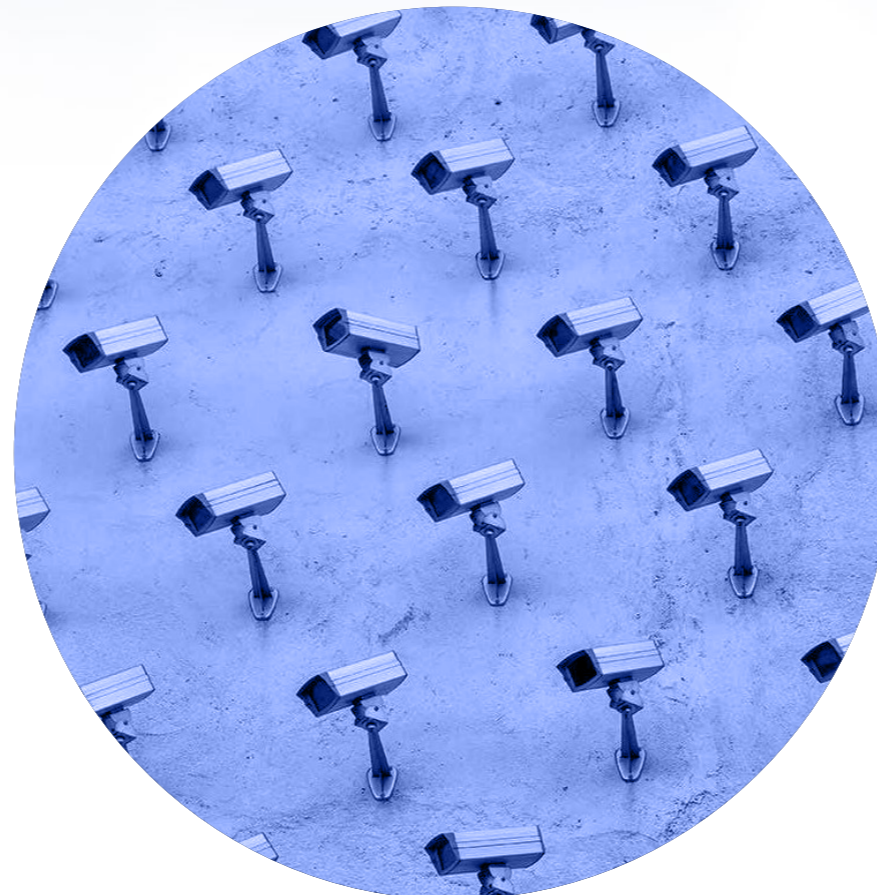


# Theory

Being not only legal, but also political and ideological document, the new constitution of the pavilion should give frames to what is understood by legitimacy, stability, reality, supremacy, and ideology within the perimeter of the pavilion in the next 10 years.

The future constitution should describe legal, political, bureaucratic, restorational, and ideological actions acceptable within the pavilion and united into one system, written description of which will be turned into the constitution of the pavilion if agreed upon by the majority of the voters.

To make the process of voting more transparent, it will be available for anyone interested, who will be willing to register for it in advance via online mediums. In order to widen the reach of this voting, cooperation with the Russian media outlets will be established to encourage Russian citizens to participate.



The frame of a regulatory sandbox is chosen for this endeavour, because the project team (Presense) should not be seen as a governmental authority, rather it should play a role of mediators who help civic innovation to spur in a controlled experimental environment.

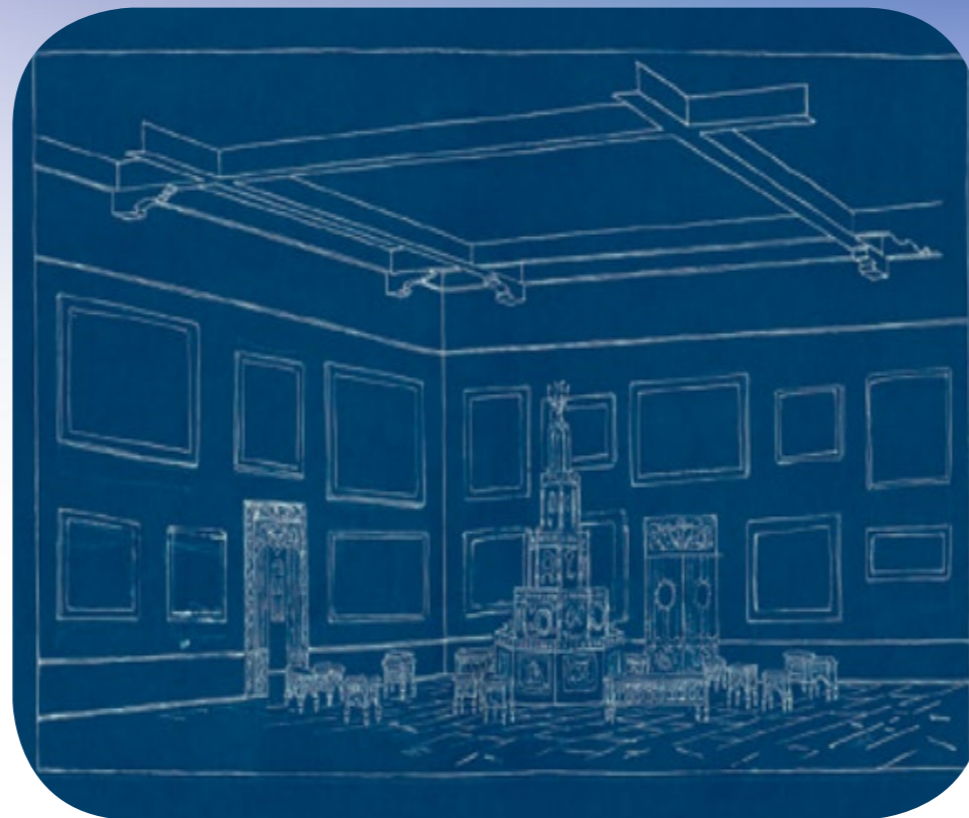
The work task of the project team during the biennale is to make sure that the text of the constitution is developed via democratic exchange of ideas, which are agreed upon by the majority of the participating stakeholders.

# Set up/visitor's journey

When a person enters the pavilion, he first passes through a dark corridor (stanza 3). He then enters a big light room (stanza 4), the walls of the room are colored white. Big letters on the wall opposite from the entrance say 'КОНСТИТУЦИЯ' (constitution). There is an empty velvet platform in the middle of the room. Its emptiness symbolises the 'work in progress' on the text of the future constitution

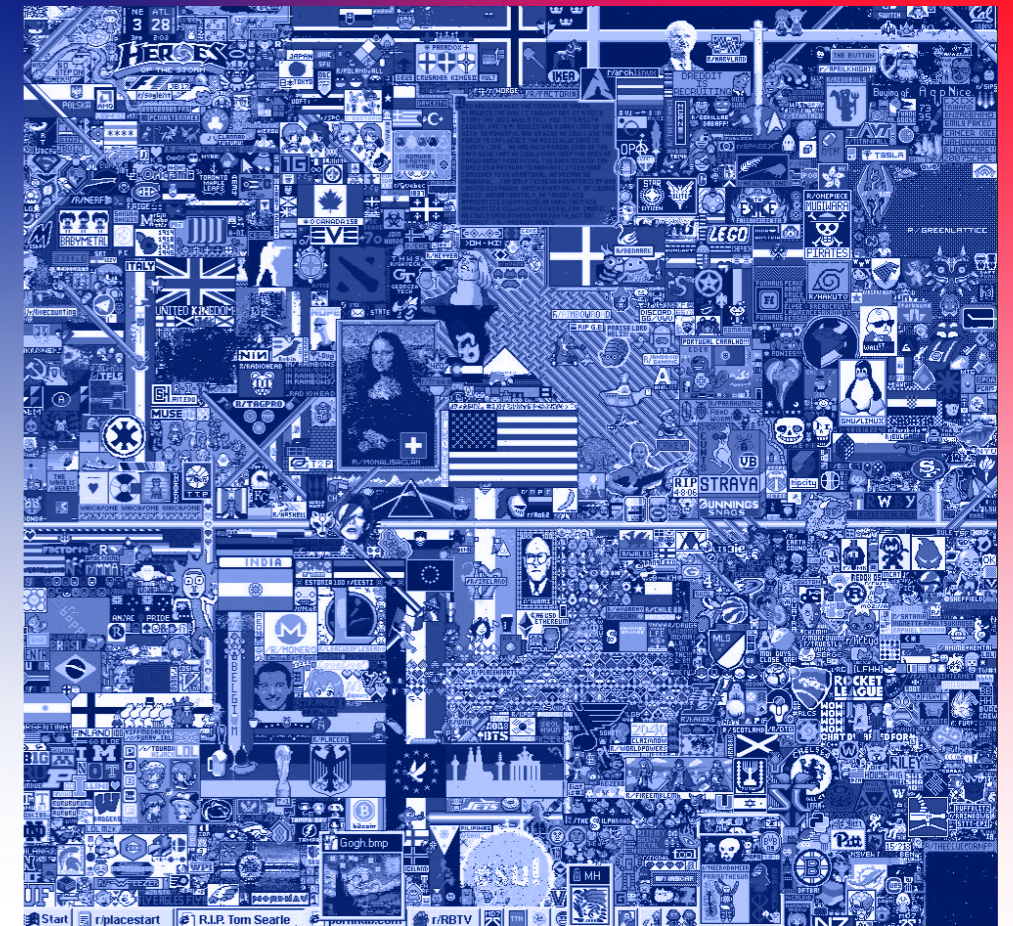


The next room that a person visits is the main hall (stanza 5). The set up of the main hall will follow the original vision of the architect Shchusev.



The walls of the main hall are covered with numerous identical TVs or screens. Following the notion of OPEN!, each team that applied to take part in the

biennale is given one screen.



Each screen provides a livestream 24/7 channel of communication to the agency it belongs to. Each agency has full control over what is shown on the screen at what time - providing space for both individual and collective visual action in resemblance of Reddit's Pixel Wars.

# Set up/visitor's journey

In order to avoid hierarchical misunderstanding, the project team's work in the office is also shown on one of the screens - no voice should be louder. The location of the project team's office is unknown.

All of live stream data is aggregated. Data analytics techniques will be applied to these data in order to extract text from the video-discussions and formulate the text of the future constitution by non-human means.

Once the experiment is over, machine learning algorithms will be applied to video data in order to develop a non-human perception of the occasion in the form of machine-generated film.

is unknown.



# Set up/visitor's journey

The floor in the middle of the main hall is replaced. Looking through the hole to the lower floor, visitors can see a typical office relaxation room, with ping pong table, kicker, coffee machine, flowers, etc. The room serves a purpose to provide space for an informal

dialogue between Russian architectural bureaus, the project team, and visitors. For the sake of dialogue facilitation, a bar will be designed in the same place.

Since the actual decisions in the office are often made in informal settings, observation of how the project office team interacts with each other and with visitors when not working in front of their computers becomes part of the exhibition. In order to make this experience more immersive, interactive tools will be installed in the room. For example, a chess board providing an opportunity for visitors to play a match with any Russian architectural bureau.



# Set up/visitor's journey

After observing the main hall, visitors are entering next room (stanza 6). This room is designed as a typical office environment with several desktop computers installed. Each computer is connected to one of the screens in the main hall.

Visitors have opportunity to sit in front of these computers and appear on one of the screens and potentially start a conversation with other stakeholders or the project team.

Underneath this room (in stanza 1), there located a server room where data from the screens are stored. Visitors do not have access to this space.

Importantly, CCTV cameras are installed on the whole territory of the pavilion, streaming live all of the processes that happen in the pavilion, which can be seen online by anyone.



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