

# Conversation with SAGA



This year, the Russian Federation Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture strives towards openness, transparency, and accountability. These are not empty words, but the manifestation of a genuine intention—the project of reimagining the network of symbols, meanings and relationships that a national pavilion in Venice embodies, and to use the outcome of this investigation as a blueprint to rethink contemporary cultural institutions. On February 24th, the curatorial team seized the opportunity to participate in a public gathering organized by the Moscovite architectural community to discuss the result of the Open Call.

This seemed an ideal way to promote public debate around the Pavilion, and to kick-start a process of exchange and dialogue, three months before the opening of the Biennale. The meeting, orchestrated by the architectural studio SAGA (Artyom Staborovsky, Alina Kvirvelia and Julia Ardabyevskaya) saw the participation of various groups connected remotely from Moscow, Milan, Tokyo, and Maastricht. Among the issues that were discussed: what does it mean for the Russian Federation Pavilion to be “Open!” in practical terms? What is the time frame in which the

project of institutional re-designing is going to take place? How can the criticalities and the contradictions that lie at the core of a 19th-century institution such as the Venice Biennale be addressed? What is the role of the public program? Can we still conceive of architecture as a discipline, or has it gotten dissolved into the dictates of interdisciplinarity?