



## **Pavilion of Lithuania at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia**

*'Take a large population of humans, strip them of all social, racial, cultural, sexual, political and economic constructs and bring them together so that they stay in close proximity for a substantial amount of time. That would be the ultimate revision of human architecture.'*

***Julijonas Urbonas, the founder of the Lithuanian Space Agency***

**The Lithuanian Space Agency presents, *Planet of People***

**22 May – 21 November 2021**

**Preview days: 20 – 21 May 2021**

**The Lithuanian Space Agency (LSA) is thrilled to present the Pavilion of Lithuania at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. In the unique setting of the Renaissance church Santa Maria dei Derelitti, the LSA proposes a fictional outer space world that brings together gravitational aesthetics and cosmic imagination. The LSA's exhibition in Venice is curated by Jan Boelen, commissioned by Julija Reklaitė and organised by Rupert, Centre for Art and Education.**

The LSA, founded by Julijonas Urbonas, is an organisation that researches space architecture and gravitational aesthetics. The agency is an astro-disciplinary initiative that aims to create a truly extraterrestrial imagination. A think-tank-cum-space-logistics-company, the LSA is researching and developing the poetic logistics of establishing alternative ways of being and imagining together both on and beyond Earth. Acknowledging the cosmos as the site of radical other-worldliness, the agency focuses on how we can get closer to the unearthly while also shifting perspectives on humanity to those of an alien.

According to Boelen, 'The current crisis is a crisis of imagination. The LSA presents prototypes that let us choreograph and dream together. The most ambitious prototype is a machine for an escape from Earth that catapults us into space where we merge into an alternative planet. With this presentation, designed as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the LSA introduces a new possible space age. A space age that gives power back to the people, shifting it away from the national and commercial colonisation of space.'

For the Biennale Architettura 2021, the LSA presents Urbonas' most recent project, *Planet of People* — an artistic and scientific study into a hypothetical artificial planet made up of human bodies. The agency explores what it would actually take to realise the architectural fiction of *Planet of People* and raises questions about its sociopolitical implications. When humans are liberated from the constraints of Earth and simply become the building blocks of this new extra-terrestrial structure, what is the role of our earthly cultural and ethical notions? At the centre of the installation of *Planet of People* is a 3D scanner that scans the participants of the experiment and 'sends' them into space as animated simulations. As more and more people participate over the course of the trial run in Venice, the scanned bodies begin to form a new planet.

'Increasingly, we become aware of the fragility of Earth and the human species. More and more, we realise that we might not have an appropriate survival plan when the doomsday comes. What are the alternatives? There are two options: a planetary-scale funeral or a monument for the history of Earth and its inhabitants. It is time to consider both', says Urbonas. 'Imagination is inseparable from reality and vice versa. They neither contradict each other, nor do they exclude one another. The same goes for architecture. It is as imaginative as it is realistic. Scientific and architectural speculations are informed by social and technological constructs as much as they themselves inform those constructs. So, on this level, *Planet of People* is as real as the Eiffel Tower. The only difference between them is that one is yet to be built.'

The LSA includes a number of other Urbonas' works or 'prototypes', such as *Airtime*, *Barany Chair*, *Cerebral Spinner*, *Cumspin*, *Emancipation Kit*, *Euthanasia Coaster*, *Hypergravitational Piano*, *Oneiric Hotel*. These so-called prototypes are based on Urbonas' research into gravitational aesthetics, a name he has given to a genre of architecture, design and art. Gravitational aesthetics is concerned with the choreographing and locomotive power of things, both real and imaginary, and the effects these choreographies have on the sensual, psychological and social domains. Consider, for example, *Cumspin*, which uses artificial gravity to enhance human sexual pleasure, or *Euthanasia Coaster*, a roller coaster that ends in euphoric death. These works and research have formed the basis of the main installation, *Planet of People*.

The LSA is also pleased to announce the release of their first annual report, which will be available for purchase at the exhibition and on the agency's website. The report includes several texts on gravitational aesthetics by Urbonas and contributions from other members of the LSA. The major part of the report is dedicated to an in-depth presentation of *Planet of People* with feasibility studies conducted by a number of researchers from different fields of planetary science, such as space architecture, design, art and engineering, astroanthropology, astronomy and astrophysics. Among these contributors are Michael Clormann, Régine Debatty, Vidas Dobrovolskas, Hu Fei and Jia Liu, Li Geng, Theodore W. Hall, Craig Jones, Rebekka Ladewig, Xin Liu, Lisa Messeri, Michael P. Oman-Reagan, Joseph Popper, Lauren Reid, He Renke, Fred Scharmen, Ma Yansong and Zheng Yongchun.

During the exhibition in Venice, the LSA will deepen its research into space architecture and introduce it to the public through guided tours and workshops led by Urbonas and Boelen. In partnership with other international institutions, the LSA will also continue developing their programme and testing *Planet of People* after the Biennale Architettura 2021.

**Address:**

Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Derelitti  
Barbaria delle Tole, 6691,  
(Castello), 30122 Venice, Italy ([Map](#))

**For further information, images and interviews contact:**

media@lithuanianspace.agency  
Vilius Balčiūnas +370 630 60280  
Jogintė Bučinskaitė +370 624 93440

**Find out more at** [lithuanianspace.agency](https://lithuanianspace.agency)

**Instagram:** @lithuanian\_space\_agency

**Facebook:** @LithuanianSpaceAgency

#LithuanianSpaceAgency

#PlanetOfPeople

#HowWillWeLiveTogether