

ARCHITECTURE AND NEGOTIATION

Mobile Interface for political Crisis Negotiation

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Abstract
Layers
Integration
Process Trigger & Assembly
References



Charles Giron, *The Cradle of the Confederation* (1901)
5 x 12m Painting in the Nationalratsaal, Bern.

The notion of negotiating as a political process has proved to be inherent to Switzerland's internal composition and geopolitical position. From its founding as the alliance between small states that had nothing to offer to greater powers in exchange for their protection, to the merely imposed "armed neutrality" declared in 1815 making its territory the puffer zone between rival empires, finding agreement has been the first necessity and purpose of swiss organizational structures. The myth of the 1291 founding agreement has even become a narrative device as the landscape bearing the memory of its negotiation is the backdrop to the Nationalrat's deliberations, making the parliament the modern place for negotiation between the federated Cantons.

J - 0, 7:15

Ca y est, c'est aujourd'hui. L'adrénaline l'a empêchée de dormir, elle a juste attendu que le réveil sonne pour aller enclencher la machine à café. Il est encore tôt, mais Sonja s'apprête à se joindre à un groupe de personnes qu'elle connaît seulement depuis peu: sur un service de chat principalement, où une collègue de travail l'a ajoutée, s'est organisée la marche d'aujourd'hui. Ils espèrent montrer au Conseil d'Etat, qui recevra aujourd'hui la résolution de la semaine dernière, que les citoyens et citoyennes ont encore une dignité, et que l'écodictature doit cesser de pénétrer ainsi leurs droits fondamentaux. Mais aussi, ils se sentent particulièrement visés: Sonja et son compagnon viennent d'acquérir une petite villa crépée pas loin d'Echallens, avec double place de parking. Parce qu'ils ont eu les moyens d'aller s'installer au calme, ils devraient maintenant laisser leur voiture au garage?

J - 0, 10:20

On les voit arriver, mais surtout, on les entend. Ils n'ont même pas besoin de crier, de toute manière le pouvoir des libéraux est assez tentaculaire pour que leur voix porte delà du château de Sainte-Maire et jusqu'à Berne. Ils n'ont pas l'air très bien coordonnés, vus comme ça: certains portent des gilets jaunes, d'autres un attirail traditionnel vaudois. Ils n'ont pas l'habitude de manifester et ça se voit - en même temps, on peut lire à leur dégain qu'ils n'ont jamais vécu la moindre injustice à leur égard. Tant pis pour eux, maintenant ils ne savent pas comment s'y prendre. Zebbson_XO a toujours son portable en main, c'est le nouveau pavé grâce auquel il organise la défense de ses idées. Ce jour, il le prépare depuis toujours, c'est un jour parmi d'autres: alors que les insatisfaits viennent physiquement manifester contre la résolution, son camp se mobilise dans le champ de bataille virtuelle. Oui, il faut interdire les voitures, les foutre loin, et oublier qu'elles existent. Il y en a marre de danser autour du pot et de se faire ignorer par toutes les générations antérieures; le changement n'arrivera ni trop tôt ni trop fort. L'avantage du camp de Zebbson_XO, c'est qu'ils n'ont même plus besoin de ces voitures pour se déplacer, ils sont déjà partout. Ils peuvent savoir dans quel rue tournent leurs acolytes sans avoir jamais vu leur visage. Ils peuvent, telle une masse qui devient critique, amplifier des points de vue partagés jusqu'à les rendre réalité. Et aujourd'hui, ils comptent bien négocier l'interdiction totale des trajets automobiles pour pendulaires.

J - 7, 15:00

En soufflant sur son thé déjà froid depuis longtemps, F. G. essaie de se contenir. Elle fait les mille pas devant la salle du Grand Conseil, ce mardi x.xx.xxxx. Un député des Verts a déposé tôt ce matin une résolution, permettant d'exiger des pendulaires une justification s'ils se déplacent en voiture. Et celle-ci est sur le point d'être acceptée! Quel affront à tout ce que son parti représente, et pourquoi elle a elle-même décidé de se faire élire à cette assemblée. Comment osent-ils s'en prendre ainsi aux fondements mêmes de la liberté démocratique et individuelle de notre petit paradis libéral? Justifier son moyen de déplacement, et ensuite, quoi? Justifier, c'est un verbe sans fin, qui ouvre des brèches là où il n'y en a pas. Au moins, il y a une année, lorsqu'une des pontes vaudoises du parti a préféré se faire élire à Berne, une avocate du parti a repris le DIT au Conseil d'Etat - elle saura certainement protéger les citoyens et citoyennes suisses qui tiennent à leur liberté, et avec le délai de réponse de 3 mois, elle saura interpréter le contenu de cet affront de résolution.

J - 0, 14:00

Il n'y a pas autant de monde qu'attendu, au final. C'était peut-être pas nécessaire de déployer autant d'hommes à la Riponne, surtout qu'on va encore passer pour des gens violents. Ça devient plus difficile à estimer maintenant que les jeunes font leurs manifs en virtuel, on sait jamais exactement qui viendra. En même temps, le gendarme Brunet est bien amusé de voir ce qui est en train de se dérouler. Les manifestants, pas super bien organisés, ont deux personnes au château qui les représentent. Une des conseillères d'Etat les a rencontrés dans l'arène, sur l'esplanade, sous l'oeil des gardes, et a entamé la discussion avec eux pendant que les manifestants à la Riponne buvaient ses paroles. Ils se sont sentis forts et écoutés, jusqu'à ce que d'autres négociants entrent dans l'arène: le député à l'origine du débat et un mec, jeune, qui sortait d'internet. Là, les choses ont changé: les pro-climat se sont mobilisés sur internet, et ça a été une déferlante. Des points de vue complètement opposés, rien à voir. La médiatrice a eu de la peine à trouver le fil d'un accord, ça risque de durer encore quelques heures. En tous cas, c'est un peu comme regarder un match de foot. Les pensées du gendarme Brunet retournent à son portefeuille de paris sportifs, il a misé gros sur un Both Teams To Score entre Liverpool et Leeds ce soir, ça devrait le faire.

Acknowledging that upcoming challenges will increase political instability and a sense of dissociation between citizens and elected officials, the communication channels need to be strengthened: in between elections, citizens, interest groups, and elected officials need a place to convene whenever a public political crisis arises.

Since citizens have no political leverage during a given mandate, we rely on the notion of biopower - the power of bodies, movement, and the mass - to express the demands of citizens in a decentralized way. We build on two assumptions:

(1) Political crises, public demonstrations and non-traditional powers will become more prominent in the close future due to rising social, environmental, and economic inequalities.

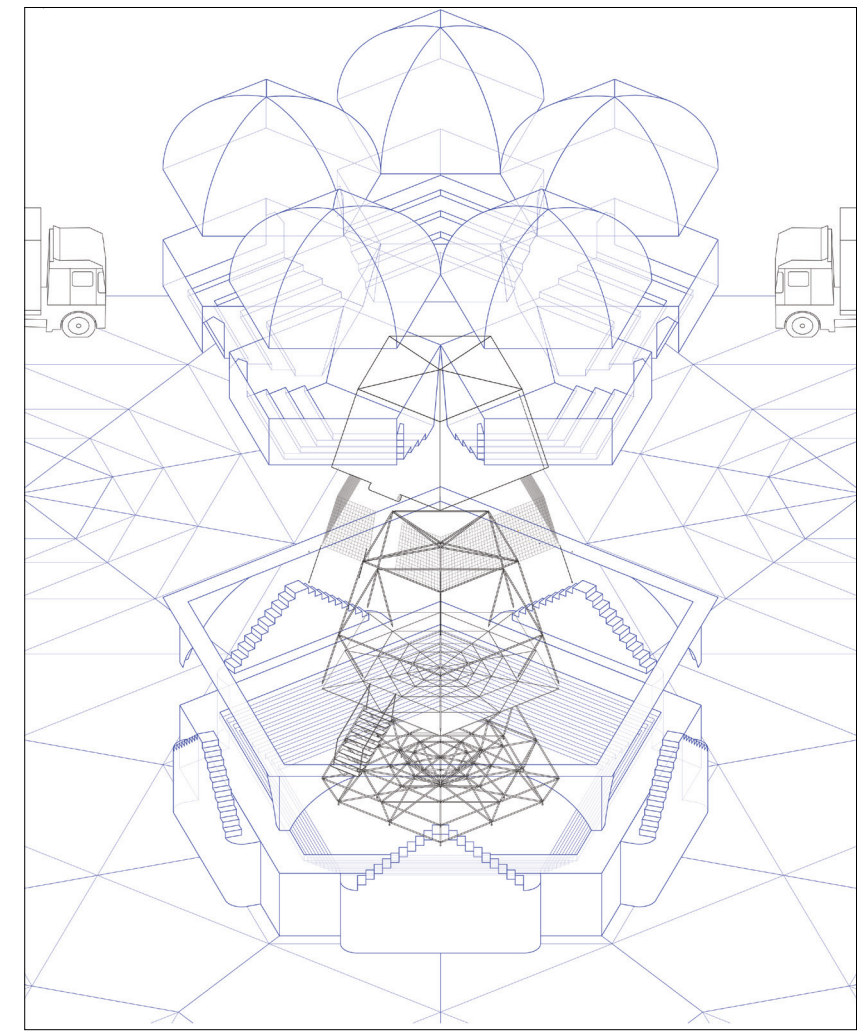
(2) Transitory channels of communication between politicians, citizens, and interest groups aiming at reaching an agreement can help to solve a crisis situation in a more satisfying way.

Fictional Story: Multipolar negotiation

This proposal is based on a previous research work. Through the analysis of a well-known diplomatic negotiation between Switzerland and Lybia, we extracted spatial parameters that play into the power balance. These are general enough to be applied to interpersonal or public negotiations as well. For example, power imbalance can be inflated through an aysmetric spatial knowledge and agility, or by the territorial appartenance of meeting spaces to one or another party. As well, the balance can be moderated by stating symbolic safe-havens for each party, and by using a level of formality that reflects both parties' aims.

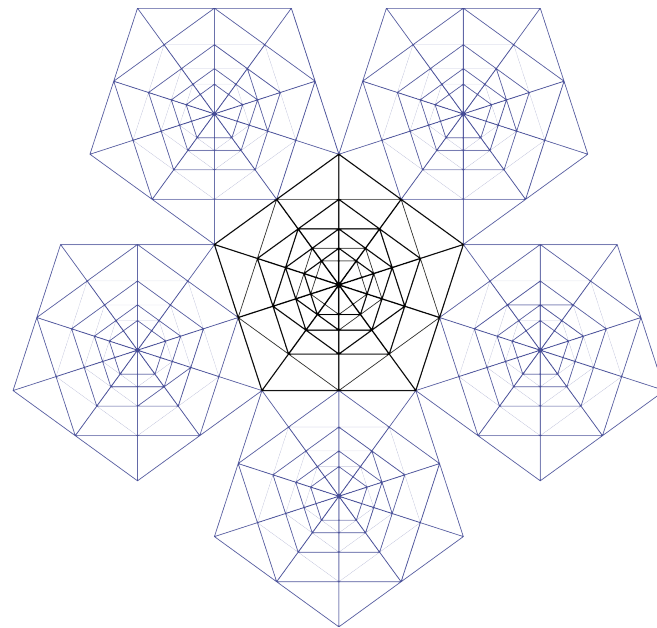
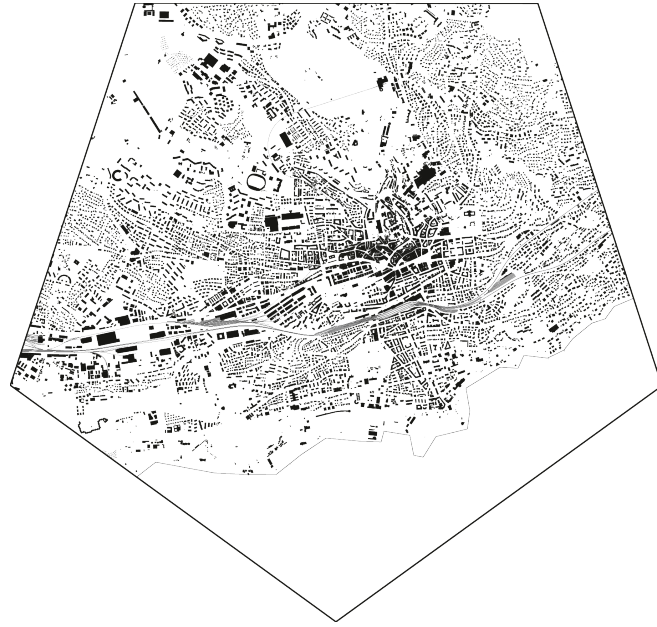
The last parameter we identified is relevant in regional public crisis situations: when bodies convene to form a demonstration, using public space to express a dissent towards a given decision or state, they impose a new meaning on these spaces.

How can this strong, coordinated action be used as a lever for discussing measures with elected officials in place?



Conceptual Axonometry
Architecture for negotiation

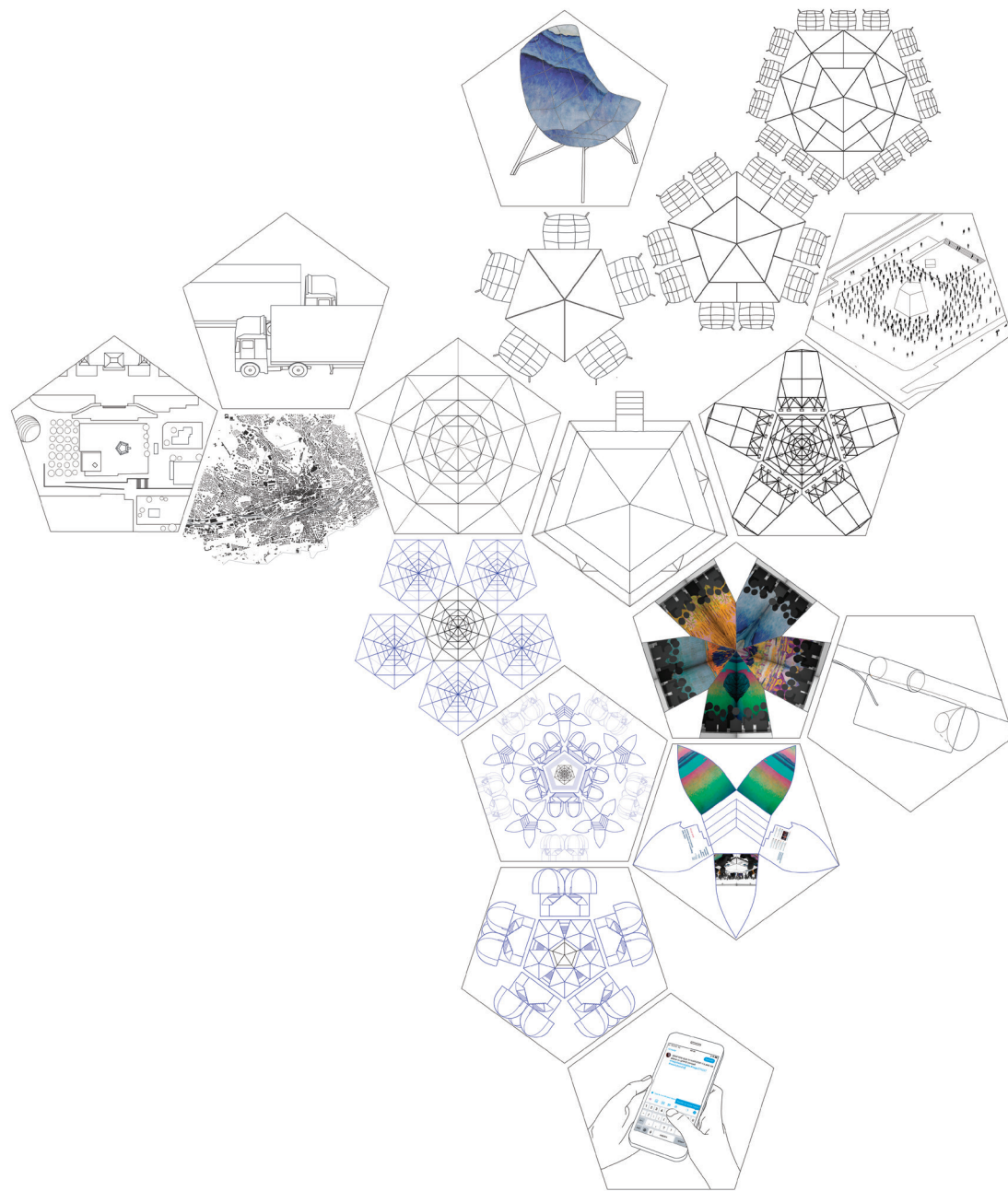
Trans-scalar network of physical digital dispositives



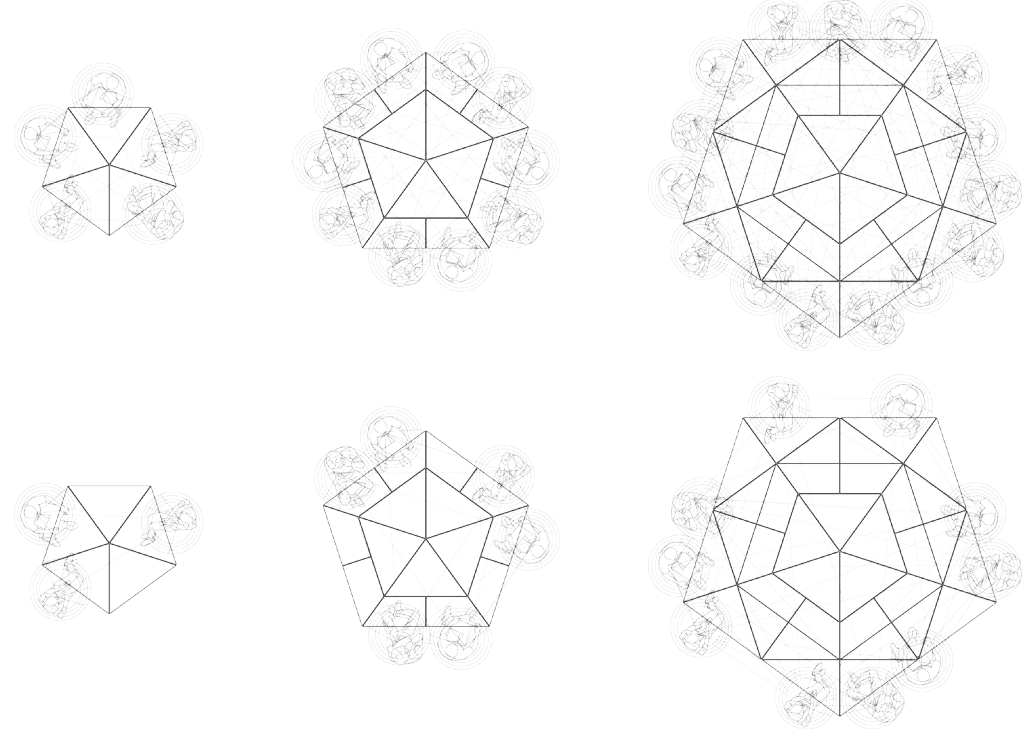
Physical (above) and virtual (below) base layers
The regional territory and the geometric grid are layered to achieve decentralization through integrating the physical and the virtual-digital.

The proposal consists of integrated layers of dispositives, working in between the virtual, digital, and physical realm. The two base layers, shown on the left, express the intent of decentralizing and expanding the field of involvement between actors and participants. As a general rule, objects and dispositives that are strictly virtual are shown in blue lines, and those that are physical are shown in black.

The pentagon generates a grid that allows for transitions in scale. By using this same isometric geometry, the virtual and physical layers can achieve integration and strong links.



Transscalar layers of dispositives
Virtual-digital dispositives are shown in blue, physical in black lines.

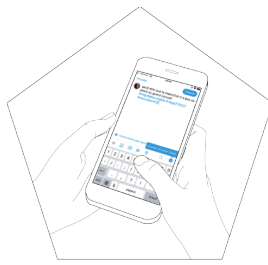


Negotiations table and communication channels
Small, medium and large configurations

When aiming for a satisfying negotiation outcome, seating orders are a main concern. Looking at different configurations, we concluded that: angles are desirable, since they create clear delimitations and avoid strong imbalances caused by powerful personalities. isometric sidelengths are desirable. opposing viewpoints are not desirable, since they create a sense of opposition.

Therefore, the pentagon seems to be an ideal geometry. In incremental sizes, it can fit a large variation of party configurations - bipolar or multipolar, always considering the presence of a mediator.

In order to improve the access to information and facts, the table uses tactile screen technology. Those screens are easily managed by the participants. They are divided in individual space, on which the user can display and arrange documents and notes as desired, and a shared panel, displaying elements that are seen by all other users as well. This panel contains a twitter frame: people from the protest are encouraged to express their position by using certain hashtags on twitter. This allows for the negotiators to be aware of opinions from people in the crowd.



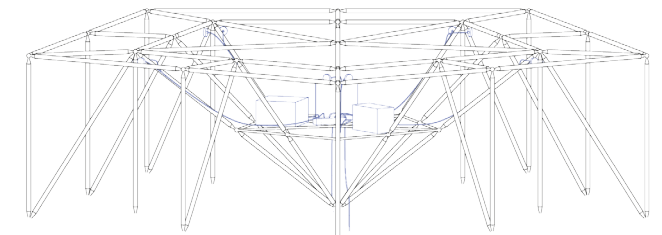
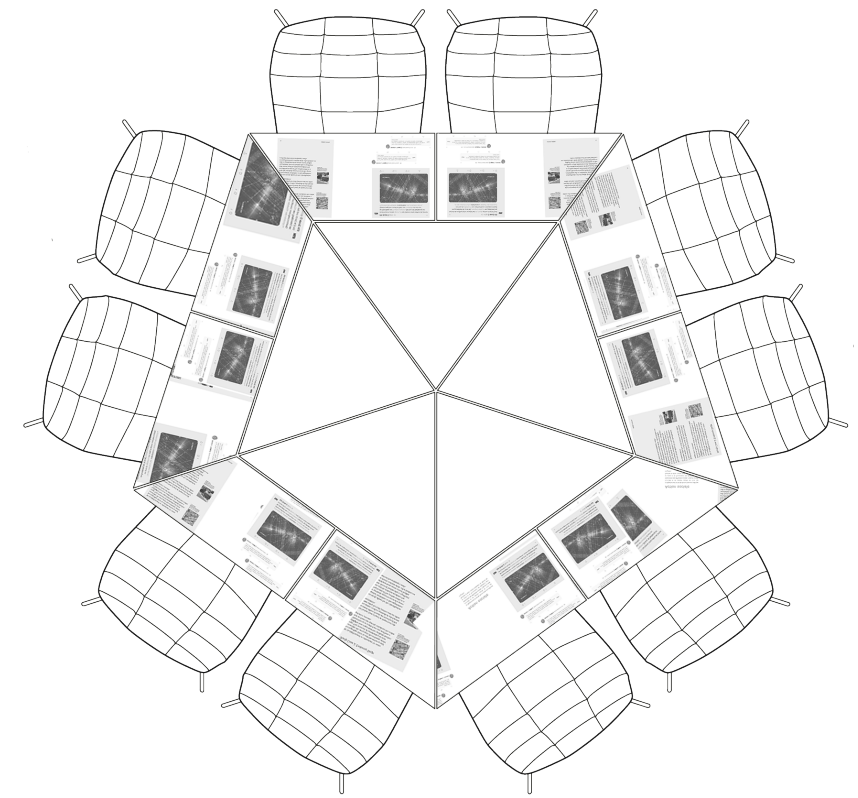
Participation through Twitter
Citizen or any concerned person can use hashtags to have their opinion displayed to the negotiations

The chairs offer comfortable sitting positions, refraining from armrests to allow for free movement and avoid confrontative body postures. They are fitted with electric heating pads that provide individual comfort in choosing the desired temperature.



Negotiation chairs
Individual heating if desired by plugging the power cable to the table's substructure

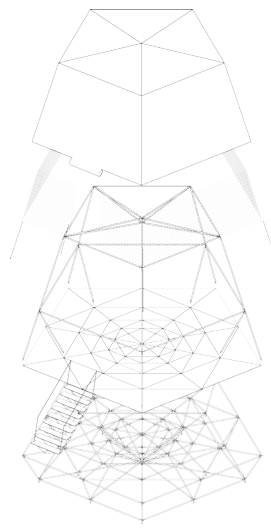
The table's substructure is a spatial grid formed by the incremental pentagonal geometry, and is made of small lightweight steel elements that are assembled and transported easily. It foresees a space to keep the servers for the table and is linked to a power supply on the ground.



Tactile tabletop and structure
Medium size configuration

The table's geometry generates its vessel: following the intent to be displaced to crisis locations, the tent offers a neutral space, symbolically safe.

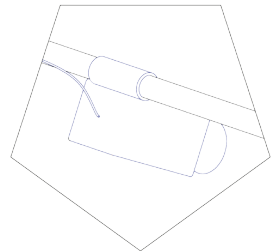
It can be mounted without heavy equipment and contains adaptive elements. It is anchored in pentagonal concrete blocks that can be levelled to terrain. Once the structure is mounted, cables run to stabilize it. The floor panels also serve to rigidify this light structure. The cables span fabric panels: those are layered to adapt to different contexts. A translucent layer, a waterproof layer, and a transparent net can be spanned according to needs of privacy, ventilation or weather conditions.



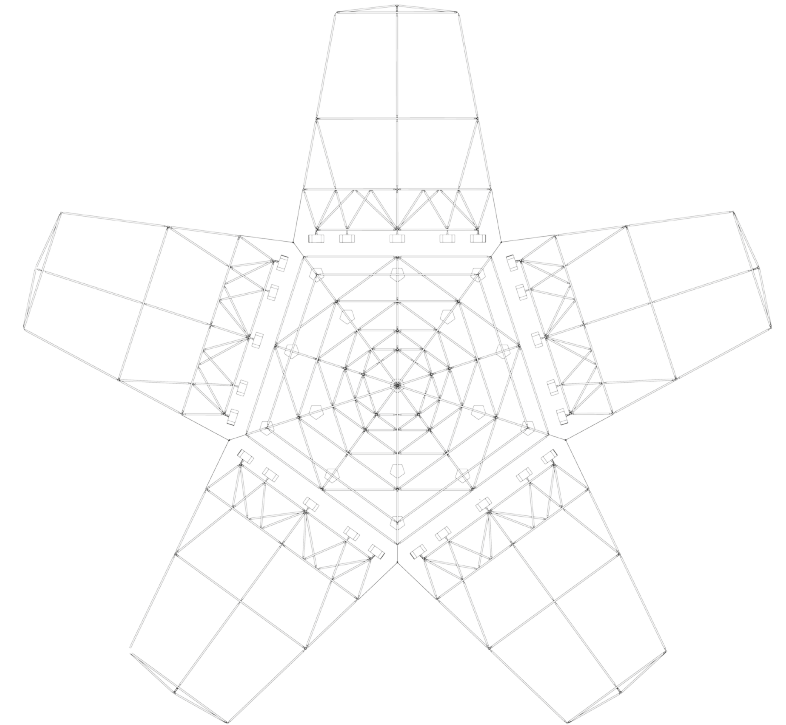
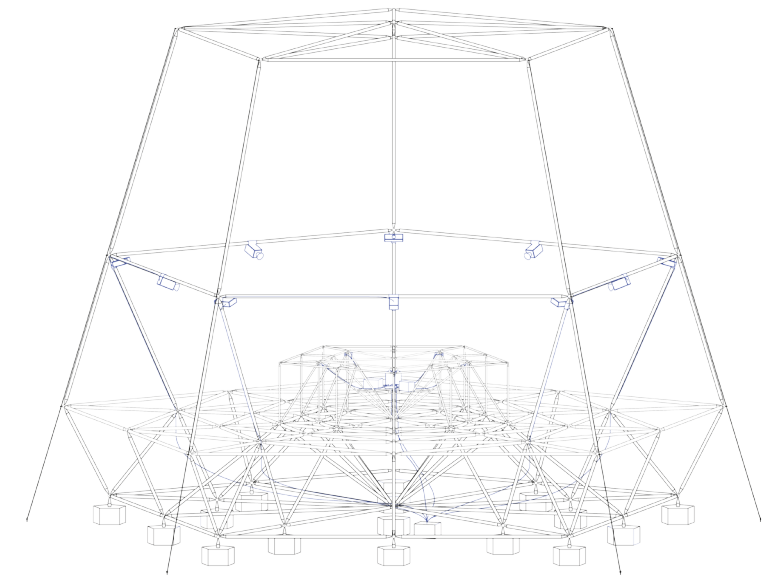
Structure and stabilizing elements (cables and fabric)

The tent's design shows a formal and ceremonial aspect, through an elevation that makes it's occupants visible from afar, and through a high volumetry.

Its upper part functions as an interface: the textile is an immersive screen, showing a decentralized audience. At the same time, the structure bears recording and projection devices, that allow for the integration of virtual and digital interactions.

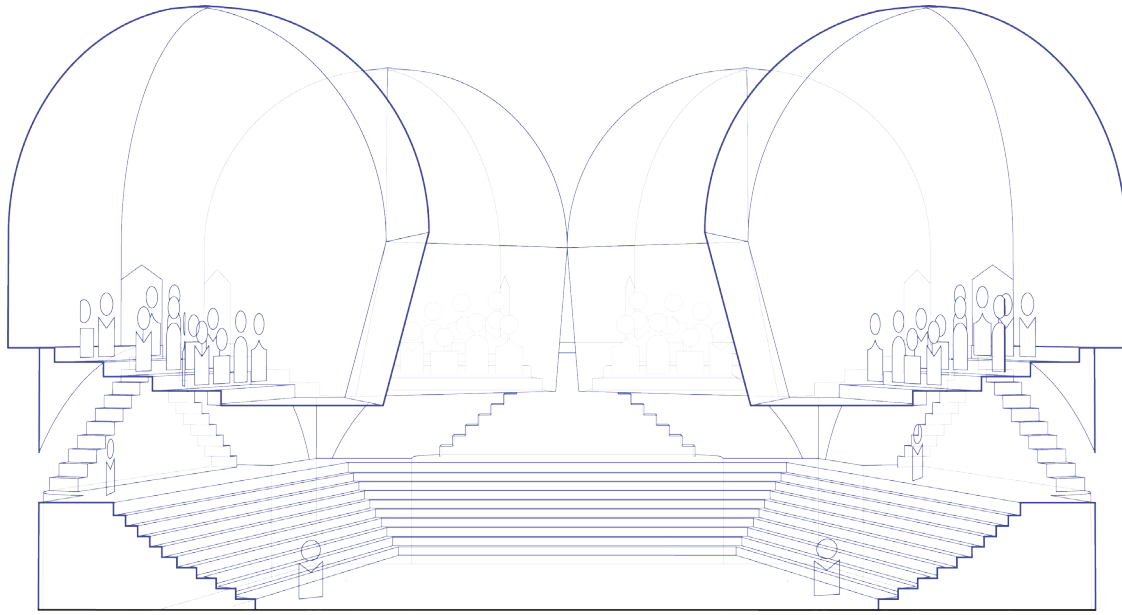


Cameras and projectors are fitted on the structure

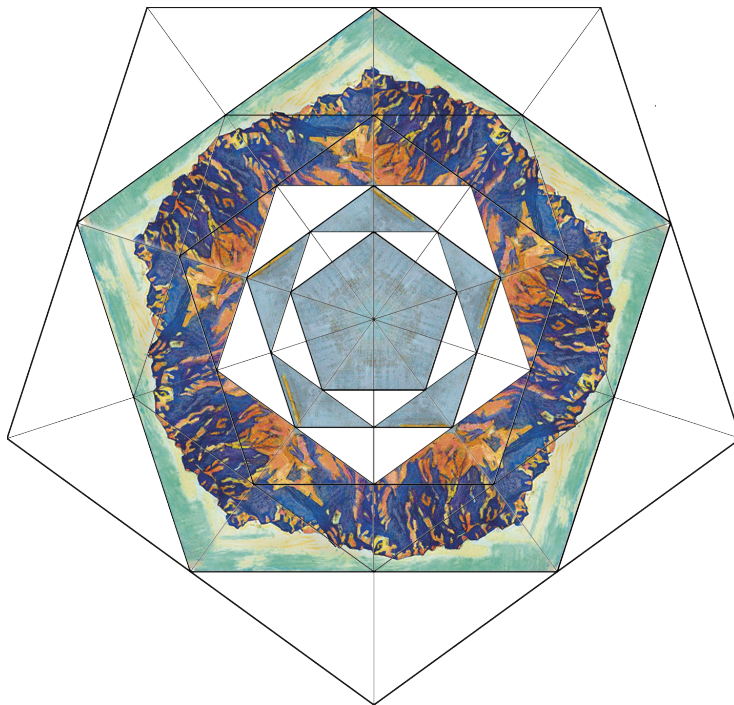


Tent: Axonometric view of the Structure

Plan and elevations, unfolded

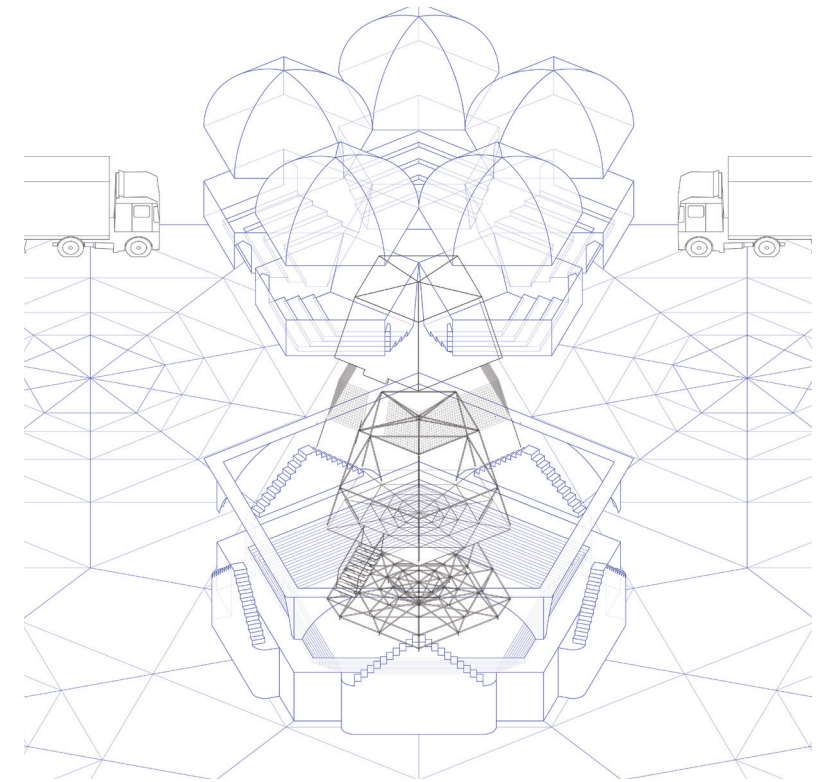


Virtual Arena, section



Ground Level (Lobby) Floor
Mosaic

Virtual arena and Negotia-
tion Tent adjustment



Joining in from other places, spectators can enter the virtual arena surrounding the negotiations' table. Having chosen their geometric avatar and pseudonym, they enter an open and pentagonal lobby-like space. From there, they have access to five symmetric staircases, each leading to two viewing rooms, which will have them enter one of the five rooms randomly.

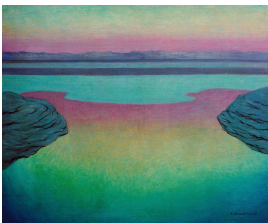
This configuration allows for a transition between a large open space and smaller rooms, giving the spectators a variation of available spaces to create more and less personal interactions.

The virtual and physical spaces, although a shift in scales, are conceived to fit one into another.

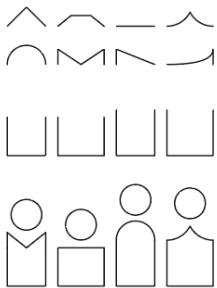
The viewing rooms provide small gathering spaces to attend the viewing of the negotiations, and allow users to interact with each other on a proximity basis and to use twitter-features to express their opinion publicly.

As a rhetoric and symbolically charged ornamentation, paintings from Félix Vallotton, Alice Bailly and Ferdinand Hodler are assembled in fresques, returning to the tent as the landscapes that hold the collective memory of the negotiation - just as the painting of Charles Giron in the Nationalratsaal does by bearing the memory of the three first confederate states. The digital fresques serve as a backdrop that can be chosen before the negotiation.

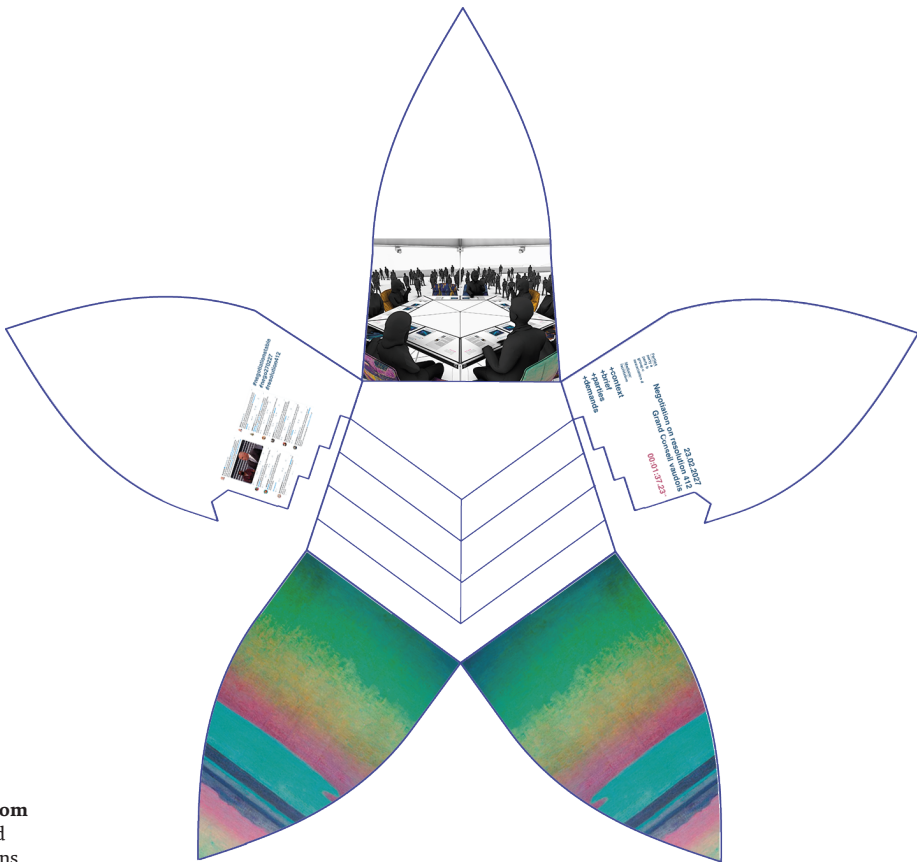
The avatars have a simple design with a few customizing options and geometries. In order to be as inclusive as possible, they refrain from imitating human features other than the circular head.



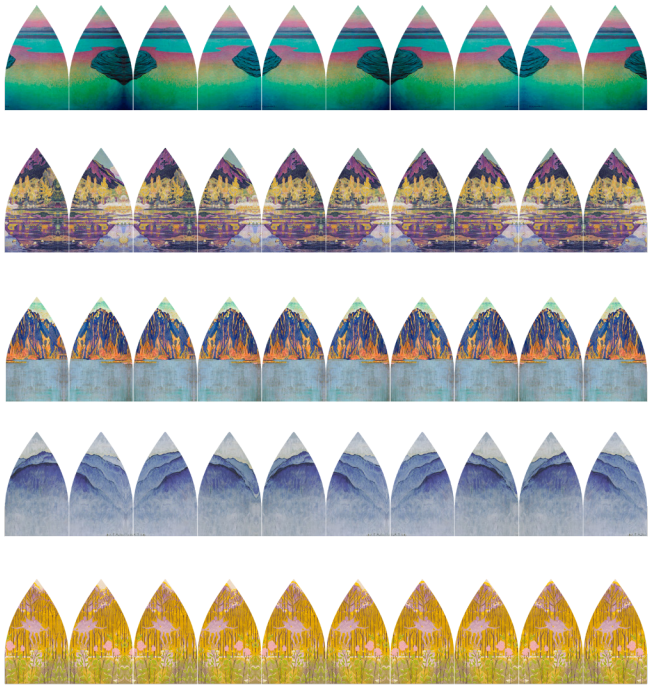
Félix Vallotton's landscapes
Meer bei Flut im Abendlicht (1915) is one of the paintings that ornate the virtual arena.



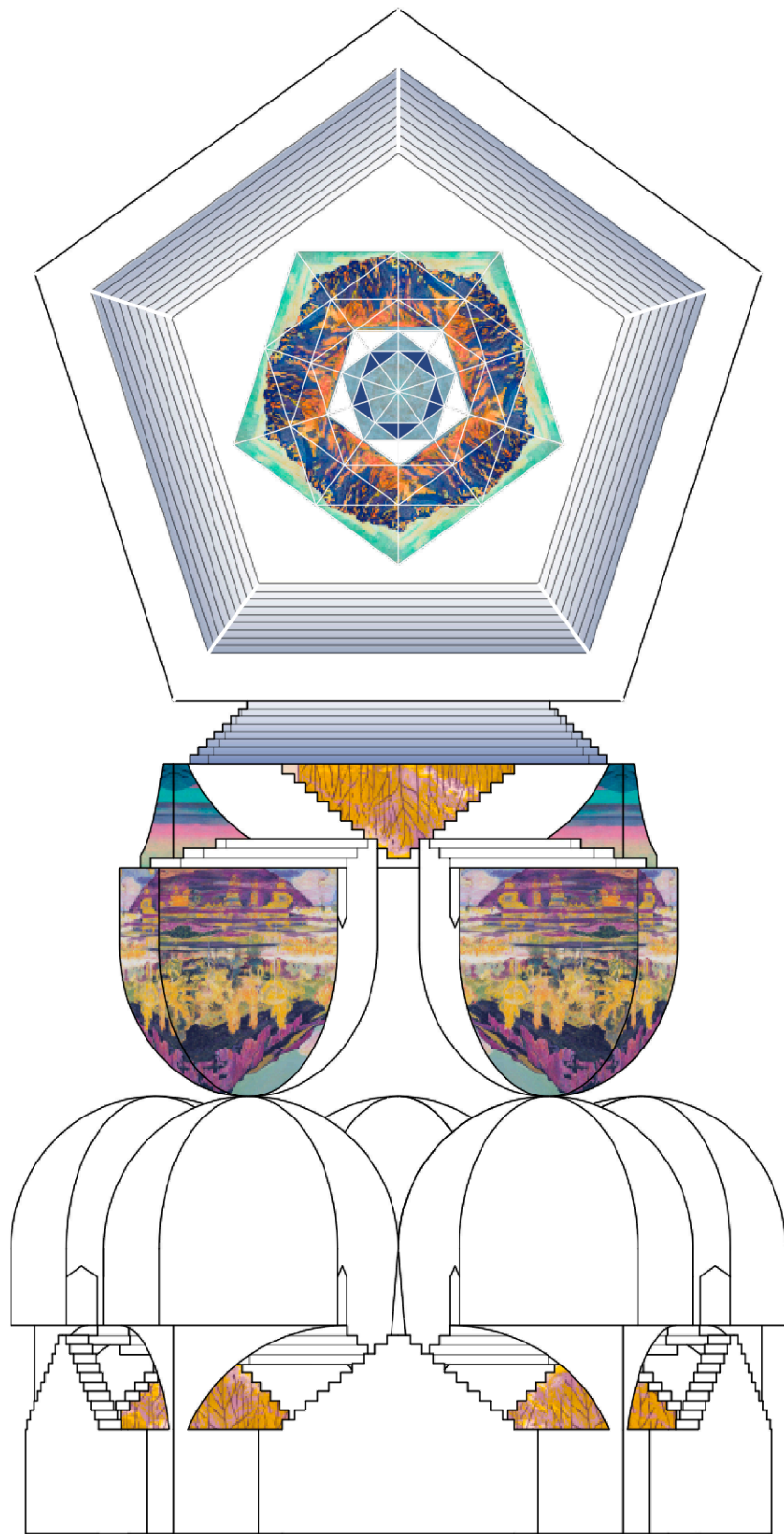
Inclusive minimalistic avatars
With personalized geometry options above



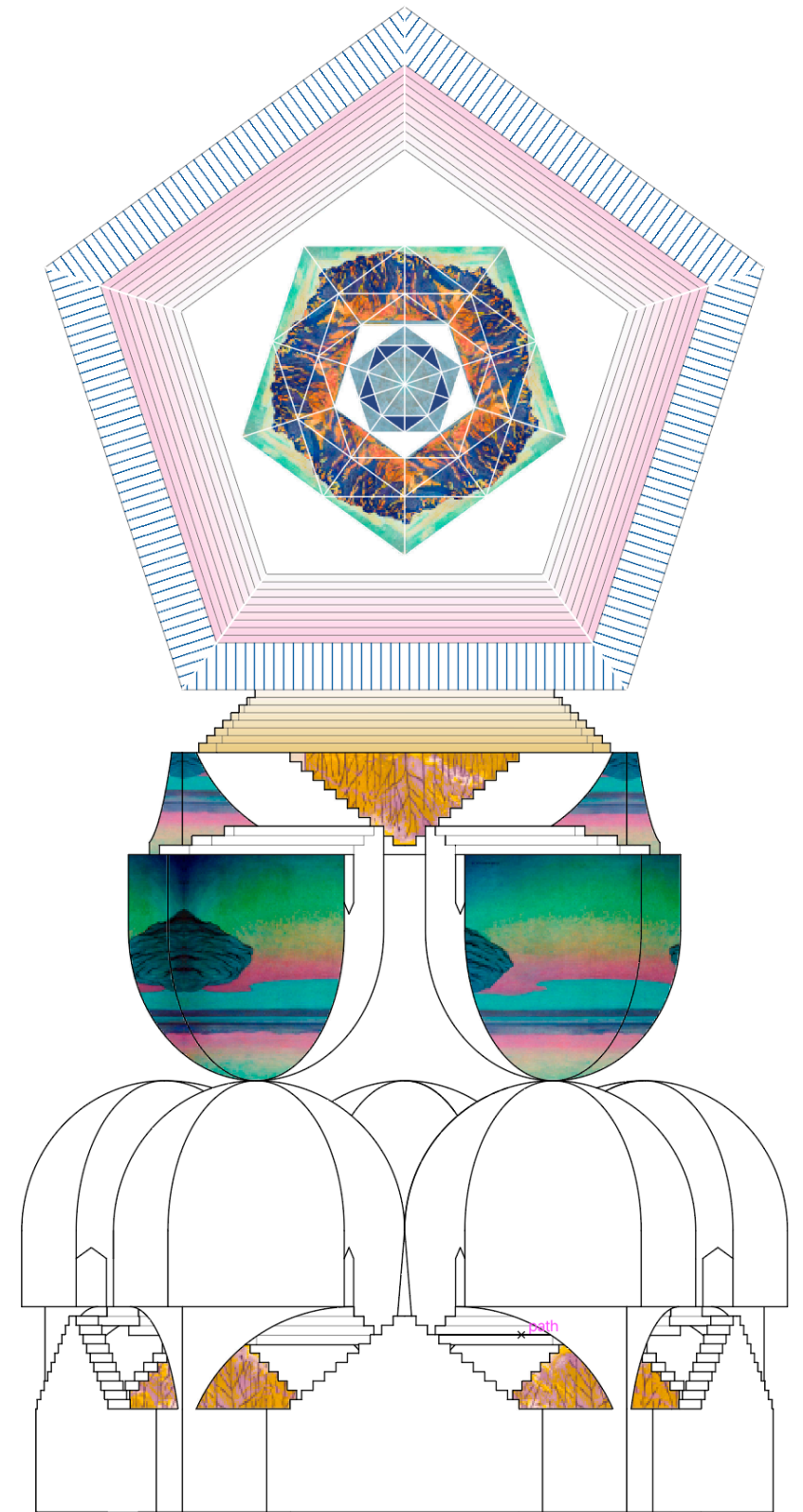
Layout of a viewing room
Floorplan with tiers and unfolded inner elevations

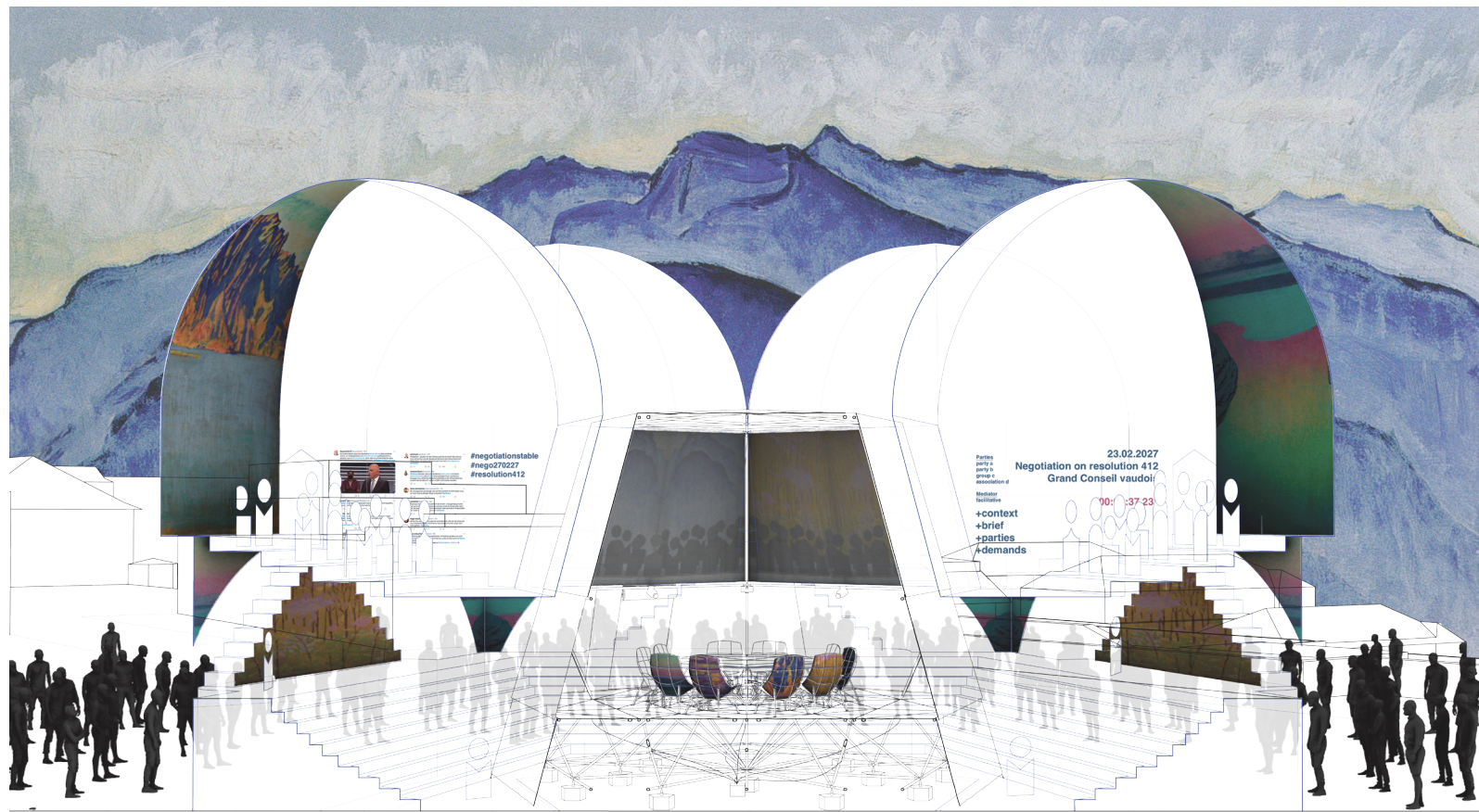


Digital fresques
Collages from swiss artists' landscapes



Plan and elevations (inside and outside) unfolded

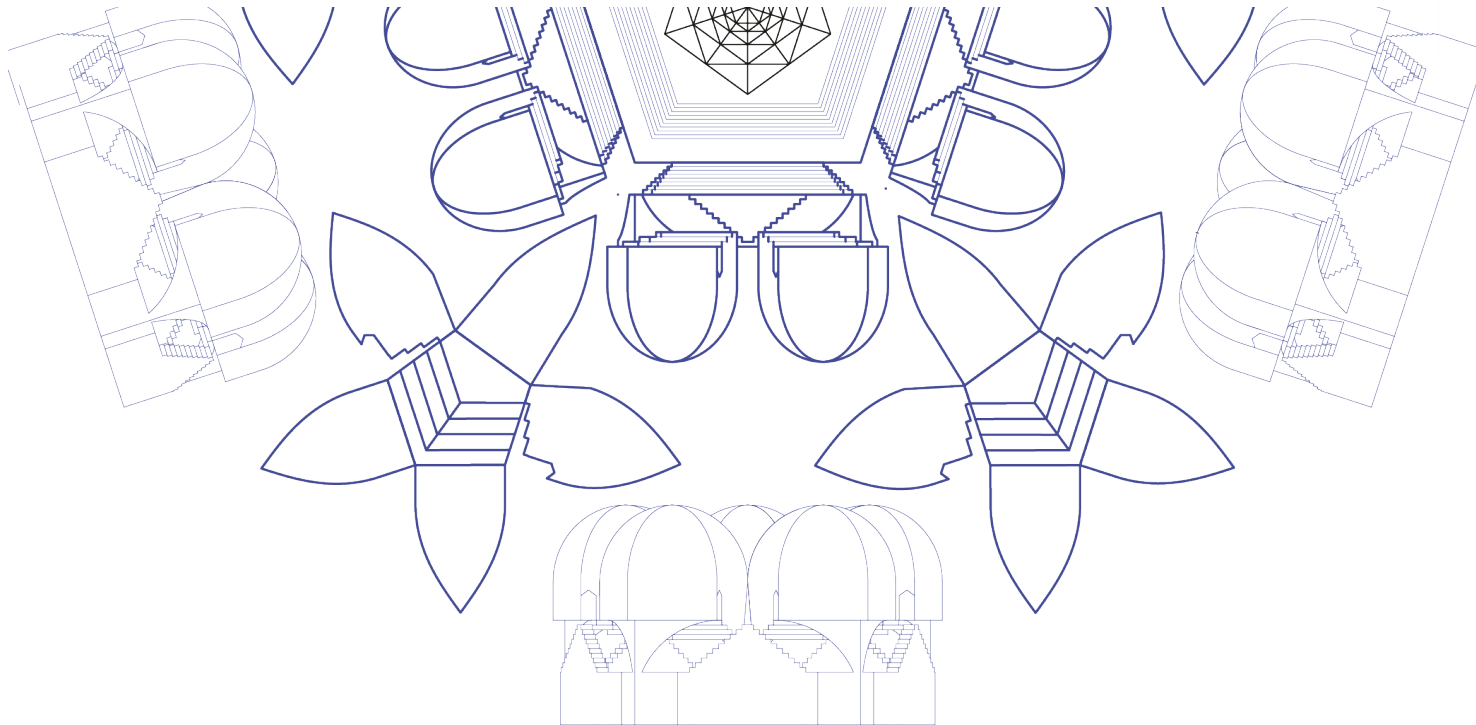




Integration

The section shows how the virtual, digital, and physical dimensions form an assemblage. The collective memory is represented by the landscapes painted by swiss artists Félix Vallotton, Alice Bailly and Ferdinand Hodler.

The tent's fabric screens role of the interface is made visible: the VR-spectators can see through them, inside the tent, and the negotiators can see the inside of the VR viewing arena's rooms.



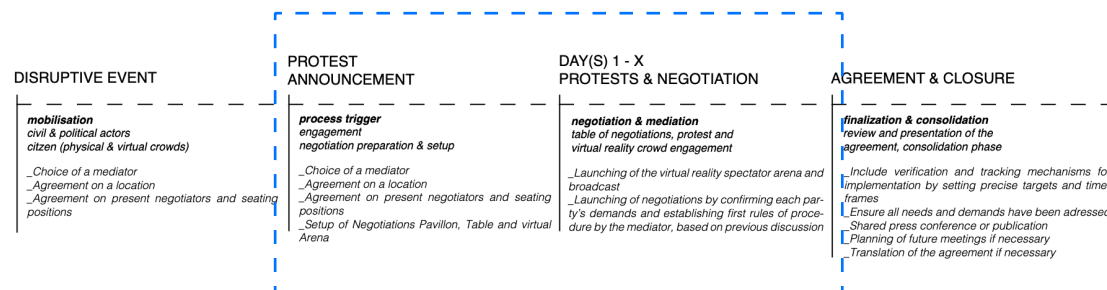
Process Trigger and Assembly

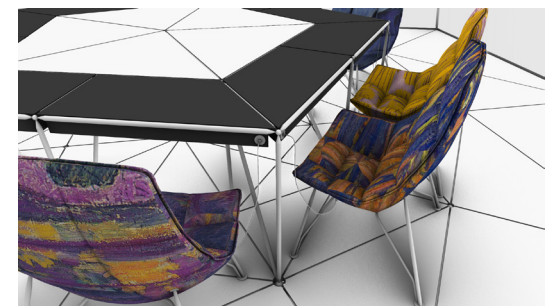
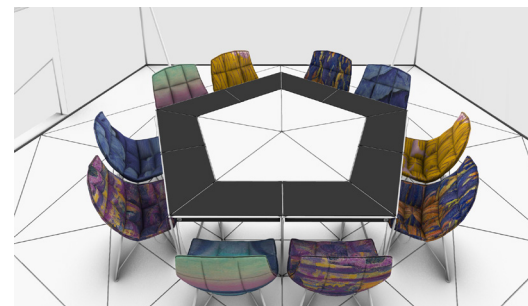
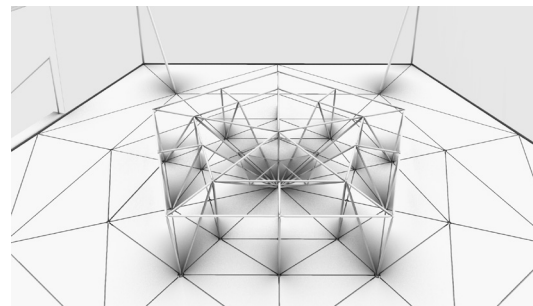
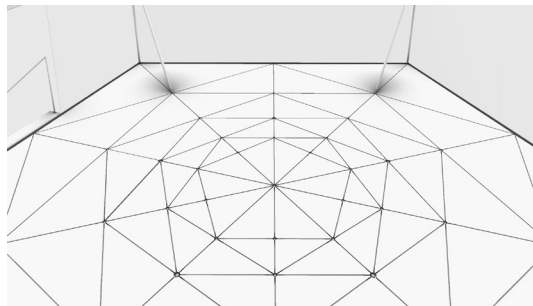
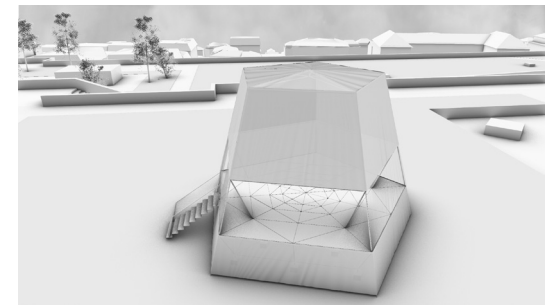
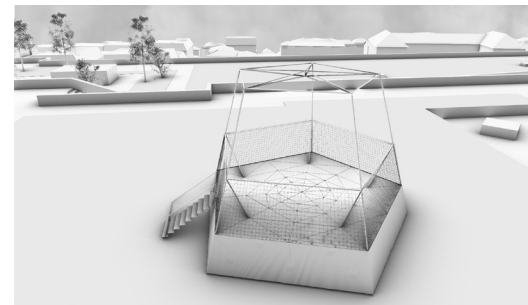
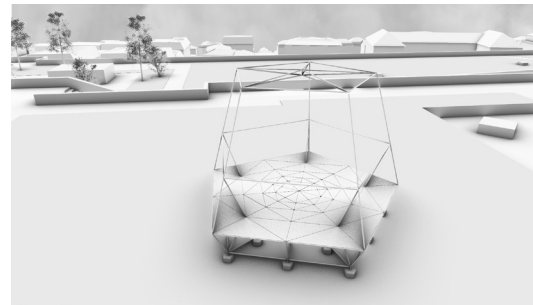
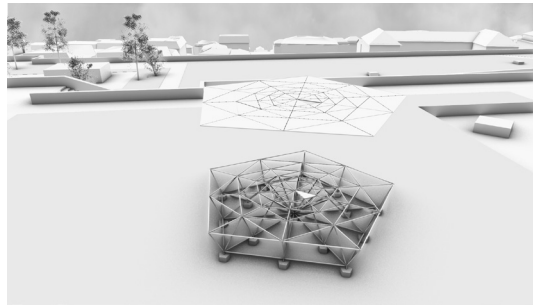
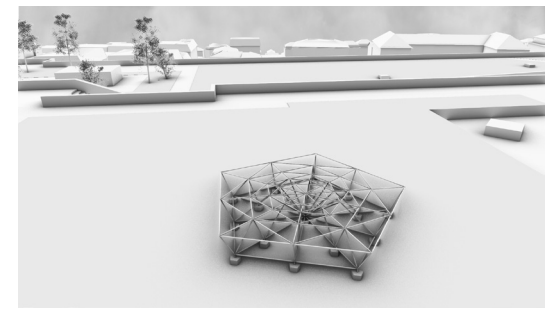
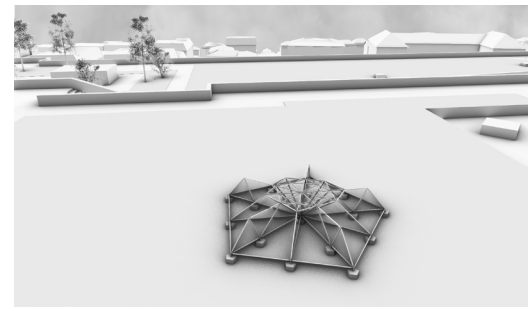
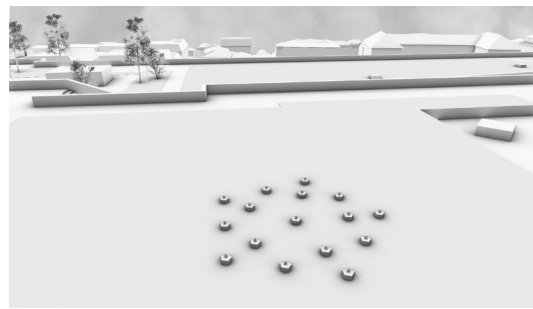
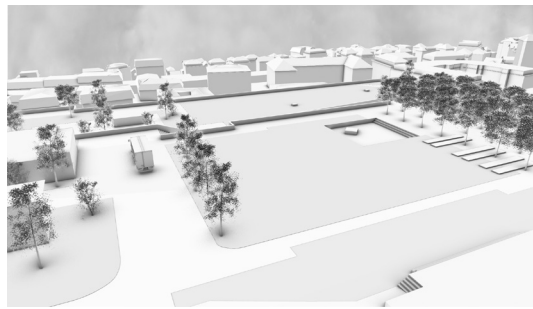


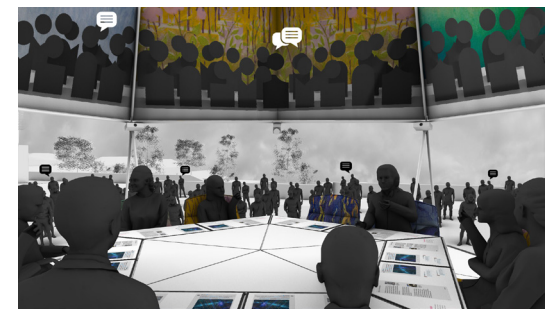
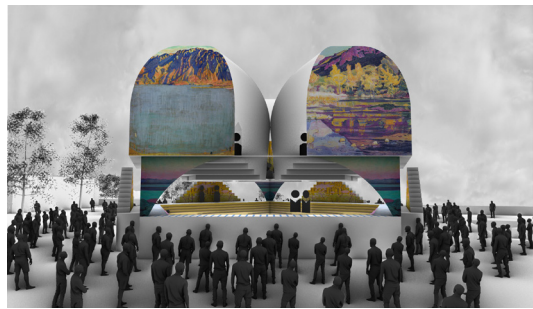
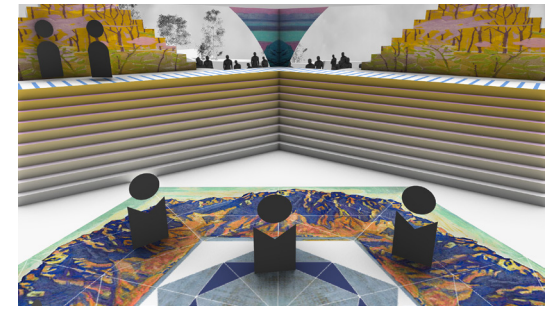
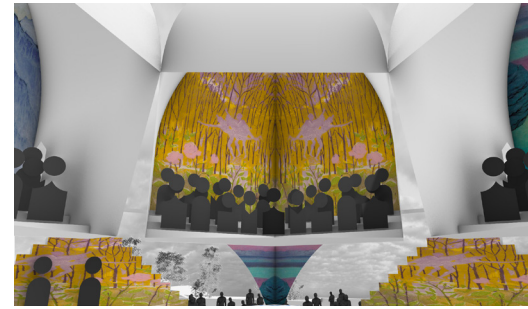
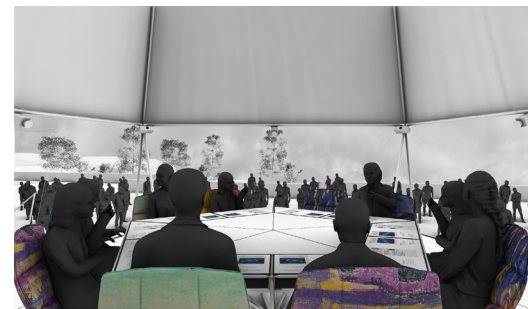
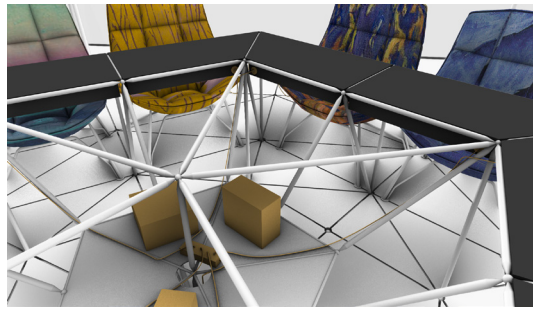
Process Timeline and hypothetical Site in Lausanne
Parc de Montbenon

After a disruptive event - which can consist of a resolution or lawful decision, a news item, or an upcoming vote - civil and political are mobilized through coordinated action and decision making. In the case of an organized public protest, the negotiation process is triggered. The parties to the conflict or crisis need to agree on a mediator, the seating order, and the location where the tent will be set up.

As an example, the following pages show a set up and the spatial organization for an assembly in Montbenon, Lausanne. The location is often an ending place for protests and marches, it has enough space and is easily accessible from the city center.









1



2



3



4



5

References

Paintings

- (1) Hodler, Ferdinand. Am Fuss des Petit Salève, 1893. Oil on canvas
- (2) Bailly, Alice. Jardin du Luxembourg, env. 1907. Gravure sur bois imprimée en trois couleurs
- (3) Hodler, Ferdinand. Peaks in the Morning, 1915. Oil on canvas
- (4) Vallotton, Félix. Meer bei Flut im Abendlicht, 1915. Oil on canvas
- (5) Hodler, Ferdinand. Grammont, 1906. Oil on canvas

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Source: Wikimedia Commons

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