

PICSEL

*A collaborative canvas — a million voices and a trained AI.
One unpredictable emergent artwork.*

Act I: A *manifesto*.

On why this moment requires more than a response. It requires a position.

THE QUESTION

A rupture that has no answer yet

Every technology that has touched the act of making has provoked the same reflex: first denial, then absorption, then reinvention. The camera did not kill painting — it liberated it from the obligation of representation and made Impressionism possible. The question was never whether the new instrument would survive. The question was always what it would force the existing order to become.

Generative artificial intelligence is a different order of rupture. Not because it is more powerful than what came before — but because, for the first time, the instrument does not merely assist the act of creation. It enters it. A system trained on the entire arc of human visual production, capable of generating something no individual human has made before, is not a tool in the traditional sense. It is a participant. And that single shift has reopened questions the art world considered closed: who is the author, what does originality require, where does authenticity reside.

The responses that have emerged so far are partial to the point of evasion. NFTs constructed an architecture of ownership without addressing what made those works worth owning. Most institutions chose silence. The commercial AI art market produced volume without necessity.

What does not yet exist is an institution that has decided to treat this rupture not as a problem to be managed, but as a material to be worked with.

That is what PICSEL is.

THE MANIFESTO

Time for change

Every significant rupture in the history of art arrived dressed as a threat. The camera was going to kill painting. The readymade was going to kill authorship. Abstraction was going to kill meaning. None of them did. Each forced a renegotiation of what art is allowed to be — and the renegotiation itself became the most generative moment in the tradition.

Artificial intelligence is not a different kind of threat. It is the same kind, at a different scale. The question it forces is older than the technology: what is original, what is authentic, and who — or what — is permitted to create?

Art history has never resolved these questions. It has only displaced them forward, into the next rupture.

Dada dismantled the logic of the art object to expose the arbitrariness of institutional taste. Duchamp's Fountain did not destroy authorship — it asked who grants it. Le Corbusier's manifestos did not describe buildings that existed — they described a way of thinking that would make certain buildings inevitable. A manifesto is never a description of the present. It is a claim on what the present makes possible.

PICSEL is that claim.

Not a claim that AI can replace the artist. A claim that the encounter between collective human intention and a system trained on 800 years of visual memory produces something neither could produce alone — and that this something deserves to be treated as art, examined as art, and preserved as art.

The fear people carry toward AI in the creative domain is not irrational. It is the correct response to a genuine uncertainty. What PICSEL proposes is not the resolution of that fear, but its transformation into material. The anxiety becomes the process. The process becomes the work.

THE GENEALOGY

What comes before PICSEL

Sol LeWitt demonstrated that the instruction can be the work — that execution is delegable without loss of meaning. Fluxus insisted that the audience does not consume art, it produces it. Nicolas Bourriaud theorized that significant contemporary art lives in the relational space between people, not in the isolated object.

Each of these gestures expanded the boundary between artist and spectator. PICSEL takes the next step: it introduces a third term into this relationship — an AI system that has absorbed 800 years of collective artistic memory and transforms diffuse human intention into coherent visual form. This is not a break with tradition. It is its logical continuation.

The concept that makes this possible is emergence. In biology, emergence describes the appearance of complex properties from the interaction of simple elements — consciousness from neurons, a murmuration from birds with no central leader. The emergent property cannot be deduced from its components. It simply appears.

The work PICSEL produces cannot be anticipated by anyone — not by the participants, not by the team that built the system. It is the product of one million individual decisions processed by a system trained on all the visual memory humanity considered important enough to preserve.

This is a form of authenticity deeper than any signature. It is the authenticity of an avalanche — structured by the system, impossible to reproduce.

WHAT PICSEL IS

A system that has seen everything. A question it cannot answer alone.

PICSEL is the first cultural institution whose core mechanism is the encounter between collective human aesthetic intention and artificial intelligence. It is not a gallery. It is not a platform. It is an institution with campaigns, a permanent archive, and a question it poses differently each time.

It is simultaneously three things:

- A living archive that grows with each campaign and permanently preserves one million individual artistic decisions from across the world.
- A cultural framework: seven campaigns, seven anthropological questions, seven works produced over years — each one unrepeatable, each one inscribed permanently.
- An institution built for longevity, not for the market cycle. Each completed campaign adds a layer that cannot be erased.

At the centre of each campaign is AION.

WHAT AION IS

The AI system at the centre of every campaign

AION is an AI system trained on 800 years of Western visual art — every major movement, rupture, and grammar of form from the fifteenth century to the twentieth. It has not been built to generate images on demand. It has been built to do something more specific: to read the aggregate of one million human aesthetic decisions and synthesize from them a single, coherent work that none of the participants could have predicted.

AION does not respond to a single prompt. It receives a mass of directives — weighted, geographic, thematic — and produces from that mass something genuinely new. It is reconfigured for each campaign with a specific directive tied to that campaign's question. The result is always different. The result is always unrepeatable.

AION is not the author of the final work. It is the third term in a relationship between collective human intention and 800 years of accumulated visual memory. The authorship is shared: AION, a human collaborating artist who co-signs each campaign, and the one million co-authors who contributed their choices.

HOW IT WORKS

The mechanism

Anyone can become a co-author of the work. The process is simple in form, profound in consequence.

A participant chooses how many pixels to purchase — each one a pixel on a canvas of one million units, each one €1. They place them on the canvas, selecting their exact position in the emerging collective work. Then they choose their fragment — a detail from a work somewhere in 800 years of art history — and make the essential decision: on a scale of 0 to 100, how much of that choice will influence the content of the final work, and how much its style.

This dichotomy — content and style are the two fundamental dimensions of any work in art theory — is not decorative. It is a real aesthetic position, conscious or not.

AION processes all received directives continuously. It sees simultaneously the geographic distribution, thematic concentrations, collective weightings. From this mass of individual intentions, it synthesizes a single work — coherent, new, impossible to anticipate.

The final work carries three types of authorship: AION, the human collaborating artist who co-signs, and the one million co-authors.

Every participant receives a digital postcard immediately after purchase — their name, country, chosen fragment, and position in the experiment permanently recorded. A receipt, a certificate, and a portrait of a decision. When the final work is complete, a second postcard arrives: the same fragment, now transformed by AION. The before and the after, side by side. What you chose, and what the system made of your choice.

THE WORK AS LAYERED

The work has four levels of reading

Macro — the painting as a whole: a work with stylistic and content coherence, produced by AION, bearing the collective imprint of one million people. This is the work sold at auction.

Intermediate — the interactive canvas: each pixel is a navigable node. Visitors can explore the geography of collective decisions, trace patterns invisible at the macro level.

Micro — the individual portrait: each pixel is the portrait of a real person — a fragment of art chosen by someone, somewhere, for a reason that belongs to them alone. One million micro-portraits that form a macro-portrait of contemporary humanity.

Temporal — the living archive: the work does not end when the painting is sold. The canvas remains permanently accessible, navigable. Every person who participated remains inscribed in the work — with their name, country, and choice.

THE 7 CAMPAIGNS

Seven questions. Seven works. One archive.

Each PICSEL campaign begins with a fundamental question about what it means to be human. AION is reconfigured for each one with a specific directive. A different collaborating artist co-signs each work.

I — The Origin Manifesto / What is the impulse that makes a human being want to create something that did not exist before?

II — The Memory Manifesto / What do we choose to keep, and what does that choice reveal about who we are?

III — The Body Manifesto / How has the human body been the first and last territory of all representation?

IV — The Conflict Manifesto / What does it look like when beauty and rupture occupy the same space?

V — The Sacred Manifesto / What do people reach for when language is no longer enough?

VI — The Future Manifesto / How do we picture what has not happened yet?

VII — The Final Manifesto / What remains when everything has been said?

The seventh campaign synthesizes all that preceded it — not as a summary, but as a distillation. AION receives its final directive: forget everything. Create from what remains after forgetting. This deliberate finitude is itself an artistic statement.

AUTHENTICITY

A new form of authenticity

Authenticity in art has been redefined multiple times. For classical painting, it was the guarantee that the master's hand had touched the canvas. For conceptual art, it belonged to the idea, not the execution. For NFTs, it was guaranteed cryptographically.

AION proposes the authenticity of emergence.

The work is authentic not because someone signed it, not because a certificate exists — but because it is the evidence of a unique and unrepeatable process. You cannot recreate the same one million decisions by the same people. You cannot reproduce the exact historical, cultural and personal conditions that determined each choice.

This is not a marketing claim. It is a structural constraint of the system.

FIRST OF ITS KIND

What makes this work unprecedented

There are categories of significance in art history that are assigned retroactively — and categories that can be established at the moment of creation. This work belongs to both.

— An intrinsic value of €1,000,000 before any market evaluation. Each of the one million pixels carries a cost of €1. The canvas, fully completed, represents a collective investment of one million euros in a single work — before a single critic has written about it, before it enters any auction room. No painting in the traditional sense arrives at market with this structure of embedded, documented, distributed value.

— The first work of art generated by a substantial human collective in direct dialogue with AI. Not curated by one artist using AI as a tool. Not produced by AI alone. Generated from one million individual aesthetic decisions — each a real choice, each permanently inscribed — synthesized by a system trained on the full arc of Western visual tradition. The authorship structure has no precedent.

— The first AI system to operate as an interpreter of collective artistic will rather than an executor of individual instruction. AION does not respond to a single prompt. It reads the aggregate of one million directives — weighted, geographic, thematic — and produces from that aggregate something none of the participants could have predicted.

— The first permanently navigable collective canvas. The work is not a static image. It is a territory of one million nodes, each with its own before and after, each tied to a real person, a real country, a real decision. The canvas is simultaneously the process and the archive of the process.

These are not marketing distinctions. They are structural properties of the mechanism — properties that cannot be replicated by repeating the gesture, because the gesture depends on its moment of emergence.

The first time is always the only time.

Act III: *The institution.*

On what outlasts the work.

THE INSTITUTION

Not a project. An institution.

The difference between a project and an institution is not one of scale — it is one of intention and time.

A project has an end. An institution has a cycle. PICSEL is built with deliberate finitude — seven campaigns, seven years, a permanent archive — but each step is designed to add a layer that cannot be erased: a completed campaign, a work in a collection, one million documented co-authors, a festival presence, a published curatorial text.

The reference model is not a gallery or a digital platform. It is closer to the Ars Electronica Center in Linz — a permanent space dedicated to art, technology and society, housing both its own collection and temporary exhibitions. In the long term, a PICSEL space can exist in Bucharest, Berlin or Amsterdam.

The cultural institutions that will define the 21st century are being founded now.

TIMING

The window is now

There are moments when an idea and a context meet with precision. This is one of them.

AI technology for image generation has reached genuine artistic maturity — five years ago it was not possible, in five years it will be so commonplace that the question can no longer be posed with the same urgency.

The digital art market is searching for legitimacy and substance after the fever and partial collapse of NFTs. Serious collectors and cultural institutions are receptive to projects with a solid narrative and a genuine mechanism of authenticity.

There is no equivalent institution anywhere in the world. The territory is not empty — it is waiting. And in cultural history, the institutions that arrive first with conviction do not merely occupy a space. They define what that space means.

THE INVITATION

What we are looking for

We are not looking for capital and we are not looking for validation. We are looking for people who understand that building a cultural institution in 2025 is not a philanthropic act — it is an act of positioning ahead of a moment that history will recognize retroactively.

We are looking for curatorial partners to contribute to formulating each campaign's questions and selecting its collaborating artists.

We are looking for institutions — museums, cultural centers, universities — to host the physical installations and become part of the living archive.

We are looking for investors with a minimum 3–5 year horizon, with networks in art, culture or technology, and with tolerance for the risk of creation — not speculation.

If you have read to the last slide and find yourself asking the same question we are asking, that is the sign we have something to discuss.

