

Press release: opening of the architectural installation **Phyllotaxis**, by Australian designer, Kerwin Datu in conjunction with the Velvet Box exhibition, “The Awakening” Mercado de la Ribera, Bilbao, Spain, Friday, September 28, 2007

The architectural installation, *Phyllotaxis*, will be opening in the Mercado de la Ribera (Riverside Market) in Bilbao, Spain, at 8.00pm Friday, September 28, 2007, in conjunction with VELVET BOX’s inaugural touring exhibition, “The Awakening”.

The *Phyllotaxis*, designed and constructed by Australian designer Kerwin Datu and extending over some 300m² in the upper hall of the market building, will be built to house works of painting, drawing, illustration, sculpture, installation, photography, video, design and fashion by some twenty young artists and designers drawn from across Europe.

The *Phyllotaxis* proposes a new kind of spatial environment in which to encounter art, whereby the architecture does not recede from the works but aggressively encloses the works within a dense field of columns, elevating the viewing of the exhibition as a whole to an artistic experience in its own right.

The installation, built from cardboard tube columns and timber beams, responds to Velvet Box’s brief for a kind of temple to art, a space that embodies the spirituality, sincerity and professionalism upon which the association has been founded, while still respecting its infinitesimal four-figure budget and being easily transportable from one location to another.

The exhibition will be open in the Mercado de la Ribera, calle de la Ribera, 48005 Bilbao, from 10am to 2pm, and 4.30pm to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. It will close after its last day on Friday, November 30, 2007, before moving to its second location in Spain.

About Kerwin Datu

While working for a number of Sydney practices from 1998, Kerwin Datu concurrently completed his studies in architecture at the University of Technology, Sydney, in 2004, with first class honours. Moving to France in 2005, Kerwin Datu worked in a number of international practices, notably the Pritzker prizewinning Atelier Christian de Portzamparc, and began his collaboration with the Velvet Box association.

About Velvet Box

Velvet Box is an international association of young artists coming together to developing innovative cross-disciplinary events and projects. From exhibitions and festivals, to magazine editorials and merchandising, the heart of all its activities is a desire to make good art accessible to the public, to find young artists, give them greater exposure, and combine their talents to create events to capture the public imagination, ultimately adding to the vitality of the arts scene across Europe.

For more information on the *Phyllotaxis* or the Velvet Box exhibition “The Awakening” please contact:

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Architectural description

A *field of columns* condenses the space by filling it with innumerate discrete volumes; our eyes and our paces do not dart across the space but mete out its depth slowly, column by column. The geometry of *phyllotaxis*– the mathematics governing the head of a pine cone or the petals of a flower – is at once founded on the most irrational value in number theory, and at the same time one of the most common orderly patterns found in nature. This geometry gives to the plan of the columns a sense of abundance, of fluidity and organism; the complexity of its overlapping curves fills the space with beautiful energy.

Where this geometry naturally degrades towards its centre, it makes way for the typology of the *temple* and *sanctuary*. In a temple, the sanctuary is the centre of a spatial order that orients all that surrounds it. As we circulate around this place, we are aware of this order, it gives us to read and appreciate the installation as an artistic whole. As we move in this way, the space and the works within it are the objects of our perception.

As we move toward the centre, the presence of the order intensifies in our consciousness, heightening our awareness of ourselves at the focal point. At the centre, the centripetal force of the surrounding spaces contains us within the sanctuary, giving us to rest, to reflect, to discuss. Here, our own consciousness becomes the object of our perception. By establishing this pattern of perception, the sanctuary will bring different visitors into prolonged contact, enough to start conversation and open up each other's thoughts, discuss each other's visions of the future.

Images

Photos of the *Phyllotaxis* are available on the web page <http://thediagramofeverything.com/phyllotaxis.html>

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