

Press release

November 27, 2008

## Virtu-Real goes Tokyo

By: studio un/real + TEAM

Client: The Swedish Institute

Quality of Life - the Design of Swedish Innovations, December 8, 2008 - January 14, 2009  
Swedish Embassy, Tokyo, Japan (and Second House of Sweden Sim, Second Life)

**Tokyo, Japan – With their latest new media architecture installation, architects Daiki Kobayashi and Michael Matèrn, continue to stretch the boundaries between real and virtual space. They will be part of “Quality of Life - the Design of Swedish Innovations”, an exhibition at the Swedish Embassy in Tokyo, opening on December 8.**

The young Swedish-Japanese duo, known by their alter egos of Mr Kobayashi & Mr Matèrn, together form the architecture firm studio un/real. They work together with +TEAM, a creative platform for architects, designers and other creatives.

“We really try to give the visitors an experience of a unique atmosphere of being in between the hard, vector-produced digital computer world and our soft and very tactile DNA-based everyday life,” says Kobayashi, the Japanese half of studio un/real.

The site specific installation, the second of four commissioned by the Swedish Institute, a public agency promoting Sweden abroad, plays with the perception of 2D and 3D space. Through an interface of body movements and mobile phones, visitors can interact in a space in between the real and the virtual

“The Virtu-Real concept is basically about trying to merge virtual and real life in a spatial way. When you physically move in real life, you also move in relation to the virtual world, thus creating a new kind of spatial interface,” explains Matèrn, the Swedish half of studio un/real. By using the traditional methods of perspective painting as a textile 3D collage (instead of on a flat canvas plane), it is the inevitable continuation of concepts such as Murakami’s Superflat ideas and the post-modern database.

This 3D-goes-2D surface is then hardwired into an online virtual world. As visitors become the 'Final Artist', using both digital and analog tools and codes, the installation reassembles the whole event into a representation of the ultimate database: Virtu-Real.

Although only an addition to an existing exhibition space in the Swedish embassy in Tokyo, the installation creates a new way to interact with the virtual online world of Second Life and its users. By walking around this 4 x 14 meter interactive textile collage, visitors can not only look into, but actually through the online virtual space and back into the real embassy again.

Visitors can also send text messages from their mobile phones into the virtual continuation of this space and communicate with exhibition visitors inside Second Life, who can text back into real space. The messages sent into Second Life will be displayed as 3D objects in the virtual world, at the same time the text messages sent from inside Second Life will be projected onto the surface of the installation in the embassy. Video streaming will also allow visitors in both Second Life and the real-life embassy to see each other. With the use of traditional Scandinavian arts and crafts material, such as felt and paper, for the real life exhibition space addition, studio un/real + TEAM designed, engineered and constructed the installation on site in a true database spirit.

Press photos available for download as of December 8 at: [www.studiounreal.com/tokyo](http://www.studiounreal.com/tokyo)  
(preview 3D-rendering available for download as of now at: [www.studiounreal.com/preview](http://www.studiounreal.com/preview))

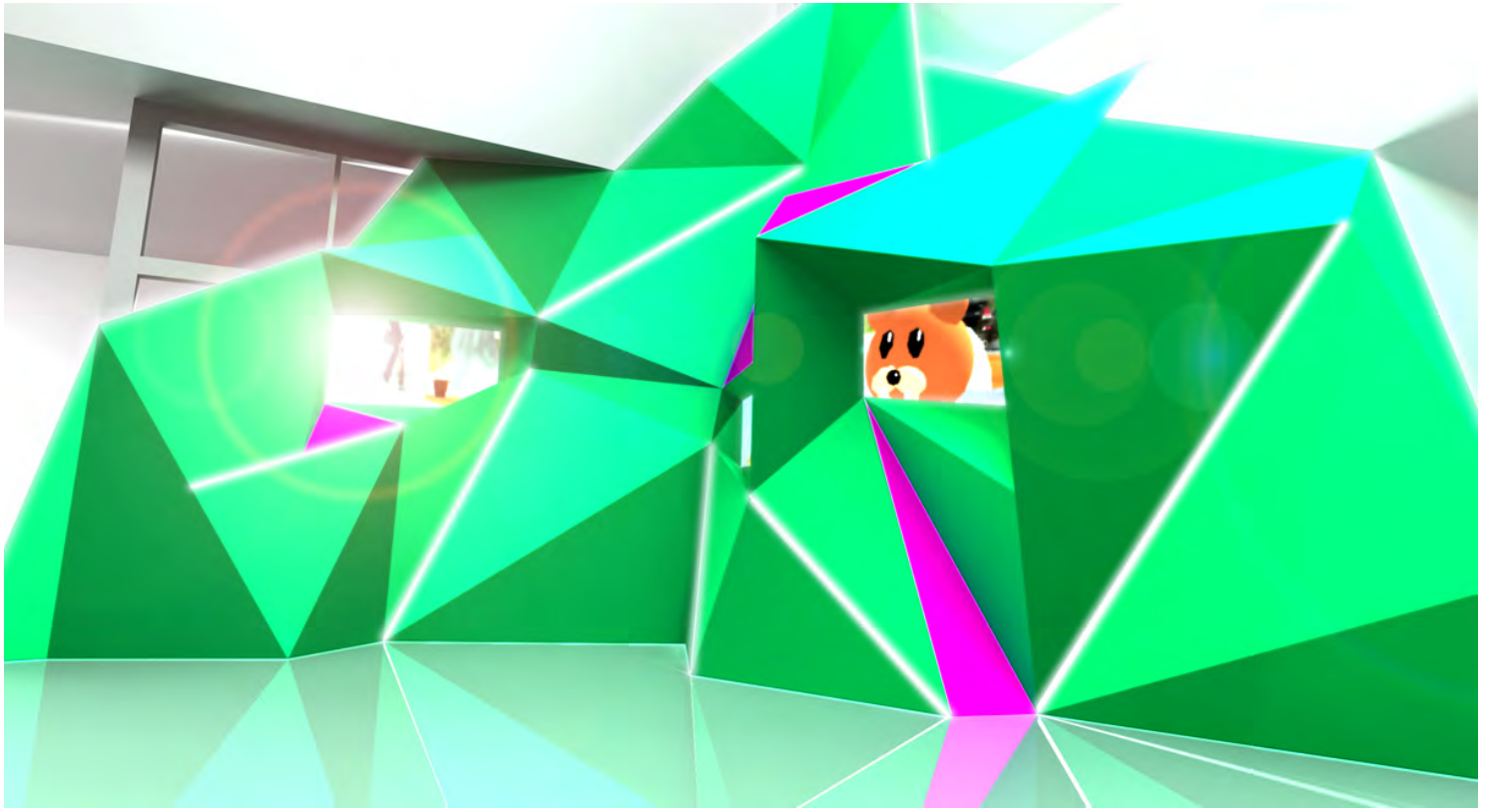
Sponsor: Kvadrat Sanden

For more information about the members of +TEAM, see: [www.studiounreal.com/TEAM](http://www.studiounreal.com/TEAM)

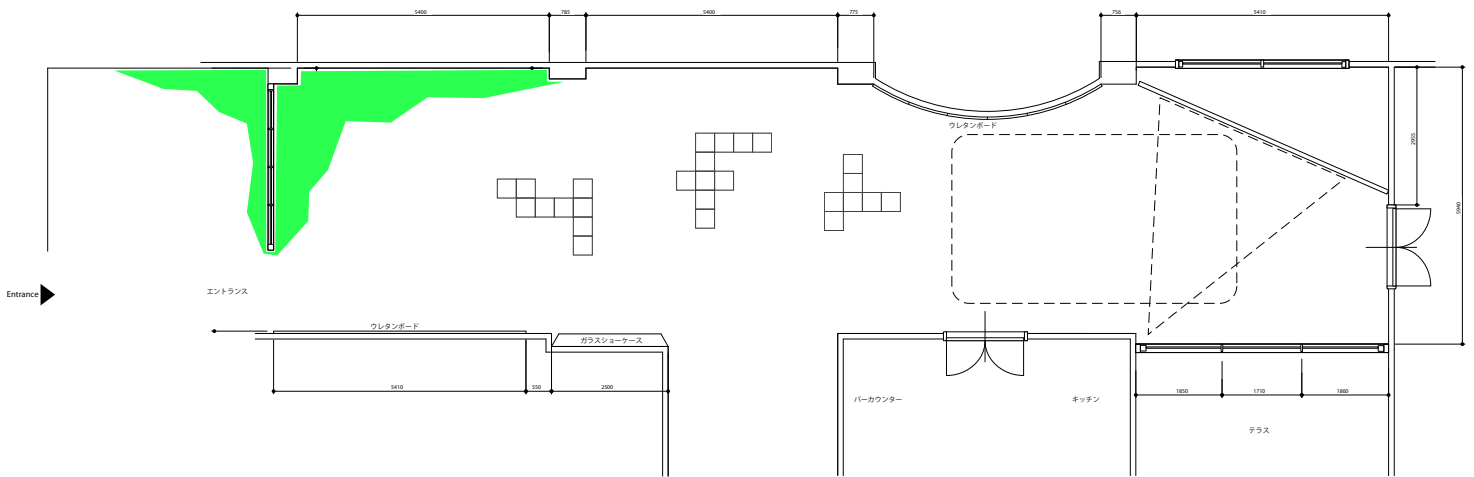
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Preview picture, rendered from actual 3D drawings.  
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Preview plan.  
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