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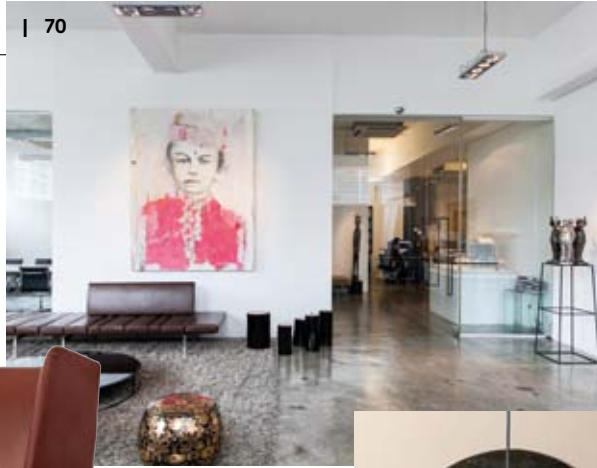
 **SINGAPORE INDESIGN** The Event Sat 4 Oct 2014
singaporeindesign.com.sg

TAKENOUCHI WEBB'S ASIAN ADAPTATION

MILAN DESIGN WEEK 2014 | SUYING METROPOLITAN STUDIO | SILICON STRAITS CO.LAB
BY OUTFSTOCK | SILVERKRIS LOUNGE BY ONG&ONG | WEE HOUSE BY HCF AND ASSOCIATES

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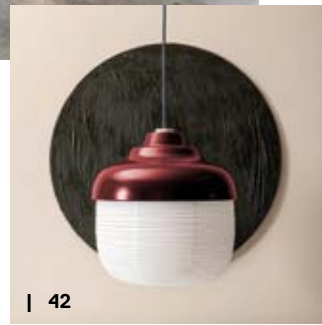
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CURATED SPECTACLE



MINISTRY OF DESIGN'S REFURBISHMENT OF THE TANGS FLAGSHIP STORE ON ORCHARD ROAD RE-IMAGINES THE STORE'S ROLE AS A CURATOR OF RETAIL.

TEXT » FELICIA TOH
PHOTOGRAPHY » EDWARD HENDRICKS,
COURTESY OF MINISTRY OF DESIGN



DESIGNING FOR PROJECTS with a rich history is as daredevil an endeavour as walking a tight-rope. On one end you have the weight of an authentic narrative to uphold, and on the other there is the need to re-imagine and make relevant that history within the modern. In the redesign of the Tangs flagship store on Orchard Road, Ministry of Design (MOD) deftly manages to tread that line while keeping these two poles in tension, as it has done in the past with heritage projects such as Club Hotel at Ann Siang Road and Macalister Mansion in Penang, Malaysia.

Anchoring the busy intersection of Scotts and Orchard Road, the signature red, tiered, pagoda-like roof of Tangs Plaza is unmistakable. MOD cleverly

references this by introducing a glossy crimson ceiling at the main entrance that sweeps down from the roof in fractal form. "The facets were inspired by the structural ribs and beams of the heritage Chinese roof and act as a visual continuation of the language of lines," notes Colin Seah, principal of MOD.

The use of bold, chromatic geometries with a certain tongue-in-cheek finesse is characteristic of what the practice brings to the plate. But MOD's strength lies not merely in spatial design but also in something more fundamental – conceptual rethinking of what a brand represents.

The commission began not with a spatial brief

Above: The existing fiery red columns and stone plinths were incorporated into the faceting ceiling's design

typically issued in any interior design project, but with a four-month strategy study exercise. The question raised by Tangs was essentially: *In a market saturated with thriving high street fashion labels, how can we reinvent ourselves?*

During the four-month study, MOD worked closely with key stakeholders from all departments of Tangs to identify current problems, strengths and analyse various trajectories that iconic multi-label retailers like Liberty, Selfridges (London), 10 Corso Como (Milan), and Colette (Paris) had taken. What were some of the key findings? “Chiefly, the heritage element was key to Tangs’ identity and presence amidst the Singaporean scene. We saw that Tangs could play the role of a ‘curator’ much more strongly, as opposed to being just a generic faceless department store,” Seah notes.

This led to a massive coordination effort involving all the retailers and Tangs’ management to rebrand the retail environment through careful editing. In opposition to conventional beauty halls featuring ubiquitous rows of loose furniture and display modules, the Tangs Beauty Hall comprises a series of sinuous three-dimensional pods that allow each brand to inhabit the floor, ceiling and everything in between. This was remarkable considering that high-end retailers like Chanel, Tom Ford and Burberry had to be galvanised to task, invariably evoking the question: *Do you mean you want us to customise our shelves for you? We’ve not done that before.* To their credit, the retailers and the Tangs team rose to the occasion and customised shelves and displays to perfectly fit their brand identities.

Central to the concept of curatorship was the introduction of stages, the largest of which is right at the main entry way,” Seah explains. This ‘Centrestage’ is flanked by full-height window displays that are angled to funnel views as well as pedestrians towards the store entrance, and are large enough to allow ‘live’ displays within. Seah says, “We wanted to create an environment that is not merely a space to shop but a layering of experiences. Window displays are not static, but treated as a three-dimensional stage, which can be used dynamically and thematically.” Through the centrestage and large window displays, Tangs was envisioned as a curator of immersive experiences that continually entertain, excite and evolve.

When asked if their experience as shoppers themselves influenced the design, the fashion-savvy Seah enthuses, “We do love our fashion! I think the precedents we gravitated towards in our research were all venues we loved personally.” The people must agree. Freshly re-opened in early 2013, the Tangs redesign has already garnered two wins within the year: ‘Best Retail Concept of the Year’ and ‘Best Shopping Experience’ by the Singapore Retail Association and Singapore Experience Awards respectively.



TANGS FLAGSHIP STORE

CLIENT C.K. Tang Limited
INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM Ministry of Design
PROJECT TEAM Colin Seah, Kevin Leong, Ron Sim, Joyce Low, Don Washington Castaneda, Dennis Cheok, Tan Qingling, Julie Djohan, Dora Tokai, Joanne Pang, Charissa Ho, Bryan Law, Allan Veloso, Lolleth Alejandro
ARCHITECTURE FIRM Aedas
BUILDER SEF Construction Pte Ltd
C&S ENGINEER T.Y. Lin International
M&E ENGINEER Bescon Consulting Engineers
QUANTITY SURVEYOR Langdon & Seah Pte Ltd
LIGHTING CONSULTANT Bo Steiber Lighting Design

TIME TO COMPLETE 10 Months
TOTAL FLOOR AREA 1,500sqm

MINISTRY OF DESIGN
 (65) 6222 5780 modonline.com

FINISHES
 Entrance and Centre Stage Flooring is Honed Finish ‘Hebei Black’ Granite, Beauty Hall Flooring is Compressed ‘Bianco

Venus’ Marble in Polished Finish, Facade Stone Cladding is ‘Shanxi Black’ Granite in Fine Water Jet Finish, Toilet Finishes is Homogeneous ‘Grey Lappato’ Tiles and Glass Mosaics, All from Surface Stone. Centre Stage Ceiling and Wall Finish is High Gloss Red Spray Paint Polished on MDF Board by SEF Construction with Paint from Nippon Paint. Facade Glass Doors and Fixed Double-Glazed Units from Singapore Safety Glass. Feature Columns at Centre Stage and Secondary Entrances is Stainless Steel in Reflective Mirror Finish from Nisshin Metal Services. Beauty Hall Ceiling Finished with White Matt Paint from Nippon Paint and High Gloss Adhesives Custom Designed by MOD and Made by SEF Construction. In Toilets, Cubicle Door Powdered Oak Laminate from Formica, Doors in Stainless Steel Reflective Mirror Finish from Nisshin Metal Services, Glass Mosaics from Unlimited Enterprises, Polyflor Expona Design Vinyl Planks with Timber Pattern from Floorspec.

FIXED AND FITTED
 Centre Stage Video Wall Samsung LED Panels from Pave System, Central Void

Escalators from Kone. In Toilets, Sanitary Wares, Fittings and Accessories from Rigel Technology (S), Customised Vanity Basin in LG Hi-Macs Solid Surface with Integrated Bin Clad in Mosaic Finish by SEF Construction.

LIGHTING
 Generally Throughout, Lighting Designed by Bo Steiber, Supplied by Lightcraft.

Floorspec Pte Ltd (65) 6484 5550 floorspec.com.sg **Formica (Singapore) Pte Ltd** (65) 6514 1313 formica.com.sg **Lightcraft Pte Ltd** (65) 6297 6658 lightcraft.com.sg **Kone** 6424 6246 kone.sg **Nippon Paint** (65) 6265 5355 nipponpaint.com.sg **Nisshin Metal Services Pte Ltd** (65) 6861 0544 nims.com.sg **Rigel Technology (S) Pte Ltd** (65) 6844 0660 rigel.com.sg **Pave System Pte Ltd** (65) 6344 8086 pave.com.sg **SEF Construction** (65) 6100 1188 **Singapore Safety Glass** (65) 6861 5530 ssg.com.sg **Surface Stone Pte Ltd** (65) 6281 7800 surfacestone.com.sg **Unlimited Enterprises Pte Ltd** (65) 6298 5713 unlimite.com.sg

Top: The different treatment of the escalator portal from the entrance and beauty hall booths highlights it as a threshold between zones

Bottom: Curved walls at the toilets’ entrances echo the fluid lines of the beauty hall booths