Synopsis:

Consumerism is a dominant force in the shaping of our built environment. It is the ideology of capitalism, based on the notion of commodity exchange - be it the circulation of products, forms of entertainment or ideas, all of which are embodiments and reflections of the contemporary cultural or societal views.

The vehicle of this thesis is a Contemporary Design Centre in Orchard Road, at the junction of Cairnhill Road. The Contemporary Design Centre aims to inject a cultural dimension into Orchard Road by utilizing the notion of consumerism – that is the act of buying and selling, which dominates the relationships along this commercial, shopping and tourist street.

The design takes on the idea of the 'body' and the 'skin' – the 'skin' being the exterior, the outer layer that wraps around the 'body', branding, labelling and packaging the product so that it could be marketed and consumed. It is the layer of seduction that arouses the desires of the consumers. The 'skin' is ephemeral in nature – its structure allows for flexibility and change, thereby functioning as window display that reflects the content of the 'body'. Spatially, it forms new relationships between the commodity, display space and the consumer. Functionally, the 'body' is where the consumer views/fits/test the products (consumer as spectator) and the 'skin' is where he could purchase the product through an electronic buying system (consumer as spectacle - to be seen as part of the window display).

There is an intended blurring of the conceptual difference between a work of art and a mass-produced commodity by selling and displaying limited edition of designer's product, complete with certification from the artist, together with the mass-produced products. Hence, culture and consumption are no longer seen as separate and antithetical realms of daily life. Public awareness of good designs is encouraged
through participation and consumption, by converging education, leisure and shopping into a single experience. The Contemporary Design Centre offers the consumer products of good design; creative and innovative ideas; spatial experience for exploration, consumption, to see and be seen and rental space for display, launching of products and functions.