Thesis Abstract

This thesis aims to redefine the art institution both contextually and architecturally, in the midst of a nation's aspiration to be a Renaissance City. Contextually, it attempts to intervene the contemporary and adapt the heritage. Architecturally, it attempts to break the traditional notion of an art space.

There are pre-established mindsets¹ as to what and where an art institution should be. The thesis aims to question these mindsets. This is very important and critical because it asks the question, "What should we build for the Arts next?" Are we going to build more Singapore Art Museums and Esplanades? If not, what?

EH CoCA is built on a canvas of issues:

1. **Art vs City**: The role of art in the consumerist society of the spectacle².
2. **Art vs Art**: The blurring of the lines separating art disciplines.
3. **Art vs Public**: The relationship of art and the people.

EH CoCA is envisaged to be a multi-disciplinary art centre fronting Orchard Road. The architecture consists of a sequence of interlocking spaces that alternate between art space and social spaces creating a sense of spatial fluidity that facilitate the experience and interaction of art. These spaces have a dual characteristic, its transparency towards Orchard Road let it takes on a metaphor of a "Gazed House" to display revealing and exhibiting art to the eyes of the public, instilling related confidence and pride. Contrasting this exhibitionist quality is a contemplative and meditative atmosphere that revolves in the art making spaces of the centre.  The adjacent and adapted buildings of the former SCGS (Singapore Chinese Girls' School). Despite its antithetical differences, the qualities are compliment and dependent on each other, constituting to an inseparable whole of the art center.

In brief, EH CoCA aims to engage and redefine the city; the "consumerist society of the spectacle" and to create an ideal environment for the interaction of people and art, based on the principle that the creation, production and experience of art is a natural continuum.

¹ *Mindset No. 1*: Art should be in the Civic District.  *Mindset No. 2*: Art establishments should be monodisciplinary.

² In *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), Guy Debord theorised that capitalism has evolved such that the commodity is no longer the predominant form of social life, but that society has become engulfed in it contemplation and consumption of images as spectacle.