

CUBES

#99 – Emotive Spaces



SKP_S by SYBARITE, Gentle Monster and SKP
Auro K90 & Cation in P+H
Aman Kyoto, by Kerry Hill Architects
Sustainability in Hotel Design
Emotive Spaces

POWERED BY INDESIGNLIVE.SG

CONTENTS

CHECKLIST

Getting you up to speed on the latest and greatest.

COMMUNITY

Conversations with creative thinkers.

MinaabMaster, Wisk Collaborative, Onlin, AuroKO

CASE STUDIES

The shape of ideas in buildings and spaces.

Aman Kyoto, by Kerry Hill Architects with

Toyo Architects & Engineers Office

Geleong Concept Store, by Studio 10

Yi by Jerome Leung for Raffles Hotel, by Aedas Interiors

SKP_S by SYBARITE, Gentle Monster and SKP

A Simple Headquarters, by Pencil Office with

TEAM DESIGN Architects

Samsen STREET Hotel, by CHAT architects

The Quiet Room, by Lekker Architects

CRITIQUE

How can we benefit from deeper engagement with place and people?

CURIOSITY

What can we gain from virtual experiences of physical sites?

INDESIGNLIVE.SG

CASE STUDIES

One Giant Leap

SKP_S by SYBARITE, Gentle Monster and SKP

Words Mandi Keighran. Photography Gentle Monster, unless otherwise stated

In an art space on the first floor, the *Future Farm* installation presents a barn full of robotic sheep that unnervingly move and behave like their flesh-and-blood counterparts.

The experimental SKP_S department store in Beijing boldly combines commercial and non-commercial spaces to redefine the retail experience. Are you ready for the brave new future of retail design? Here's how SKP, SYBARITE and Gentle Monster imagine it.

In China last year, 35.3 per cent of retail sales occurred online, representing a global trend away from bricks and mortar retail experiences. As a result, engaging shoppers in store is becoming an increasingly avant garde art – one that SKP, one of China's most luxurious department stores, is leading the way in with the recent opening of SKP_S. With architecture by SYBARITE and creative direction and interior design by cult South Korean eyewear brand Gentle Monster (in collaboration with SYBARITE), the four-floor, 19,000-square-metre department store is truly out of this world, representing a bold new vision for how retailers can engage consumers.

SKP_S is located in a converted building opposite the more traditional SKP store, and it was essential that the architecture both related to the existing brand and set it apart as a more experimental space. While both stores have a timeless architecture that acts as a backdrop for flexible retail spaces, SKP_S challenges what retail will be in the future.

"This required an innovative architecture to match such a brave retail offering," says Simon Mitchell, co-founder of SYBARITE, which has been working with SKP for seven years. "It needed to be unique and hold the customer's attention – the dichroic tunnel, the oculus and the use of space-like materiality are a few examples of this."

While the building is familiar from the outside – with materials, an architectural curve and branding that have been used in previous SKP buildings – as soon as visitors step inside, they are transported to

another dimension in which a futuristic Martian environment has been realised in exacting detail with a dizzying mix of commercial and non-commercial spaces.

Gentle Monster was involved in almost every aspect of the interior, from planning and branding to the design and construction of major spaces on each floor. "This innovative shopping space incites an anticipation for the future as well as nostalgia for the past, redefining the retail experience for visitors," says a spokesperson from the brand. "Our goal was to design an iconic department store that is a must-see spot for tourists visiting Beijing, as well as locals."

Visitors enter SKP_S through a non-commercial experimental art space with rotating installations and brand pop-ups. The inaugural installation is *Future Farm* by Gentle Monster, a faithful reproduction of an old-fashioned sheep farm, rendered uncanny beneath a bright ceiling of light. The sheep, of course, are not real but robots. Designed as a museum-like space, it is theatrical yet intimate – almost the opposite of the bright, white spaces we have come to expect in department stores.

The first floor is also home to the cosmetics section – themed around *Beauty of the Future* – which playfully examines what the aesthetic trends of Mars might be. Towering white figures, video screens and plant displays surround the different zones, which offer various beauty experiences.



The building's materiality and curvature immediately speak of the SKP brand. The building is flanked by powerful architecture and notable government buildings so it was important for SKP_S to be of a benchmark quality. Photo by Noah Sheldon.

The second floor is immediately lighter than the first, with terrazzo, polished concrete and backlit glass vitrines showcasing cult streetwear alongside emerging brands. Gentle Monster imagined the space as a surreal Martian environment, with Xu Zhen's sculptures and Daniel Rozin's kinetic penguins interacting within the artificial landscape of the future.

On the third floor, visitors are transported through a tunnel of translucent dichroic glass into a domed environment that features a constantly changing virtual 'window' into space. The contrasting themes of *Anticipation and Fear of the Developing Digital World* and *Longing for the Lost Analog World* have been explored here – a concept that could easily be read as an analogy for the way consumers feel about how the retail industry is changing.

Art installations punctuate this floor, drawing visitors through the space. Fashion brands are housed in a mixture of futuristic pods and store fronts, akin to a space station, with backlit LED lighting, wall-clad cushioning, and various mesh and woven finishes.

"SKP_S is an ever-changing landscape," says Mitchell. "Each floor has a different feeling and perspective, and the objective is to gradually immerse the customer in this world, all the way until they reach full immersion in the Mars zone."

There's no doubt that shoppers will spend more time navigating – and Instagramming – the maze of artworks and experiences at SKP_S than they would in a more traditional retail environment. And the more time spent in store, the more chance there is that money will be spent, meaning that we are likely to see an increasing number of major retailers following in SKP's footsteps in the coming years.

"We think it is important for department stores to provide experiential spaces to consumers in addition to transactional functions," says Gentle Monster. "Reducing functional areas might be thought to reduce business, however we believe the balance of maintaining both commercial and non-commercial spaces may be key to long-term business."

gentlemonster.com
sybarite.com

Third-Storey Axonometric

First-Storey Axonometric

Legend: 1 Entrance | 2 Information Desk | 3 Office Tower Entrance | 4 Future Farm | 5 Art Installation – Robot Arm | 6 Art Display Vitrine | 7 Retail Anchor | 8 Escalator | 9 Lift | 10 Retail Anchor | 11 3D-Printed Dome | 12 Dichroic Corridor | 13 Dichroic Tunnel | 14 Art Installation – Diorama | 15 Art Installation – Warehouse | 16 Art Installation – Radar | 17 Art Installation – Spaceship Docking | 18 Art Installation – Curiosity Zone | 19 Art Installation – Mars Scene Wall | 20 Escalator | 21 Stairs to Second Storey | 22 WC.

A Lasting Relationship

SYBARITE has been working with SKP for seven years and has seen the brand grow into one of the world's most successful department stores, second only to Harrods. The British firm is responsible for inventing the branding and creating the architectural vocabulary synonymous with SKP across all stores. The SKP curve is what links all of the buildings but it has subtly evolved with each new store. It is important that the customer reads this SKP language from the outset as it is part of the heritage that SYBARITE has created for SKP and it sets the expectation immediately.

On the third floor, *Mars Rediscovery* depicts a new species of digitalised humans examining their history through past media and relics of the first settlement on Mars.