

ARCHITECTURE

Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia
PROJECT 1, part 2

INFO SESSION — 24 May 2012
16.00–17.00h, ETH HIL E 71

THE HINTERLANDS



ASSISTANT PROF — Milica Topalovic
TEAM — Martin Knüsel, Marcel Jäggi
PROGRAM — Design Research Studio
with a Fieldtrip, and Thesis Elective

WHERE — Future Cities Lab, Singapore
WHEN — 17 September–21 December 2012
PLACES — 8–10
APPLY BY — 29 June 2012

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OF TERRITORY

The HS 2012 program consists of two integrated courses enabling students to focus on territorial research and design during the semester. The common theme of the hinterlands will be approached from different perspectives, from fieldwork and architectural and urban analysis, to theory and visual media.

Design Research Studio
THE HINTERLANDS:
RESOURCES

Prof Milica Topalovic, Martin Knüsel, Marcel Jäggi

After its independence in the early 1960s, it had looked like Singapore, with no natural hinterland and material resources, has little chance of survival. Today, on the surface at least, the sparkling metropolis appears to defy limitations. Owing to its open economy and function as an entrepôt, vital resources including labour, energy and food

are being supplied from the outside. No doubt, Singapore's excessively controlled and technologically oriented urban model represents a specific answer to its restricted context. Looking further, across the city-state's borders, it is apparent that Singapore's economy uses land and labour far beyond its 680 square kilometres territorial limits. Its strategic hinterlands (agriculture zones, water sources, sand quarries, etc) are found anywhere from the neighbouring areas of Malaysia and Indonesia, to sites in Cambodia, China and the Middle East. The studio will investigate and describe Singapore's territorial impact, the characteristics of its hinterlands, and the politics of resources of the global city.

PROCESS AND RESULT

During 2012, the project on the hinterlands evolves in two stages. After the investigation into Singapore region's productive territories during the spring term, in the fall we will look at the same region from the perspective of

resources. The work will be brought together into a common book.

Thesis Elective Video
(Mobility Course / Mobilitätsfach)
IMAGES OF TERRITORY

Assistant Professorship with Guests

How to see, describe and even construct an urban space through moving images? Looking through the camera lens and sampling what we see into a video reportage, we will explore Singapore's fragmented borderlands. At the same time, the explorations will lead to questions on the cultural aesthetics and the hidden ideologies of images. The video work is closely tied to the territory; a moving image and a plan or a map, are considered as complementary ways of seeing urban space. The work will be developed in collaboration with invited filmmakers from Singapore.

Cities have, throughout history, functioned as centers of political and economic power, from which the agricultural and resource-rich hinterlands were managed and controlled. The dichotomy center-periphery (rural-urban, city-countryside, etc) has laid the basis of urban culture in general. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, new technologies, transportation modes and the opening of trade have introduced a remarkable complexity and an increase of physical distances in the relationship between cities and hinterlands. Less and less it is thought, cities rely on surrounding territories for supply and subsistence. Instead, they seem emancipated from the constraints of geography, operating in a global web of dependencies: global cities are said to have global hinterlands. These are the conditions where the access to resources and labor, and even the distance between the sites of production and consumption, are being reconsidered in their economic, political and ethical dimensions.

At first glance, the island city-state of Singapore is the city without a hinterland. Certainly it is the city whose productive territories lie beyond

the national borders. The access to resources, land, drinking water, energy and labor has been profoundly important for Singapore since its independence in 1959. On the one hand, these apparent restrictions have proven to foster innovation in urban development, for which Singapore has become known. On the other hand, economical incorporation of proximate areas in Malaysia and Indonesia has remained both a necessity and a profitable opportunity. The momentous growth found at Singapore's borders – at the convergence of foreign investment with inexpensive land and labor – is marked by less transparent rules. The politics of control of flows of people and goods has imposed an urban geography of sharp differences.

During 2012, the tri-national metropolitan region of Singapore serves as the paradigmatic research case. Starting from the base in Singapore at the Future Cities Laboratory, we will traverse the borders toward the islands of the Indonesian Riau Archipelago, the Malaysian region of Johor and beyond, to investigate the links and the dependences between the global city and its hinterlands.

ARCHITECTURE OF TERRITORY is a long-term research program of the new Assistant Professorship of Architecture and Territorial Planning. Based at the FCL in Singapore until 2015, every year we will invite a small group of ETH students to join us for a specific project. During 2012 we work on hinterlands, with Singapore metropolitan region serving as the case study. After that, we will move to other sites that have the potential to illuminate the dynamics of contemporary territories.

THE FUTURE CITIES LABORATORY in Singapore is a vibrant research community and a laboratory of innovative research in architecture and urbanism. It is founded by the ETH Zurich and the Singapore National Research Foundation, as the first research program of the SEC/Singapore-ETH Centre for Global Environmental Sustainability. Its projects

are directed towards the sustainable development of buildings, neighbourhoods and urban regions. The FCL works in close collaboration with Singapore's universities.

HS 2012

The semester has the status of a regular ETH semester, and offers the total of 23 credit points / The Design Studio with Integrated Discipline (Planning) 13+3 KP, the Fieldtrip (instead of Seminar Week) 2 KP, and the Thesis Elective 5 KP. Students are free to join other courses at the ETH Zurich.

LIVING IN SINGAPORE

The living costs in Singapore are considered lower than in Zurich. Students will rent their own rooms and apartments in the city. We will provide advice and contacts to help you find accommodation. Our studio space is located at the FCL

and the newly built Create Campus, neighboring local and foreign universities including the MIT, TUM and the NUS.

TRAVEL GRANTS

Please contact Frau Elisabetta Giordano;
giordano@arch.ethz.ch .

HOW TO APPLY

Please apply before June 29th 2012, in order to obtain the visa and the work permit in Singapore. Please, send your brief motivation statement, and samples of work (max 5 jpg images or pdf files). In Singapore, students will work in groups of two, thus group applications are also welcome. We are looking for avid travellers and team workers, with strong motivation and independent position. Please apply to jaeggi@arch.ethz.ch and knuesel@arch.ethz.ch .