

# ARCHITECTURE

Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia  
PROJECT 1

INFO SESSION — 6 December 2011  
16.30–17.30h, ETH HIL E 71

## THE HINTERLANDS



ASSISTANT PROF — Milica Topalovic  
TEAM — Martin Knüsel, Marcel Jäggi  
PROGRAM — Design Research Studio,  
Thesis Elective and Seminar Week

WHERE — Semester FS 2012 at the Future  
Cities Laboratory in Singapore  
WHEN — 20 February–1 June 2012  
PLACES — 6

APPLY BY — 23 December 2011  
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# OF TERRITORY

The FS 2012 program consists of three 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

Prof Milica Topalovic, Martin Knüsel, Marcel Jäggi

At first glance, Singapore is a wealthy metropolis of sparkling urban organization, impeccable social order and a glamorous skyline. But this image is anything but complete. Since decades, the city-state's expanding economy has required more space and labour beyond its 680 square kilometres territorial limits. Mirroring the growth of Singapore fast growing "support cities"

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

at Malaysian and Indonesian borders, are characterised by young populations of migrant workers, vast sites of global manufacturing industries, by plenty of dynamism, and uncertain futures. We will investigate, describe and contest the forms and the rules of urbanism in Singapore's productive hinterlands.

Thesis Elective  
LANDSCAPE VIDEO

Prof Christophe Girot, prof Milica Topalovic

How to see, describe, analyse and even construct an urban landscape through moving images? Looking through the camera lens and sampling what we see into an urban video reportage, we will explore and document the fragmented landscapes of Singapore's borderlands. At the same time, the explorations will lead to questions on the cultural aesthetics and the hidden ideologies of

images. Video artist Susanne Hofer will give us virtual support from Zurich. Photographer Bas Princen and video artist Marc Westhof are invited workshop tutors.

Seminar Week  
HONG KONG – SHENZHEN

Prof Milica Topalovic, Martin Knüsel, Marcel Jäggi

In many ways, the linked growth of Singapore and its neighbouring cities, Batam and Johor, brings to mind Hong Kong and Shenzhen some years earlier. In 1979 Shenzhen, then a fishing village, was declared China's first special economic zone, and grew rapidly, serving as Hong Kong's productive hinterland. Today however, the roles are changing. Going from Hong Kong's vertical factories to Shenzhen's urban villages, we will search for the sites and the stories of the twin-cities.

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 the FS12, the tri-national metropolitan region of Singapore will serve 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 and the Malaysian region of Johor, 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 Future Cities Laboratory 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 will 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.

FS 2012

The semester has the status of a regular ETH semester, and offers the total of 23 credit points / The Design Research Studio 13+3 KP, the Thesis Elective 5 KP, and the Seminar Week 2 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 will be 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 December 23rd 2011, in order to obtain the visa and the work permit in Singapore. Please, send us your brief motivation statement, and samples of work (max 5 jpg images or pdf files). During the semester 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 topalovic@arch.ethz.ch .