ARCHITECTURE
Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia
PROJECT 1, part 2
INFO SESSION — 24 May 2012
16.00–17.00h, ETH HIL E 71

THE
HINTERLANDS

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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
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 entrepot, 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 neighboring 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 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.