

HOT AIR

TRANSFORMATIONS:

KUALA LUMPUR



Federal Building designed by HI Ashley and SP Merer, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, 1958. Photo: Erik G. L'Heureux

Hot Air Transformations: Kuala Lumpur Travelling Studio Overview

This travelling research studio positions fieldwork and travel as a central mode of architectural inquiry. The studio will run all day Wednesdays throughout Semester 1, with an intensive study tour running from 11th-19th of April inclusive of travel. Students are encouraged to refer to the Monash Abroad information for costs and related information. For the first half of the semester, students will document and analyze a selection of 20th-century, tropically calibrated buildings in Kuala Lumpur—a megacity at the geographic and political center of ASEAN and a critical hub within Southeast Asia. These works, constructed during or in the spirit of Merdeka, have recently been vacated, deactivated, or are now poised for transformation. Large-scale adaptive-reuse candidates include Maybank Tower, the Dayabumi Complex, and the Malaysian House of Parliament, among others, and will be studied in relation to the background buildings and the surrounding urban and natural fabric that shape the city. Two projects will be selected by the studio for further design intervention, adaptive reuse, and Life Cycle Assessment.

Students will investigate the architectural vessels to understand how a high-density megacity at the heart of Southeast Asia works productively with the pressures of a tropical climate and a warming world and propose adaptive reuse, low-carbon systems, and urban regeneration. Life-cycle assessments will be developed and validated through on-site observation and tested through analog modelling and material forensics. For the second half of the semester students will propose (typically in pairs) netzero or low carbon adaptive reuse designs of the selected two projects manifest through analog models and specific drawings. Engagement with Kuala Lumpur's design and architecture climates and communities will situate the research within contemporary equatorial discourse. Good food will accompany all activities. Umbrellas and sunscreen are strongly encouraged.