

## **Island Life**

### **by Mark Lee**

While recent research in design has generated a set of theoretical inquiries into the dissolution of boundaries (substantiated by desires for interconnectivity, indeterminacy, and multiplicity); this trajectory is being countered by the opposite phenomenon of privatized, single-use programs of various scales - from gated communities and golf courses to special economic zones and tax havens.

Characterized by impermeable, hard boundaries and limited check points, these 'Island' and 'archipelago' organizations are spatial segregation taken to an extreme, a hyper world of fragmentation where definition triumphs over blur, separation over combination, destination over nomadicism.

Rather than viewing such island-like monocultures as fissures within the inclusive mentality of globalization, these organizational models have the potential to promote another form of connectivity through the exclusionary demarcation of borders.

An examination of the effects caused by urban islands such as Christiania in Copenhagen, the now-demolished Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong, and the Barrios of Caracas on their surroundings reveal the potentials of such segregated entities and their subsequent agglomeration.

The restructuring of urban space through 'island' structures disclose new ways to practice urbanism as a model of transformation which emerges from within and could open up crevices in the urban edifice out of which new collective habitations might emerge.

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