

Today's News - Thursday, August 14, 2008

EDITOR'S NOTE: We'll be taking Friday's off for the rest of August...see you Monday, August 18.

- Just when we thought all that could be said has been said re: China: Wondering whether all that starchitecture "was a wise use of such wealth."
- Lessons from Beijing for Delhi as it plans to rebuild ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games: "People will be comparing. We better remember that."
- China "is ground zero for anyone with big ambitions," but what does it reflect: "an even more insane Moscow."
- An examination of the safety issues that plagued the Bird's Nest (we trust they've been fixed).
- Kamin's "Skyscraper wars, part four."
- Streetcars making a comeback across the U.S.
- Critics claim Gaudí's Barcelona masterpiece being marred by mediocrity.
- Mid-century Modern under threat in Dallas and Memphis.
- Meanwhile, restoration of a Modernist gem in Germany "was a case of subtraction" (+ fab slide show)
- An appreciation for a Kahn masterpiece in Philadelphia.
- Rybczynski wanders "Home Delivery": "a stylish litany of second-place finishers, also-rans, if-onlys, and downright losers" (and some good stuff, too).
- Prefabs gaining ground and going green.
- Weekend diversions: Rawsthorn on "1% Water and Our Future" show in Belgium: it "explores our relationship to water, and how design can help us to use it more responsibly and productively."
- "Living Beautifully: Greene and Greene in Pasadena" (in Pasadena) highlights the offbeat.
- Page turners: More thumbs-up's for "The Last Days of Old Beijing" and "Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)" - Weinstein finds "New Lobbies & Waiting Rooms" an "invaluable visual sourcebook." - A former professor of architecture pens a thriller with Sydney's cityscape as a main character.
- Watch out Wikipedia - RIBAPedia launches tomorrow!

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Star-architecture casts light on new Beijing: Stunning new buildings scream to the world that this is a modern city, but much has been lost during the transformation...it's impossible not to wonder if all the "star-architecture" was a wise use of such wealth in what is still a developing nation...What I'd worry more about in China's warp-speed drive to the future is its disregard for the past. - Vancouver Sun

Shock and awe: The Olympic spending was to completely transform the image of China and it's clearly worked...It poses for us a test as we push our own plans to rebuild Delhi ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games. People will be comparing. We better remember that. - Business Standard (India)

Building Beijing: It has been years since a host nation has used the Games as a chance to splash out on the newest and most exciting trends in architecture...even as it raises some unsettling questions...Certainly, when it comes to design and architecture, China is ground zero for anyone with big ambitions. But how much of that reflects a dynamic society that is in control of its future... -- Herzog & De Meuron; PTW Architects - The Moscow News (Russia)

Bird-s Nest or Bird Trap? China-s National Stadium slammed for safety issues: ...the world-s most expensive arena...has drawn sharp criticisms from the day it broke ground...Flawed design halted construction...- Epoch Times International

Skyscraper wars, part four: Jahn's message is that it is easy to learn the language of a culture but far more difficult to learn its essence. By Blair Kamin -- Adrian Smith; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Helmut Jahn/Murphy/Jahn; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF)- Chicago Tribune

Downtowns Across the U.S. See Streetcars in Their Future: Cincinnati and at least 40 other cities are exploring streetcar plans to spur economic development, ease traffic congestion and draw people back from the suburbs. - New York Times

Master's vision blurred as trustees put stamp on emblem of Barcelona: Sagrada Familia will bear little resemblance to Gaudí's original plan, say critics: "What stands out is the mediocrity of a group of technicians and developers who are well-meaning but...It has more to do with building a tourist attraction and for propaganda purposes." - Guardian (UK)

Preservationists shocked at Dallas banker's plan to raze Stanley Marcus home: "If I can see on paper where it is economically feasible to go the restoration route, I would do it."...house is more famous for the architect who didn't design it. -- Roscoe DeWitt (1938)- Dallas Morning News

Clock ticks on Gassner landmark in Downtown Memphis: Admirers of modern architecture...will have to act quickly to save an iconic former C&I Bank building...isn't old enough to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, but architects said that doesn't diminish its value as one of the city's best examples of mid-20th century modern architecture. -- Francis Gassner (1974) [image]- Commercial Appeal (Memphis)

An Architectural Gem in Germany is Reborn: ...restoring the 80-year-old ADGB Trade Union School...was a case of subtraction"...it was more hidden under changes made over time"...the greatest threat facing Modernist buildings is a "lack of public will"... By David Sokol -- Hannes Meyer (1930); Brenne Gesellschaft von Architekten [slide show]- Architectural Record

Kahn's National Masterpiece: One of the most seminal buildings of modern architecture is right here in Philadelphia. The Richards Medical Research Laboratory (1961)... - The

## Bulletin (Philadelphia)

Instant House: Would you buy a home that was made in a factory? a slide-show essay about "Home Delivery"...the MoMA show is a stylish litany of second-place finishers, also-rans, if-onlys, and downright losers...Most of the prefabs...come under the category of "bright ideas"... By Witold Rybczynski -- Richard and Su Rogers/Rogers Stirk Harbour; Jeremy Edmiston/Douglas Gauthier; Oskar Leo Kauffmann and Albert Rüff; Lawrence Sass; Richard Horden/Haack + Höpfer; Marcel Breuer; KieranTimberlake- Slate

Factory-built homes may be greener: Modular houses are built to higher standards and with less waste, proponents say..."The technology is there, we just haven't embraced it"...NAHB is in the process of completing a review of green building standards especially for modular homes... -- KieranTimberlake; Michelle Kaufmann; KAA Design Group- Christian Science Monitor

Creating solutions to a water crisis: "1% Water and Our Future" an exhibition at Z33...in Hasselt, Belgium...explores our relationship to water, and how design can help us to use it more responsibly and productively. By Alice Rawsthorn -- karlssonwilker; Jordi Canudas; Atelier Van Lieshout; IDEO; Irene van Peer [slide show]- International Herald Tribune

Going Greene: "Living Beautifully: Greene and Greene in Pasadena" to highlight offbeat items of famed Pasadena architects...at the Pasadena Museum of History, the first in a series of events marking the Gamble House's centennial. [images]- Pasadena Star-News (California)

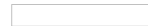
Book review: The Vanishing City: The life and death of Beijing's alleys: Michael Meyer records this orgy of destruction and the ongoing struggle for a new identity in his excellent book "The Last Days of Old Beijing."- Slate

Book review: Dangerous Roads Are Safest, and Other Traffic Mysteries: The abomination visited upon...city dwellers around the globe is the subject of Tom Vanderbilt's "Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)."- Bloomberg News

Book review: Designing the places we wait: "New Lobbies & Waiting Rooms" by Daniela Santos Quartino explores the creative beauty of spaces for times in between...invaluable visual sourcebook... By Norman Weinstein [images]- Christian Science Monitor

Book review: "Bright Air" by Barry Maitland: This former professor of architecture knows how to construct an intricate and thrilling plot...[his] understanding of architecture is evident in the scrutiny afforded to buildings and place. How good it is to have him finally describing the cityscape of urban Sydney...- Sydney Morning Herald

RIBA launches rival to Wikipedia: ...an internet knowledge bank called RIBAPedia...website will be unveiled on Friday 15 August and will cover everything from profiles of schools of architecture to research papers.- The Architects' Journal (UK)



-- Frank Gehry: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2008, London, UK  
-- architecture53seven: Egan-s Coffee Bar & Roof terrace, Portlaoise, Ireland  
-- Book: Olympic Architecture 2008, Introduction by Guoxin Ma

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