

Today's News - Wednesday, October 15, 2008

- Merrick minces no words about what he thinks of "iconic" architecture: our worship of "architectural bling" is "toxic proof that we are maxing out on the minimum thing."
- But take heart: two in-depth reports on the new generation of design activists designing with a conscience.
- At an Aedes Architecture Forum, architects explore the mosque building boom in Europe - is it "confrontational architecture" or "homesickness architecture"?
- In the Philippines, architects warn of "topsy-turvy urban planning" not tied to a master plan - and call to be a part in the planning process.
- At ISO Dubai 2008 conference now in progress, the UAE claims it's leading the way in sustainable development.
- Kuhne says global economic slowdown could boost quality of architecture in Gulf states.
- An eyeeful of HOK's master plan for Water Garden City in Bahrain.
- An anonymous architect bemoans the fallout befalling the profession in tough economic times: "Three months ago it was the developers who were laying people off. Now we Architects are running out of commissions."
- Diane Keaton offers an eloquent elegy for the Ambassador Hotel: "Demolishing such iconic buildings not only destroys history, it wastes resources."
- A historic little grass shack rebuilt in Honolulu.
- Fort Collins, Colorado, moves ahead with big plans for two new cultural venues.
- Hosey finds some surprises among the One Good Chair design competition winners (great pix, too).
- Good reasons to be in Ottawa for the next two days: the Public Art Matters Forum focuses on sustainability, and the Governor General's Medals in Architecture are handed out.
- LAS Design Awards for Liverpool's best buildings.

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Empty vessels: eye-con architecture: Today's obsession with landmark 'iconic' buildings is bad for us -- and architecture...if we become utterly supplicant to...architectural bling, then we risk becoming desensitised to less obviously dramatic, but potentially more engaging, humane, and affecting buildings and places...The pursuit and worship of architectural icons is toxic proof that we are maxing out on the minimum thing. By Jay Merrick- Independent (UK)

Design With Conscience: ...people, buildings, and concepts that wed humanitarianism and architecture...the profession is returning to the social contract upon which architecture is founded. -- Sergio Palleroni/BaSiC Initiative; Shigeru Ban; Teddy Cruz; Hashim Sarkis; Joe Addo; Urban-Think Tank; Luyanda Mpahlwa; Anna Heringer; Code; Phooey Architects; Deborah Gans/Denise Hoffman Brandt; Badanes/Jersey Devil; Dutton/Over-the-Rhine; Freear/Rural Studio; Hopfner/Yale Building Project; Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis; Louis/DesignBuildBLUFF; Rockhil/Studio 804 [images, slide shows]- Architectural Record

Public-Interest Architecture: A new generation of design activists is helping to reshape the role of contemporary architects. -- John Peterson/Public Architecture; Bryan Bell/Design Corps; Steve Badanes/Jersey Devil; Sergio Palleroni/BaSiC Initiative; Erik Van Mehman/Studio B Architecture; Seth Hender-Voss/Design Corps; Teddy Cruz; John Quale/ecoMOD [images, links]- Metropolis Magazine

Confrontational Architecture: Europe's Mosques Move from Back Alleys to Boulevards: There are plans to build several hundred new and often magnificent mosques...Architecture has become the field of a fierce ideological battle about the visibility of Europe's 16 million Muslims. -- Mubashra Ilyas; Paul Böhm/Wilfried van Winden/Architekturbüro Boehm; Alen Jasarevic; Reinhold Zemke [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Architects warn anew of topsy-turvy urban planning among cities: "...many emerging cities now are going the way of the mistakes of Metro Manila because of the lack of centralized planning." -- United Architects of the Philippines (UAP)- BusinessMirror (Philippines)

UAE Shows The Way With World Leading Sustainability: "The UAE had outlined laws, standards and technical regulations governing the design and construction of sustainable buildings since the beginning of the year. The local construction sector is compelled to follow them" -- ISO Dubai 2008- UAE Daily News

Eric Kuhne says global economic slowdown could boost quality of architecture in Gulf states: "Developers have been more interested in money than in building harmonised communities"- BD/Building Design (UK)

HOK unveils 60-hectare masterplan for Water Garden City in Bahrain...will create a community for up to 40,000 people. [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Redundancy: From Boom To Bust: This time last year, when the words credit and crunch first became linked, I remember thinking that it would only be a matter of time before it affected the construction industry...Three months ago it was the developers who were laying people off. Now we Architects are running out of commissions...- Sky News (UK)

Op-Ed: The Ambassador Hotel lesson: Demolishing such iconic buildings not only destroys history, it wastes resources....We've treated old buildings like we once treated plastic shopping bags...we've tossed them out. This has to stop...When we tear down a building, we are wiping out lessons for the future. If we think of it that way, we will begin to understand the emotional impact of wasting the energy and resources used to build it in the first place. By Diane Keaton- Los Angeles Times

Little grass shack rebuilt: ...as Hawaii Hall is being reborn, there is a building within the building that is also getting the full restoration treatment...Hale Pili, or "grass house," in the central courtyard of the century-old Bishop Museum...the only known existing original hale pili. -- Glenn Mason/Mason Architects; Pomaika'i Kaniaupio-Crozier/LeoKanaka [slide show]- Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Music center ideas flowing: Bohemian Foundation hires architecture firm for downtown project...foundation has just begun working with LMN Architects...Oxbow is one of two large performance venues in the works...HOK is designing the \$20 million to \$25 million amphitheater that would be built on city-owned land...- Fort Collins Coloradoan

More Than One Good Chair: Can we be as smart about the way things look as we are about how they're made? ...design competition...inviting designers everywhere to contribute their vision for a new kind of eco-chair, one that focuses first and foremost on form...two winners and three runners-up... By Lance Hosey [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Governor General honours outstanding achievement in architecture: Public Art Matters Forum "How do we sustain buildings? How do buildings sustain us?" -- Wednesday, October 15; Governor General's Medals in Architecture ceremony - Thursday, October 16 -- architectsAlliance/Behnisch Architekten; Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden; Le Groupe Arcop; Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB)/Goldsmith Borgal; Lang Wilson; Ian MacDonald; Moriyama & Teshima/Griffiths Rankin Cook; Patkau/LM Architectural Group; Saucier + Perrotte; Teeple Architects; Shore Tilbe Irwin [link to projects]- Governor General of Canada (Ottawa)

Liverpool's best buildings: Liverpool Architectural Society/LAS Design Awards honours architecture that has made a mark on the city...buildings included in the 2008 awards stand in stark contrast to earlier examples erected when there was less investment in Liverpool -- Union North Architects; Wilkinson Eyre; BIQ/ASL/Donald Insall; Fielden Clegg Bradley; DK Architects/R2 Architecture/Igloo; ShedKM; OMF Derek Cox [links]- BBC

Field Notes from the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale - Part 1: The Arsenale: Betsky's eclectic curating and the polished and thoughtful presentations of the exhibitors make it a challenging, entertaining, and provocative show. By Terri Peters -- David Rockwell; Jones|Kroloff; Thonik; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Greg Lynn; Droog; ArandaLasch; Gehry; Hadid; Philippe Rahm; An Te Liu; Barkow Leibinger [images]- ArchNewsNow



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