Today’s News - Friday, February 12, 2010

- We love good news (to us, anyway): NYC to make pedestrian mall experiment on Broadway permanent (though a few bah-humbugs remain).

- Is it OK to run architectural competitions for Haiti? Browning says yes: "it's an architect's duty to respond to humanitarian disasters; Sinclair says no: "response to human suffering is a mandate, not a career advancement."

- A "battle royal" brewing over planned tower next to San Francisco's iconic Transamerica Pyramid: is it "a creative approach to sustainable development," or "an audacious move" that sets "a dangerous precedent."

- Saffron minces no words about Philly's new Family Court: the "design threatens to be a mean and unwelcoming presence" with "public spaces as clinical as a morgue" (even city boosters are "having trouble mustering nice words about it)."

- The Vancouver Olympics begin: stop griping about the Canada Pavilion: it's "sensible, modest and ... Canadian" - "nobody seems to have heard of it until it turned out not to have been designed by Frank Gehry."

- The Winter Olympics may not be the "design extravaganza that London 2012 will be" - but there's mucho millions of dollars in design on display (and who knew the medals are made from reclaimed computer motherboards?!?).

- Mincing no words about the "short-sighted budget slashes" being made to National Trust for Historic Preservation programs (we concur).

- Meanwhile, the Trust for Public Land launches "Save the Peak" campaign to protect land around the Hollywood sign from development.

- Walker cheers the effort, but finds the Hollywood sign campaign off-message: "a preservationist and typographic disaster."

- "Mind Your Behaviour - Close Up: 3XN" at the Danish Architecture Centre explores how architecture can shape - you guessed it - our behavior.

- "Contemplating the Void" at the Guggenheim "may sound like a grim invitation to stare mortality in the face," but a lot of the big-name contributors "approached the exercise with nothing short of glee" (great pit!).

- "How Architecture Matters?" by parts a useful, inspiring, frustrating guide" to the "debate about the emotions buildings provoke in us."


- In Auburn, AL, "After You Left, They Took It Apart" details the downfall of three modern houses by Paul Rudolph.

- "Unbuilt Masterworks of the 21st Century" offers "bumptious confidence" bouncing off every page: "Building them would ruin them."

- Page turners: Glancey on Muschamp's "Hearts of the City": "boy-oh-boy, are there some rattling good rows in this book...opinionated, occasionally self-indulgent yet warm, brave, and fully alive."
Cleveland Design Competition: Project 2009: Lakefront Station - Winning Submissions -- Mario Caceres & Christian Canonico (France); Pepijn van Voorst (Netherlands); Russell Collin (UK) [images]; - Cleveland Design Competition

From the AR archives: In celebration of I.M. Pei being awarded the RIBA Gold Medal...revisits the National Gallery of Art, Washington in "IM Pei, Inside the NGA," a 1979 article by Colin Amery..."Pei's new wing is a clumsy giant...?" [images]; - Architectural Review (UK)

People Who Live in Glass Houses: From Feb. 12 to 21...thousands of building and design freaks...will descend upon Palm Springs for Modernism Week...celebration of mid-20th century design runs the gamut from the kitsch...to the academic...to the starstruck... -- Albert Frey; Donald Wexler; William F. Cody; E. Stewart Williams [links]; - Time Magazine

Homes left abandoned, leaving modern ruins: "After You Left, They Took It Apart: Demolished Paul Rudolph Homes"...photographs by Chris Mottalini detailing the downfall of three modern houses in Rhode Island, Florida and Connecticut...at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, Auburn, AL; - The Auburn Plainsman (Alabama)

"Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum": While the show's title may sound like a grim invitation to stare mortality in the face, many of the contributors approached the exercise with nothing short of glee. -- Zaha Hadid; MVRDV; Greg Lynn; Olson Kundig Architects [images]; - New York Times

"Mind Your Behaviour - Close Up: 3XN": Architecture can get people talking together...calm children in the classroom...make passive people more active...shape corporate culture...In short, architecture can shape your behaviour; at the the Danish Architecture Centre, February 13 - May 13; Danish Architecture Centre (Copenhagen, Denmark)

Jose Oubrerie Exhibit at Spitzer School of Architecture: will feature Oubrerie's best-known works, the Church of St. Pierre in Firminy, France, and the Miller House in Lexington, Ky...the last living protégé of Le Courbusier... - City College of New York (CCNY)

Cuban-American Artist Jorge Pardo to Exhibit at the Irish Museum of Modern, Dublin: ...ranging from sculpture and installations to design and architecture...Perhaps the best examples of his cross-over into architecture are when he makes or remakes buildings. - ArtDaily.org

How 'green' is their valley? "Greening the Valley: Sustainable Architecture in the Pioneer Valley" at the University of Massachusetts Amherst...showcases sustainable structures...designed by locally and nationally recognized architects... - Boston Globe

Muschamp, the Works: "Hearts of the City: The Selected Writings of Herbert Muschamp"...boy-oh-boy, are there some rattling good rows in this book...as big, as heavy, and often, hard-hitting as a brick...a roller-coaster guide...taken with an opinionated, occasionally self-indulgent yet warm, brave, and fully alive companion. By Jonathan Glancey; - The Architect's Newspaper

"Why Architecture Matters" by Paul Goldberger: Yes, but is it art? ...the dean of American architecture critics, explains what it takes to turn a big building into something even bigger...by parts a useful, inspiring, frustrating guide to the long history and complex content of the debate about the emotions buildings provoke in us... - Globe and Mail (Canada)

"New Topographics" by Britt Salvesen: photographs that find beauty in the banal: With its stark yet oddly romantic images of American factories, intersections and trailer parks, William Jenkins's 1975 exhibition rewrote the rules of landscape photography. Does it have the same impact today? ...now collected in an austerely beautiful book...still looks, for the most part, contemporary -- and still seems troubling in its matter-of-factness... - Guardian (UK)

"Unbuilt Masterworks of the 21st Century: Inspirational Architecture for the Digital Age" by Will Jones: ...a compendium of schemes that never made it...But is this menagerie of failures miserable? Hell no. Bumptious confidence bounces off every page...Building them would ruin them. - Icon (UK)


Morphosis: Cahill Center, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California

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