

## Today's News - Thursday, April 1, 2010

- The transformation of a 1928 St. Louis landmark creates a collaborative space for a design firm's regional office and confirms its commitment to the community.
- A Haitian pol claims the Haiti aid conference a "farce" without citizen input.
- Re: Kapoor/Balmond's Olympic "Orbit" (we expect more will be chiming in):
- Glancey and Merrick give (mostly) thumbs-up: "What an extraordinary thing this is...a strange and enticing marriage of sorts between the Eiffel Tower and Tatlin's Tower," and "There's something beautifully fractious, and not quite knowable."
- On the other hand, Pearman minces no words: it's "misconceived, ugly, banal, compromised and downright embarrassing"; Dyckhoff calls the "giant squiggle" a "gift to the tabloids" (and a waste of money); Rochon sees it as a "drunken, debauched Eiffel Tower" that is "feral, rowdy...very high and, possibly, very scary." (we thought it might be an April Fool's joke a day early when we saw it in our inbox yesterday)
- Pearman is a lot more positive about the afterlife of the Hargreaves/LDA-designed Olympic Park: it "promises much, far into the future. I think it is going to be good."
- The battle over the future of Beirut and the type of city it should become: "a genuine history is being destroyed while a fake one is being built"; there's The Egg and Solidere (a.k.a. "Disney Downtown").
- Even after 20 years, the debate continues over Piano's City Gate project in Valletta: "this is not the right time to indulge on this national project."
- Brussat agrees with Rogers re: U.S. Embassy in London?!?!? "No, not really...In modern architecture, every day is April Fool's Day."
- A half-finished Toyo Ito treasure sits abandoned in Spain (how could this be?).
- On a brighter note: the first of never-built FLW faculty housing plans will be built, adding to Florida Southern College incredible Wright collection (terrific slide show!).
- McDonald says the collapse of Murray Ó Laoire Architects proves the Irish "government needs to take the crisis in architecture seriously" (a good start would be if it paid its bills promptly); the Construction Industry Federation is "very concerned. It just seems the industry is being left to shut down."
- National Landscape Architecture Month kicks off today with ASLA's "Designing Our Future" initiative.
- The Hudson River Valley could be declared a National Park (that's cool news to us!).
- A great profile of Piet Oudolf, "the constant gardener."
- UNLV students protest the possible closure of the Landscape Architecture program.
- Call for entries: 2010 YAF/COD International Ideas Competition: Temporary/Permanent Relief Housing.
- Our favorite annual: PPS Faking Places: "City Center" R.I.P.: The faux phrase is now banned in 38 states (and so much more).
- Happy April Fool's Day!

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**Power to the Past: Cannon Design Regional Offices at The Power House: A design firm transforms a 1928 city landmark to support its highly collaborative, team-oriented work approach that includes space that can be used by the community as well.** - ArchNewsNow

**Haiti aid conference a 'farce' without citizen input: "You cannot talk about helping a country without asking the people, 'what do you want, what do you think is missing, how do you want to be governed.'" - Toronto Star**

**First among Olympian obelisks: The architecture and landscaping for 2012 promises little excitement, but the 115m Orbit raises the Olympic design stakes...ArcelorMittal Orbit...is indeed the Joker in the Olympian pack. I mean that favourably...What an extraordinary thing this is...should continue to delight us long after the Olympics have been forgotten.** By Jonathan Glancey -- Anish Kapoor; Cecil Balmond/Arup - Guardian (UK)

**120m high and very, very red: the best seat at the Olympic Games: There's something beautifully fractious, and not quite knowable, about the ArcelorMittal Orbit tower's design. It's anti-bling, and its brusque form will be either loved or hated...It is strange, it is not an eye-con, and there is something artistically risky about it.** By Jay Merrick -- Anish Kapoor; Cecil Balmond/Arup - Independent (UK)

**London's Olympic "Orbit" Monument by Anish Kapoor : exactly why is it so bad? ...misconceived, ugly, banal, compromised and downright embarrassing, that is why it is, by a considerable distance, the worst piece of public art I have ever seen. It will probably look great on television, particularly at night.** By Hugh Pearman -- Cecil Balmond/Arup [image, link]- HughPearman.com (UK)

**Just what London needs, a giant squiggle: ArcelorMittal Orbit...is a gift to the tabloids. What's a better physical representation of a waste of money and potential Olympic disorganisation than a giant Mr Messy? Pointedly, it doesn't have a point...with no other purpose than to shout 'coo-ey, look at me!'... By Tom Dyckhoff -- Anish Kapoor; Cecil Balmond/Arup - The Times (UK)**

**The towering ambition of London: Anish Kapoor reveals designs for twisted 115-metre structure, envisioned as drunken, debauched Eiffel Tower...a feral, rowdy...Twisting and cavorting...very high and, possibly, very scary...(the next set for a James Cameron film, perhaps?)...awkwardly, officially, christened the ArcelorMittal Orbit...is intentionally brazen... By Lisa Rochon -- Cecil Balmond/Arup - Globe and Mail (Canada)**

**Root and branch rethink: More than anything it is the regenerated landscape that will transform the 2012 Olympic site. Here, it's what happens after the Games that will help east London flourish...The Park...promises much, far into the future. I think it is going to be good.** By Hugh Pearman George Hargreaves; LDA Design; Populous/Peter Cook; Zaha Hadid; Michael Hopkins; Sarah Price [images]- RIBA Journal (UK)

**The battle for Beirut's buildings: As Dubai-style skyscrapers spring up in central Beirut, the city's precious architectural heritage is being lost...The Egg is at the centre of a battle over the future of Beirut and the type of city it should become...A genuine history is being destroyed while a fake one is being built. -- Joseph-Philippe Karam (1965); Bernard Khoury [links to images, info]- Guardian (UK)**

**Grand entrance: The plans for the City Gate project for Valletta's main**

entrance have, as expected, received the necessary endorsements...a project which has been debated for around two decades...the Renzo Piano design to transform city gate into a work of art will continue to divide opinion...this is not the right time to indulge on this national project... - Malta Business Weekly

Meet America's new 'Tower of London': The design for the proposed new U.S. Embassy in London was not the best choice...I agree with...Richard Rogers...that Thom Mayne's entry should have won...Really? No, not really...In modern architecture, every day is April Fool's Day. By David Brussat -- KieranTimberlake; Morphosis; Richard Meier; Pei Cobb Freed; Martin Fillier [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

'Jewel of 21st century architecture' abandoned in Torre Vieja: ...built in the shape of a snail from wood and then covered in copper, although the copper has since vanished and the wood below is now warped from damp. -- Toyo Ito [images, links]- Typically Spanish

Florida Southern College Plans to Add a Usonian House to Its Wright Collection: ...plans to build a house that Frank Lloyd Wright designed in 1938 as the first of a series of homes for faculty members. By Lawrence Biemiller -- Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects; Antony Putnam [image]- The Chronicle of Higher Education

Architects' contribution must be recognised: The Government needs to take the crisis in architecture seriously if more liquidations are to be avoided in architectural practices where principals often go without pay to keep their business going. For a start, it must ensure that public bodies pay bills promptly... By Frank McDonald -- Murray Ó Laoire Architects- Irish Times

Murray O Laoire collapse 'should inject urgency into tackling crisis in the construction industry': ..."We're very concerned. It just seems the industry is being left to shut down"...Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI) estimates that more than 50% of all registered architects in the State are now out of work. - Limerick Leader (Ireland)

"Designing Our Future" Campaign Kicks Off National Landscape Architecture Month: New educational site on sustainable landscapes highlights April celebration- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

National Perks: Congress explores designating the Hudson River Valley: A new bill...could be the first step in turning the Hudson River Valley into a national park...would authorize a National Park Service (NPS) study on adding a 182-mile stretch of land on both sides of the Hudson... [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

The constant gardener: For Piet Oudolf, acknowledged leader of the New Perennials landscape movement, architectural plants chosen for their form and structure rather than their colour are the basis of his deeply philosophical designs. [images]- RIBA Journal (UK)

University of Nevada, Las Vegas students protest possible program elimination: You would never know it's the week of Spring Break at UNLV the way hundreds of students protested..."we want them to know Landscape Architecture is not one of the programs to go"- News 3 TV (Las Vegas)

Call for entries: 2010 YAF/COD International Ideas Competition: Temporary/Permanent Relief Housing: submit sketches using sustainable strategies and following the Living Building Challenge; deadline: May 10- AIA Young Architects Forum (YAF) / AIA Committee on Design (COD)

Faking Places: Unprecedented Series of "Recalls" Will Dramatically Change Our Communities: Dangerous Roads Recalled by Transportation Department; New York Targets Blank Walls; Landscape Architects Pull the Plug on Jargon; "City Center" R.I.P.: The faux phrase is now banned in 38 states; etc. - Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

Celebratory Meditations on SANAA Winning the Pritzker Prize. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



Jean Nouvel: National Museum of Qatar, Doha Corniche, Qatar

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