

Today's News - Thursday, April 8, 2010

- New Zealand has sold itself as "100% Pure" and green (resident Hobbits would probably disagree).
- Lessons from Japan's ancient tradition of sustainability.
- Green prefab housing seemed like such a good idea - until 2008 arrived.
- Gehry entertains a Chicago crowd: he's a humbug when it comes to LEED buildings, and throws a jab (in jest) at Piano: "He's gotten better."
- Gunts on Baltimore's plans to designate a third arts district; not all agree: "The city should focus on building up the two arts districts it already has."
- Lots of details re: the new Brooklyn Bridge Park; and lots of complaints about its playground's "hot" steel scorching tiny fingers.
- Dyckhoff on Ban's Pompidou-Metz: "It's so freaky looking I don't know what to make of it. A crustacean, perhaps, beached very far from the sea?"
- Helsinki rejects a new hotel by H&deM (even though it would be "better than a sauna or a dog park").
- Brussat cheers Brown University's decision to drop SHoP and hire "America's sole starchitect who works in traditional styles" for its new fitness center.
- Rothstein visits The Cocoon at the Darwin Center in London: "Enjoy the bugs, but don't feed the scientists."
- An eyeful of BIG's design for a mosque in Copenhagen, "either ingenious or outrageous, the design is gorgeous" and "bound to stir emotions" (it is pretty wild).
- Kiev's 1903 House of Chimeras is "festooned with fantasy...a twinkling star on the far side of the gray trough of 70 years of Soviet architecture" (talk about wild!).
- Lebbeus Woods pays tribute to Raimund Abraham, his fellow visionary and friend.
- In Los Angeles, LACMA could become Watts Towers' guardian angel.
- CORA issues a call to action for architects to come to the aid of their profession.
- Architects tap into social media - it's still too soon to say if their efforts will pay off.
- AIA launches National Architecture Week on Facebook.
- An eyeful of some amazing entries in the Haiti Poster Project that will raise funds for Doctors Without Borders.

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It's not easy seeming green: A backlash to New Zealand's vow of purity: ...the dilemma...is no different to that of other rich countries - how to balance economic growth with the need to address environmental degradation...The difference...is that New Zealand has actively sold itself as "100% Pure"...it is time for the country to find itself a more sustainable brand, and soon. - The Economist (UK)

Bent by the Sun: Lessons from Japan's ancient tradition of sustainability: One of the most important lessons is that the primary design response to material and energy shortages...was to seek multiform solutions, designs that solved many problems at once. By Azby Brown [slide show] - Change Observer

It Isn't Easy Building Green: It seemed the right idea at the right time — a company building prefab housing that was stylish and environmentally sound — but then 2008 arrived. -- Michelle Kaufmann/mkDesigns; Resolution 4 Architecture; LivingHomes and Marmol Radziner; FlatPak; Blu Homes - New York Times

Frank Gehry on LEED Buildings: Humbug: ...has never designed a structure that's achieved LEED certification, and I'd wager that he never will, based on his gruff remarks during a public Q&A...in Chicago...also jabbed a thumb, somewhat in jest, in the eye of fellow architect Renzo Piano..."He's gotten better" - BusinessWeek

Proposal calls for west side arts district: Baltimore seeking NEA grant to develop plans: ...would help fill vacant storefronts, populate dormant buildings and bring attention to the area while helping the city attract more "creative folks in the broadest sense"... By Edward Gunts - Baltimore Sun

Declaring the west side an arts district is not the solution: Baltimore already has two arts districts...it doesn't need a third...the city should focus on building up the two arts districts it already has. That's a plan artists and local business owners can get behind. - Baltimore Sun

9.5-acre Pier One Turns Brooklyn Bridge Park Plans into Reality: ...the largest of a set of six planned for the Brooklyn waterfront...built on landfill instead of pile-supported structures, and features sustainable design elements that enable the site to take care of 70% of its own water needs...it's almost self-sufficient. -- Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates [image, links] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Parents fuming over Brooklyn Bridge Park's playground's 'hot' steel attraction: Park officials said they have hung signs warning parents to "exercise caution" on sunny days...young trees planted near the domes "will supply shade in the coming weeks and alleviate this heat." But critics said it was unlikely the small trees would provide enough shade any time soon... - NY Daily News

Pompidou-Metz is a strange new museum rising in eastern France: ...resembles one of those fabled mythical beasts medieval people used to think existed at the end of the world: half duck, quarter walrus and quarter horse. It's so freaky looking I don't know what to make of it. A crustacean, perhaps, beached very far from the sea? By Tom Dyckhoff -- Shigeru Ban; Jean de Gastines; Herzog & de Meuron; Norman Foster; Zaha Hadid; Jean Nouvel; Frank Gehry; Heneghan Peng - The Times (UK)

Helsinki City Council rejects Katajanokka hotel project at heated meeting: "It is better than a sauna or a dog park" -- Herzog & de Meuron - Helsingin Sanomat (Finland)

Brown University's unorthodox new Jonathan Nelson Fitness Center: ...decision to hire America's sole starchitect who works in traditional styles, Robert A.M. Stern, is key to the athletic center's heady prospects...had initially hired the modernist firm of SHoP... By David Brussat [image] - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Enjoy the Bugs, but Don't Feed the Scientists: The Cocoon, a new area of the Darwin Center at the Natural History Museum in London, seems to define a new approach to science museums...For all its shortcomings, its effect is palpable,

changing your perspective on its classic and venerable ancestor. By Edward Rothstein -- Alfred Waterhouse (1881); C.F. Moller Architects - New York Times

Can a Modern Mosque in Copenhagen Settle the Disputes Between Danes and Muslims? Given the local tensions with Muslim immigrants, the Bjarke Ingels Group/BIG mosque is either ingenious or outrageous...The design is gorgeous...bound to stir emotions. [images]- Fast Company

Festooned With Fantasy: Kiev's House of Chimeras survived the Soviet era...it is a twinkling star on the far side of the gray trough of 70 years of Soviet architecture. -- Vladislav Gorodetsky (1903) [image]- Wall Street Journal

Tribute: Raimund Abraham: Lebbeus Woods recalls his fellow visionary and friend: His charisma was...at once frightening and inspiring, heavy with moral weight, yet uplifting and liberating as an example of the creative potential of an individual. [slide show]- The Architect's Newspaper

Watts Towers may get LACMA as a guardian: The art museum offers to direct conservation work on the fragile structures that has been delayed by Los Angeles' budget crisis...a city partnership with LACMA on towers conservation "could bring a whole array of benefits." -- Simon Rodia- Los Angeles Times

Call to Action: CORA Position Paper: Now Is The Time For Architects To Come to the Aid of Their Profession -- Duo Dickinson- Congress of Residential Architects (CORA)

To Tweet or Not to Tweet? Increasingly, architects are tapping into social media to connect with peers and promote their work...do these online pursuits pay off?...few can say their efforts have directly led to new projects ... yet. By Jessica Sheridan- Architectural Record

AIA celebrates National Architecture Week April 11-17: "Design Matters" theme focuses on the importance and impact of quality design to society...will take place virtually on the American Institute of Architects Architecture Week 2010 Facebook fan page. - American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Haiti Poster Project Bolsters Relief: ...over 300 pieces by artists and designers from all over the world...will be auctioned off, with all proceeds going to Doctors Without Borders. [images, links]- Fast Company



Ron Arad Architects: Design Museum Holon, Holon, Israel

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