

Today's News - Monday, November 15, 2010

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of Calatrava in Rio, and Kimmel Eshkolot Architects in Jerusalem.
- Birnbaum enters the New Urbanism vs. Landscape Urbanism fray: architects' "co-option...has resulted in a revealing turf war...landscape architects should respond, 'game on!'"
- Williams takes on the "beauty debate": we "certainly need to reclaim beauty, but actually, we need to reclaim it from those very philistines who are pretending to defend it" (Happy-Clappy Architecture included).
- An in-depth look at the school that wants to eat New York: "By charm and brute force" NYU wants to add 6 million square feet - is its president "the new Robert Moses"? (and an architect snipes at an architect - who is not amused).
- Gazprom tower (remember that?) is back in the news: the sums money invested so far are so large, it's most likely a done deal, whether "it spoils sights of St. Petersburg or not."
- London's mayor says he'll "prioritize design" with a different (smaller) version of Design for London: "Be of good cheer, it will all be OK" (there's hope?).
- Saffron minces no words about Philly's new National Museum of American Jewish History overlooking Independence Mall: "the architecture is decidedly downbeat...strikingly inward-looking and closed off from its surroundings...This is architecture that exudes unease" (ouch!).
- A historian "pities" the museum (and the architects, it seems): "If the museum would have to give up the building, the next tenant would have very little trouble adjusting it to its own needs."
- Kamin, meanwhile, cheers Jahn's "heroic, if unlikely, vision for Navy Pier: Yes, it's over the top and, in all likelihood, ridiculously expensive. But it's full of creative sparks."
- Rochon x 2: (mostly) thumbs-up for a new outreach facility for the homeless in Toronto "designed with humanity" in mind + "There's something that looks like architectural hope emerging on Ontario's superhighways" (never mind they sit amidst acres of parking).
- An astounding report (and slide show) of McDonald's \$2.4 billion international make-over plans (including a "Martian reeducation camp" for "gonzo experimentation").
- An effort underway to save projects by "Cambodia's forgotten architect" who "redefined the look of his homeland" in the '60s (some stunners already lost to redevelopment - check out terrific slide show).
- NYC sprouts a huge green roof (we'd see more if they didn't cost \$30/sf, while they're only \$2/sf in Germany).
- Anderton's "action architecture" at the (now closed) California Design Biennial: "Her thoughtful choices set a standard that the other curators struggled to match."
- Chatfield-Taylor on winning the Vincent Scully Prize: "Today, the problems of our time are not Classicism, but better city planning, infill, energy sources, and sustainability."
- Litt lists the Cleveland AIA and IIDA 2010 design awards.

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-- Santiago Calatrava: Museum of Tomorrow, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
-- Kimmel Eshkolot Architects: The Davidson Center, Jerusalem, Israel

Will Architecture Go Horizontal? Landscape architecture has become very fashionable... to architects. Moreover, its co-option and absorption into architectural practices has resulted in a revealing turf war...landscape architects should respond, "game on." By Charles A. Birnbaum/The Cultural Landscape Foundation -- Andrés Duany; Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU); John Nolen; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.; Alex Kreiger; Charles Waldheim; Mark Rios; Martha Schwartz; Kurt Culberston/Design Workshop; Mark Robbins; Linda Pollak/Marpillero Pollak - Huffington Post

The "beauty debate" isn't even skin deep: Rather than demands for "beauty" reflecting a resurgence in aesthetic judgement and cultured debate about the poetics of architecture, in today's environment the critique of "beauty" has merely become just another social policy lever...we certainly need to reclaim beauty, but actually, we need to reclaim it from those very philistines who are pretending to defend it. By Austin Williams - Independent (UK)

The School That Ate New York: By charm and brute force, NYU is planning to add 6 million square feet to its campus across the city. Is John Sexton the new Robert Moses? "What's good for NYU is good for the city" is a slogan that, one way or another, New Yorkers are going to have to get used to. By Gabriel Sherman -- I.M. Pei; Toshiko Mori; Kevin Roche; Grimshaw [images, links] - New York Magazine

Okhta-Centre: pro et contra: All in all, everything is not so simple. But the sums money invested...are so large, that the project seems to be incorporated, if it spoils sights of St. Petersburg or not. -- RMJM; Norman Foster, Rafael Viñoly; Kisho Kurokawa; Philip Nikandrov [images] - Russia-InfoCentre/Russia-IC

Design for London set to be absorbed into new mayoral body: Boris Johnson insists he will prioritise design but admits number of advisers will shrink..."Be of good cheer, it will all be OK," Johnson said. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Building and message at odds: While the National Museum of American Jewish History's exhibits tell of Jews' success in America, the architecture is decidedly downbeat...Given the museum's location overlooking Independence Mall...is strikingly inward-looking and closed off from its surroundings...This is architecture that exudes unease...design actually works at cross-purposes with the compelling story told within... By Inga Saffron -- James Polshek/Ennead Architects [slide show] - Philadelphia Inquirer

The Pity of the National Museum of American Jewish History: The building, the accompanying text, and strange omissions...raise some interesting questions...building is a large shiny glass box devoid of any Jewish imagery...The architects were instructed to make sure that "there was to be nothing religious in the Museum," and they have done just that. If the museum would have to give up the building, the next tenant would have very little trouble adjusting it to its own needs. By Judith Apter Klinghoffer -- Ennead Architects - History News Network/HNN (George Mason University)

Helmut Jahn's heroic, if unlikely, vision for Navy Pier: Yes, it's over the top and, in all likelihood, ridiculously expensive. But it's full of creative sparks - precisely what was missing from the largely predictable list of recommendations made by a visiting panel of developers... By Blair Kamin - Chicago Tribune

A homeless shelter - in the club district: Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre...If Toronto is serious about pushing forward as a 21st-century city of freedom, tolerance and equality, this is the right kind of outreach facility at exactly the right place...Designed with humanity... By Lisa Rochon -- Levitt Goodman Architects - Globe and Mail (Canada)

Pull over! I see hope on the road ahead: They're far from perfect and the food's bad, but Ontario's new service centres channel a certain Muskoka charm...There's something that looks like architectural hope emerging on Ontario's

superhighways. ONroute service centres...transforming the generic, forgettable designs of yesteryear... By Lisa Rochon [images]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Making Over McDonald's: Inside the \$2.4 billion plan to change the way you think about the most iconic restaurant on the planet...doesn't have to mean primary colors and fiberglass booths..."has become one of the few companies that does design management well." -- Denis Weil; Tim Brown/Ideo; Philippe Avanzi; Juicy Design; Antenna Design; Studio Gaia [slide shows]- Fast Company magazine

Vann Molyvann: Cambodia's forgotten architect: In the 1960s, he redefined the look of his homeland architecturally. Now his works are being lost to redevelopment. Admirers are working to highlight his importance...ingeniously used what might now be called green technology -- Bill Greaves; Darryl Collins; Geoff Pyle [slide show]- Los Angeles Times

Huge green roof sprouts at Union Square: Zeckendorf Towers gets 14,000-square-foot leafy new top billed as the largest in the city; saving money on cooling bills and improving the view at the same time...One of the drawbacks to such projects is the price. In New York City, it costs at least \$30 per square foot to build a green roof, while in Germany it costs \$2... [images]- Crain's New York Business

Review: Action Architecture at California Design Biennial: Frances Anderton's picks for the first-ever architecture category play up the transformative power of buildings...Her thoughtful choices amount to the biennial's most impressive category, setting a standard that the other curators struggled to match. -- Michael Maltzan; Frederick Fisher; Safdie Rabines; Layer; Atelier Manferdini; Ball-Nogues; California College of the Arts; IDEO- The Architect's Newspaper

Adele Chatfield-Taylor Wins 2010 Vincent Scully Prize: "Most preservationists were concerned with saving the biggest and the best, but the American Academy in Rome has been interested in keeping the built environment intact. Today, the problems of our time are not Classicism, but better city planning, infill, energy sources, and sustainability." - Inform: Architecture + Design in the Mid-Atlantic (Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects)

Cleveland chapters of the AIA and IIDA hand out 2010 design awards: Familiar names and projects dominated... By Steven Litt -- Westlake Reed Leskosky; Vocon; Ewing Cole/Belson Design Architects; Robert Maschke Architects; Kordalski Architects; City Architecture; Strollo Architects - Cleveland Plain Dealer

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