Today's News - Tuesday, December 21, 2010

- Fumihiko Maki, Hon. FAIA, Awarded the 2011 AIA Gold Medal: "He is able to articulate, through architecture, the significance of science, education, arts, music, culture, and media in our society" [images] - Architect

- Positive changes around S.F. and environs in 2010: ...I'd be hard-pressed to name the 10 best buildings of the year - or even 10 major structures that got built. On the bright side? The year saw neighborhood-planning that teaches us with the promise of sustainable, transit-friendly urbanity. By John King -- Lundberg Design; EHDD Architecture; David Baker + Partners; Mark Cavagnero Associates; Case + Abst Architects; Ognydiak/Phillinger Architects; Arup/Donald Macdonald [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

- Ghost town, Mongolia: Inside China's empty cities: They're building it, but will they come? Why China's real estate boom looks so troubling from the outside...the empty streets of Ordos in Inner Mongolia...this is not exactly the first place that comes to mind to locate a luxury hotel. It's spooky...But maybe they're creating art in the process. By Duff McDonald - Fortune magazine

- Newly Built Ghost Towns Haunt Banks in Spain: ...many empty units are in areas where there is little demand for them, particularly along the southern coastal areas where hills have disappeared under vast housing developments...biggest challenge for the banks is that they are likely to end up owners of vast amounts of undeveloped land. - New York Times

- Turkey's artist village draws huge interest: The Sonsuz Sükrün Köyü (Village of Gratitude), which is being established in the Central Anatolian province of Konya, is claimed to be the first of its type in Turkey...Some 500 artists have applied for one of the 210 houses...will also give classes for free while also tending their own vegetables. -- Mehmet Tasdiken - Hürriyet Daily News (Turkey)

- Cairo's 2050 "Cleaner, Greener, Better" Plan Could Displace Thousands: Everybody wants a greener Cairo, but residents don't trust the government's compensation plans...some people welcome the move...Others are less optimistic. - Green Prophet (Middle East)

- Council Approves West Side Apartment Towers: Riverside Center...brings to an end years of planning and dickering with community groups...were successful in getting the developer to include affordable housing, build the school and realign the public spaces so that they were more accessible to local residents. "But, it's still too big." -- Atelier Christian de Portzamparc [image] - New York Times

- The future is a high-rise world: Thom Mayne is certain of one thing: city populations will continue to grow - and that will be good for architects...says the tall apartment tower is about to come into its own. For all cities, at some point, "there will be no choice...High-rise is the solution for intensification" - Sydney Morning Herald

- Marilyn makes moves in Mississauga: ...Absolute complex, better known as the Marilyn Monroe...this remarkable 54-storey tower redefines highrise condo architecture...extraordinary structure was so popular with buyers a matching tower is also being built...symbolic of a city seeking to establish an image of itself as innovative and forward-looking, as well as cool and sexy. By Christopher Hume -- MAD Architects [images, video] - Toronto Star

- Turning the page at Robarts Library: There's Brutalism and just plain brutal. The University of Toronto's Robarts Library is both...it's not hard to understand why a contemporary architect might want to run screaming from a project that involved refurbishing a building as recalcitrant...Not so Gary McCluskie...By Christopher Hume -- Warner, Burns, Toan and Lunde/Mathers and Haldenby (1973); Diamond and Schmitt Architects [image] - Toronto Star

- LMM Architects and Gustafson Guthrie Nichol envision bold ideas for downtown's Group Plan Commission: It might be tempting to say that none of it will ever happen...that the fresh ideas should be radically and quickly winnowed to the cheapest and lowest common denominator. That would be a mistake...there are signs that, after decades in which the city paid little attention to parks and public space, the powers that be get it. By Steven Litt [images, links] - Cleveland Plain Dealer

- Lunch with the Critics: Northwest Corner Building, Columbia University: This is not the building most New Yorkers were expecting from either Moneo or Columbia...But just because a building defies expectations doesn't mean it's not good...maybe the problem...is that it couldn't possibly do all that it has been asked to do. By Alexandra Lange and Mark Lamster -- Rafael Moneo; Moneo Brock Studio; Davis Brody Bond Aedas [images] - Places Journal
A New Museum for Qatar: ...an architecturally modest museum with a far more ambitious mission is ready to open its doors for the New Year. The Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art aims to be a new pan-Arab center for culture and creativity...primarily concerned with Arab modernity...will open in a former school building...will not shy away from being provocative. – Jean-François Bodin [images]- Metropolis Magazine

A Minimalist Church Designed for Maximum Tourism: ...Chapel of the Carmelites of the Assumption in Paris...transformed into a sort of pilgrims' holy land...And it totally works. It's got what looks like the roominess of a small cathedral and the soul of a Vitra showroom, which is exactly how we like our churches. By Suzanne LaBarre – Noël Lemaesquier (1959); 3box; John Doe Studio [slide show]- Fast Company

Antiterror Turntables: In Lower Manhattan, Rogers Marvel Architects satisfy security imperatives without sacrificing street life...Called “NoGos”...“They’re tough utilitarian things that we let become, if not objects of desire, then appreciable things in the streetscape.” By Martin C. Pedersen [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Students draft center’s future: University of Oregon architecture classes asked to submit designs for facilities...took on a daunting task: design Salem’s 1970s-era civic center campus as an icon for the city...one of 14 projects that students will help plan as part of the Sustainable City Year... -- Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects (ZGF); CB Two Architects- Statesman Journal (Oregon)

Enrique Norten Takes South Korean Mega-Firm to Court: After merger falls through, TEN Arquitectos founder accuses Heerim Architects & Planners of breach of contract, seeks $3 million in damages...he sees as a warning to other American architects who try to make deals with foreign firms. They should be wary... By Fred A. Bernstein- Architect Magazine

Sasaki and Hacin + Associates Join Forces: Not a merger, the arrangement...is more of a May-December romance...."This partnership is one more level of collaboration in two already collaborative organizations. It is not fundamentally about saving money or an economy of scale, but about achieving greater design results." - Architect Magazine

Architectural Archives Donated to Yale: The materials are from the firm of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates. - New York Times

Gehry Partners: Dr. Chau Chak Wing Building, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia