

Today's News - Tuesday, February 22, 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our hearts and thoughts are with the people of Christchurch, New Zealand, suffering such losses in the aftershocks and aftermath of a devastating earthquake.

- Russell gets a Ground Zero walk-about with PANYNJ's Chris Ward to find out "how he galvanized the \$11 billion World Trade Center site construction after years of political and management morass."
- King on the endgame (finally) beginning for San Francisco's massive Treasure Island development, and cheers proposal to "tone down" its skyline.
- Other cities may be taking a pass on costly LEED certification "to get a plaque on the wall," but Minneapolis thinks it's worth it.
- Findley offers an in-depth look at two very different apartheid museums in South Africa that "reflect the difficulties of memorializing a complex and terrible history"; even "their place names poetically foreshadow the contexts that shaped the projects" (long journalism writ well).
- Wigglesworth wags an indignant finger at the U.K.'s education secretary: "Michael Gove's rejection of decent architecture shows he knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing."
- The saga of the (currently homeless) Solar Decathlon continues, with pleas from Eric Owen Moss and two team leaders to keep it on the Mall, and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts secretary offering an alternative site.
- Q&A with Ferry and Monoian, "Abu Dhabi's most innovative design couple" re: public initiatives such as the Land Art Generator Initiative and their vision of a future full of beautiful energy plants.
- Calys cheers Studio O+A being named Contract mag's Designer of the Year, and is pleasantly surprised to find Orpilla and Alexander to be "designers without any pretension and certainly no agenda other than doing right by their clients" (great slide show, too).
- A who's who in the architectural firmament send an open letter to London's mayor to save Design for London: "It would be a tragedy if DfL were allowed to wither away."
- A terrific presentation of the 2011 P/A Award winners (penned by some terrific writers).

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Ground Zero's \$11 Billion Morass Shows Gains Before Anniversary: "Political calendars guided the project rather than construction calendars"...By opening the work up to many contractors...the "competition drove real efficiencies"... By James S. Russell -- Fumihiko Maki; Santiago Calatrava; Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM)- Bloomberg News

Treasure Island proposal cuts tower down to size: ...a signal the endgame has begun: the tallest tower's potential height is being lowered by 200 feet...by toning down the skyline...proponents are acknowledging something that should have been obvious all along: even a project billed as "an international exemplar of sustainable development" should know its place. By John King -- Craig Hartman/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)- San Francisco Chronicle

Cities pass up green stamp of approval, say it costs too much: They say they can build green without spending money on LEED. But Minneapolis says it's worth the price.- Minneapolis Star Tribune

Red and Gold: A Tale of Two Apartheid Museums: ...represent extremes of possible responses to the cultural and political conflicts of the new South Africa...The apartheid museums at Gold Reef and Red Location encapsulate some of the critical challenges for architecture in a nation undergoing an enormous historical shift. By Lisa Findley -- Mashabane Rose Architects/Sidney Abramowitch, Barend Johannes (Bannie) Britz/Linda Mushi/GAPP; Noero Wolff Architects [images, links]- Places Journal

Op-Ed: Why are the ConDems designing factory schools? Michael Gove's rejection of decent architecture shows he knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing...Sadly, the government doesn't seem to regard the built environment as affecting our wellbeing. By Sarah Wigglesworth- Guardian (UK)

Solar Decathlon 2011: Tell Me to What You Pay Attention and I'll Tell You Who You Are: ...hard working teams of intelligent, dedicated students...are simply asked to acquiesce in the face of a faceless government authority... By Eric Owen Moss/Southern California Institute of Architecture and Elisabeth Neigert/SCI-Arc/Caltech Solar Decathlon 2011 Team- Huffington Post

Letters: Where to hold the Solar Decathlon: Locating the Solar Decathlon here [10th Street, also known as the L'Enfant Promenade] could be the first step in a much-needed transformation of the corridor from its barren condition... + ...every decathlete understands that the location is sacrosanct. By Thomas Luebke, Secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and Christopher Werner, 2009 Cornell University Solar Decathlon team- Washington Post

Interview With Abu Dhabi's Most Innovative Design Couple: Robert Ferry and Elizabeth Monoian...public initiatives such as the Land Art Generator Initiative (LAGI) have coincided with a thrust to incorporate more renewable energy sources into the region's portfolio. -- Studied Impact Design [images, links]- Green Prophet (Middle East)

Studio O+A named Designer of the Year: ..."simple" is not an adjective most designers would use about themselves. As I discovered, Primo Orpilla and Verda Alexander are designers without any pretension and certainly no agenda other than doing right by their clients. By George Calys [slide show]- San Francisco Chronicle

Star architects appeal to Boris to save Design for London: ...the continuing threat to the organisation has been underlined in an open letter to the mayor and "the people of London"... "It would be a tragedy if DfL were allowed to wither away." -- Maxwan; Ben van Berkel; Mario Botta; Alain de Botton; Kees Christiaanse; Frank Gehry; Adriaan Geuze; Xaveer De Geyter; Zaha Hadid; Jacques Herzog; Daniel Libeskind; Renzo Piano; Peter St John; Rafael Vinoly- BD/Building Design (UK)

58th Annual Progressive Architecture Awards/2011 P/A Awards: Out of 300 submitted projects, this year's jury selected six that push the envelope of progressive design, regardless of the building type. By Vernon Mays, Mark Lamster; John Morris Dixon, Sara Hart, Joseph Giovannini, Thomas Fisher -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Julie Snow Architects; Lord, Aeck & Sargent/Office dA; Preston Scott Cohen; Stan Allen Architect; Field Architecture [slide shows]- Architect Magazine

Álvaro Siza Arquitecto: Mimesis Museum, Paju Book City, South Korea

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