

Today's News - Tuesday, April 5, 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're taking a two- (or possibly three-) day break...we'll definitely be back by Monday, April 11.

- Concern mounts for Ai Weiwei with calls for his release - or at least information + Lebbeus Woods vows "to reject all new work offers in China until the artist and architect is released.
- An architect and urban planner bemoans the probable loss of an "endangered urban paradise" in Jakarta to a new skyscraper for politicians (never mind the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) members say "it shows indications of plagiarism" - though no architect is named).
- Saffron takes away some sobering lessons from a conference that pondered the future of water.
- Kamin cheers that a Chicago alderman has stepped in to slow down Northwestern's plans to demolish Goldberg's Prentice hospital: "now have a chance for a real debate. Let's see where the debate goes."
- Mays marvels at a new condo tower that "will show a bright, light and translucent face" to Toronto's Bloor Street opposite the "dull, opaque cladding - the worst thing about Libeskind's ROM exterior."
- The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority proves to be a good neighbor by demonstrating that "even the most utilitarian public buildings can be elevated to a level of design that inspires the people who use them and benefits the communities that surround them."
- Meier makes his first foray into Central America with two W Hotels in Mexico.
- Gdansk, Poland, is rebuilding its Shakespearean theater on the "site of the only Shakespearean playhouse to have been constructed outside England during the Bard's lifetime" (who knew?!?!?).
- The Van Alen Institute taps LOT-EK to re-envision the architectural bookstore (and more) in NYC.
- Plans to transform the historic - but long-vacant - Union Station in Springfield, MA, into a regional transport hub that have been kicking around for more than 30 years finally look to be chugging forward.
- The on-again-off-again plans for a visitors center at Stonehenge are on - again.
- Q&A with Bratton re: can we design a more harmonious world? "Not only are the answers wrong, the questions are wrong too" (and check out the Guardian Activate Summit coming to NYC April 28).
- Birnbaum offers an eloquent eulogy to an Olmsted elm that "served as one of the most symbolic living witnesses to the birth of landscape architecture and city shaping in America."
- Architecture Canada | RAIC names first recipient of the Young Architect Award.
- Call for Papers: 49th International Making Cities Livable Conference.

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[A Call to Free Ai Weiwei, Artist, Architect, Activist: While his arrest is not unexpected...it is a devastating and saddening blow that follows upon the forced demolition of his Shanghai studio in January...We strongly encourage you to raise your voice...to advocate for official statements and positions on his behalf as well as all of those that have been detained these last weeks in response to the Jasmine Revolution.](#) - The Architect's Newspaper

[Ai Weiwei missing: American architect Lebbeus Woods on strike until Ai Weiwei released from detention...co-founder of the Research Institute for Experimental Architecture has vowed to reject all new work offers in China until Beijing-based artist and architect Ai Weiwei is released...](#) - World Architecture News (UK)

[Op-Ed: An endangered urban paradise: It is most ironic that while statesmen from all over the world...are promoting the green movement, part of the lush green open space of Senayan will be cleared to make way for a new 36-story skyscraper...planned for members of the House of Representatives...the planning and design of the new office tower will turn...Jakarta's heaven, into hell...the best option is to hold an architectural competition...](#) By Eko Budihardjo- The Jakarta Post

[A Philadelphia conference ponders the future of water: ...the sobering lesson of a two-day symposium...at the University of Pennsylvania PennDesign...brought a flow of ideas from an international lineup of designers, landscape architects, engineers, and historians..."We're always arguing about which is more important, carbon or water, water or carbon. It's really a fake choice"...](#) By Inga Saffron -- Charles Waldheim; James Corner; Kongjian Yu; Doug Jerolmack; Hans Venhuizen- Philadelphia Inquirer

[Alderman Reilly gets Northwestern University to hold off on its old Prentice Women's Hospital demolition push; and why that matters...The important thing is that we now have a chance for a real debate...not a Daley-style fait accompli. Let's see where the debate goes.](#) By Blair Kamin -- Bertrand Goldberg (1974)- Chicago Tribune

[The ROM \[Royal Ontario Museum\] meets its match in new cross-street condo: ...brings a visual punch to complement museum's flamboyant look...instead of retiring from the fray of big-city life behind dull, opaque cladding -- the worst thing about Daniel Libeskind's ROM exterior -- Exhibit will show a bright, light and translucent face to the street.](#) By John Bentley Mays -- Rosario Varacalli/r. Varacalli Architect; Diego Burdi/Paul Filek/Burdfilek [image]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

[Good designs, good neighbours: WRHA \[Winnipeg Regional Health Authority\] projects...demonstrate even the most utilitarian public buildings can be elevated to a level of design that inspires the people who use them and benefits the communities that surround them.](#) By: Brent Bellamy/Number Ten Architectural Group -- Smith Carter and Parkin Architects; MMP Architects [images]- Winnipeg Free Press (Canada)

[Richard Meier Tapped for Two W Hotels in Mexico: One will be part of a mixed-use complex in Mexico City, while the other will be a resort near Cancun...the buildings strongly evoke other Meier designs, especially his trio of condos along Manhattan's Lower West Side..."It's so much better to do a group of buildings, rather than a singular building, because it creates a place."](#) [images]- Architectural Record

[Shakespeare: Stratford. London. Gdan'sk? Four centuries on, Poland is rebuilding its Shakespearean theatre...the site of the only Shakespearean playhouse to have been constructed outside England during the Bard's lifetime.](#) -- Renato Rizzi/Studio Associato Rizzi Equipe- Guardian (UK)

[Ex Libris Van Alen: LOT-EK and the Van Alen Institute re-envision the architectural bookstore in New York...using its tiny ground-level storefront space on West 22nd Street to reintroduce itself to the public and counter the loss of the city's once impressive range of architecture bookstores..."We are not reinventing the wheel, we are addressing a need."](#) -- LOT-EK [image]- The Architect's Newspaper

[Union Station architect picked: ...hired to design the long-stalled reconstruction of Springfield's Union Station said his first job is to find profitable uses for the massive and long-vacant depot...Plans to refurbish it have been kicking around for more than 30 years. "The stars are aligning"...](#) -- HDR Architecture- The Republican (Massachusetts)

[Architecture minister unveils Stonehenge funding package: Work on Denton Corker Marshall visitor centre on course to start next year...government had helped English Heritage secure a "unique funding mix" to enable the £27 million scheme to proceed.](#) - BD/Building Design (UK)

Q&A with Benjamin H. Bratton, director of the Center for Design and Geopolitics, Calit2 and University of California, San Diego: "Better design is a way of doing good in and of itself, one would assume. But what is better design? Better for what end?" - Can we design a more harmonious world?...What can we expect from you at the Guardian Activate Summit in New York? "Not only are the answers wrong, the questions are wrong too." - Guardian (UK)

Tree Hugging is Back in Style: This week saw the passing of a distinct American icon - it wasn't a movie star...it was an elm tree in Brookline, Massachusetts...believed to be 200 years old...on a property called Fairsted...served as one of the most symbolic living witnesses to the birth of landscape architecture and city shaping in America. By Charles Birnbaum -- Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.; Landslide; Every Tree Tells a Story [images, links]- The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF)

Architecture Canada | RAIC announces new Young Architect Award recipient: Taymoore Balbaa, MRAIC, is the first recipient...In 2005, he became the inaugural winner of the Canada Council for the Arts' Prix de Rome in Architecture for Emerging Practitioners... -- Atelier3AM- Canadian Architect

Call for Papers: 49th International Making Cities Livable Conference on Planning Healthy Communities for All (Portland, OR, May 20-24, 2012); topics include: Planning for health & well-being; Healthy Inclusive Communities; Nature in the urban environment; Mixed-use urban fabric; Urban villages/suburban towns; etc.; deadline: June 15- International Making Cities Livable (IMCL)



Michael Maltzan Architecture: Mashouf Performing Arts Center, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California

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