

Today's News - Friday, April 29, 2011

- An eyeeful of the competition-winning design by an Iraqi architect (not named Hadid) for the General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers in Baghdad.
- TEN Arquitectos to bring two high-profile designs to a Washington, D.C. neighborhood "more accustomed to Georgian politesse."
- NYC to be home to the U.S.'s first museum dedicated to mathematics, where "math = discovery = beauty = fun" (alas, no mention of who's designing it).
- The U.S. State Department is working on its own version of a Design Excellence Program for U.S. Embassies, "moving away from low-bid contracting to a best-value approach" (it's about time!).
- An eyeeful of "the greatest buildings never built - man's best unmade plans."
- Mergers result in P+W Canada.
- Schumacher spends a weekend in FLW's Bernard Schwartz House and ends up more enamored of the master than she'd expected (fab pix, too!) + Myers spends a night in Mies's Farnsworth House and finds it "remains shockingly ahead of its time."
- Weekend diversions:
 - Campbell cheers "The Divine Comedy" where "art and architecture at Harvard are at last getting to be friends" via Ai Weiwei, Tomas Saraceno, and Olafur Eliasson: it's "an ambitious agenda and a thought-provoking exhibition."
 - Still no word on what's happened to Ai Weiwei, but his "Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads" debuts Monday on Manhattan's Grand Army Plaza.
 - "Modern Architecture in Kyoto" hopes to put the spotlight on the city's "outstanding structures built between the 1920s and '70s" (many either already lost or under threat).
 - Patton finds "Aerotropolis" to be a bit "like an airport itself...sprawling and miscellaneous...But the book is often fun."
 - Two excerpts from "Reconsidering Jane Jacobs" are reading treats: Mennel argues that while Jacobs has had a profound influence on city planning, Andy Warhol's world was actually "the more inclusive" + Campanella bemoans urban planning becoming "a caretaker profession - reactive rather than proactive, corrective instead of preemptive, rule bound and hamstrung and anything but visionary."
 - In "Triumph of the City," Glaeser "is Jane Jacobs with a pocket square and, importantly, a spreadsheet."
 - Kamin is taken by "Chicago From the Sky" that will undoubtedly "end up on numerous coffee tables, where it can be counted upon to delight and, perhaps, educate" (great pix!).
 - Rybczynski cheers "Alvar Aalto Houses" which beautifully illustrates why "his domestic work bears revisiting...especially in our economically stressed period" (great pix here, too!).
 - Rawsthorn raves about A Taxonomy of Office Chairs, "that charts "the evolution of an industrial product as thoroughly as a biologist studies nature."
 - San Diego's NewSchool of Architecture and Design tackles getting beyond the "eye candy" of architecture books (some don't hold together too well, either).

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[An Infinite Free Iraqi Constitution? An award-winning design by Iraqi Architect Manhal Al Habbobi tells the revival story of Mesopotamia...to design the new compound for the General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers in Baghdad.](#) [images]- EconomyWatch.com (Singapore)

[Raising Capital: TEN Arquitectos joins Foster in bringing architecture to D.C.: Two new Enrique Norten buildings...in the West End neighborhood of Washington, D.C. introduce high-profile design to an area more accustomed to Georgian politesse. The West End Library...and the two-story fire station building will have five stories of affordable housing...](#) [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

[NY MoMath museum aims to add to math appreciation: a formula that looks like this: math \(equals\) discovery \(equals\) beauty \(equals\) fun...the only museum in the United States dedicated to mathematics...Math museums exist in many other countries...but none in the U.S., perhaps reflecting the low regard for the subject in this country.](#) - AP

[State Department Ramping Up Design Excellence Program for U.S. Embassies: Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations intends to release a how-to handbook by July...initiative is reshaping OBO contracting...its "default" contracting method was design-build...moving away from low-bid contracting to a best-value approach... -- KeiranTimberlake; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill \(SOM\)](#) [images, links]- Architectural Record

[The Greatest Buildings Never Built: Monumental victims of dwindling finances, public backlash and political roadblocks, many designs from the world's most celebrated architects never broke ground...stunning structures exist only as colorfully rendered visions on a lost landscape. Here, man's best unmade plans. -- Zaha Hadid; Rem Koolhaas/OMA; Jean Nouvel; Frank Gehry; Foster + Partners; Daniel Libeskind](#) [slide show]- Wall Street Journal

[Ottawa architectural firm merges, relaunches: Vermeulen Hind Architects...relaunched as Perkins+Will Canada following mergers with two other related firms...Shore Tilbe Perkins+Will, which focuses on civic and recreation architecture, and Vancouver's Busby Perkins+Will, a green firm.](#) - Ottawa Business Journal

[Making a Wright Turn: It's hard to see Frank Lloyd Wright...on the banks of the East Twin River, is the Bernard Schwartz House \[1938\]...We've experienced architecture that is itself inspired before. Now, we've experienced a structure that was designed to inspire in a very particular way. And it did.](#) By Mary Louise Schumacher [slide show]- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

[Transformational Transparency: Built between 1949 and 1951, Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House instantly revolutionized country living and remains shockingly ahead of its time.](#) By Marc Myers - Wall Street Journal

[Art and architecture have a meeting place at Harvard, catching the public's eye on campus: evidence...that art and architecture at Harvard are at last getting to be friends..."The Divine Comedy"...an ambitious agenda and a thought-provoking exhibition.](#) By Robert Campbell -- Ai Weiwei; Tomas Saraceno; Olafur Eliasson; Sanford Kwinter - Boston Globe

[Ai Weiwei Unleashes Animals of the Zodiac on Central Park for His First Public Art Project: "Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads" will begin its travels in Grand Army Plaza, in front of the Plaza Hotel, from May 2 - July 15.](#) [images]- Artinfo

[Making Kyoto's modern architecture part of the city's heritage: At a time when many architects struggled to bring modern architecture into a Japanese aesthetic context...Who dared compete with the masters..."Modern Architecture in Kyoto" at the Kyoto Institute of Technology \(KIT\) introduces those who did dare...covers 22 outstanding structures built between the 1920s and '70s... -- George Nakashima; Junzo Yoshimura; Antonin Raymond; Kunio Mayekawa; Koji Fujii; Mamoru Yamada](#) - Japan Times

[Plane Talk: Phil Patton on "Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next" by John D. Kasarda and Greg Lindsay: Like an airport itself...the book is sprawling and miscellaneous...How does architecture fit into the story? Marginally, at best...But the book is often fun.](#) - The Architect's Newspaper

[Jane Jacobs, Andy Warhol, and the Kind of Problem a Community Is: Jacobs's world...has provided an enduring ideal of communitarian solidarity and profoundly influenced half a century of city planning. But Tim Mennel argues that it is Warhol's world that was the more inclusive, more open to complexity and unruliness, and ultimately more influential on the city we actually inhabit.](#) [images]- Places Journal

Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning: Half a century after Jacobs challenged large-scale urban renewal and big-picture master planning, the field has become, says planning professor Thomas Campanella, "a caretaker profession — reactive rather than proactive, corrective instead of preemptive, rule bound and hamstrung and anything but visionary." - Places Journal

A Prescription for Prosperity: Let Cities Be Cities: In "Triumph of the City," Ed Glaeser has written a love letter to his lifelong object of study, the global metropolises...his enthusiasm for cities is sincere and infectious...a deeply humanist book, with the "triumph" referring to the heights of invention and creativity achieved when people cluster together...Glaeser is Jane Jacobs with a pocket square and, importantly, a spreadsheet. - California Planning & Development Report

Chicago, that shape-shifting town: "Chicago From the Sky: A Region Transformed" captures 25 years of dramatic transformation, with a few exceptions...by Lawrence Okrent, a Chicago planning and zoning consultant who doubles as an aerial photographer...will end up on numerous coffee tables, where it can be counted upon to delight and, perhaps, educate... By Blair Kamin [images, slide show] - Chicago Tribune

A Low-Key High Modernist: The unpretentious houses of Alvar Aalto: ...beautifully illustrated "Alvar Aalto Houses" by Jari Jetsonen and Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen...his domestic work bears revisiting, for his particular brand of low-key modern design holds many lessons, especially in our economically stressed period. By Witold Rybczynski [slide show essay] - Slate

Taking a Zoological Approach to Chairs: In "A Taxonomy of Office Chairs," the American industrial designer Jonathan Olivares aimed to chart the evolution of an industrial product as thoroughly as a biologist studies nature...He chose well. By Alice Rawsthorn - New York Times

The Architecture Book: Beyond Eye Candy: Would you curl up with a 20-pound tome on a desert island? NewSchool of Architecture and Design wants to know..."Often the weight of the book is too great and they fall apart"...one example - "Piano" by Philip Jodidio...has not held up well as students have checked it out to study...an ideal architecture book..."Building in Existing Fabric: Refurbishment, Extensions, New Design," edited by Christian Schittich... - San Diego Union-Tribune



[Richard Meier & Partners: W Retreat Kanai, Riviera Maya, Mexico](#)

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