

Today's News - Friday, May 6, 2011

- A Glasgow A-listed treasure under threat: the developer claims if the government doesn't cough up sufficient grants, demolition will be "the only way his firm can avoid insolvency" (sounds like cultural blackmail to us).
- Mays's take on a "curious architectural creature, neither fish nor fowl": a planned condo tower "that may, alas, help define a baleful 21st century tall-building style in Toronto...This is sentimentality, not good urban design."
- This may be a tough economic time for architects, but history proves it also allows "many to seek new projects and means of design"
- Correa "deconstructs the shifting arc of architecture": "It's truly sad that our leaders want to make Mumbai a Singapore...Most of the "architecture" you see today isn't architecture; it is construction."
- Architect and author Godwin decries that Nigerians "have never had the courage to define and recognise architecture as an art" and urges the Nigerian Institute of Architects "to close ranks and shun the unhealthy rivalry between them."
- Schumacher cheers the 2011 AIA Wisconsin Design Awards winners that include "a little modernist shed that goes from 'nowhere to nowhere.'"
- An eye-ful of the "inventive if improbable top picks" in the 2011 DawnTown Floating Stage Competition for Candela's Miami Marine Stadium: a "mysterious floating orb" leads the pack.
- The controversial - and now dismantled - "Statue of Humanity" honoring Turkish-Armenian relations may find a new home in Berlin.
- The 11 Most Walk-Friendly U.S. Cities that "tend to be green in other ways, too" (some real surprises to us!).
- Weekend diversions (and lots of 'em!):
- NYC's Festival of Ideas for the New City includes Audi's "Urban Future Initiative: Project New York" where five NY teams explore "how neighborhoods might develop and morph...based on the exhibit, it will be damn strange indeed" + OMA/Koolhaas launch "Cronocaos" exploring "the increasingly urgent topic of preservation in architecture and urbanism" at the New Museum.
- In Prague, an exhibition of sustainable architecture "shows that the issue is international - but it's been slow to take off locally" + A retrospective of SIAL, a "small but vitally important architecture studio that opened under communism" that proved "intelligence and clarity sometimes win out over chaos."
- Kamin cheers the opening of Saarinen's "extraordinary" Miller House to the public, and hopes the frayed edges don't get smoothed over too much: "Such details offer evidence of the human activity that this house so exquisitely shelters and celebrates" + Fab slide show, video of the house and garden.
- The annual "The Digest of South African Architecture" is important in "contributing a strand of provocation to a somewhat spatially illiterate public, yet another legacy from the apartheid era."
- Calys cheers King's "Cityscapes" as "a jaunty romp through a few of the icons that dot the City by the Bay...there's not a single bit of jargon, no technical terms, nary a wisp of archi-babble."
- Hawthorne cheers "Richard Meltzer's Guide to the Ugliest Buildings of Los Angeles": it's a "barbed (and "efficiently raucous") meditation on what it takes to qualify...as a genuine eyesore" (and hard to find).
- Yarinsky finds two "very different, but equally engaging" books on Donald Judd offer revealing insights into "how architecture might gain from his art the capacity for a more vital connection to our world today."
- Dobrzynski finds "Architect for Art: Max Gordon" has "more going for it than marvelous pictures" + Gordon may have "adhered to a notion of simplicity" - but the book" took two years and four authors to create."

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Threat to demolish historic Alexander "Greek" Thomson's masterpiece: The owner of an iconic Glasgow building...A-listed Egyptian Halls...said that as long-standing plans for a hotel were no longer financially viable and because local and national government will not provide sufficient grants, there was no option but to pull it down...the only way his firm can avoid insolvency. [image]- The Herald (Scotland)

A guilty conscience stifles good urban design: ...18-storey complex...a curious architectural creature...that may, alas, help define a baleful 21st century tall-building style in Toronto: a sleek modernist tower rising from a streetside clutter of Victorian bric-a-brac. This is sentimentality, not good urban design. By John Bentley Mays -- Prishram Jain/TACT Architecture [image]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Design for how much? ...many architects are out of work. What does this economical diet say for design? Are there benefits to this forced efficiency in architecture? ..."constraints can inspire creativity"...The change in weather...has also allowed many to seek new projects and means of design. -- Phillip Johnson; Thomas Heatherwick; Barbosa Guimarães; John Morefield/Architecture 5¢- International Business Times

Architect of glory: Shortly after the release of "A Place in the Shade", Charles Correa deconstructs the shifting arc of architecture..."It's truly sad that our leaders...want to make Mumbai a Singapore...Most of the "architecture" you see today isn't architecture; it is construction. The role of the planner has been taken over by the ever-growing nexus between builder and politician."- The Hindu (India)

Architecture should be seen as art: Author of "The Architecture of Demas Nwoko" John Godwin has decried..."we have never had the courage to define and recognise architecture as an art"...urged the Nigerian Institute of Architects and scholars to close ranks and shun the unhealthy rivalry between them.- Next (Nigeria)

2011 AIA Wisconsin Design Awards announced: ...place emphasis on public and educational structures, as well as projects that honor historic buildings. By Mary Louise Schumacher -- Ballinger; Uihlein Wilson Architects; Zimmerman Architectural Studios; Bruns Architecture; Isthmus Architecture; HGA Architects; La Dallman Architects; Kahler Slater Architects; Johnsen Schmalig Architects; Kubala Washatko Architects [images, links]- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Miami Marine Stadium's new floating stage: A mysterious floating orb, a giant inflatable mushroom cap and a cube whose walls are curtains of water...inventive if improbable top picks in the DawnTown international competition to devise an eye-popping new stage for the long-shuttered Miami Marine Stadium. -- Hilario Candela (1963); Abingo Wu Studio; Pink Cloud.DK.Design Group; NBWW; biuro architektoniczne SCOLIOSIS [link to images/info]- DawnTown + Miami Herald

The Art of Turkish-Armenian Relations: Controversial Kars Monument Could Come to Berlin: Turkish Prime Minister recently called the "Statue of Humanity" [by Mehmet Aksoy]...a "monstrosity." It has now been dismantled. But Berlin restaurant owner Adnan Oral wants to bring it to the German capital and re-erect it. [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Pedestrian Perfection: The 11 Most Walk-Friendly U.S. Cities: Communities that promote walking tend to be green in other ways, too. A new ranking says who's getting us on our feet. By Kaid Benfield- The Atlantic

NYC Of 2030 Is Filled With Organic Towers, Algae, And Other Terrifying Things: Audi's "Urban Future Initiative: Project New York," exploring how several Manhattan neighborhoods might develop and morph...based on the exhibit, it will be damn strange indeed. -- Festival Of Ideas For The New City; Leong Leong; Abruzzo Bodziak Architects; LabDora; TheVeryMany; Matter Practice [links]- Gothamist (NYC)

"Cronocaos" is an exhibition about the increasingly urgent topic of preservation in architecture and urbanism by OMA / Rem Koolhaas...through June 6. -- Office of Metropolitan Architecture- New Museum (NYC)

Sustainable architecture building a base, slowly: The Global Award for Sustainable Architecture exhibition shows that the

issue is international — but it's been slow to take off locally..."Currently, there are only a few examples of sustainable buildings in the Czech Republic" -- ARKOS Forum; Carin Smuts/CS Studio Architects; Rural Studio/Andrew Freear; Thomas Herzog - Czech Position

Technically beautiful: Even in the most turbulent eras, intelligence and clarity sometimes win out over chaos, a fact evident in the work of the Engineers and Architects Association of Liberec (SIAL), a small but vitally important architecture studio that opened under communism...now featured in a retrospective display at Jaroslav Fragner Gallery, in Prague, until May 22. [slide show] - The Prague Post

A modern Midwestern gem unveiled: For years hidden behind a wall of hedges, the Miller House in Columbus, Ind. gets ready to open for tours...extraordinary house...meant to be lived in seven days a week...And live in it, they did...I hope the Indianapolis Museum of Art doesn't smooth over frayed edges...Such details offer evidence of the human activity that this house so exquisitely shelters and celebrates. By Blair Kamin -- Eero Saarinen; Dan Kiley; Alexander Girard [images]- Chicago Tribune

Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Indiana, opens for tours beginning May 10: ...one of Indiana's most significant architectural sites and considered one of the finest examples in the nation of the modernist movement. -- Eero Saarinen; Alexander Girard; Daniel Urban Kiley (Dan Kiley); Balthazar Korab [slide show, video]- Indianapolis Star

What to do when you are building tomorrow: "The Digest of South African Architecture"...genuinely address both plurality and densification...contributing a strand of provocation to a somewhat spatially illiterate public, yet another legacy from the apartheid era...Perhaps it is time to take more serious note of the potential that architecture and design can have in contributing to socioeconomic problems facing societies in our rapidly globalising world. By Iain Low -- South African Institute of Architects (SAIA) - Mail & Guardian (South Africa)

"Cityscapes" by John King: you don't need to leave your architectural heart in San Francisco: ...a jaunty romp through a few of the icons...and a number of the idiosyncratic structures that dot the City by the Bay...there's not a single bit of jargon, no technical terms, nary a wisp of archi-babble. By George Calys - San Francisco Examiner

Reading L.A.: Richard Meltzer tracks down the ugly: "Richard Meltzer's Guide to the Ugliest Buildings of Los Angeles"...a barbed meditation on what it takes to qualify not just as a mediocre piece of architecture but as a genuine eyesore...this efficiently raucous and tough-to-find book deserves to be a whole lot better known. By Christopher Hawthorne - Los Angeles Times

Donald Judd and the Blooming of Reality: David Raskin's "Donald Judd" and Marianne Stockebrand's "Chinati: The Vision of Donald Judd," offer revealing insights into...his fusing of art, architecture and environment...very different, but equally engaging...how architecture might gain from his art the capacity for a more vital connection to our world today. By Adam Yarinsky/Architecture Research Office (ARO) [images]- Places Journal

"Architect for Art: Max Gordon": ...[his] philosophy about architecture for contemporary art...highlight the art, not the architecture; use light to create space; make everything as simple as possible...has more going for it than marvelous pictures... By Judith H. Dobrzynski -- David Gordon; Alanna Heiss; Richard Serra; Jennifer Bartlett; Lawrence Luhring; Jasper Johns; Kenneth Frampton; Jonathan Marvel - ArtsJournal

Light, White and Space: Max Gordon adhered to a notion of simplicity. With an unrelenting focus on functionality...undertook seven major projects, all of which are highlighted in "Architect for Art: Max Gordon"...book took two years and four authors to create. -- Nicholas Serota; Kenneth Frampton; Jonathan Marvel/Rogers Marvel Architects; David Gordon - Wall Street Journal



Roseta Vaz Monteiro Arquitectos: Church of Senhora da Boa Nova, Estoril, Portugal

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