

Today's News - Wednesday, May 18, 2011

- Farrelly minces no words about Sydney's "determination to snatch mediocrity from the jaws of excellence" when it comes to the Barangaroo development: it's not too big, but it's "too boring. The site demands Opera House-type audacity."
- MacCash went in search of Architect Barbie at the AIA confab, but found Andres Duany "in an especially feisty mood," offering "an amusingly acidic account of what he calls 'silver bullets'" intended to make New Orleans better (but don't quite get there).
- Campbell is almost wistful on his annual spring stroll of Boston's Kennedy Greenway: "The good news is that [it] is getting more beautiful. The bad news is that almost nobody is using it."
- Baghdad "faces a new scourge: tastelessness" as buildings erupt in riotous colors: "the best hope may be a plague of sandstorms" (with pix to prove it!).
- High hopes for Mumbai getting a facelift with street furniture, "but celebrations may be premature."
- A conference on the changing face/place of libraries: their role as community centers "is in the ascendancy": "We're moving books out and replacing them with coffee shops."
- After months of controversy, San Antonio's 1923 Municipal Auditorium heads towards becoming the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts (with lots of interior recycling to other non-profits).
- A once-derelict marina in Far Rockaway, Queens, to see new life as a "far-out art scene" (shipping containers included).
- Heatherwick's TEDtalk includes "some remakes of the ordinary" - and one "extraordinary pavilion" (three guesses which one, first two don't count).
- An in-depth (and interesting) profile of Jeanne Gang who really digs construction and "likenes the architect to a cook, a prospector and a nomad."
- April's AIA Architecture Billings Index took a fall + We are very sad to hear the news that D.C.'s long established - and respected - Group Goetz Architects is shutting its doors after 32 years: "Regrettably, the firm is another statistic of the U.S. economy."
- On a brighter note: Yale to be the first Ivy League school to offer free online access to its museum, archive, and library collections with a massive "harvesting" of images underway.
- There's a zero-energy future for old federal buildings via the Metropolis =Next Generation 2011 winning proposal, which "reads like a sci-fi script from Hollywood" (but is totally doable - we hope!).
- Milan's Piazza Affari has a pointed finger raising eyebrows: it's either rude or ironic.
- Call for entries: ACADIA 2011 Design + Fabrication Competition (deadline extended) + Montreal's Namur-Jean-Talon West Urban Design Competition (alas, Canadian teams only).

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Think big but make it exciting: ...determination to snatch mediocrity from the jaws of excellence is driving our most significant development for decades. Barangaroo's problem is not that it's too big, but that it's too boring. The site demands Opera House-type audacity. By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

Looking for Architect Barbie and finding Andres Duany: Whether you buy his New Urbanist ideals or not, Duany's always a gas. And he's in an especially feisty mood...provides an amusingly acidic account of what he calls "silver bullets"; those catalytic architectural projects made to enhance New Orleans over the years... By Doug MacCash [videos]- The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)

If you don't build it, they won't come: Kennedy Greenway needs to be an urban center: The good news is that [it] is getting more beautiful. The bad news is that almost nobody is using it...desolate, surrounded on all sides by crowds enjoying more interesting places...The lesson is obvious: People want something to do in a park, not just something to look at. By Robert Campbell- Boston Globe

A Newly Pastel Capital: As Baghdad Erupts in Riot of Color, Calls to Tone It Down: ...has weathered invasion, occupation...But now it faces a new scourge: tastelessness. Iraqi artists and architecture critics who shudder at each new pastel building blame a range of factors for Baghdad's slide into tackiness..."It's anarchy of taste"...the best hope may be a plague of sandstorms. [slide show]- New York Times

Mumbai to get a facelift with street furniture: The manner in which this scheme is implemented will undoubtedly decide this city's fate, but celebrations may be premature...But neither can we deny that the city is in dire need of a few fixtures...and for heaven's sake dustbins! -- Asim Merchant; Ahsan Ansari/p f a (passion and faith in architecture); Clement DeSylva; Naved Kazi/Transitions Architects; Alok Karmakar/too; Matthew Soules- NDTV / New Delhi Television

Design Institute Explores Changing Place of Libraries: ...revolved around the idea that libraries' role as a community center is in the ascendancy..."We're moving books out and moving comfortable new furnishings in. We're moving books out and replacing them with coffee shops"...It's all about creating a space where people can come together, interact and learn together"...-- Cunningham Group Architecture; Humphries Poli Architects; MS&R; Engberg Anderson; PSA-Dewberry; HGA Architects & Engineers- Library Journal

Municipal Auditorium to start on road to becoming the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts: First steps will include the removal and recycling of much of the interior...city's Historic and Design Review Commission recently gave final approval for the project's design, ending six months of controversy... -- LMN Architects; Marmon Mok Architecture [image]- San Antonio Express-News

Far Rockaway's Far-Out Art Scene: A once-derelict marina is becoming fertile ground for experiments in the arts and sustainability...in Queens will be the summer home of ArtBloc, a nonprofit that creates mobile art units out of shipping containers. -- Tim Steele Design/Big Prototype [image]- Wall Street Journal

Building the Seed Cathedral: A future more beautiful? Thomas Heatherwick shows five recent projects featuring ingenious bio-inspired designs. Some are remakes of the ordinary: a bus, a bridge, a power station ... And one is an extraordinary pavilion...a celebration of growth and light. [video]- TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design)

On Her Precipice: Blooming 'starchitect' Jeanne Gang thrives on sustainable design, craves construction, is mad for materials and builds community...[she] likens the architect to a cook, a prospector and a nomad...guiding principles can be summed up by five words: research, reveal, realize, record, remember. By Nadine M.Post -- Studio Gang [slide show]- Engineering News-Record (ENR)

US architecture billings index falls in April: ...fell almost 3 points to 47.6, a level that indicates declining demand for architecture services, according to the American Institute of Architects (AIA). New project inquiries index 55.0, down 3.7 pts. Financing an obstacle to recovery.- Reuters

Group Goetz Architects shutting down: Georgetown architecture firm...is closing its doors May 25 after three decades..."Regrettably, the firm is another statistic of the U.S. economy and the deep penetration

its effect has on companies and individuals." - Washington Business Journal

Yale announces free online access to museum, library collections: No license will be required for transmission of the images, and no limitations will be imposed on their use... (AP)- Boston Globe

Group Effort: The Next Generation 2011 Winner: A large, multidisciplinary team of architects and engineers envisions a zero-energy future for our federal government...proposed energy retrofit of a Los Angeles federal building reads like a sci-fi script from Hollywood..."Process Zero: Retrofit Resolution"...bring a typical, energy-guzzling 1960s building...to a net-zero energy standard. By Linda Hales -- HOK; Vanderweil [images]- Metropolis Magazine

At Milan's Bourse, Finger Pointing Has Business Leaders Up in Arms: Sculptor Maurizio Cattelan Made a Rude Statement; Why Not? Wall Street Has a Bull..."Some people have a sense of irony, and some do not"...It makes Piazza Affari look like a De Chirico painting" [image, video]- Wall Street Journal

Call for entries: ACADIA 2011 Design + Fabrication Competition: Integration Through Computation...experimental projects that digitally pursue...alteration of methods, processes and techniques of fabrication and assembly for Lighting, Partitions, Furniture; deadline extended to June 15- FLATCUT_

Call for entries/proposals: Namur-Jean-Talon West Urban Design Competition to transform the heart of the sector's road corridors into quality public spaces for community use, give greater prominence to pedestrians...and make a positive contribution to the district's new identity; open to multidisciplinary Canadian teams; no fee; registration deadline: May 27 - City of Montreal / Ville de Montréal



MVRDV: China Comic and Animation Museum, Hangzhou, China

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