

Today's News - Tuesday, June 28, 2011

- A day of Serpentine superlatives (did you expect anything different?); all worth reading:
- ArcSpace offers Zumthor's own manifesto re: his "hortus conclusus" (and lots of pix!).
- Glancey escapes "into a floriated garden of monastic calm" where "visitors should be asked to turn down their personal and collective volume."
- Long sees "a thoroughly mute black box" that is "a rebuttal of the hyperactive showmanship" of previous pavilions (take that, starchitects!).
- Merrick muses on the master taking "gallery visitors over to the dark side" by bringing "dark matter to Hyde Park" (he means that in a good way).
- Bayley says the pavilion "gives Britain a first glimpse of Zumthor's genius."
- Ouroussoff finds his own superlatives for Holl's Horizontal Skyscraper in China: it is "a surreal hybrid - part building, part landscape, part infrastructure...also a carefully engineered social machine" (throw in "extraordinary" and possibly "architectural masterpiece").
- An in-depth profile NYC's planning chief Amanda Burden who has transformed "a once-sleepy bureaucratic agency into an activist department championing good design by using zoning as a weapon to enforce her vision" (not all are enthralled, of course).
- Another NYC urban planner brings home lessons from São Paulo by stepping "onto the front lines of the enormous challenges of rapid and unplanned urbanization": "why" we do things might be similar between places...but we must be wary of copying the "what."
- P+W's Alschuler sees buildings as sandwiches and explains what makes them tasty: "A land-use sandwich would enable vertical stacking of different uses that multiplies the flavors we get out of any one bite of a city and nourishes us with diversity."
- Q&A with Nina-Marie Lister on ecological urbanism, green infrastructure, brownfields, Toronto's Evergreen Brickworks, and how the ARC wildlife crossing competition is "the beginning of a new typology of infrastructure - and a new role for landscape architecture."
- An archaeologist and researcher on Islamic architecture offers an insightful take on how/why "Islamic architectural tradition is all about innovation" - from the Great Mosque of Damascus to a German minaret wind turbine.
- Goldberger takes issue with Woody Allen's take on Paris: what makes his film "so unconvincing is that it's so flat and one-dimensional: it isn't a city," but rather "a place in which the greatest gift that the architecture of the past can give us, the gift of a richer present, is implicitly devalued...Paris as it exists, warts and all, is much more interesting."
- A good reason to head to Australia later this month: the 4th Healthy Cities: Making Cities Livable Conference in Noosa, Queensland.
- The 2011 Emirates Glass LEAF Awards shortlist is a really, really long one.
- Call for entries: The Greatest Grid: International Call for Ideas: use the Manhattan street grid as a catalyst for thinking about the present and future of New York (and be part of an upcoming MCNY exhibit to boot!).

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Peter Zumthor: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011, London, UK

Swiss-made Serpentine pavilion presents garden of tranquility: Peter Zumthor's shed-like pavilion offers London an escape into a floriated garden of monastic calm..."There is no hidden, or even obvious, meaning here. This is a place for you to be. To be. Nothing else"...visitors should be asked to turn down their personal and collective volume, although Zumthor's enigmatic work might just do this for them. By Jonathan Glancey -- Piet Oudolf [slide show]- Guardian (UK)

Everything in the garden is lovely: ...a thoroughly mute black box, sucking the light into itself, and looking like, well, nothing at all: a mere space, a deletion, a blackness...Perhaps the black box...is a rebuttal of the hyperactive showmanship...that has broadly characterised the pavilion commissions in most previous years. But there is much more to this resistance than bloody-minded introversion. By Kieran Long -- Peter Zumthor; Frank Gehry; Rem Koolhaas; Zaha Hadid; Piet Oudolf- Evening Standard (UK)

Serpentine Pavilion takes gallery visitors over to the dark side: Peter Zumthor...has brought dark matter to Hyde Park in a building whose apparent cloister-like simplicity asks a deceptively simple question: "Where do you think you are?" This building waits for you like a stage set lacking only actors and a script. By Jay Merrick- Independent (UK)

Peter Zumthor: a master builder at work: The choice of architect...to design the new Serpentine Pavilion gives Britain a first glimpse of his genius...[his] first building in this country...represents discipline in design, educated pleasure, balance, beauty, care and intellectual substance. It also represents faith in enduring values. By Stephen Bayley -- Piet Oudolf [video]- Telegraph (UK)

Turning Design on Its Side: Steven Holl's Vanke Center in Shenzhen is an example of how architects are free to explore their fantasies in modern China...giving rise to an architectural renaissance, one that is producing legitimate architectural masterpieces...the "Horizontal Skyscraper"...is a surreal hybrid - part building, part landscape, part infrastructure...also a carefully engineered social machine. By Nicolai Ouroussoff [images]- New York Times

Champion of Cities: With New York's High Line park expansion, Amanda Burden's urban revitalization efforts set a model for the world...Chairing the City Planning Commission since 2002, [she] has revolutionized its role in the city, transforming a once-sleepy bureaucratic agency into an activist department championing good design by using zoning as a weapon to enforce her vision...instructing developers and architects on what they can and cannot do...- Wall Street Journal

Beyond Flyover Urbanism: Learning from São Paulo: Thaddeus Pawlowski, an associate urban designer at the NYC Department of City Planning, reflects on his participation in a recent professional urban design exchange between São Paulo and New York...I briefly stepped onto the front lines of the enormous challenges of rapid and unplanned urbanization..."why" we do things - might be similar between places, and we may even learn together the "how," but we must be wary of copying the "what." -- SP Urbanismo [images]- Urban Omnibus

Think Of Buildings As Sandwiches. What Makes Them Tasty? As our cities grow and evolve, buildings should become stacks of uses, as varied as the communities that are cropping up around them...A land-use sandwich would enable vertical stacking of different uses that multiplies the flavors we get out of any one bite of a city and nourishes us with diversity. By Karen Alschuler/Perkins+WWill- Fast Company

Interview with Nina-Marie Lister on Ecological Urbanism: "I think we can work towards a more

sophisticated ecological urbanism in a number of ways...I am an optimist, and I believe design has the power to cultivate a more ecologically literate and engaged citizenry." -- Michael Van Valkenburgh; HNTB-The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Eco-mosque is another powerful symbol of Islamic ingenuity: From the Great Mosque of Damascus to a German minaret wind turbine, Islamic architectural tradition is all about innovation...have always stood as positive examples of syncretism...examples of architecture that are paradoxically original through the way they borrowed from other cultures. By Bilal Badat -- Selcuk Ünyilmaz - Guardian (UK)

What's Missing from Woody Allen's "Midnight in Paris": What makes [his] view of Paris so unconvincing is that it's so flat and one-dimensional: it isn't a city, it's a stage set...a place in which the greatest gift that the architecture of the past can give us, the gift of a richer present, is implicitly devalued, because it's seen mainly as a vehicle to help escape from the present...Paris as it exists, warts and all, is much more interesting... By Paul Goldberger - New Yorker

4th Healthy Cities: Making Cities Liveable Conference : examine public policy and social/community outcomes and consider what actions we can take to positively influence the ongoing debate; July 27-29, Noosa, Queensland - Healthy Cities

2011 Emirates Glass LEAF Awards Shortlist: 12 coveted awards will be announced on 16th September 2011 in London. - LEAF Awards

Call for entries: The Greatest Grid: International Call for Ideas: use the Manhattan street grid as a catalyst for thinking about the present and future of New York; selected proposals will receive an honorarium and will be included in an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York; open to design professionals; deadline: September 26 - Architectural League of New York / Museum of the City of New York

Book Review: A Shout Out for Leers Weinzapfel Associates - Some Meditations on Rejuvenating Campus Architecture: "Lovers of the Difficult" was one of many compellingly memorable phrases by the great poet Rainer Maria Rilke, and it's a phrase that comes readily to mind when perusing the new retrospective monograph, "Made to Measure"... By Norman Weinstein - ArchNewsNow

Poetry as Rescuing Angel: The Angel Island Immigration Station, San Francisco Bay: Long abandoned and near demolition, an important part of American immigration history was saved by writings on the wall. -- Architectural Resources Group; Tom Eliot Fisch; Daniel Quan Design - ArchNewsNow

Juan Navarro Baldeweg: Human Evolution Museum, Burgos, Spain

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