

Today's News - Wednesday, November 30, 2011

- Chaban reports on AIA's efforts to have a seat - and a voice - at NYC's political tables: "Now we want to be there for the start of the discussion, or even initiating the discussion ourselves."
- Meanwhile, the NYC DOT (and Sadik-Khan) now faces a couple speed bumps in its drive to reshape the city's streets.
- Heathcote is disheartened by Britain's high streets: "This is a landscape of aesthetic and social dysfunction...Streets need to make us see the city anew as a place that is alive rather than an architectural Stepford wife."
- UVA's \$50 million plans to restore Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda include getting rid of six 100-year-old magnolias; needless to say, not all are pleased (especially when the project is actually restoring the Stanford White version of the famed building).
- When a religious group wants to sell off its house of worship but historians want to save it, who should decide?
- Dvir reports on efforts to save at least the façade of a 1957 movie theater in Bat Yam; developers want to raze it to make room for a luxury high-rise (what else?).
- Colombian architect Simon Velez is gaining ground in his global crusade for new uses of bamboo: it is now an approved construction material in Colombia's building code.
- Landscape architects are on a crusade to "end the unsustainable harvesting of lpe wood and scale up the use of sustainable alternatives" that could also prove to be "a new source of employment in cities like Cleveland and Detroit, where landscapes aren't as productive as they could be."
- Q&A with the "maestro of super-tall buildings" Adrian Smith re: why skyscrapers are efficient and eco-friendly (as will be the Kingdom Tower in Jeddah, "which will take the title of world's tallest when - and if - it is built").
- Lexington, KY's Living Arts & Science Center plans to expand "with a beautiful contemporary addition" that "promises to be one of Lexington's most exciting pieces of contemporary architecture" (though not all are pleased).
- Troppo Architects and others win big Down Under in the Weddell New-Town Urban Design Competition: "I think everyone's had their mind boggled with the notion of building a new city in the bush."
- Eyefuls of the winners in the 2011 ar+d Awards for Emerging Architecture (great presentations!).
- DXA/Design Exchange Awards announces Canada's top 50 design projects (alas, only the names).
- Dunlop x 2 re: Art Basel Miami Beach and Design Miami: she chats with Adjaye, who "takes center stage as an unconventional choice" for Design Miami's Designer of the Year + The events are "about art, of course, but it is also about the integration of art into the larger world - in public projects, in public spaces, in commercial districts."
- Heathcote weighs in on the celebration as well: "Miami has been an intriguing experiment in the dynamics of the urban distribution and dispersal of art and design space and installation."
- Meanwhile, AIA New Orleans is about to kick off its 5th Annual DesCours, a free, public, 10-night architecture, art and entertainment event that includes installations within "hidden" locations in the heart of the city.
- One we couldn't resist: Safdie's Habitat 67 finds itself "in top spot in a competition to determine the next Lego architecture set."

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Design Within Reach? Big Architecture: AIA New York Has Shaped the City, But Can it Reshape City Hall? ...it was through their advocacy, their lobbying, that the mayor and the Department of Buildings ultimately created the Hub... There is a common joke that is meant only half in jest, that the real designers in New York are the land-use attorneys... "Now we want to be there for the start of the discussion, or even initiating the discussion ourselves." By Matt Chaban -- Margaret O'Donoghue Castillo; Rick Bell - New York Observer

City Council Acts to Slow Transportation Projects: ...took steps to slow down a Department of Transportation that some criticize for speeding in its drive to reshape New York's streets...reflect the feeling...that the transportation department...has become an agency with a mission that forges ahead with its plans for plazas and bike lanes without benefit of consultation or facts. -- Janette Sadik-Khan - Gotham Gazette (NYC)

Window pains: I long to see Britain's high streets transformed from drab architectural clones into spaces that allow us to dream: This is a landscape of aesthetic and social dysfunction...If the future of the west is pure consumerism, how can it possibly be so little fun? This decline is a profound social, architectural and aesthetic problem...Streets need to...make us look again and see the city anew as a place that is alive rather than an architectural Stepford wife. By Edwin Heathcote - Financial Times (UK)

Rotunda rehab: Good-bye and good-riddance to magnolias? ...part of a planned \$50 million restoration of Thomas Jefferson's famous centerpiece...six 100-year-old magnolias...need to be removed...Ironically, while the University of Virginia insists on remaining loyal to Jefferson's intentions...the exterior...is mostly the work of Stanford White, while the interior is...a 1974-76 remodeling by Ballou and Justice that gutted White's interior... "The only thing that's really left of Jefferson is the brick." -- David Neuman; Brian Hogg - The Hook (Virginia)

The Trouble With Church Preservation: When a religious group wants to sell off its house of worship but historians want to save it, who should decide? ...these old churches are beloved landmarks, whether people worship there or not. Churches are key to a city's architectural character and its social and religious history, preservationists say. - The Atlantic Cities

Bat Yam activists organize to save Savion Cinema: ...objection to the planned demolition...to make way for...a luxury residential and commercial high-rise...built in 1957...it became a local landmark thanks to its front facade made of interwoven blocks of industrial concrete that give it an airy and elegant look. By Noam Dvir -- Ilan Pivko; Society for Preservation of Israel Heritage Sites - Ha'aretz (Israel)

Colombia architect leads bamboo building crusade: Eco-sustainable bamboo is strong and beautiful and can take the place of wood and concrete in many building projects, Simon Velez says...leading a global crusade for new uses of the plant...After waging a 20-year battle, he achieved a milestone: getting bamboo on the list of approved construction materials in Colombia's building code. - Los Angeles Times

Why Use lpe When You Can Have Black Locust? ...how to end the unsustainable harvesting of lpe wood and scale up the use of sustainable alternatives...Black Locust may offer new opportunities for local sustainable forestry businesses...can provide a new source of employment in cities like Cleveland and Detroit, where...landscapes aren't as productive as they could be. -- Stephen Noone/Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates; Ted Zoll/HNTB; Don Lavender/Landscape Forms [images, links] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Architect wants to take you higher: Adrian Smith, the architect behind Burj Khalifa and many of the world's tallest buildings, says skyscrapers are efficient and eco-friendly...the maestro of super-tall buildings...is designing the 1-kilometre-tall Kingdom Tower in Jeddah, which will take the title of world's tallest when - and if - it is built. -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture - The National (UAE)

Living Arts & Science Center plans \$5 million expansion : Lexington's Kinkead House is much more than just another historical home...campaign to renovate the house and more than double the center's size and programming capacity with a beautiful contemporary addition...promises to be one of Lexington's most exciting pieces of contemporary architecture. -- De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop [image] - Herald-Leader (Kentucky)

Tropo Architects reveal winning design for new Northern Territory city: won the Weddell New-Town Urban Design Competition...Build Up Design, were joint winners..."I think everyone's had their mind boggled with the notion of building a new city in the bush"...win marked a poignant occasion for the architecture firm, after the tragic loss of Greg McNamara and Lena Yali, and Kevin Taylor in a recent car accident. -- Kart Projects/MORQ [images, links]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Winners of the 2011 ar+d Awards for Emerging Architecture: ...winning schemes are spread over a range of locales, from Spain to Sri Lanka...key assessment criteria: connectedness to place, appropriate use of materials and technology, and the cultivation of environmental and social responsibility. -- Boonserm Premthada; Creus e Carrasco; Thomas Garcia Piriz; Haugen/Zohar Arkitekter; Shingo Masuda; Jose Maria Sanchez Garcia; Molo Design; Zigzag Arquitectura; Tetsuo Kondo; ICA Arquitectura; Hiroshi Nakamura; Takashi Yonezawa; Masahiro Harada; Chinthaka Wickramage; Enrique Krahe; PLY Architecture [links to images, info]- Architectural Review (UK)

DXA/Design Exchange Awards announces Canada's top 50 design projects: now on view in Toronto to February 26, 2012 -- atelier TAG (Manon Asselin Architect); Bing Thom Architects; RDH Architects/david premi Architect; Henriquez Partners Architects; Menkès Shooner Dagenais Letourneux Architectes/Provencher Roy + Associés Architectes; Quadrangle Architects; Stephen R. Pile Architect; Levitt Goodman Architects; Nicholson Sheffield Architects; DIALOG Ontario; IBI Group; etc. [link to images]- Canadian Architect magazine

Design Miami's Designer of the Year: architect David Adjaye: ...takes center stage as an unconventional choice...His work shapes galleries, but it's not — for the most part — on display in them...has designed a pavilion titled Genesis that stands as the entrance to the Design Miami tent...We spoke with him about his life, work and ideas. By Beth Dunlop - Miami Herald

Miami Design exhibitions span Biscayne Bay: Art Basel Miami Beach — or Miami Art Week...is about art, of course, but it is also about place, and the shaping and making of spaces, rooms, furniture, objects...it is also about the integration of art into the larger world — in public projects, in public spaces, in commercial districts... By Beth Dunlop -- Buckminster Fuller; David Adjaye; Christopher Janney; Luis Pons; Rene Gonzalez - Miami Herald

A space of their own: ...with Art Basel Miami Beach and Design Miami side by side, design curators seem to be trying harder to give their area of interest the heft to be noticed...Miami has been an intriguing experiment in the dynamics of the urban distribution and dispersal of art and design space and installation... By Edwin Heathcote -- David Adjaye; Buckminster Fuller; Christopher Janney - Financial Times (UK)

5th Annual DesCours: a free, public, 10-night architecture, art and entertainment event...13 architecture installations within 'hidden' locations in the heart of New Orleans, December 2 - 11 - AIA New Orleans

Montreal landmark beating out some of world's most famous sites in Lego contest: could be upstaging some of the world's most famous buildings in the race to be immortalized as a popular children's toy. Habitat 67...found itself in top spot in a competition to determine the next Lego architecture set. -- Moshe Safdie - Winnipeg Free Press (Canada)

"Unbuilt Washington": The National Building Museum explores some breathtakingly beautiful and some simply bizarre proposals to shape - or re-shape - America's capital: Two architect/curators discuss the what-might-have-been architecture and urban design projects that would have made Washington, DC look very different today (and tomorrow). -- G. Martin Moeller, Jr.; Susan Piedmont-Palladino - ArchNewsNow



Rudy Ricciotti: Cocteau Museum, Severin Wunderman Collection, Menton, France

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