

Today's News - Friday, December 2, 2011

- King hears from Botta who "discreetly" weighs in on the removal of SFMOMA's grand stair: he's sorry to see it go, but "I was not invited to submit my proposal and now I don't feel up to expressing any easy judgments on the choices made by a competent designer like Snøhetta."
- Hume and Mays are both wary of and worried about Toronto selling off public assets: "the selling of the city...is only just getting going in earnest" + A 75-story condo deal sends the messages that "any piece of our public realm that can't be made to pay its way financially may be put on the auction block" (both well worth reading).
- An investigation into a building collapse that killed 18 in Christchurch earthquake puts engineers in the hot seat re: their five (5!) pre-quake inspections; they claim they just "followed procedures and wouldn't have done anything differently in retrospect" (groan).
- Q&A with Sendil re: IDEO and Michael Graves teaming up to design a model home for disabled military vets.
- Adjaye explains his Design Miami pavilion: "It's basically a glorified gazebo. But it's more than just a gazebo."
- Wines waxes poetic about the art of hand drawing: "signs scratched on paper with a pen or pencil have a way of restoring authenticity, as well as validity, value, and symbolic content" (great slide show).
- EPA announces five winners of the 2011 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement.
- Call for entries/Applications (looming) deadline reminder: Inaugural Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Fellowship in Landscape Studies in 2012 to recognize and foster emerging design talent from across the design disciplines.
- Weekend diversions:
 - Jaffe delves into MCNY's upcoming "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan for Manhattan, 1811 - 2011" show (great slide show, too).
 - "Eames: The Architect & the Painter" x 2: a lively conversation with the filmmakers + It's "an enlightening" film that is "just clever enough to entertain even those not interested in who these innovators were and how they impacted contemporary art and culture."
 - King is taken by "Megapolitan America" as a new planning tool to help public and private decision-makers to take the large view (it's "more than a statistical exercise").
 - Ascher's "The Heights: Anatomy of a Skyscraper" might "well be one of the most interesting books published all year."
 - A Detroit native tackles four books showcasing shutterbugs lured to his city and ponders: "how much ruin porn can we take?...There is the irony of how - in the face of the decline we desire to see catalogued in coffee-table books - out of spite or pity or sheer willpower, morning still comes to 700,000 Detroiters every day" (a most excellent read).
 - Berg queries King re: "Cityscapes: San Francisco and its Buildings" (and cheers that "these aren't verbose or pompous architectural reviews").
 - Dvir gives (mostly) thumbs-up to a new book about Nahum Zolotov who, at 85, is one of Israel's "most intriguing architects."
 - PLANetizen and The Dirt chime in with their annual lists of Best Books of 2011 (great lists, as always).

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Call for entries: ArchNewsNow / MOO Competition: If you could hand your business card to one person in the world, who would it be? (It's fun!)- ArchNewsNow

Mario Botta to miss his staircase: The architect of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's red-brick home has weighed in - discreetly - on proposed changes to his building..."Of course I am sorry that the central staircase will be removed...I was not invited to submit my proposal and now I don't feel up to expressing any easy judgments on the choices made by a competent designer like Snøhetta." By John King- San Francisco Chronicle

Private lives and public policy: Where does the sale of public assets end? Despite the occasional wringing of hands, the selling of the city — indeed, of the public realm in all its various forms — is only just getting going in earnest...Historically, such measures have been dismissed as short-sighted, counter-productive and even self-destructive. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Joint venture on [75-storey] Toronto condo cuts a new path for development: ...the Build Toronto-Tridel arrangement sends out messages that are, or should be, repugnant to every citizen. It says any piece of our public realm that can't be made to pay its way financially — whatever its cultural, recreational, historical or aesthetic value — may be put on the auction block... By John Bentley Mays -- Rudy Wallman Architects; Janet Rosenberg- Globe and Mail (Canada)

New Zealand Earthquake: Pyne Gould Building Safe Before Collapse: Engineers...declared a Christchurch office building safe five times in the months before it collapsed and killed 18...a 2007 memo [concluded] that the building's unusual design was a "severe weakness" that made it vulnerable to "severe failure"...But engineers...testified that they did not see that report...they had followed procedures and wouldn't have done anything differently in retrospect. - Huffington Post

Architecture for Recovery: IDEO and Michael Graves Design a Home for Disabled Military Veterans: Q&A with Altay Sendil, IDEO designer and project lead for the Wounded Warrior house... [images]- Core77

David Adjaye, Design Miami's Designer of the Year: ...commissioned to create an installation for the fair..."Genesis"... "It's basically a glorified gazebo. But it's more than just a gazebo...I call it a piece of archi-furniture, because it's neither a piece of furniture nor a piece of architecture." [images]- New York Times

Mind and Hand: Drawing the Idea: You are what you draw...Computer proficiency can never match the advantages of the calligraphic aptitude needed to draw really well...signs scratched on paper with a pen or pencil have a way of restoring authenticity, as well as validity, value, and symbolic content. By James Wines/SITE [slide show]- ArchitectureBoston (Boston Society of Architects/BSA)

2011 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement: EPA recognizes 5 winners that show how communities of any size can use smart growth to become dynamic places to live, work, and play. -- Old North St. Louis Revitalization Initiative; Silver Gardens Apartments, Albuquerque, NM; Plan El Paso 2010; Maroney Commons, Howard, SD; Uptown Normal Roundabout, Normal, IL -- Claudio Vigil Architects; Oz Architecture; Calthorpe Associates; Dover, Kohl & Partners; AIA South Dakota; Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects; Farr Associates [images, info]- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Call for entries/Applications deadline reminder (international): Inaugural Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Fellowship in Landscape Studies in 2012; new biennial initiative to recognize and foster emerging design talent from across the design disciplines; deadline: December 15, 2011- Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

A Visual History of Manhattan's Grid: To celebrate this 200th anniversary, the Museum of the City of New York is exhibiting a vast collection of maps, documents, and artifacts tracing the grid's evolution. "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan for Manhattan, 1811—2011"...concludes with a consideration of the grid as a paradigm for modern urbanism. By Eric Jaffe -- Sarah Henry; Hilary Ballon [slide show]- The Atlantic Cities

Behind "Eames: The Architect & the Painter" by Bill Jersey and Jason Cohn: "My initial thought was Mid-Century Modernism is what we should make a film about...the more I read about Charles and Ray, the more I realize they totally encapsulated everything about Mid-Century Modernism"...One of the most striking features of the documentary is that, though it covers the vast range of the Eameses' activities...it also tells a very personal story of the couple's life together. - San Francisco Chronicle

More Than Chairs: "Eames: The Architect and the Painter": Capitalist mass production owes a lot to Charles and Ray

Eames. So, too, do post-Modern design and architecture...an enlightening new film by Jason Cohn and Bill Jersey...just clever enough to entertain even those not interested in who these innovators were and how they impacted contemporary art and culture. - Phoenix New Times (Arizona)

Book launches megapolitan concept as planning tool: "Megapolitan America: A New Vision for Understanding America's Metropolitan Geography" by Arthur C. Nelson and Robert E. Lang...What makes this more than a statistical exercise...is that decision makers both public and private should be taking the large view. By doing so, regions can be more proactive in everything from transportation planning to economic strategies...derive their concept from the notion of "megalopolis"... By John King - San Francisco Chronicle

Inside the power of the tower: A meeting of wealth and innovation – the skyscraper is the defining symbol of our age. "The Heights: Anatomy of a Skyscraper" by Kate Ascher dissects the workings of our megatowers...might well be one of the most interesting books published all year...mixing facts with the hyper-complicated realities of building a giant tower. - Independent (UK)

Panic in Detroit Lures Shutterbugs But How Much Ruin Porn Can We Take? "Andrew Moore: Detroit Disassembled," "The Ruins of Detroit," "Lost Detroit: Stories Behind the Motor City's Majestic Ruins," Julia Reyes Taubman's "Detroit: 138 Square Miles"...There is the irony of how — in the face of the decline we desire to see catalogued in coffee-table books — out of spite or pity or sheer willpower, morning still comes to 700,000 Detroiters every day. By Michael H. Miller - New York Observer

"Cityscapes: San Francisco and its Buildings": John King on Watching a City Change Through its Buildings: ...a collection of 50 of his columns looking at individual buildings...these aren't verbose or pompous architectural reviews...they're neat and concise summaries of these separate but linked elements of the city. By Nate Berg - The Atlantic Cities

The man who tamed concrete: He planned the first supermarket, mall and residential high-rise in Israel and is credited with many other innovations. A new book reveals the work of one of the country's most intriguing architects, and the man behind them...now 85..."Nahum Zolotov: Architect and Town Planner" (in Hebrew), by Tel Aviv architect Tula Amir... By Noam Dvir-Ha'aretz (Israel)

Top 10 Books: 10th annual list of the 10 best books of the year in urban planning, design and development: "The Agile City: Building Well-Being and Wealth in an Era of Climate Change" by James S. Russell; "Garden Cities: Theory & Practice of Agrarian Urbanism" By Andrés Duany/Duany Plater-Zyberk; "By the City, For the City: An Atlas of Possibility for the Future of New York" by The Institute for Urban Design; "Pocket Neighborhoods: Creating Small-Scale Community in a Large-Scale World" by Ross Chapin; etc. - PLANetizen

Best Books of 2011: "Landscapes in Landscapes" by Piet Oudolf; "The Altered Landscape: Photographs of a Changing Environment"; "Genius of Life: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted" by Justin Martin; "High Line: The Inside Story of New York City's Park in the Sky" by Joshua David and Robert Hammond; "Making Healthy Places: Designing and Building for Health, Well-being, and Sustainability"; "Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier" by Edward L. Glaeser; etc. - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)



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

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