Today's News - Monday, December 5, 2011

- ArcSpace brings us an eyeful of Perrault's pretty amazing Arganzuela footbridge in Madrid (bikes welcome).
- On a more distressing Spanish note, the Nemeyer Center for the arts is slated to close December 15, after opening barely nine months ago; it could be an "omen of what could happen as other big public projects become white elephants littering the landscape"; Nemeyer is "disturbed" by the news (a sad irony: 12/15 is his 104th birthday).
- On a brighter note, social media is becoming a useful planning tool, "creating a level of public involvement" that exceeds what would be possible through traditional town hall meetings.
- Community groups are also "leading the charge to transform abandoned rail lines into new city parks" in "a bold new model that bypasses the traditional role of city government in implementing and maintaining public space."
- Kimmelman and Garvin explore the good, the bad, and the outright ugly public spaces in midtown Manhattan: "We've been so fixated on fancy new buildings that we've lost sight of the spaces they occupy and we share."
- Among the newest amenities in public spaces: very cool architect-designed benches.
- Woodman warns that architects designing bold, "innovative show homes ignore mainstream market trends at their peril...most have proved commercially naïve."
- Meanwhile, zero-energy passive housing may be in its infancy in the U.S., but it's beginning to take baby steps in New York.
- A Delhi-based "stalwart" of architecture boasts the Nagpur centre of the Indian Institute of Architects for being "a resource base" for the growing city.
- Zero-Energy' Construction Crosses the Ocean: Passive, or zero-energy, houses are making their way to the United States at a pace as fast as Nagpur.- Times of India
- Bold may not be bountiful: Architects designing innovative show homes ignore mainstream market trends at their peril...many of the show houses built for Scotland's Housing Expo last year have failed to sell...Each of the 28 designs was presented as a model worthy of wider application but...most have proved commercially naïve. By Ellis Woodman -- Rogers Stirk Harbour; Proctor & Matthews - BD/Building Design (UK)
- On the Right Track: Community groups are leading the charge to transform abandoned rail lines into new city parks...a bold new model, one that bypasses the traditional role of city government in implementing and maintaining public space. -- Bloomingtonale Trail (Chicago); Embankment (Jersey City, N.J.); Reading Viaduct (Philadelphia); High Line (NYC); Arup; Ross Barney Architects; Michael Van Valkenburgh; Alan Greenberger; Alex Garvin [images, links] - AIArchitect
- On a more distressing Spanish note, the Niemeyer Center...slated to close on Dec. 15, after barely nine months of operation...could be an omen of what could happen across Spain, as conservative politicians cut funding for the arts and other big public projects become white elephants littering the landscape. -- Óscar Nemeyer [images] - National Public Radio (NPR)
- Social Media to the Rescue: New online tools are changing how residents of Tuscaloosa, Ala., are planning to rebuild their tornado-stricken city...creating a level of public involvement...that far exceeded what would have been possible through traditional town hall meetings alone. In urban planning, where disassociation with one's built environment is an unparalleled killer of communities on par with any natural disaster, community ownership of whatever is rebuilt is a raw necessity. -- BNIm MindMixer [images, links] - AIArchitect
- Curtain Could Fall On A Dazzling Arts Center In Aviles, Spain: The Nemeyer Center...slated to close on Dec. 15, after barely nine months of operation...could be an omen of what could happen across Spain, as conservative politicians cut funding for the arts and other big public projects become white elephants littering the landscape. -- Óscar Nemeyer [images] - National Public Radio (NPR)
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Constructions Photographed" was a highlight of 2011...The architecture world is a poorer place without the Hungarian Imre Makovecz... By Jonathan Glancey -- Piers Gough/CZWG; Anish Kapoor/Cecil Balmond- Guardian (UK)

No Parallel: Zaha Hadid designs a parking garage for Miami Beach: ...delivers a concrete structure that calls to mind both gyroscopes and pizza dough in mid flight...the city’s latest to use design as a tool to attract tourism and notoriety. [images]- The Architect’s Newspaper

Canada Water library: Southwark’s new library is...a celebratory building...to "look civic and grand without being pompous"...From a practical question -- how to put a library on a site too small for it -- comes the pleasure of the architecture...a new public place has been created, where the architecture contributes to and expands the experience of using it. By Rowan Moore -- Piers Gough/CZWG [images]- Observer (UK)

Kisho Kurokawa’s Maggie’s Centre opens in Swansea: The concrete spiral-shaped building has a kitchen at its heart, with private rooms and terraces occupying the two wings. -- Garbers & James [images]- The Architect’s Newspaper

Amid Historic Homes, New England Moves to Preserve a Modern Heritage: Historic New England is now seeking to protect certain modern houses along with the more traditional New England homes it has helped preserve for generations...after some notable modern homes...were torn down to make way for the McMansions... -- Walter Gropius; Alexander Gorlin; Earl Flansburgh; Henry B. Hoover- New York Times

Famous Leaning Church Tower Set For Demolition: The people of Bad Frankenhausen have been fighting to save their famous leaning church tower for years...The Protestant church authority slated it for demolition...after the town failed to secure funding to stabilize its collapsing landmark. But the mayor has vowed to fight on. [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Grand designs: ...a preview of Jerusalem Design Week...An international design conference...about how the global financial crisis is affecting artists, designers and architects on Thursday, December 8...on the assumption that, as the crisis broadens and the international financial situation deteriorates, current received wisdom about progress and design will no longer hold.-- Ha’aretz (Israel)

Call for entries: NEA posts guidelines for 2012 Our Town grants: ...for creative placemaking projects that contribute toward the livability of urban and rural communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core; deadline: March 1, 2012- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

Call for entries: 2012 AIA/COTE Top Ten Green Project Awards (open to architects licensed in the U.S.); deadline: January 23, 2012- AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE)

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

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