

Today's News - Friday, January 6, 2012

- Florida offers up lots of charts, facts, and figures re: why some cities are healthier than others: the U.S. "will not solve its health problems - or reduce its skyrocketing health care costs - until it comes to grips with the worsening class divides that plague it."
- Kimmelman calls for architects and planners to start taking parking lots (and spaces) seriously - and finds a few who do: lots "don't need to be dead zones" (great slide show).
- Two RMI experts push for and offer tips for energy-efficient retrofitting: "the task is daunting," and "huge barriers stand in the way...But we're not starting from scratch" (and a little bling can go a long way).
- Glancey x 2: the week in review includes Helsinki's Chapel of Silence, designer shelters for NYC cats, and a proposed inverted pyramid for Tahrir Square + His picks of what he's looking forward to in 2012.
- Russell finds the "default to blandness" of the new Gates Foundation in Seattle "is a lost opportunity," but at the Lance Armstrong Foundation in Austin, the "joy of giving and the connection to people served is palpable" and "has a cheerful energy utterly invisible at the posh, sober Gates."
- King pays tribute to Legorreta, whose "emphatic and boldly colored buildings are found throughout the Bay Area," but his "largest impact on the region could lie ahead."
- Baillieu minces no words about the RMJM/YRM deal: "YRM's mistake was to believe it could trade on an illustrious past. RMJM's mistake could be in giving the remnants of this once great firm a desk" (then there's the staff left unpaid and in the lurch).
- On a lighter note, a profile of the architect behind Lego's Architecture Series + Lego is looking for suggestions for the next addition to the series.
- Weekend diversions:
- Riley taps the talents of rising architects to devise futuristic façades for the Shenzhen & Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture (great pix).
- Kimmelman visits MCNY's "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011" and finds the grid "gives physical form to a certain democratic, melting-pot idea" - it is "the ego to our id."
- Schambelan visits the V&A's Postmodernism show and finds it more than "just a survey of Memphis and its fellow travelers" (she's also struck by teapots that "appear with bewildering frequency").
- Brothers discovers what radical architecture was "before it was chic" at London's Royal Academy: "it is worth remembering what revolutionary architecture meant when it was more than an attitude."
- Hawthorne's final Reading L.A. tackles three tomes that take on a contested public space and nature's place in the city.
- A peek into "No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff" by Jeffrey Head (amazing slide show, too).
- Mays hails "Unbuilt Toronto 2" that will "make the reader weep or cheer" - and hopefully think "anew about the Toronto we didn't get, the city we did, and the one we want."
- Two icy offerings we couldn't resist: amazing eye-fuls from the Harbin Ice and Snow Festival in China and a Bavarian snow church (finally completed).

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[Why Some Cities Are Healthier Than Others: Happiness, form of commute and money all play a role: As America's class divide worsens, so too do its health outcomes. We can tell people to smoke less, eat better and exercise more, but the United States will not solve its health problems - or reduce its skyrocketing health care costs - until it comes to grips with the worsening class divides that plague it.](#) By Richard Florida- [The Atlantic Cities](#)

[Paved, but Still Alive: We need to take parking lots more seriously, architecturally, and to think of them as public spaces, as part of the infrastructure of our streets and sidewalks...Lots don't need to be dead zones. And the best architecture can be light on its feet.](#) By Michael Kimmelman -- Eran Ben-Joseph; Interboro Partners; John Brinckerhoff Jackson; John Kaliski/Urban Studio; Renzo Piano; Robert Irwin; OpenOffice [slide show]- [New York Times](#)

[Top 10 Ways To Get Retrofit On Energy Efficiency In 2012: Guidance is not coming from national policy makers...you need to offer healthy, bright, sustainable spaces — with a green lease so everyone benefits. It's past time for real people to get serious about building energy efficiency and start to move the needle.](#) By Elaine Gallagher Adams - [Rocky Mountain Institute](#)

[Pushing Energy-Efficiency Retrofits Closer to the Tipping Point: ...the task is daunting...Huge barriers stand in the way...But we're not starting from scratch. There's already good headway in making existing buildings more efficient...with clear and measurable benefits to our economy and job creation.](#) By Michael Bendewald [links]- [Triple Pundit](#)

[Constructive criticism: the week in architecture: Helsinki's Chapel of Silence combats consumer culture, New York's cats get designer shelters and an inverted pyramid for Tahrir Square.](#) By Jonathan Glancey -- K2S Architects; Architects for Animals; Co Adaptive Architecture; Peter Besley/Assemblage; Arash and Kelly; Paolo Baratta; David Chipperfield [images, links]- [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[The arts in 2012: architecture: Jonathan Glancey picks his highlights of the year ahead -- Herzog & de Meuron; Renzo Piano; Anish Kapoor/Cecil Balmond/Katherine Findlay; Anthony Caro; David Kohn; Snohetta; Davis Brody Bond-](#) [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Gates Global Aims Played Down in Design of \\$500 Million Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle: The default to blandness is a lost opportunity...It put me in mind of Livestrong, Lance Armstrong Foundation...recently built home in Austin...The joy of giving and the connection to people served is palpable...has a cheerful energy utterly invisible at the posh, sober Gates.](#) By James S. Russell -- NBBJ; Gustafson Guthrie Nichol; Lake/Flato [images]- [Bloomberg News](#)

[Ricardo Legorreta: ...emphatic and boldly colored buildings are found throughout the Bay Area...His largest impact on the region could lie ahead: For the past year Legorreta and his son Victor have been designing the 12-acre Salesforce headquarters that would be the centerpiece of San Francisco's young Mission Bay neighborhood.](#) By John King -- Peter Walker; Legorreta + Legorreta - [San Francisco Chronicle](#)

[End of a once-great practice: YRM's heyday was long gone, so what does RMJM stand to gain from its purchase? ...appears to be a textbook case of how not run a practice. What went wrong is not difficult to understand. YRM lacked flair, it lacked leadership, and...lacked any sense of responsibility to its staff...its mistake was to believe it could trade on an illustrious past. RMJM's mistake could be in giving the remnants of this once great firm a desk.](#) By Amanda Baillieu-BD/Building Design (UK)

[The very model of a \(LEGO\) architect: Using a childhood toy, Adam Reed Tucker has built a career as the creative force behind Lego's Architecture Series](#) - [Chicago Tribune](#)

[The Houses of Futures Past: 8 Suggestions for Lego's Architect Series: Lego is apparently open to outside opinions on the next addition to the series... \[images, links\]-](#) [Tchnologist](#)

[Rising Architects Hit the "Street" in Shenzhen With a Show of Futuristic Façades: 4th annual Shenzhen & Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture, "Architecture Creates Cities. Cities Create Architecture"...Terence Riley...the first non-Chinese person to serve as chief curator...tapped the talents of architects hailing from five continents... -- K/R; Atelier Deshaus; Alejandro Aravena; Fake Industries Architectural Agonism; spbr; SO-IL Aranda Lasch; J. Mayer H.; JohnstonMarkLee; Open Architecture; MAD Architecture; Mass Studies; Hashim Sarkis Studios \[slide show\]-](#) [Artinfo](#)

The Grid at 200: Lines That Shaped Manhattan: As "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011" at the Museum of the City of New York demonstrates, an 1811 map turned an island into a city that works and walks...The grid binds the island...gives physical form to a certain democratic, melting-pot idea...outsiders who move here become New Yorkers simply by saying so...The grid is the ego to our id. By Michael Kimmelman -- Frederick Law Olmsted; John Reps; Hilary Ballon [slide show]- [New York Times](#)

Does Postmodernism begin with the teapot? The question is prompted by the V&A's "Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970-1990," where the vessels appear with bewildering frequency...The show is not just a survey of Memphis and its fellow travelers, however. By Elizabeth Schambelan -- Michael Graves; Ettore Sottsass; Studio Alchimia; Charles Jencks; Frank Gehry; Robert A. M. Stern; Robert Venturi; Denise Scott Brown; Charles Moore; Hans Hollein- [Artforum](#)

Ideology Through Geometry: What was radical architecture before it was chic? At a time in which the mantle of the avant-garde has been inherited by...Rem Koolhaas...or by Zaha Hadid...it is worth remembering what revolutionary architecture meant when it was more than an attitude..."Building the Revolution: Soviet Art & Architecture 1915-1935"...conveys the electric energy and genuine radicalism of the works created during this period. By Cammy Brothers -- Vladimir Tatlin; Kazimir Malevich; El Lissitzky; Richard Pare- [Wall Street Journal](#)

Reading L.A.: The once and future Plaza, nature in the city: "Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space" by William David Estrada...a surprisingly propulsive narrative dotted with terrific photographs...William L. Fox's "Making Time: Essays on the Nature of Los Angeles"...essays on the complicated way that the natural world coexists with big-city Los Angeles...Robert Gottlieb's "Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City"...smart and useful summary of the contemporary city... By Christopher Hawthorne- [Los Angeles Times](#)

The rise and fall of Wallace Neff's bubble houses: ...were Neff's solution to a global housing crisis, and in the 1940s and '50s, Airforms went up around the world..."No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff" by Jeffrey Head [images, slide show]- [Los Angeles Times](#)

A Toronto that might have been: "Unbuilt Toronto 2: More of the City That Might Have Been" by Mark Osbaldeston...fresh compendium of history, lore and imagery is enough to make the reader weep or cheer...projects featured here as occasions for thinking anew about the Toronto we didn't get, the city we did, and the one we want. By John Bentley Mays- [Globe and Mail \(Canada\)](#)

Towering sculptures at the International Harbin Ice and Snow Festival in China [slide show]- [Los Angeles Times](#)

'God's Igloo': Village Opens Snow Church in Bavaria: Mitterfirmiansreut has opened a house of worship made of snow and ice to commemorate a similar church that took shape in the country 100 years ago. -- Alfons Doeringer [images]- [Der Spiegel \(Germany\)](#)



Yayoi Kusama: Flowers That Bloom at Midnight, Jardins des Tuileries, Paris, France

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