Today's News - Friday, February 3, 2012

• Holl is "the chosen one" (over Snhetta and Morphosis) to design Museum of Fine Arts, Houston expansion.

• Mays marvels at a new residential development in Toronto's Little Portugal that "is no bully, but makes no bones about the fact that it's different" - it's helping to "shape the image of the city in fresh, bracing ways."

• Of minarets and domes: is this really "a bad time for Islamic architecture" in America, or because good design comes up with modern forms?

• Lewis finds Gehry's design for Eisenhower memorial is "creatively unconventional, innovative in form and use of materials, monumental in scale - and the wrong thing to build."

• Foes of Christo's "Over the River" take a final stand and "unleashed their final barrage."

• Birnbaum is a bit bewildered by Boston's "grass ceiling" when it comes to funding the city's Emerald Necklace: "Where are the Boston equivalents of major philanthropists who donated $35 million to New York's High Line?"

• Joy joins Holl in Princeton University project.

• Weekend diversions:
  - Kamin cheers Tigerman's show at the Graham Foundation that "encapsulates the work and wit of Chicago's design provocateur": it's "well worth seeing, even if you're already familiar with his ecletic opus and wisecracking ways."
  - L.A.'s Chinese American Museum presents four Chinese-American architects who helped shape the city "as modernist architectural visionaries."
  - Searle is stirred by Thomas Demand's photos of Lautner's "bent and battered models" with "chewed corners and dinked, friable edges": they "show what happens when modernity gets old."

• "Migrating Landscapes" migrates to Toronto, exploring "the influence of migration and immigration on Canadian architects and designers"; we'll soon know which firms make Team Canada at this year's Venice Biennale.

• Schwarzer sizes up Rosenfeld's "Building After Auschwitz": it's a "grandly ambitious book," but "evaluating Jewish-American architects for the Jewishness of their built layers of society, culture, and politics.

• "Windfall," a documentary that's not tilting at windmills: it "delivers a profound message: Look before you leap into wind power."

• Kraus gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Ascher's "The Heights: Anatomy of a Skyscraper": it's successful on one level, but skirts some important topics (like the "complex politics of mid-rise and culture, society, and politics.

• Wetton is wowed by "Windfall:" a documentary that's not sitting at windmills: it "delivers a profound message: Look before you leap into wind power."

• We couldn't resist the Strandbeest, a kinetic sculpture by a Dutch artist and physicist, takes Melbourne, making "even the most stolid of Melburnians nervous" (so worth looking up video of this creature, too).

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Angeles (1945-1980)," includes original drawings, models and a series of photographs by the legendary Julius Shulman that firmly establish these four as modernist architectural visionaries. [Chinese American Museum, L.A.] -- Eugene Choy; Gilbert Leong; Helen Liu Fong; Gin Wong- Ventura County Star (California)

"Thomas Demand: Model Studies": John Lautner's models have lost their plainness, and somehow gained character and history. Demand's photographs of them are, as much as anything, records of shadows and dust, and time's havoc, as they are of the architect's vision...They show what happens when modernity gets old. [at Nottingham Contemporary] By Adrian Searle- Guardian (UK)

"Migrating Landscapes" architecture competition and exhibition series...exploring the influence of migration and immigration on Canadian architects and designers...a high-profile national jury...will select the architectural 'Team Canada'...at the 13th annual Venice Biennale in Architecture...in Toronto Feb. 6 - 24. -- 5468796 Architecture + Jae-Sung Chon- Daily Commercial News (Canada)

"Building After Auschwitz: Jewish Architecture and the Memory of the Holocaust" by Gavriel Rosenfeld: ...grandly ambitious book...I am troubled by his assessment that the choice for modern Jewish architects has been either assimilation or alienation...evaluating Jewish American architects for the Jewishness of their built works feels like a forced and, given the book's lack of evidence to the contrary, futile exercise. By Mitchell Schwarzer -- Stanley Tigerman; Percival Goodman; Erich Mendelsohn; Marcel Breuer; Gordon Bunshaft; Louis Kahn; Peter Eisenman; Frank Gehry; Daniel Libeskind; etc. [images]- Places Journal

Book Review: Kate Ascher's "The Heights: Anatomy of a Skyscraper": ...intended to be a graphic investigation of the inner workings of our urban environment, and as such, it is a success...No matter how tall or how green they become, skyscrapers exist within complex layers of society, culture, and politics; topics that Ascher skirts. By Mercedes Kraus- Urban Omnibus

A Cautionary Tale About Wind Power: Filmmaker Laura Israel isn't tilting at windmills - but she does want to cast a critical eye in their direction. And she's done that with "Windfall" - her first documentary film, art-directed within an inch of its life - and one that delivers a profound message: Look before you leap into wind power. By J. Michael Welton- Huffington Post

Peculiar fusion of art, physics and motion: enough to make even the most stolid of Melburnians nervous: a 12m-long, 4m-high fossil-like behemoth wandering across Federation Square...The Strandbeest, Animaris Umerus, Dutch artist and physicist Theo Jansen's kinetic sculpture modelled on the nervous system...made from recycled rigid plastic bottles...[image]- The Australian

Book Review: How to be a Useful Architectural Critic: Alexandra Lange's Perspicacious Primer Points the Way. "Writing about Architecture: Mastering the Language of Buildings and Cities" - use it often and you'll never think of the word "critic" pejoratively again. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow.com


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