

Today's News - Tuesday, February 28, 2012

- A Pritzker Prize surprise: Wang Shu of China. We're thrilled. The work is very thoughtful and quite beautiful. But we're more than a bit disappointed in what seems a repeat of the 1991 Venturi and Scott Brown snafu.
- Hawthorne has lunch with the laureate in L.A.: "should his wife be sharing the Pritzker Prize with him? "Yes.""
- Pearson gets an explanation why his wife/partner was not included (not all that convincing to us).
- Kamin says pick "signals a shift toward relevancy"; Wang is "a different breed from recent Pritzker winners...that augurs well both for his country and the continued relevance of the Pritzker Prize."
- Lifson lauds Wang's hopes to "influence this generation of Chinese architects to realize that China must not demolish history to develop"; re: his wife and only partner: "without me, no design. Without her, it can't become reality."
- Russell commends the jury for making Wang Shu "an international messenger for humane, people-centered places."
- The Hyatt Foundation's official 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate website - with tons of info and images.
- Aric Chen assesses the makeover of the National Museum of China on Tiananmen Square: the architects "did an admirable job combining old and new. But has a programming infrastructure that lags behind its architectural ambition, and neither seems to have been planned with the other in mind."
- It's a who's who of a shortlist in the running to design Cornell's \$2 billion technology and engineering campus on Roosevelt Island.
- Detroit's MOCAD picks a New York team for redesign; their "sensitivity to site history made the team stand out" (now all it needs is the moolah).
- Russell cheers Gehry's Signature Center, now "one of New York's best new off-Broadway theaters" by returning to his roots and "conjuring cheerfully informal sculptured spaces in faceted planes of humble plywood."
- Browne offers an amusing take on the "waning of wild architecture," when "eccentric" was meant as a compliment (and Goff "was a nutty follower of Frank Lloyd Wright").
- Dublin-based Heneghan Peng tapped to be Ireland's showpiece at the Venice Architecture Biennale.
- Q&A with a New York architect who has designed bookshelves to re-purpose now-unused pay phone stands: "his persistence speaks to the sustainable, community-driven bent of architecture as art" (despite "some unforeseen obstacles" like "the swift theft of both the first prototype and its books").
- The University of Texas at Arlington establishes the David Dillon Center for Texas Architecture in honor of the late critic.
- AAF and USCM honor Philadelphia Mayor Nutter with the 2012 Riley Award for Leadership in Urban Design.
- Four university teams are finalists in the ULI Hines Student Urban Design Competition to re-envision a grand but shuttered post office in Houston (great presentations).
- Call for entries: Co.Design/Porsche \$20,000 Next Design Challenge (it can be "smaller than a living room and bigger than a purse" - as long as it's not a car).

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Pritzker Prize goes to Wang Shu, 48-year-old Chinese architect: ...his firm's intentionally imperfect work stood out as a thoughtful alternative to the sleekly generic towers that now dominate the skylines of rapidly expanding Chinese cities...Still, it would be a mistake to see his work as old-fashioned...What about his wife and design partner, Lu Wenyu? In 1991 the Pritzker jury blundered by giving the award to Robert Venturi without honoring Denise Scott Brown...I asked Wang if history was repeating itself...should his wife be sharing the Pritzker Prize with him? "Yes..." By Christopher Hawthorne -- Amateur Architecture Studio- Los Angeles Times

Wang Shu Wins the Pritzker Prize: "It's a big surprise. I'm still so young!"...When asked why Lu was not included in this year's award, Martha Thorne, executive director of the Pritzker jury said, "The prize goes to a person or people (not a firm)...the jury looked at his contributions to the built work, teaching, theory, etc., and felt that he was exceptional and worthy of the prize." By Clifford A. Pearson -- Lu Wenyu; Amateur Architecture Studio [slide show]- Architectural Record

A Pritzker Prize for Chinese architect Wang Shu signals a shift toward relevancy; no monk in the mountains, the winner sheds fresh light on how booming cities should grow: ...a different breed from recent Pritzker winners...He's heading in an enormously promising direction, one that augurs well both for his country and the continued relevance of the Pritzker Prize. By Blair Kamin -- Lu Wenyu; Amateur Architecture Studio [images]- Chicago Tribune

Chinese Architect Wang Shu Wins The Pritzker Prize: Wang's wife is the only partner in his small firm. He says "without me, no design. Without her, it can't become reality." He hopes this prize influences younger Chinese architects to work within local contexts...also hopes he can influence this generation of Chinese architects to realize that China must not demolish history to develop. By Edward Lifson -- Lu Wenyu; Amateur Architecture Studio- National Public Radio (NPR)

\$100K Pritzker Prize Won by Chinese Architect: Wang Shu's answer to the wholesale destruction of historic Chinese cities is to collect the stones of demolished buildings and install them in new ones...has gently attempted to help Chinese realize what they are erasing...I suspect Wang is too much a hothouse flower to change the direction of his nation's gigantic urban-development machine. But I commend the Pritzker jury for making him an international messenger for humane, people-centered places. By James S. Russell -- Lu Wenyu; Amateur Architecture Studio [images]- Bloomberg News

Wang Shu of The People's Republic of China Is the 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate [images]- The Hyatt Foundation

From Mao to Modern: On vast Tiananmen Square, one of Mao's "Ten Great Buildings" becomes the world's largest museum: GMP did an admirable job combining old and new. But...the National Museum of China has a programming infrastructure that lags behind its architectural ambition, and neither seems to have been planned with the other in mind. By Aric Chen -- Zhang Kaiji (1959); gmp Architects (Architekten von Gerkan, Marg und Partner) [slide show]- Architectural Record

Cornell Readies Architects' Face-Off: ...close to choosing an architect to design the school's first academic facility for its new planned technology and engineering campus on Roosevelt Island...has narrowed down the candidates to six high-profile architecture firms... -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA); Morphosis Architects; Steven Holl Architects; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson- Wall Street Journal

Museum Of Contemporary Art Detroit Picks Rice+Lipka, James Corner Field Operations For Redesign: ...the two firms' prior work with industrial architecture -- MOCAD is housed in the raw space of a former car dealership -- and sensitivity to site history made the team stand out. - Huffington Post

Frank Gehry Banishes Off-Broadway Dreariness With \$66 Million Signature Center: ...has built one of New York's best new off-Broadway theaters...the Pershing Square Signature Center...returns to the roots of his practice, conjuring cheerfully informal sculptured spaces in faceted planes of humble plywood. By James S. Russell -- H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture [images]- Bloomberg News

The waning of wild architecture: Eccentric architecture has a long history...There are visionary architects who have produced serious eccentricity...The reason there's little eccentric style today could be we...strive for community validation over individual authenticity. But without eccentrics...it's more vanilla style to come. By Kelvin Browne/Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) -- Buckminster Fuller; Antoni Gaudi; Le Corbusier; Bruce Goff; Frank Lloyd Wright; Frank Gehry; Rose Cumming; Tony Duquette- National Post (Canada)

Emerging architects get Venice showcase: Dublin-based Heneghan Peng Architects will be showcased at this year's Venice

Architecture Biennale...Ireland's commissioner for the biennale, Elizabeth Francis, is an Irish-born architect based in Bologna, Italy. By Frank McDonald- Irish Times

New York architect John Locke brings books to a pay phone stand near you: Bookshelves designed to lock into old pay phone stands...has encountered some unforeseen obstacles to the ideals of the project – such as the swift theft of both the first prototype and its books – his persistence speaks to the sustainable, community-driven bent of architecture as art: a fine mixture of form and function. [images]- NY Daily News

UTA honors late David Dillon by collecting archives, sponsoring symposiums: The David Dillon Center for Texas Architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington has been established to honor the memory of The Dallas Morning News' longtime architecture critic, who died in 2010. By Scott Cantrell- Dallas Morning News

2012 Joseph P. Riley Jr. Award for Leadership in Urban Design: Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter: AAF and The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) emphasized the design leadership that he has demonstrated in transforming Philadelphia into a city focused on smart design and sustainability.- American Architectural Foundation (AAF)

ULI 10th Annual Gerald D. Hines Student Urban Design Competition: Four finalist teams announced: Students Charged with Creating Redevelopment Plan for USPS Property Slated to Close in Downtown Houston -- University of California-Berkeley; Columbia University; University of Michigan; University of Colorado/Harvard University [links to images, info]- Urban Land Institute (ULI)

Call for entries: Co.Design / Porsche \$20,000 Next Design Challenge: Design an object smaller than a living room and bigger than a purse, which references three design elements taken from Porsche 911s of the past or present. (But not a car!); win a 911 for a year, or \$20,000; deadline: April 6- Fast Company

Two Books to Accelerate the Translation of Ideas into Practical Forms: New books on design research and transformational ideas through architectural history have potent practical uses: "The Designer's Guide to Doing Research: Applying Knowledge to Inform Design" Sally Augustin and Cindy Coleman; and "100 Ideas That Changed Architecture" by Richard Weston. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

The Big Chill: Leers Weinzapfel Associates' Chiller Plants Reinvent the Art of Infrastructure Work: Thoughtful analysis, ingenuity, and the ability to envision design opportunities create a unique exercise in urban design to "make something of beauty." By Charles Linn, FAIA [images]- ArchNewsNow



-- Exhibition: "Alturas de Macchu Picchu: Martín Chambi - Álvaro Siza at work," The Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal  
-- UNStudio: Kutaisi Airport, Kutaisi, Georgia

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