• Weinstein weighs in on books about Barragán’s home BNIM’s Omega Center that “reveal how transparently daring designs teach Nature’s processes.”

• Kent minces no words about what he thinks of critics’ high praise for architecture as object instead of architecture creating “place” - he takes architects and landscape architects to task as well (and names names).

• Muscat finds Australian “green-tinged admirers” of “Triumph of the City” have “mostly missed the point”: “for Australia, Glaser’s core argument simply doesn’t hold.”

• Could our current “concrete jungles” become urban forests of wooden skyscrapers?”

• Saffron says “seeing the modernized Gardner Museum campus is good preparation for assessing the shock to come at the Barnes...If the Barnes can make the move to its new home with its eccentricity intact, all the rest may be mere details.”

• A German architect is breaking new ground by transforming above-ground WWII bunkers into bright living or working spaces; now the government is getting serious about selling the “grim structures” and launching a competition for conversion ideas (alas, we couldn’t find competition details).

• Darley reflects on urban wildernesses “loaded with layers of significance” and a book that concludes professionals need “to learn when to stand back” and apply “the aesthetics of thrift”: “No one can quarrel with the message but don’t for a moment imagine that the light touch is the easiest solution.”

• Russell ruminates on MoMA’s “Foreclosed” : it “doesn’t suggest that architecture can float underwater mortgages,” and “unfortunately the architects only intermittently make a persuasive case for their visions...I say keep trying.”

• Witt finds “Foreclosure” is an “object lesson of how not to accommodate a society’s population,” but his “confidence in mankind’s ability to plan for growth was restored” by MCNY’s “The Greatest Grid.”

• LeBlanc cheers “Big Enough?” on view in Toronto that asks, how much space do we really need? The show “succeeds because it doesn’t preach.”

• “Houses of the Sundown Sea” highlights iconic homes by Harry Gesner: at 86, he still surfs and still ponders turning waste into fuel: “Solid waste is something I’ve been working on for the last 50 years” (great Q&A).

• In an excerpt from “Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture,” CCA’s Zardini and Sisko re: Syracuse University’s UPSTATE interdisciplinary design center that focuses on the impact of design, research and real estate in the post-industrial city.

• Weekend diversions:...and a “greenwash”) need to be challenged. + Extraordinary Places/Hall of Shame. By Fred Kent -- Mick Pearce/DesignInc; Overland Partners; Fox & Fowle; CPG Consultants; RenzoFXFOWLE; Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Frank Gehry; Rem Koolhaas/Prince-Ramus/OMA [images]; Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

• Can wooden skyscrapers transform concrete jungles? Swapping cement and steel for timber is the vision of a number of environmentally-minded architects who are planning high-rise buildings across the world...building codes are one of the main reasons we haven't seen more tall wooden buildings..."we're at the stage where we're able to start to show what's possible, a bit like that Eiffel Tower moment." -- Michael Green [images] -- CNN

• Toward the Anarchist of Architecture: Moving Beyond Iconic to Extraordinary: We need to be very strong in our criticism. Both architects and landscape designers (many of whom are trying to outdo the architecture profession with shapes and forms and a "greenwash") need to be challenged. + Extraordinary Places/Hall of Shame. By Fred Kent -- Mick Pearce/DesignInc; Overland Partners; Fox & Fowle; CPG Consultants; RenzoFXFOWLE; Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Frank Gehry; Rem Koolhaas/Prince-Ramus/OMA [images]; Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

• Built by forced labor, German bunkers become homes: Rainer Mellek has pioneered the art of converting the grim structures into bright living or working spaces, and his work is set to increase as Germany ramps up sales of the above-ground forts, originally designed as air-raid shelters...now stepping up a campaign to sell the structures and this month launched a competition for conversion ideas. -- mielek+freudenberg -- Reuters

• For the Barnes, some parallels at Boston museum: ...seeing the modernized Gardner Museum campus is good preparation for assessing the shock to come at the Barnes...Many warned that modernizing...would destroy the creators’ distinctive visions...It's too early to speak about the Barnes, but very little of the experience is lost at the expanded Gardner...If the Barnes can make the move to its new home with its eccentricity intact, all the rest may be mere details. By Inga Saffron -- Renzo Piano; Tod Williams Billie Tsien--Philadelphia Inquirer

• Urban wildernesses need a light touch: Decayed landscapes are loaded with layers of significance - not necessarily obvious ones...“Urban Wildscapes” edited by Anna Jorgensen and Richard Keenan...concludes, professionals need "to learn when to stand back" and apply “the aesthetics of thrift”. No one can quarrel with the message but don’t for a moment imagine that the light touch is the easiest solution. By Gillian Darley - BDBuilding Design (UK)

• UPSTATE: Design, Research, Real Estate: ...part of a series of profiles of university-based urban design centers...Q&A with Julia Czeniak and Joe Sisko at the Syracuse University School of Architecture about its interdisciplinary center focusing on...the impact of architecture and planning in the post-industrial city. By Nancy Levinson -- From the Ground Up [slide show] -- Places Journal

• What Mumbai and Beijing Can Learn From New York: ...the abject lesson of how not to accommodate a society’s population

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"Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream" at the Museum of Modern Art...at the Museum of the City of New York, my confidence in mankind's ability to plan for growth was restored. Wandering through "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan for Manhattan 1811 - 2011"... By Anthony Flint - The Atlantic Cities

Harbourfront Centre exhibit "Big Enough?" asks, How much space do we really need?...can architecture be sold on quality over quantity?...[it] succeeds because it doesn't preach. By Dave LeBlanc -- Altius Architecture, nK:a, rizbd; Surendra Lawoti - Globe and Mail (Canada)

"Deco Japan: Shaping Modern Culture, 1920-1945": Japan Society Gallery Presents First U.S. Survey of Japanese Art Deco March 16 — June 10; travels to Sarasota, Florida (July 2012); Albuquerque (February 2013); Palm Beach, Florida (November 2013)... - Japan Society

The Architect Harry Gesner, Still Riding That Wave: The designer of the Wave House, whose work is the subject of "Houses of the Sundown Sea," by Lisa Germany, created homes that celebrated California's dramatic landscapes...At 86, he is still surfing...you have a few patents on a system to turn solid waste into fuel..."Solid waste is something I've been working on for the last 50 years." [images] - New York Times

*John Pawson*: first major exhibition in Germany on the British architect and "ultra-minimalist" opens in Munich: He is the great master of paring his designs down to a minimum to yield a maximum richness of clarity and purity. - Architekturmuseum der TU München

John Pawson: the 500-a-day man: He may be one of our leading architectural designers, but he has an addiction: photography. How did he turn his 230,000 'snatched shots' into a book? "John Pawson: A Visual Inventory" [images, slide show] - Guardian (UK)

Mastering the Language of Buildings: "Writing About Architecture: Mastering the Language of Buildings and Cities" by Alexandra Lange: It's not only a delight to read...[it] is an instructive treatise on how great criticism comes to be...an informative and concise tutorial for architects and journalists alike. By J. Michael Welton -- Ada Louise Huxtable; Michael Sorkin; Charles Moore; Lewis Mumford; Herbert Muschamp; Jane Jacobs - Huffington Post

"By The El: 3rd Avenue and its El at Mid-Century: Lawrence Stelter discusses his book on the 3rd Avenue Elevated, which combines a rich archive of his father, Lothar Stelter's photography with a comprehensive understanding of New York's public transit history. [images] - Urban Omnibus


-- OMA: Milstein Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
-- Book: "Project Japan: Metabolism Talks" by Rem Koolhaas & Hans Ulrich Obrist

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