

Today's News - Monday, May 14, 2012

- ArcSpace brings us ALA Architects' Kilden Performing Arts Centre in Kristiansand, Norway, and Calatrava's latest adventure in Lakeland, Florida.
- Peirce parses Ehrenhalt's new book about a "grand inversion" that "makes a strong case for how today's young adults are opting for lively, walkable urban streets with parks, shops, transit and school choices. But it's not just urban hype."
- ULI's McMahon makes the argument that "density is being pursued as an end in itself, rather than as one means to building better cities. Density does not always demand high-rises."
- Doig looks into "gritty Rust Belt cities, once left for dead, are on the rise" - or is the attraction of "ruin porn" just "a faddish blip"? (great links).
- Brake cheers Cincinnati's "progressive urbanism" championed by a mayor who "has put public space, place making, and mixed-use development at the center of his agenda."
- Scruton scrutinizes the possibility of renewal in urban America: changes in zoning laws needed; and why China's urbanization is one of the great ecological disasters of our time.
- Superfont's McEwen muses (darkly) on "The Hunger Games" being released in China: "should architects be afraid?"
- Pulvers posits: "Born of disaster, modern architecture is itself now an ongoing disaster" - and finds Kuma's "The Principles of Place" holds answers to how we can "turn away from this self-inflicted condemnation and reclaim our humanity."
- Farrelly opines that a "high-minded brief can be badly executed and a rotten brief brilliantly" - illustrated by projects that break "new ground with nobility, grace and budgetary restraint."
- Hawthorne kicks off a new series exploring how L.A.'s boulevards are beginning to "reassert their place in the public realm," offering "glimpses of a new city identity taking shape" and "reversing decades of neglect" (great presentation, too).
- Berger's take on how Seattle's 1962 World's Fair is still shaping the city 50 years later (maybe it's time for the U.S. to re-join the Bureau of International Expositions so American cities can get back in the game).
- Rosenbaum has a catch-up report on the Rudolph reprieve in the land of Goshen - and some disturbing images of Yale's Rudolph Hall that "suggest an uneasy fit between the structure's form and its current function."
- Menking updates what's going on with Johansen's Mummies Theater in Oklahoma City: "It's a sad day for this great building."
- Moore argues that "replacing London's last great ruin with a football stadium would be a grave mistake": destruction of the landmarked Battersea Power Station would only be "so that lenders get a less severe haircut."
- Meanwhile, a media preview of London's ArcelorMittal Orbit tower brings on the expected media frenzy (with more to come, we're sure): Jones fell "in love with this friendly giant" (that even has an "arse!"); "Critics are missing a lot of fun" (worth watching the video, too!).
- Hudson is not at all disappointed: it's "like looking up at some classic early Modernist building that's been grabbed by a monstrous hand and shaken all over the place. Yet as you look closer, a certain order appears."
- Even Kapoor thinks the entry fee to climb the tower, finally "delivered to a far from dotting city," is steep: it's "pricey - but beautiful" (no word on whether the tickets will be cheaper after the Games).
- Q&A with Balmond re: the orbit's convoluted design and construction process: "The first challenge was to get it to happen" (and "only three men were needed to build it").
- One we couldn't resist: we can all breathe easy now - archaeologists have discovered the oldest-known Mayan calendar that says the world won't end at the end of this year (whew!).

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-- ALA Architects: Kilden Performing Arts Centre, Kristiansand, Norway
-- Santiago Calatrava: Innovation, Science & Technology Building, Florida Polytechnic, Lakeland, Florida

Urban U.S.A. Remade: A 'Grand Inversion'? : Are cities on a clear comeback path? What's the future of suburbia? ...Alan Ehrenhalt's new book, "The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City"...makes a strong case for how today's young adults...are opting for lively, walkable urban streets with parks, shops, transit and school choices. But it's not just urban hype. By Neal Peirce- [Citewire](#)

Density Without High-Rises? ...Americans famously dislike two things: too much sprawl and too much density...smart growth, transit oriented development (TOD), new urbanism, infill development...all coalescing to foster more compact, walkable, mixed use and higher density development...density is being pursued as an end in itself, rather than as one means to building better cities...Density does not always demand high-rises. By Edward T. McMahon/Urban Land Institute (ULI)- [Citewire](#)

Rust Belt chic: Declining Midwest cities make a comeback: Gritty Rust Belt cities, once left for dead, are on the rise...Demand for decay could spell a new era for post-industrial cities — or run its course as a faddish blip that attracted more media coverage than actual converts..."we're going to use our grit, our authentic landscapes, our coolness. Just don't cheese it up. Don't get cute." By Will Doig [\[links\]](#)- [Salon](#)

Editorial> Getting It Right in the Queen City: Alan G. Brake praises progressive urbanism in Cincinnati: ...why is it still seen as politically advantageous to denigrate urban areas? And why are urbanists so bad at making the case for cities with the public? Mayor Mark Malloy...has put public space, place making, and mixed-use development at the center of his mayoral agenda. - [The Architect's Newspaper](#)

The Life and Death of Great American Cities: Roger Scruton on the possibility of renewal in urban America and why China's urbanization is one of the great ecological disasters of our time..."American zoning laws typically prevent people from living and working in the same place...Aesthetic constraints of...European planning law are directed at creating and maintaining that "somewhere"..." - [The American](#) (American Enterprise Institute)

"The Hunger Games" Approved For Release In China: Should Architects Be Scared? ...political circumstances of construction are, indeed, a new concern in architecture...the visualization of architecture and infrastructure presented may be more facile and potent than the allegory of the actual characters. By Mitch McEwen/Superfront -- Kadambari Baxi; Mabel O. Wilson; Beth Stryker; Daniel Liebeskind; fCoop Himmelb(l)au; Office dA; Albert Speer [\[links\]](#)- [Huffington Post](#)

Born of disaster, modern architecture is itself now an ongoing disaster: How do we turn away from this self-inflicted condemnation [and] reclaim our humanity? ...Kengo Kuma, has an answer, and he set it out in "The Principles of Place"...architecture of the "small place" is the creative answer to progress in the 21st century. It harks back and leaps forward at the same time. By Roger Pulvers- [Japan Times](#)

New ground found with nobility, grace and budgetary restraint: The new Government Architect, Peter Poulet, is right;

architecture is as much social and political as aesthetic. A high-minded brief can be badly executed and a rotten brief brilliantly...the question here is not which building has the noblest purpose but which one fulfills its purpose most nobly and with grace. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Fisher Design + Architecture/Mackenzie Pronk Architects; Lahz Nimmo; Hassell/Grocon [images]- Sydney Morning Herald

Atlantic on the move: As Los Angeles' boulevards reassert their place in the public realm, the transformation along Atlantic Boulevard offers glimpses of a new city identity taking shape...emblematic of the way urban planners, architects, shopkeepers and neighborhood activists are remaking the boulevards of Southern California, reversing decades of neglect. By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Los Angeles Times

The Expo As Change Agent: 50 years after its debut, Seattle's Jetsons-era World's Fair is still shaping the city, an example of how an ephemeral exposition can have a permanent impact...might help refresh our national memory of what world's fairs can do to break through barriers and process gridlock, to boost economies and shape cities for the future—all while showing people a good time. By Knute Berger [images, links]- The Atlantic Cities

Goshen's Paul Rudolph Building Gets Reprieve (plus my video from the legislative debate): ...James Russell, in his recent insightful review, said that deciding which path should be followed at this restore-or-destroy crossroad is "not an easy call"...Even the carefully restored Art and Architecture Building at Yale University...suggests an uneasy fit between the structure's form and its current function. By Lee Rosenbaum [images, links]- ArtsJournal

Dispute Could Doom John Johansen's Iconic Mummers Theater in Oklahoma City: It's a sad day for this great building...Meanwhile Johansen...at 96...may witness yet another one of his buildings falling to a wrecking ball. His 1967 Mechanics Theater in Baltimore is facing similar fate... By William Menking- The Architect's Newspaper

Why Battersea power station must be preserved: Replacing London's last great ruin with a football stadium would be a grave mistake: ...calls for its euthanasia have gathered pace...""the only people who want [it] retained are a few ancient hippies"...The argument for demolition, or for crushing it under a stadium, is to destroy a listed building so that lenders get a less severe haircut. By Rowan Moore -- Allies and Morrison; Terry Farrell- Guardian (UK)

London 2012 Olympics: first view from the ArcelorMittal Orbit tower: a drunken party animal of a building: Colossal and imperfect, Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond's sculpture...is the body of us all...the tower seems a living being, full of blood...it even has an arse...The moment I discover that strange orifice, as if it were about to vacuum up the Olympic crowd, or fart on everyone, is the moment I fall in love with this friendly giant. By Jonathan Jones [video]- Guardian (UK)

Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond's ArcelorMittal Orbit, doesn't disappoint: Standing beneath this wildly asymmetric structure is like looking up at some classic early Modernist building that's been grabbed by a monstrous hand and shaken all over the place. Yet as you look closer, a certain order appears. By Mark Hudson- NY Daily News

Pay £25 to climb into Orbit? Even Anish Kapoor thinks it's steep: After three years and £23m, the Olympic tower is finally open...it's pricey – but beautiful: ...was delivered to a far from dotting city...The only dissent concerned the price of entry..."It's a hell of a lot of money. We wanted something very democratic." Officials would not say if tickets would be cheaper after the Games. -- Cecil Balmond. - Independent (UK)

"It Will Be a Landmark That Pushes London": Anish Kapoor Collaborator Cecil Balmond on London's New Icon ArcelorMittal Orbit: ...shared some insights into the structure's convoluted design and construction process...- Artinfo UK

Newly-Discovered Mayan Calendar Says The World Won't End In 2012: Archaeologists have uncovered the oldest-known Mayan calendar to date, that throws the apocalypse myth out of the window...we can keep our 'Just In Case' kit for future generations. [images]- DesignTAXI

Who Designed the Space Needle? Victor Steinbrueck's contributions have been given short shrift, leaving the design of what is arguably Seattle's most important structure clouded by assumption and innuendo to this day. By Dale Cotton -- John Graham, Jr. [images]- ArchNewsNow

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