• ArcSpace offers eyefuls of Hadid in Montpellier, and Gonçalo Byrne Arquitectos in Portugal.
• Beijing Design Week is doing its part in revitalizing the city's crumbling neighborhoods.
• A big day for winners: CTBUH names Nouvel's Doha Tower 2012 Best Tall Building.
• Höweler + Yoon take home the €100,000 2012 Audi Urban Future Award.
• From Down Under, Sydney picks a shortlist in its Green Square Library and Plaza design competition + It's a banner year for Andrew Burns.
• The Society of Architectural Historians announces winners in its inaugural Awards for Architectural Excellence (way to go, Gwen!).
• SOM, WXY, and Foster offer up some really grand plans for NYC's Grand Central + They each tell their story (with link to lotsa pix).
• Taylor takes on ArtPlace's new Vibrancy Indicators intended to measure the success of their grants and grantees.
• Vuocolo takes issue with Frank's criticism of buzzwords like "vibrant": "trying to measure it means that policymakers are at least acknowledging some of the abstract qualities that make communities appealing."
• Rochon is heartened by what she finds at the Winnipeg Design Festival: the city "is being changed by its highly energized, collegial architects, who are demanding more from each other - and of architecture - than are many of their overworked colleagues" elsewhere.
• Bruhn tools around with Cook at his new school of architecture in Queensland, Australia, and cheers "un-programmable spaces for critiques, group work and exhibitions (and of course alumni gossip)."
• Don't look for Hadid Shumacher Architects to be the firm's new moniker any time soon, though "she conceded that Schumacher was 'the king of parametricism."
• Heathcote finds "a number of intriguing similarities" in two very different homes belonging to Soane and Goldfinger that "remain London's most inspirational interiors."
• Q&A with architect and author Lukek re: Gocár's "significance for Czech architecture" (and the only surviving Cubist café in the world).
• One we couldn't resist: a Serbian film director's plans to build a "mini-town" theme park sparks controversy in Visegrad, scene of atrocities in Bosnian war: "his aim is to teach Bosnia's Serbs about their past, including the bits they do not like."
Vibrancy by proxy: I always find it intriguing when a funder describes...what kind of change they’re looking for. A recent case-in-point is ArtPlace, in their release of their new set of Vibrancy Indicators...describes how they will observe success in their grants and grantees, and what evidence will inform their future investment or philanthropic decisions. By Andrew Taylor [links]- ArtsJournal

Though Cliché, “Vibrancy” Isn’t Meaningless: Thomas Frank...criticizes the shallowness of buzzwords by zeroing in on the term “vibrant.” In his view, vibrancy has become an almost universal measure of success for cities without having a clear definition...even trying to measure it, means that policymakers are at least acknowledging some of the abstract qualities that make communities appealing... By Alex Vuocolo - Next American City

Local architects power Winnipeg’s reinvigorated design: The Prairie city is being changed by its highly energized, collegial architects, who are demanding more from each other – and of architecture – than are many of their overworked colleagues in such capital-rich cities as Toronto and Vancouver. By Lisa Rochon -- Sasa Radulovic/Johanna Hurme/9468796 architecture studio; Patkau Architects; David Piner; Peter Sampson; Neil Minuk; DPA+PSA+DIN Collective; Storefront Manitoba - Globe and Mail (Canada)

Peter Cook’s tour of CRAB Studio’s Bond University’s Soheil Abedian School of Architecture building...four concrete blades are structural, environmental and experiential elements. They create un-programmable spaces for critiques, group work and exhibition (and of course alumni gossip). By Cameron Bruhn -- Alson Smithson; Gavin Robotham/Cook Robotham Architectural Bureau; Populous; Brit Andresen [images, video] - ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Architect extraordinare: A former dean of the MIT has returned home to Beijing where...he prepares for a retrospective exhibition...“Materialism”...“What is China’s architecture today?...It seems that the connection between a house and the people living in it has been lost...has transformed the halls of Ullens Center for Contemporary Arts into a hutong neighborhood... -- Zhang Yonghe/F.C.2/Zhejiang Jiaozhu - China Daily

Olafur Eliasson Teams With Victor Pinchuk to Bring Art to a Ukrainian Steel Mill...new Interpipe Steel mill...boasts another attraction...“Dnepropetrovsk Sunrise,” specially commissioned for this city...we wonder if citizens of Dnepropetrovsk and ordinary steel melters need all this...he doesn't bother with the question as to whether his art work was comprehensible for his audience. [slide show] - Artinfo

Hadd mulls practice title change: Zaha Hadid has said business partner Patrick Schumacher ‘needs to commit himself’ before practice is renamed Hadid Shumacher Architects...she conceded however that Schumacher was ‘the king of parametricism’. -- The Architects’ Journal (UK)

Inside an architect's head: A look at two ‘built expositions of ideas’: ...two very different architects from very different eras yet their houses, both open to the public, betray a number of intriguing similarities...They are advertising, psychoanalysis, gallery and memorial and they remain London's most inspirational interiors. [from "The Meaning of Home"] By Edwin Heathcote -- John Soane; Ernö Goldfinger [images] - Financial Times (UK)

The House of the Black Madonna – home of the only surviving Cubist café in the world - the Grand Café Orient: Q&A with architect Zdenek Lukeš, author of an extensive monograph dedicated to the building’s architect, Josef Gocár...about Gocár’s significance for Czech architecture. [images] - Radio Prague

Serbian film director’s ‘theme park’ echoes The Bridge on the Drina: Emir Kusturica builds homage to Ivo Andric novel, triggering controversy in Vasegrad, scene of atrocities in Bosnian war...He maintains that his aim is to teach Bosnia's Serbs about their past, including the bits they do not like...his mini-town...will have about 50 buildings..."It's like a time machine." - Guardian (UK)

Prime Time for Landscape Architects: Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects Masters the New Collaborations: The expanding influence of landscape represents a fundamentally different way of thinking about urbanism. By John Gendall [images] - ArchNewsNow