

Today's News - Tuesday, December 11, 2012

- McKee says the ocean won, again, with Hurricane Sandy: "The easiest and blindest thing would be to rebuild and bring back all the good memories. The wisest and most heartless thing would be to say: You should never have built anything there in the first place."
- Rochon, Merrick, and Robertson offer eloquent tributes to Niemeyer: "In his hands, even heavy concrete was expressed as if weightless"; "his Serpentine pavilion took the breath away" (and he called Corbu "a small architect"); "I wish I could write with pictures instead of words to explain why Niemeyer was one of my heroes" + Foster and Burdett think differently about Brasilia: it's "a great body of work by a great architect," but "it's just not a city."
- Bing Thom and Ronald Lu beat out rival starchitects to win competition for the first venue in Hong Kong's mammoth West Kowloon Cultural District, and a most impressive shortlist tapped for the district's M+ museum.
- Davidson has some major reservations about midtown Manhattan rezoning plans: it's a "sweeping proposal that combines swollen ambitions for the skyline with puny civic aspirations."
- Lewis cheers Washington, DC, finally revisiting its ancient building heights law: the "vital study is coming none too soon. The city could grow physically in rational ways without compromising or sacrificing its historic urban form."
- Ennead's renovated Yale University Art Gallery is "a masterpiece" and "breathtaking."
- Arch Record's Design Vanguard 2012 "blur roles, disciplines, and national boundaries" as "part of the young architect's kit of survival strategies these days" (great presentations!).
- Bernstein x 2 from Art Basel Miami Beach and Design Miami: "The death of starchitecture has been greatly exaggerated" + Lots of "bubbles and blow-ups."
- K. Jacobs takes an in-depth look at Sperry's attempt to amend AIA Code of Ethics to ban architects from designing death chambers and solitary confinement cells: his proposal "is the outgrowth of the debate that has long been an undercurrent of the profession: Do architects have an obligation to improve the human condition?"
- One we couldn't resist: exquisite photo essay by Fouillet "an ode to midcentury modern churches."
- Calls for entries (and lots of 'em): 2013 Architectural League Prize for Young Architects + Designers + ASLA 2013 Professional & Student Awards + FIGMENT 2013 MiniGolf Course on NYC's Governors Island + AIA Diversity Recognition Program + Call for presentations for IALD Enlighten Americas 2013 conference.

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The Ocean Wins, Again: During Hurricane Sandy...New Jersey, New York City, and Long Island took the same sort of punch that Mississippi's coast took during Katrina...The easiest and blindest thing would be to rebuild the...shores to look the way they did before, and bring back all the good memories. The wisest and most heartless thing would be to say: You should never have built anything there in the first place. By Bradford McKee- LAND Online / American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Oscar Niemeyer: The long reach of a Brazilian master: More than 60 years after the completion of the Copan apartment building, his attempt at providing a dense, liveable and lyrical minicity still works, wonderfully...In Niemeyer's hands, even heavy concrete was expressed as if weightless. By Lisa Rochon -- Le Corbusier; Lucio Costa- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Oscar Niemeyer: The last of the 20th century's great heroes of architecture, who remained an obdurate outsider: ...his Serpentine pavilion took the breath away...position on the very cornice of architecture's 20th-century pantheon depended...on a nexus of influences that set him apart from the other great purveyors of...the International Style. By Jay Merrick -- Lucio Costa; Walter Gropius - Independent (UK)

As an architect, he soared: Just this once, I wish I could write with pictures instead of words. That would make it easier to explain why the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer...was one of my heroes...wanted to surprise and delight. His work was serious, and taken seriously...but there is a playfulness about his buildings that I find irresistibly charming. By Eugene Robinson - Washington Post

Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia: Does it work as a city? ...By common consent his buildings are elegant and astonishing...But what's it like to live in Brasilia? ..."The issue is not whether it's a good city or a bad city. It's just not a city"...in some ways it succeeded too well...The apartment building complexes...to house the rich and the poor, are now home to the rich and the rich. -- Lucio Costa; Norman Foster; Ricky Burdett- BBC

Vancouver Firm to Build HK\$2.7 Billion (\$348 million) Opera House: Bing Thom Architects and local firm Ronald Lu have beaten out rival studios to build the Xiqu Centre...will be the first of 17 venues at the HK\$23.5 billion West Kowloon Cultural District...WKCD also announced a short list of six firms vying to build M+ museum... -- Herzog & de Meuron/TFP Farrells; Kazuyo Sejima/Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA; Renzo Piano; Shigeru Ban/Thomas Chow Architects; Snohetta; Toyo Ito/Benoy [images]- Bloomberg/BusinessWeek

The Subtle Greatness of Grand Central May Get Trampled by Midtown Rezoning: ...New York City Planning Department has floated a sweeping proposal that combines swollen ambitions for the skyline with puny civic aspirations...makes a wan attempt to alleviate the desert of public space...there is too much at stake to rush a lopsided scheme... By Justin Davidson -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Vishaan Chakrabarti/SHoP Architects - New York Magazine

Revisiting Washington D.C. building heights law is a win-win: This month two agencies begin a study of the 102-year-old federal law...this vital study is coming none too soon...The city could grow physically in rational ways without compromising or sacrificing its historic urban form. Intelligently planned growth would benefit residents and businesses... By Roger K. Lewis - Washington Post

Renovated Yale University Art Gallery a masterpiece: There is only one word for the renovation, and that's breathtaking... -- Louis Kahn (1953); Egerton Swartwout (1828); Duncan Hazard/Richard Olcott/Ennead Architects (formerly Polshek Partnership)... [images, video]- New Haven Register (Connecticut)

Design Vanguard 2012: Blurring roles, disciplines, and national boundaries is all part of the young architect's kit of survival strategies these days. By Clifford A. Pearson -- Yuko Nagayama & Associates; Gracia Studio; Envelope Architecture+Design; Vo Trong Nghia Architects; SsD; Trace Architecture Office; Easton+Combs; Hironaka Ogawa & Associates; FRPO (Rodriguez & Oriol Architecture); MMX Studio [slide shows]- Architectural Record

Miami Dispatch: Starchitecture and Snarkitecture: The death of starchitecture has been greatly exaggerated, if events in Miami...are any indication...even younger architects got a share of the spotlight. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Herzog & de Meuron; Zaha Hadid; OMA/Rem Koolhaas; Bjarke Ingels Group/BIG; Asif Khan - Architectural Record

Miami Dispatch: Bubbles and Blow-Ups: But the architect getting most of the attention may have been Le Corbusier...selling more than a dozen chairs, tables, and sofas from Corbu's government complex in Chandigarh..."I'm revolted," said Jean-Louis Cohen... By Fred A. Bernstein -- Luis Pons; Muñoz and Co.; Pierre Jeanneret - Architectural Record

Prison Break: Raphael Sperry wants to ban architects from designing death chambers and solitary confinement cells. Can his campaign help create a more humane prison system? ...what he is proposing is the outgrowth of the debate that has long been an undercurrent of the profession: Do architects have an obligation to improve the human condition? By Karrie Jacobs -- Zeidler Partnership; KMD Architects; RicciGreene Associates [images]- Architect Magazine

Brutal Baroque: An Ode To Midcentury Modern Churches: The clergy hated it, but the radical transformation of religious architecture in the postwar era produced a number of masterpieces..."Corpus Christi," a photo essay by Fabrice Fouillet, captures masterpieces of modern religious architecture... -- Gottfried Böhn; Mario Botta; Nicholas Kaziz; André Remondet; Guillaume Gillet; Fritz Hoyer; Rudolf Schwarz; Auguste Perret; Pietro Belluschi; etc. [images]- Fast Company

Call for entries: 2013 Architectural League Prize for Young Architects + Designers: "Range": Instead of defining your stance through an agenda or thesis...define your position through the boundaries you push, test, define or exceed; entrants must be 10 years or less out of undergraduate or graduate school; deadline: February 19, 2013- Architectural League of New York

Call for entries: ASLA 2013 Professional & Student Awards; registration deadlines: February 8, 2013 (Professionals, April 26, 2013 (Students)- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Call for entries/Call for proposals: FIGMENT 2013 Minigolf Course: "State of the Art" on Governors Island in New York City; deadline: March 1, 2013- FIGMENT

Call for entries: AIA Diversity Recognition Program seeks submissions featuring exemplary efforts to diversify the architecture profession; deadline: February 6, 2013- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Call for entries/Call for presentations: IALD Enlighten Americas 2013 conference, October 3-5, Montreal, Canada; Art, Science and Professional Tools tracks; deadline: January 18, 2013- International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD)



-- Herzog & de Meuron: Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York -- Douglas Moyer Architect; Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architects

-- Diamond Schmitt Architects: Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto, Canada

-- Riding the Los Angeles Metro: Architects and artists have collaborated on turning the new LA Metro Stations into exciting, colorful spaces that reflect a community of culturally diverse people. By Kirsten Kiser -- The Tanzmann Associates; Siegel Diamond Architecture; Dworsky Associates; Miralles Associates; Escudero-Fribourg Architects; Diedrich Architects & Associates; Ellerbe Becket; Anil Verma Associates; Arquitectonica; etc.

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