

Today's News - Monday, September 30, 2013

- ArcSpace profiles Kengo Kuma, Snøhetta, and Hadid's Serpentine Sackler Gallery.
- Speaking of which, Heathcote renders his verdict: the "windblown skirt" of a roof "overwhelms the old building," but then "no one commissions Hadid for a subtle intervention."
- Woodman finds the gallery to be both "aggressive and banal - a pristine white shell, entirely devoid of articulation or scale" (perhaps better suited to a super-yacht salesroom?).
- Moore compares the Serpentine Sackler and London's Jewish center JW3 that "cost roughly the same and are poles apart."
- Rumor has it that Hadid has been tapped to design a new Iraq National Museum in Baghdad, but so far everyone involved is being "tight-lipped" about it.
- Ransford on the debate about density and transportation infrastructure in Vancouver: if the city "wants more affordable housing, it must endorse density in neighborhoods close to the city center."
- Hopes are high that developers and starchitects (with a touch of Baz Luhrmann) can reshape mid-Miami Beach into a "resplendent new epicenter" for the city, "creating a unified, pedestrian-friendly district in what is now an automobile-dominated wasteland."
- Marseille's cultural makeover is leading the charge to make the city "the thinking-person's destination on the Mediterranean."
- Eyefuls of the five proposals to reconnect Londoners with the Thames in the London as it Could be Now competition.
- Schumacher has high hopes for a new tower and an art-inspired basketball court: neither "are mere shiny objects. These projects will become part of Milwaukee's image worldwide."
- Groves reports on Beverly Hills' "buy and demolish" ethos that is seeing some landmark homes bite the dust: "architectural and cultural heritage has often proved no match for the nouveaux riches."
- Thomson takes a stroll through the Gardner Museum's Monks Garden: it "illustrates the power of thoughtful museum interventions and quiet green spaces. It isn't striving to be Millennium Park or the High Line or a private garden," but rather the "embodiment of a 'third way.'"
- As Hartford's Constitution Plaza approaches its 50th anniversary, it is still controversial, criticized "as desolate and lonely, a failure as a public space. But as landscape architecture, it is a remarkable example of work from the period, whose worth may be realized in its second half century."
- Loew takes a look at what cities made of glass can do with sunlight, which is "hardly considered by architects, designers or everyday observers" (we'll take "glimmerance" over "death ray" any day!).
- MASS Design Group and the African Wildlife Foundation team up in the Clinton Global Initiative/CGI Conservation Schools Commitment "to build unique educational environments featuring beautifully designed schools and the latest technology."
- The firm is also one of the first beneficiaries of Autodesk's just-launched program to donate \$7.5 million in design software to 500 North American nonprofits (link to application included).
- Speaking of technology, the Florida State University College of Education is developing Earthquake Rebuild, a computer game that "encourages creativity in design and uses architecture to teach geometry and other math skills."
- Call for entries (some deadlines loom!): West Kowloon Cultural District Arts Pavilion International Design Competition + 2014 Architizer A+ Awards (now includes product categories) + Applications for American Academy in Rome Academy Director (must be "urbane and outgoing, with a good sense of humor," and "devoted to Rome and Italy").

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-- Kengo Kuma & Associates: ...works with elements of Japanese tradition to create human friendly architecture for the 21st century.
-- Zaha Hadid Architects: Serpentine Sackler Gallery
-- Snøhetta/craig Dykers/Kjetil Trædal Thorsen: ...has become one of the most discussed and sought-after practices today, due to their radical rethinking of the relationship between building and landscape

Zaha Hadid's Serpentine Sackler gallery: the verdict: The most impressive building here is the Magazine itself...There is a join between the old and the new but it is not one that seems to have caused any loss of sleep. Instead, the windblown skirt of the extension's roof overlaps and overwhelms the old building. That is, of course, the point. No one commissions Hadid for a subtle intervention... By Edwin Heathcote -- Liam O'Connor - Financial Times (UK)

'Aggressive and banal' - Zaha Hadid's Serpentine Sackler Gallery: ...a pristine white shell, entirely devoid of articulation or scale...If you were told you had accidentally wandered into the saleroom of a superyacht vendor, you might not be entirely surprised...An encounter of sorts may be framed but it is one in which the two parties have nothing to say to each other. By Ellis Woodman [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

JW3; Serpentine Sackler Gallery: London's first Jewish centre and Zaha Hadid's Serpentine Sackler annexe cost roughly the same and are poles apart: One is about problem solving, the other about creating a problem -- or, to put it another way, raising an ambition. They represent poles, mutually exclusive, of contemporary British architecture. By Rowan Moore -- Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands- Observer (UK)

Baghdad beckons Zaha Hadid? Iraqi Minister of Tourism and Antiquities and Iraqi-born architect tight-lipped about billion-dollar plan to build new Iraq National Museum: ...she is "unable to confirm or comment" on the project...will also include shops, hotels and a library.- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Time to connect land-use, transit policies: The debate about neighbourhood density is related to transportation infrastructure: If Vancouver wants more affordable housing, it must endorse density in neighbourhoods close to the city centre. Otherwise, more people will live further away, resulting in a need for costly transportation infrastructure. By Bob Ransford- Vancouver Sun

Argentine developer and star designers reshaping mid-Miami Beach: ...aims to singlehandedly turn sleepy mid-Beach into the city's resplendent new epicenter...branded as the Faena District Miami Beach...creating a unified, pedestrian-friendly district in what is now an automobile-dominated wasteland...not the only one working the stretch... Rem Koolhaas/Shohei Shigematsu/Office of Metropolitan Architecture/OMA; Brandon Haw/Foster + Partners; John Pawson- Miami Herald

A Walk in Marseille: Will a Once-Rough City's Cultural Makeover Take? Thanks to European Cultural Capital initiative, Marseille-Provence 2013... its cultural scene leads the charge...to be the thinking-

person's destination on the Mediterranean...Most splashy among these additions is the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (MJCEM)...[the city's] changing face isn't just behind a single façade however. By Alexander Forbes -- Rudy Ricciotti [slide show]- Artinfo

Architects' proposals for reconnecting Londoners with the Thames exhibited: ...London as it Could be Now, developed by the Architecture Foundation and Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners...on show from today at the Royal Academy's "Richard Rogers RA: Inside Out" exhibition. -- Carl Turner Architects; David Kohn Architects; Neil Cummings/51% Studios; Studio Octopi/Civic Engineers/Jonathan Cook Landscape; The Eastern Reach [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Understated Milwaukee: The Northwestern Mutual tower and Bucks floor: Neither of the projects — a new, art-inspired basketball court and a glassy, 32-story lakefront tower — are mere shiny objects. These projects will become part of Milwaukee's image worldwide. By Mary Louise Schumacher -- Pickard Chilton- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

In Beverly Hills, the real estate ethos is 'buy and demolish': Sometimes history must make way for current tastes, and preservationists let some landmark homes fall through the cracks. Ira Gershwin's former home is an example of the house that got away...architectural and cultural heritage has often proved no match for the nouveaux riches of Beverly Hills. By Martha Groves -- John Lautner; Richard Neutra; Paul Revere Williams; Wallace Neff; Harold Leavitt; John Elgin Woolf [images]- Los Angeles Times

Boston's New Common: Inside The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's Monks Garden: ...illustrates the power of thoughtful museum interventions and quiet green spaces in a time of sensational, amenity-rich institutions and urban parks...It isn't striving to be Millennium Park or the High Line, nor a hermetic private garden. Its embodiment of a "third way"... By Steven Thomson -- Renzo Piano; Michael Van Valkenburgh [images]- Architizer

Hartford's Constitution Plaza: Potential Still Unfolding: As we approach its 50th anniversary...still controversial. It has been criticized...as desolate and lonely, a failure as a public space. But as landscape architecture, it is a remarkable example of work from the period, whose worth may be realized in its second half century. -- Charles DuBose; Hideo Sasaki/Masao (Mas) KinoshitaSasaki Associates (1964)- Hartford Courant (Connecticut)

What a Glass City Can Do With Its Sunlight:The light show that takes place each day in densely built cities is an accident, hardly considered by architects, designers or everyday observers..."glimmerance," has never made headlines. But its blinding cousin, the media-dubbed "death ray," recently became news. By Karen Loew -- Davidson Norris/Carpenter Norris Consulting; Linda Pollak/Marpillero Pollak Architects [images]- Next City (formerly Next American City)

Conservation NGO and Architectural Firm Re-Envision the Education Paradigm in Africa: African Wildlife Foundation, in partnership with MASS Design Group, announces new Clinton Global Initiative/CGI Conservation Schools Commitment to build unique educational environments in Africa, featuring beautifully designed schools and the latest technology. - AllAfrica

Autodesk Launches Technology Impact Software Donation Program for Nonprofit Organizations: Program Will Bring \$7.5 Million in Design Software to 500 Nonprofits in North America: MASS Design Group, best known for its award-winning Butaro Hospital in rural Rwanda, is one of the first beneficiaries... [link to application]- Autodesk

Educational Game Uses Architectural Design to Teach Math Skills: Rebuilding a city from the ground up requires math skills, knowledge of architectural design, common sense and an appreciation for what residents need and want from their city. It can also be fun...Earthquake Rebuild encourages creativity in design and uses architecture to teach geometry and other math skills. - ScienceDaily

Call for entries: West Kowloon Cultural District/WKCDA Arts Pavilion International Design Competition: an exhibition and event space in the run-up to the completion of the M+ museum designed by Herzog & de Meuron (Hong Kong); registration deadline: October 28 (submission deadline: November 22)- West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA)

Call for entries: 2014 Architizer A+ Awards: 2nd annual global architectural award program with 60+ categories and 200+ judges; new this year: A+ Awards for Product Categories; deadline: November 1 - Architizer

Call for entries/applications: American Academy in Rome (AAR) invites qualified individuals to apply for the position of Academy Director; deadline: October 11- American Academy in Rome

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