

Today's News - Friday, November 1, 2013

- Zeiger takes issue with how gender issues are dealt with in architecture: "Is grouping women together really a corrective or does it reinforce stereotypes?"
- Russell offers his take of the three super-slim towers rising on NYC's West 57th Street: "Enough of lazy, no-character glass walls"; "this chest-thumper might be gutsy enough to command the sky"; "this will be the most alluring."
- Wainwright wonders at a developer who speaks "in rapturous tones of awe and wonder" at the thought of Gehry working next to the Battersea power station: "So how did this rumpled everyman end up being courted by the global elite?"
- A fabulous presentation of a starchitect-studded development in China anchored by a Holl-designed museum and surrounded by (stunning) villas (available for rent).
- Six starchitect-studded teams make the shortlist for Canada's National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa.
- Winners in the 54Jeff Competition to design a future for the former Grand Rapids Public Museum couldn't be more different.
- Mark Robbins named successor to Adele Chatfield-Taylor as American Academy of Rome President and CEO.
- EDRA protests some changes proposed in the NAAB's 2014 Conditions for Accreditation that would "eliminate and truncate key criteria directly related to public health, safety, and welfare, as well as the kind of social research-based approach to architecture."
- Weekend diversions:
- MCNY's "Rising Waters: Photographs of Sandy" tells the story of the superstorm through photos by regular New Yorkers who were in the middle of it.
- "Airport Landscape: Urban Ecologies in the Aerial Age" exhibition and conference at Harvard GSD "presents landscape architects' projects for the ecological enhancement of operating airfields and the conversion of abandoned airfields." - Saffron's soul practically soars at "Philadelphia's most entrancing new art installation - a wordless narrative of light and color" by Turrell in a modest Quaker meetinghouse.
- Heathcote gives (mostly) thumbs-up to "Pop Art Design": AOC "has impeccably caught this blurring in a pastel-hued, subtly kitsch-infused set that blends Las Vegas, LA and Main Street, woven around the Barbican's concrete columns."
- "Opening the Vaults: Wonders of the 1893 World's Fair" at Chicago's Field Museum "captures the flavor" of the fair: it is "first-rate" and "compelling."
- Kamin finds much to agree with in Hunt and DeVries's "Planning Chicago" that "rips the city's failure to guide growth" in a "lucid study" based on "an obscure document: the city's 1966 comprehensive plan" that "took a holistic perspective, going beyond bricks and mortar to address social services."
- In an excerpt from Greenfield's "Against the Smart City," he "calls for an alternative vision that understands and responds to the messy realities of human existence."
- Poyner is entranced by Markman's "Door Jams: Amazing Doors of New York City" (amazing pix!).
- Orton and Worpole's "The New English Landscape" documents the "drosscape" of the Thames Estuary, home to the London 2012 Summer Olympics, which reveals the "sodden flatlands" as a "place of quintessential English beauty."
- "Tree Houses" is "a gorgeous new book" that "chronicles 50 real-life constructions, most with a far more adult flair" (with pix to prove it!).
- One we couldn't resist: Meades melds architecture and car design in a florid review of Alfa Romeo's new sports car: it "far surpasses those buildings wrought as examples of 'blob' or 'fold' architecture - it is blobbier and foldier" and "a potential source of inspiration" that "can be ripped off with abandon, impunity, glee" (a must-read, even if you're not into cars!).

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Opinion: We need to place ideas, not gender, front and centre: ...trying to rewrite design history with all-female shows like MoMA's "Designing Modern Women" does nothing to shake up the dominant masculine ethos that still plagues the industry...Is grouping women together really a corrective or does it reinforce stereotypes? By Mimi Zeiger - Dezeen

With \$90 Million Condos, Needle Towers Jostle for Views: Super-slims are unique to Manhattan...my street-level assessment of the three 57th Street needles. One57: shiny, gift-wrapped ordinariness for top prices...Enough of lazy, no-character glass walls; 432 Park: If it's finished with finesse, this chest-thumper might be gutsy enough to command the sky; 111 W. 57th: If all of these ideas meld gracefully, this will be the most alluring of the midtown super-slims. By James S. Russell -- Christian de Portzamparc; Rafael Vinoly; SHoP Architects [images] - Bloomberg News

Frank Gehry's first London building to be built next to Battersea power station: He joins Norman Foster in £8bn Malaysian-backed plan to transform derelict site with 3,500 flats, shops and offices: The developer is speaking in rapturous tones of awe and wonder...So how did this rumpled everyman...end up being courted by the global elite? By Oliver Wainwright [images] - Guardian (UK)

Nanjing's New Sifang Art Museum Illustrates China's Cultural Boom: New Art Patrons Echo American Industrialists Who Sponsored Arts in Early 20th Century: ...\$164-million development with 11 buildings designed by leading international architects...The villas...will be available for short-term rentals and retreats. -- Steven Holl; Liu Jiakun; Arato Isozaki; Wang Shu; Sanaa; Ai Weiwei; David Adjaye; etc. [images] - Wall Street Journal

Six finalist teams for National Holocaust Monument announced: ...will be built in Ottawa...near the Canadian War Museum. -- Hossein Amanat/Esther Shalev-GERZ/Daniel Roehr/Robert Kleyn/David Lieberman; Quadrangle Architects/SWA Group/Terraplan/etc.; Gail Lord/Daniel Libeskind/Edward Burtynsky/Claude Cormier/etc.; Saucier+Perrotte/Marie-France Brière; Irene Szylinger/David Adjaye/Ron Arad; Krzysztof Wodiczko/Julian Bonder - Canadian Architect

SiTE:LAB Announces 54Jeff Competition Winners: ...concepts for the future of the former Grand Rapids Public Museum... -- Danielle Berwick; Doonam Back/Yann Caclin/Hugo Pace/ABC-STUDIO; Peter Dumbadze [images, links to details] - The Architect's Newspaper

Mark Robbins Will Succeed Adele Chatfield-Taylor as American Academy of Rome President and CEO: ...coming from the position of executive director for the International Center of Photography. He's also held several leadership positions in design and architecture, including director of design at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and curator of architecture at the Wexner Center for the Arts...also served as dean of Syracuse University School of Architecture... - Architect Magazine

Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) Statement on the Proposed National Architecture Accrediting Board 2014 Conditions for Accreditation: ...recent changes eliminate and truncate key criteria directly related to public health, safety, and welfare, as well as the kind of social research-based approach to architecture that has created innovative and inspired design with contextual relevance and fit... - DigitalJournal.com

Hurricane Sandy's Devastation - Told Through The Photos Of Regular New Yorkers: Professional photography alone can't tell the story of the superstorm. "Rising Waters: Photographs of Sandy" at the Museum of the City of New York uses images snapped by the people in the storm to remind us of what happened. [images] - Fast Company

"Airport Landscape: Urban Ecologies in the Aerial Age" exhibition and conference (November 14-15) at Harvard GSD: ...presents landscape architects' projects for the ecological enhancement of operating airfields and the conversion of abandoned airfields. -- Charles Waldheim; Sonja Dümpelmann; Agence Ter; GROSS.MAX; Hargreaves Associates; James Corner Field Operations; Lateral Office; LCLA; Mosbach Paysagistes; Office of Landscape Morphology; OpSys; Stoss Landscape Urbanism; Topotek 1; West 8; Ken Smith Landscape Architect- Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD)

Art installation transforms Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting House: ...be prepared for Philadelphia's most entrancing new art installation..."Skyspace," a wordless narrative of light and color by James Turrell...likely to turn this modest Quaker meetinghouse into a prime Philadelphia art attraction...No. 84...the first year-round version on the East Coast. By Inga Saffron [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

How Pop Art plundered consumerist culture: Pop Art is about making the banal into big art; design is about creating an image for the banal, so that it can be marketed...Yet the design [in "Pop Art Design"] actually seems less cynical than the art...AOC has impeccably caught this blurring in a pastel-hued, subtly kitsch-infused set that blends Las Vegas, LA and Main Street, woven around the Barbican's concrete columns. By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

Field Museum exhibit captures the flavor of 1893 World's Fair: One of the great achievements of the...first-rate new exhibition, "Opening the Vaults: Wonders of the 1893 World's Fair," is the feeling it gives for the event in its context...[it] is compelling. This is our history...An operational definition of making no little plans, it helped make a national reputation for the architect Daniel Burnham...- Chicago Tribune

Urban planning takes back seat in Chicago, new book contends: D. Bradford Hunt and Jon B. DeVries rip city's failure to guide growth...in their lucid study, "Planning Chicago"...readers might expect the authors to cite [Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago]...Instead, [they] argue that the height of "city-led planning" in Chicago was an obscure document: the city's 1966 comprehensive plan...took a holistic perspective, going beyond bricks and mortar to address social services... By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

"Against the Smart City": Adam Greenfield critiques the prevailing definition of the "smart city" and calls for an alternative vision that understands and responds to the messy realities of human existence. [excerpt]- Urban Omnibus

New York: City of Spectacular Doors: "Door Jams: Amazing Doors of New York City" by Allan Markman, a former designer at the United Nations...seem to tell tales about hyperactively creative occupants or neighbors...it's hard to imagine that designers would tolerate the mess. By Rick Poyner [images]- Design Observer

Terrain Vague: "The New English Landscape" by Jason Orton & Ken Worpole: The Thames Estuary in South East England, home to the London 2012 Summer Olympics...is a drosscape to some but a place of great fascination to others. Photographer and author have spent over a decade documenting these sodden flatlands and reveal them to be a place of quintessential English beauty. Here Worpole explains the shifting English landscape aesthetic. - Uncube magazine (Germany)

Tree Houses for Grown-Ups, the Complete Collection: Birdhouse apartments, hanging human-sized nests, and other wonders are all featured in..."Tree Houses," a gorgeous new book...chronicles 50 real-life constructions, most with a far more adult flair. By Bonnie Tsui [images]- The Atlantic Cities

Architects, Watch This Car: ...car design and architecture have been out of step for decades, but Alfa Romeo's new sports car brings them together: ...far surpasses those buildings wrought as examples of "blob" or "fold" architecture...The Alfa 4C is blobbier and foldier...possesses a characteristic which the practice of architecture craves: it is a potential source of inspiration...can be ripped off with abandon, impunity, glee. By Jonathan Meades - The Economist / Intelligent Life (UK)



-- HARQUITECTES + dataAE: Residence for Architecture Students, Barcelona, Spain
-- Álvaro Siza: Leça Swimming Pools, Porto, Portugal
-- Ateliers Jean Nouvel: ...persistence, insatiable urge for the creative experimental and his resistance against the ordinary...

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