

Today's News - Monday, November 4, 2013

- ArcSpace brings us Sejima's Shibaura House in Tokyo; Aalto's 1971 Finlandia Hall in Helsinki; and a profile of the "unorthodox artist-architects" at Diller Scofidio + Renfro.
- An argumentative bunch today: Hopkins and Kent make the point that all the infighting raging over who earns the title "architect" is "a desperate grasp to retain relevance. And it utterly fails - the world is not listening" (in fact, the "negative tone" is turning off "any supporters who might ordinarily agree").
- Should charity work be part of an architect's duty? Yes, says McAslan's Potter; No, says FAT's Jacob.
- Chevin thinks it's time to get over "our fixation" with heritage buildings and allow some "a dignified death" - we're only "delaying the inevitable - like our attitude to junk in the attic, we can't bear to part with what may come in handy one day."
- On a brighter note, Mansavage makes the case for moving education from STEM to STEAM, calling for his "fellow designers and scientists" to take "the fear out of experimentation" and "allow things to get messy, to overlap and blur."
- A (good?) sign of the times as stalled starchitect-studded residential towers spring back to life in Manhattan (some neighbors don't agree).
- Rogers is resigned to changes in towering plans for Sydney's Barangaroo: while it still "has the 'potential to be quite extraordinary...In my opinion, it was a great lack of courage at the last moment.'"
- Hawthorne cheers the new Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills that "artfully blends old architecture with new" - though it "suggests the balkanization of L.A.'s high culture," with "every major pocket of wealth" wanting its own culture center (blame it on the city's "ever-thickening traffic").
- King makes a compelling case for George Lucas to build his proposed San Francisco museum in Maybeck's 1915 Palace of Fine Arts instead of facing the Presidio's Crissy Park: the Palace is "cited by Lucas as an inspiration for his proposed structure" - and it is "in need of a tenant."
- The architect behind China's People's Daily HQ defends his "phallic" tower - it will look very different when the scaffolding comes down; he doesn't "take the sniggering personally," but sees it as a sign "that our design is of a high standard."
- Big plans for Houston's Bayou Greenways project "to create parallel connections at the human scale by matching the sprawl of the city to the sprawl of its waterways."
- A Danish architect's Invisible Garden House "revamps the plant-growing structure for the pop-up age" (it would look great in our back yard!).
- McKenzie has a most amusing conversation with Hadid (once she got past a "brusque answer" and "a case-closed expression"): "You get the feeling that no matter how hugely successful Hadid is, she will always paint herself as the feisty underdog."
- Kuma talks about his experiences leading an unusual architectural study tour of Japan, Japanese carpentry, and Hadid's Olympic Stadium.
- A fascinating saga of a New York artist who is playing "cat and mouse" with Vitra re: Barragán's archives.
- A good reason to book tickets to Shenzhen early: the 5th Urbanism\Architecture Bi-City Biennale *Shenzhen (a.k.a. UABB*Shenzhen).
- The 2013 AIBC Architectural Award winners put the spotlight on British Columbia's brightest.
- One we couldn't resist: Hofman's giant rubber ducky is having a tough Asian tour - this time, an earthquake caused it to explode in Taiwan, followed by (some amusing) funeral services and tributes.

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-- Kazuyo Sejima & Associates: Shibaura House, Tokyo, Japan
-- Alvar Aalto: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, Finland (1971)
-- Diller Scofidio + Renfro: In the world of unorthodox artist-architects, few have made such an impact as New York City-based design studio...

Daniel Libeskind Is No Architect: A global debate is raging...over who earns the title "architect"...The effort to criminalize alternate uses of the word...is a desperate grasp to retain relevance. And it utterly fails...the world is not listening. In fact, the negative tone of the conversation likely alienates any supporters who might ordinarily agree...that legal licensure is necessary for public safety when it comes to designing buildings. By Stephen Hopkins/Innovation Lab/Dimensional Innovations and Brandon Kent/Cannon Design- Fast Company

Should charity work be part of an architect's duty? Do architects have an embedded social responsibility or should their efforts be directed elsewhere? Yes - Aidan Potter/John McAslan & Partners (N17 Design Studio); No - Sam Jacob/FAT...It's not that architecture has no social responsibility, it's that architects should not be required to be do-gooders.- BD/Building Design (UK)

A few mercy killings wouldn't go amiss: Is our fixation with the past denying some grade II listed buildings a dignified death? In many cases, sadly, we are delaying the inevitable because we are too fixated on the past and, like our attitude to junk in the attic, we can't bear to part with what may come in handy one day. By Denise Chevin- BD/Building Design (UK)

Architecture: It's not science, it's art: There is a movement to add art and creativity into STEM education...from STEM to STEAM...reinforces the wonderful connection between science, art and design...So, to my fellow designers and scientists, how about taking the fear out of experimentation? Get out there and allow things to get messy, to overlap and blur...Let them crash into each other and reveal wonderfully human results. By Barney Mansavage/SRG Partnership- Daily Journal of Commerce (Oregon)

New Life for Skyscraper: Revived Midtown Tower to House Luxury Condos Plus Gallery Space for MoMA: A \$1 billion financing package from Asia has cleared the way...the latest example of a comeback by New York projects sidelined in the downturn...Other luxury residential projects have also sprung back to life. -- Jean Nouvel; Herzog & de Meuron; Norman Foster/Foster + Partners- Wall Street Journal

Barangaroo blow but top architects let the Crown rule: ...decision to scrap the Big Red plan still hurts...master architects for Barangaroo South agree that Packer's hotel-cum-VIP casino has the "potential to be quite extraordinary" - but they do have a few niggles...How much did that political compromise hurt the total vision? "A lot," Richard Rogers [said] this week. "In my opinion, it was a great lack of courage at the last moment." -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Wilkinson Eyre Architects- Sydney Morning Herald

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a step forward for Beverly Hills: ...artfully blends

old architecture with new, with parking of course: ...a clear example of how tricky it can be...to design a new building that's architecturally sympathetic to its neighbors...suggests that the balkanization of L.A.'s high culture, propelled mostly by our ever-thickening traffic, continues apace...we are seeing more and more support for the idea that every major pocket of wealth...deserves its own concert hall or performing arts center. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Zoltan Pali; Studio Pali Fekete; Ralph Flewelling (1934); Cesar Pelli; Renzo Zecchetto; DLR Group WWCOT; HGA Architects [images]- Los Angeles Times

Ideal spot for George Lucas' art not far, far away: As [he] pursues his quest to build an art museum in San Francisco's Presidio...there's a much better location a short walk away: the Palace of Fine Arts...cited by Lucas as an inspiration for his proposed structure...Now, it faces an uncertain future...in need of a tenant. By John King -- Bernard Maybeck (1915) [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Zhou Qi defends 'phallic' design of his People's Daily tower: ...look of new headquarters for party mouthpiece will be less jarring when built...calls debate surrounding it political...he does not take the sniggering personally..."The vigorous debate and controversy so far show that our design is of a high standard." [images]- South China Morning Post

Bayou City: Houston is launching a \$215 million project to improve access to its robust network of natural waterways: ...seven-year program will lead to the creation of 1,500 acres of new parkland and trails. Taking into account Houston's vastness—the city covers more than 600 square miles—Bayou Greenways has managed to create parallel connections at the human scale by matching the sprawl of the city to the sprawl of its waterways. -- SWA Group [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

A Greenhouse To Go: Determined to keep the greenhouse alive, a Danish architect creates plant-loving pods that cultivate urban growth...His Invisible Garden House revamps the plant-growing structure for the pop-up age. -- Simon Hjermin Jensen/SHJWORKS [images]- Fast Company

Zaha Hadid: "Would they still call me a diva if I was a man?": ...smashing through the "boy's club" of international architecture, to become one of the most celebrated - and divisive - designers on the planet...finally cracking the notoriously masculine world of architecture. She disagrees. "I think it's a boys' club everywhere"...you get the feeling that no matter how hugely successful Hadid is, she will always paint herself as the feisty underdog... By Sheena McKenzie [images]- CNN International

Kengo Kuma on Japanese Carpentry and Hadid's Olympic Stadium: ...he spoke about his experiences leading a unique architectural study tour of Japan that saw participation from a team of 20 international architects, designers, and students... "Material Equilibrium: Social Action for Architects"... - Artinfo

Tug of War Stretches Architect's Legacy: Luis Barragán Homage Tweaks Vitra, the Copyright Owners: In a New York homage to the Mexican architect, the artist Jill Magid plays cat and mouse with the Swiss group that owns rights to his work...one of the first salvos in what she plans to be a series of provocative artworks about Barragán that drift surreally somewhere between fact and fiction, the past and the present, and Mexico and Switzerland.- New York Times

5th UABB*Shenzhen Appoints Curatorial Teams: 5th Urbanism\Architecture Bi-City Biennale *Shenzhen will be delivered by...Team Ole Bouman and Team Li Xiangning + Jeffrey Johnson...theme is URBAN BORDER...December 6, 2013 - February 28, 2014- UABB*Shenzhen

2013 AIBC Architectural Award Winners Showcase B.C.'s Brightest: An outstanding group of 13 projects emerged... -- mcfarlane green biggar ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN; MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects; PUBLIC: Architecture + Communication; Perkins + Will Canada Architects; Lang Wilson Practice in Architecture Culture; Allen + Maurer Architects; DIALOG Alberta Architecture; Bing Thom Architects; etc. - Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)

Giant duck explodes, a victim of earthquake: It's been a tough Asian tour for the giant yellow duck. It collapsed in Hong Kong in May, got stuck under a bridge in Osaka last month, and [Thursday] exploded in Taiwan. -- Florentijn Hofman [images, links]- South China Morning Post

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