

Today's News - Friday, November 15, 2013

- Wainwright weighs in on Foster's Apple HQ with a weighty, wary (and often amusing) musing: "in the desperate pursuit of innovation, is the building in danger of being nothing more than a machismo monument to technocratic supremacy?" ("It's a very macho exercise - it's all about big egos," says one former designer).
- Saffron is more than a bit disappointed in Piano's "lackluster," "wan," and "dreary" companion to Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum in Ft. Worth: "Minimalist architecture doesn't have to be this dull."
- King has high hopes for Snøhetta's SFMOMA addition, with even higher hopes that "the fused creation doesn't have the unfocused anonymity of a high-end shopping mall."
- Bernstein hopes that the student-users disagree with his take on the University Center at The New School in Greenwich Village.
- Nelson ponders why so many modern Australian buildings are "unfriendly and inhospitable": they tend to lack "a quality of public engagement" and "social presence" that should come from their design.
- Hosey offers one solution: "Stop building altogether...industry would be forced to turn its attention to improving the nearly 300 billion square feet of existing building stock."
- Jaffe would concur, suggesting parking garages should be designed "with an eye toward their afterlife" (it's actually happening already).
- Steinberg outlines "the challenges and opportunities" surrounding Philly's 96-acre rail yards "poised to be reimagined...will this project be our gift to the 22nd century?"
- Now a moment for a bit of the bizarre and absurd: the Chinese millionaire building "eccentric projects" everywhere: "I don't have any hobbies, except for planting trees and building castles."
- Call for entries (registration deadline looms!): The Architect's Newspaper 1st annual Best of Design Awards.
- Weekend diversions:
- Museum of Arts & Design curator hopes "Out of Hand: Materializing the Postdigital" clarifies "the role of digital design, from its capabilities to its significance in our daily lives": "People just didn't get it."
- "The Landscape Architecture Legacy of Dan Kiley" at the Boston Architectural College puts a spotlight on the master's endangered sites.
- A good reason to be in Melbourne next week: the Link Festival of Design, Technology and Social Change "will bring together 400 emerging and established leaders in community development and design thinking" to explore "humanitarian technology and design for social change."
- Stephens has a few quibbles with Montgomery's "Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design," and its "combination of earnestness and 'gee-whizz' curiosity," though by and large finds it "amiable, insightful and informative."
- A selection of excerpts by contributors to "Ian Nairn: Words in Place" who "attest to the influence that Nairn's work has had on their own."
- Burkhalter finds Ogata's "Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America" to be "a valuable and inspiring resource."

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All hail the mothership: Norman Foster's \$5bn Apple HQ:...promises to follow Apple's values of 'innovation, ease of use and beauty'. But is it a techno-utopia too far? ...in the desperate pursuit of innovation, is the building in danger of being nothing more than a machismo monument to technocratic supremacy? "It's a very macho exercise...it's all about big egos"...176-acre plot looks set to put the Garden of Eden to shame... By Oliver Wainwright -- Foster + Partners [images]- Guardian (UK)

Fort Worth's Kimbell Art Museum addition disserves Louis Kahn: The pavilion by Renzo Piano is a wan companion...two buildings now stand eyeball-to-eyeball across the lawn, locked in an uneasy dialogue...My complaint with Piano's pavilion is its own architecture...It's self-effacing to an extreme...Minimalist architecture doesn't have to be this dull. By Inga Saffron- Philadelphia Inquirer

SFMOMA remodel to bring in new light, openness: When the enlarged San Francisco Museum of Modern Art reopens in 2016, visitors should be prepared for a profoundly different experience...interior details are still being refined...to grow in such a way that the fused creation doesn't have the unfocused anonymity of a high-end shopping mall. By John King -- Mario Botta (1995); Craig Dykers/Snøhetta- San Francisco Chronicle

Commentary: The University Center at The New School's Stairmaster: Between its massing and its sheathing, the building diminishes the neighborhood...Inside are some spectacular rooms...The most interesting feature of the new building is its stairwells...producing an effect that some consider dazzling, others, fussy. This critic falls into the latter category, but hopes the students, the real audience for this building, disagree. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Roger Duffy/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [slide show]- Architectural Record

Modern Australian buildings are unfriendly – and here's why: What makes one space adorable and engaging? What makes another unfriendly and inhospitable? I have no difficulty thinking of examples from the past – almost anywhere in the world...have a quality of public engagement that comes from their design..."social presence"...There's no reason contemporary materials and modes of construction cannot economically accommodate the three principles of social presence. By Robert Nelson/Monash University [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Stop Building. Now.: ...buildings use more energy than any other single industry...Much is being done to combat this...Making buildings slightly more efficient isn't enough...a modest proposal: Stop building altogether...We build too much, and much of it goes unused...industry would be forced to turn its attention to improving the nearly 300 billion square feet of existing building stock. By Lance Hosey/RTKL - Huffington Post

We Need to Design Parking Garages With a Car-less Future in Mind: Building adaptable structures will save time, money, and material waste...designing parking structures with an eye toward their afterlife is not only logical but rather simple. By Eric Jaffe- The Atlantic Cities

Time to conduct change at rail yard: There are 96 acres of prime real estate

hiding in plain sight in the middle of our resurgent city...the rail yards at 30th Street...poised to be reimagined...need to think long term and visionary, as there will be many hurdles...will this project be our gift to the 22nd century? By Harris M. Steinberg/PennPraxis - Philadelphia Inquirer

Flights of architectural fantasy in the China's cities of grey: Chongqing businessman defies government opposition to build castle-like buildings, one of several millionaires behind eccentric projects..."I don't have any hobbies, except for planting trees and building castles," Liu Chonghua says. [images]- South China Morning Post

Call for entries: The Architect's Newspaper 1st annual Best Of Design Awards to showcase great buildings, building elements, interiors, landscape, etc. (projects must be in U.S.); registration deadline: November 22 (submission deadline: December 9)- The Architect's Newspaper

MAD Museum Gets Out of Hand: Spawned from his 2011 show on Patrick Jouin, Museum of Arts & Design curator Ronald Labaco conceived "Out of Hand: Materializing the Postdigital" as a more comprehensive show that clarified the role of digital design, from its capabilities to its significance in our daily lives. "People just didn't get it"... -- Achim Menges/Jan Knippers; Zaha Hadid/Patrik Schumacher; Greg Lynn; Anish Kapoor; Marc Newson; Daniel Libeskind; Maya Lin; etc. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Landscape group calls for care of Dan Kiley sites: The Cultural Landscape Foundation is devoting its list of endangered sites this year to...one of the most important modernist landscape architects from the 20th century..."The Landscape Architecture Legacy of Dan Kiley" at the Boston Architectural College highlights his work. It will move to the National Building Museum in February. (AP)- Boston Globe

Melbourne selected to host Link Festival of Design, Technology and Social Change: ...a collaborative two day forum...will bring together 400 emerging and established leaders in community development and design thinking...on the topic of humanitarian technology and design for social change. November 25 - 26 -- Co-Design Studio; Architects without Frontiers; Engineers without Borders; Indigenous Architects Victoria; Artbox- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Smart Growth Literature Hits its Cul-du-Sac: "Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design," by Charles Montgomery, pulls up the rear in the urbanist canon...approaches the faults and promises of the contemporary urban condition with a combination of earnestness and "gee-whizz" curiosity...by all accounts, amiable, insightful and informative. By Josh Stephens - California Planning & Development Report

"Ian Nairn: Words in Place" by Gillian Darley and David McKie: 30 years after his death, a new study explores his life and work..."an architectural critic with no architectural qualifications whatever; a scourge of planners"...contributions from a raft of writers who attest to the influence that Nairn's work has had on their own...a selection. -- Andrew Saint; Owen Hatherley; Gavin Stamp-BD/Building Design (UK)

Power Play: "Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America" by Amy F. Ogata: ...a valuable and inspiring resource for scholars and professionals in child related research, it lays out how the image of creativity became ubiquitous, from Curious George to children's furniture to the museums' art programs. By Gabriela Burkhalter - The Architect's Newspaper



-- Coop Himmelb(l)au: Known as the punk rockers of architecture...founded in Vienna in 1968 by Wolf Prix, Helmut Swiczinsky and Michael Holzer.
-- Zaha Hadid Architects: MAXXI: Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome, Italy
-- Travel blog: Vienna, Austria -- Ortner & Ortner; Adolf Loos; Hans Hollein

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