Today's News - Friday, December 6, 2013

- A new report should prove useful to all of us who advocate (and struggle for funding) for arts and culture in tight times: they represented $504 billion of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product in 2011 - surely a hefty arrow in our fundraising quivers!

- Russell is rapturous about Weiss/Manfred's "temple to science" at UPenn: for a building type where "inspiration often lands on the cutting room floor," the Singh Center "is something of a miracle. This isn't waffler architecture, nor attention-grabbing spectacle - it embodies a rarity: poise."

- Woodward parses OMAs De Rotterdam: it "embodies as no other the city's "energy and openness"...but perhaps something of the insecurity and naivety too."

- HèdèMs Binswanger describes the Pérez Art Museum Miami as "a transparent gem rather than the jewel box" (great Baan pix and a video, too!)

- Felden Clegg Bradley breaks its silence to defend its Southbank Centre scheme: "key elements" of the original design "have survived the revisions" - and skeptics are still not convinced.

- Eyeful of Arch Record's Design Vanguard 2013 who hail from Europe, North America, and Asia (great presentation!).

- Eyeful of Central America's 10 Hottest Young Firms "whose work shatters paradigms."

- Two we couldn't resist: a Christmas gift for the impossible-to-buy-for on your list: FLW's 1893 Winslow House in suburban Chicago (his first independent commission - he was just 26) is up for sale for a mere $2.4 million (great pix!).

- A French photographer introduces astronauts, rock stars, long-dead generals - and more - to Paris Metro commuters with vignettes that illustrate station's names: "the results are fantastically bizarre" (and the photos fantastic!).

- Weekend diversions:
  - "Almost Lost" at London's Wellington Arch looks back at projects "we can all be a bit thankful that didn't happen."
  - Boston's BSA Space offers "Rights of Way: Mobility and the City," with "dozens of examples of visionary urban thinking, showing how the city is shaped by the ways people move through it."

- Calatrava takes center stage "in the monumental spaces of the Charlemagne Wing in the Colonnade of St. Peter's Square" in Rome.

- Davidson decides not to set down Stern/Fishman/Tilove's massive "Paradise Planned" on "its own half-acre lot, give it a peaked roof, and simply move in": "I defy anyone who so much as leafs through this book to sniff dismissively at a verdant enclave ever again."

- Heritage exhibition "[Almost Lost]" at London's Wellington Arch looks back at projects that have threatened some of London's most famous historic buildings and beighbourhoods. [images]

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- Orlando-based architect Renzo Piano, best known for designing the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris, is putting two of his own design ideas up for sale: a Paris Métro station and a small house in the French countryside. [images]

- The London that might have been: We can all be a bit thankful that most of these projects didn't happen; A new English edition of "Almost Lost" at London's Wellington Arch looks back at projects that have threatened some of London's most famous historic buildings and beighbourhoods. [images]

- "Rights of Way: Mobility and the City..." a global exploration of mobility and transportation in cities...dozens of examples of visionary urban thinking, showing how the city is shaped by the ways people move through it; part of Overhaul: The 2013-2014 Transportation Series -- Höweler + Yoon Architecture; MILLIGRAM-office

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his works, the complex and multi-form artistic production of this celebrated Spanish architect and engineer.

- Vatican Museums

Utopia by Design: "Paradise Planned: The Garden Suburb and the Modern City" by Robert A.M. Stern, David Fishman, and Jacob Tilove: The authors deploy industrial quantities of homework and buckets of elegant prose...to rescue a "tragically interrupted, 150-year-old tradition" from modern disrepute...I defy anyone who so much as leafs through this book to sniff dismissively at a verdant enclave ever again. By Justin Davidson [- Architectural Record]

An Indispensable "The Guide to Greening Cities": From the people that know best...written primarily from the perspective of municipal sustainability officials...sharing their on-the-ground experience...really useful to advocates who need to understand how the bureaucracy works in order to be influential...a guide to Getting Things Done, pragmatically yet with vision. By Kaid Benfield [images, links]- The Atlantic Cities

"The Library: A World History" by James W.P. Campbell and Will Pryce: It's a shame that a survey of the world's libraries focuses on institutions created for the privileged..."libraries that are designed to be seen"...For all the seductive beauty...there is a niggling sense that superb buildings get erected not to celebrate books and refine access to them, but rather as a way for architects to flex and test themselves...[and] benefactors to create expanses of wall for their good name to go up on. By Tom Lamont [- Observer (UK)]

An Unheralded Brazilian Modernist: Niemeyer aside, Latin American architecture has received far too little attention in the US, so this scholarly monograph on Lina Bo Bardi by Zeuler R. M. de A. Lima is especially welcome...one hopes that Bardi's growing reputation will encourage local authorities to take better care of her buildings.


Gift guide: "Wunderkammer" by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien; "The Sea Ranch: Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place, and Community on the Northern California Coast" by Donlyn Lyndon and Jim Alinder; "Shingle Style: Living in San Francisco's Brown Shingles" by Lucius Howard and David Weingarten; "Building Seagram" by Phyllis Lambert; "Donald Olsen: Architect of Habitable Abstractions" by Piero Fornasetti; "How to Study Public Life" by Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre; "Original Copies: Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China" by Bianca Bosker; "Never Built Los Angeles" by Greg Goldin and Sam Lubell. By John King [- San Francisco Chronicle]

Sea Ranch can be yours for $65! (Between covers, that is): The definitive book on the definitive coastal utopia has been republished...an update that evolves in supple and satisfying ways..."The Sea Ranch: Fifty Years of Architecture, Landscape, Place and Community on the Northern California Coast" by Donlyn Lyndon with photographs by Jim Alinder... By John King- San Francisco Chronicle

INSIGHT: The Place of Architecture as an Art Form in the Changing Cultural Landscape: The fine arts today do not have the shared social purpose they once did. But the built environment is different. Architecture is a collective art form and a collective endeavor. By Peter Gisolfi, AIA, ASLA, LEED AP- ArchNewsNow

-- Atelier Peter Zumthor: Shelters for Roman Archaeological Site, Chur, Switzerland (1986): It's astonishing to think it was designed and built almost 30 years ago.
-- Choreography of Thought: Dominique Perrault's Sketches: "The silence, the mystery that surrounds a sketch constitutes a space in which thought is free."
-- Foreign Office Architects (FOA): Yokohama International Port Terminal (2002), Yokohama, Japan -- Farshid Moussavi; Alejandro Zaera-Polo
-- "The Monocle Guide to Better Living" helmed by founder Tyler Brûlé...it is big...global to the bone and filled with stuff of superb quality.