

Today's News - Thursday, January 30, 2014

- Rosenbaum's report on "Diller's bravura performance" at Tuesday's MoMA/AFAM confab: "She probably didn't change the hearts and minds of the many who adamantly oppose the MoMA's (to my mind justifiable) decision...But she walked away...with a long round of strong applause ringing in her ears."
- A very NY/LON kind of day (with some other places thrown in for good measure):
- RIBA releases its report "City Health Check: How Design Can Save Lives and Money."
- Woodman says the report "could hardly be more timely" with the U.K.'s "increasing appetite for green infrastructure. A key inspiration has been the High Line."
- Hatherley, on the other hand, considers why High Lines and "more green isn't always greener for cities: Transforming old industrial areas into urban woodland may look nice but can be counterproductive in the long run" (huh?).
- Tucker takes on Foster's SkyCycle: it's a "great idea, in theory," but "I can foresee a few issues."
- Fab(!) before-and-after photos of "25 of New York City's most transformative road diets" that have changed the city's "pedestrian realm in dramatic fashion."
- Jao looks into L.A.'s "People Streets" program that "aims to be a one-stop shop for community groups looking to bring life to underused city streets" (a kit of pre-approved parts included).
- The Centre for Cities' new "Cities Outlook" report crunches the numbers to see if London's success might be hampering other cities: "it seems clear that London may take but it also gives back too."
- Bayley is a bit bothered by gentrification: "What models does the gentrifier have in mind? In any period they reflect the dominant aesthetic of the architectural establishment" (and that can be good - or bad).
- A University at Buffalo researcher is using a HUD Sustainable Communities grant to study "Rust Belt gentrification and how it hurts the poor" so that other planners "will be able to employ similar methods to explore affordable housing solutions in their own communities."
- Not all are convinced as the politicians that plans for Germany's tallest Gehry-designed residential tower in Berlin will produce a Bilbao effect: "The investor is allowed to build, but the city is getting nothing in return."
- Detroit gears up for transit-oriented development: "How it gets done is critical to its success."
- Meanwhile, schoolyards across Detroit are sprouting gardens that nurture students' bodies while offering "lessons across the curriculum from science classes to math and language arts."
- Kimmelman channels Holly Whyte and spends some time at a McDonald's in Flushing, Queens, to see why elderly Koreans like to hang out (to the chagrin of the owner): "What I found reinforced basic lessons about architecture, street life and aging neighborhoods" - the place is "is a ready-made NORC."
- New Zealand's first foray to the Venice Biennale will "show off pacific architecture" with "a purpose-built whatarangi" (our newest favorite word!) filled with models of some of the country's most prized buildings.

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Gladiator in the Architects' Den: Elizabeth Diller's Bravura Performance on MoMA's Expansion: She probably didn't change the hearts and minds of the many...who adamantly oppose the Museum of Modern Art's (to my mind justifiable) decision to knock down the 12-year-old American Folk Art Museum...But she walked away...with a long round of strong applause ringing in her ears. By Lee Rosenbaum -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien- ArtsJournal

City Health Check: How Design Can Save Lives and Money: Does the architecture and urban design of our cities impact on public health? ...we compare serious health problems in nine of the most populated cities in England and how these problems relate to our urban environment and levels of exercise.- RIBA / Royal Institute of British Architects

The Royal Institute of British Architects report on the relationship between the design of cities and public health could hardly be more timely: There is an increasing appetite for green infrastructure across the UK...A key inspiration has been the High Line...demonstrated that investment in green space can have a transformative effect...British cities would do well to heed that lesson... By Ellis Woodman- Telegraph (UK)

High Lines and park life: why more green isn't always greener for cities: Transforming old industrial areas into urban woodland may look nice but can be counterproductive in the long run. By Owen Hatherley -- Fletcher Priest; Thomas Heatherwick; MVRDV; Le Corbusier; Jane Jacobs; James Howard Kunstler; Aspect Studios/Choi Ropiha Figuera; Tsai Design- Guardian (UK)

Foster + Partners' raised cycle paths for London? Great idea, in theory: Blueprint editor and cyclist Johnny Tucker on SkyCycle: Move over New York with your High Line, here comes London and its even-higher-line: It would be nice not to have to ride a bike and your luck every day. So being extricated from this melee and raised into the sky would be welcome. That said, I can foresee a few issues with this latest scheme. -- Exterior Architecture; Space Syntax- DesignCurial / Blueprint Magazine (UK)

Before & After> 25 of New York City's Most Transformative Road Diets: ...Bloomberg and...Janette Sadik-Khan's street interventions have...shaved off excess space previously turned over to cars and returned it to the pedestrian realm in dramatic fashion... [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

DnA: We The People, Remaking L.A. into "People Streets": ...aims to be a one-stop shop for community groups looking to bring life to underused city streets...streamlines the labyrinthine process...LADOT enlisted the help of designers who had undergone the process previously...to create a Kit of Parts...which contain pre-approved design elements that groups can simply adopt based on their needs. By Carren Jao [images, links]- KCRW (Los Angeles)

Is London a drain on other UK cities? ...are politicians...right to be concerned that its success might be hampering other cities? The new Cities Outlook report by the Centre for Cities compiled various data sources to discover whether this is true...it seems clear that London may take but it also gives back too.- Guardian (UK)

Boris Johnson's abuse of planning power is an assault on democracy: By intervening in the local planning process, [he] is creating a more exclusive, divided city of private enclaves, designed only for the needs of the rich...Obsessed with box-ticking and quota-filling...mayor's planning team is a dangerous force. They have presided over a wealth of misconceived, mean-minded schemes that are destroying the social and physical fabric of London... By Oliver Wainwright- Guardian (UK)

We'll soon be counting skips in Albert Square: Gentrification is coming to EastEnders...news that the BBC's superlatively proletarian Albert Square is to be redesigned to take account of London's restlessly shifting demographic is an interesting moment for amateurs of the history of taste...What models does the gentrifier have in mind? In any period they reflect the dominant aesthetic of the architectural establishment. By Stephen Bayley- Telegraph (UK)

Rust Belt gentrification and how it hurts the poor: ...University at Buffalo researcher Robert Silverman...is leading a project to make recommendations about where the government should place affordable housing in 10 of the fastest-shrinking U.S. cities...planners everywhere will be able to employ similar methods to explore affordable housing solutions in their own communities. -- HUD Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program- Phys.org

Berlin hopes Germany's tallest residential tower has the 'Bilbao effect': Plans for Frank Gehry's 150-metre building off Alexanderplatz given go-ahead, but critics doubt regenerative claims...will have 39 floors, with about 300 apartments, restaurants, a hotel and a spa..."The investor is allowed to build, but the city is getting nothing in return". [image]- Guardian (UK)

Detroit, get ready for transit-oriented development: Public officials and developers...are preparing to reap the economic potential of functional transit, something many cities across the country have already done. How it gets done in Detroit is critical to its success...South Oakland Woodward plan..."a good example of how we should be approaching TOD..." -- Chris Leinberger- Model D (Detroit)

City Kids: Nurturing Detroit's gardens of love: ...schoolyards all over the city have begun sprouting raised garden beds. Not only do these beds grow produce that nurtures students' bodies...being used in lessons across the curriculum from science classes to math and language arts...part of the Detroit School Garden Collaborative, a partnership between the Detroit Public Schools and the Greening of Detroit.- Model D (Detroit)

The Urban Home Away From Home: The clash between a McDonald's in Queens and elderly Koreans who like congregating there offers lessons about aging communities' needs...in the vein of the urban sociologist William H. Whyte...I spent some time in Flushing. What I found reinforced basic lessons about architecture, street life and aging neighborhoods...McDonald's is a ready-made NORC/Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities. By Michael Kimmelman- New York Times

New Zealand set to show off pacific architecture at Venice Biennale: ...first entry into the world architectural exhibition....will feature a purpose-built whatarangi – a one poled-pataka (storehouse) – which will feature an illuminated model of the Auckland War Memorial Museum...new Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki...[and] Christchurch's cardboard cathedral... -- David Mitchell; Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp (fjmt); Archimedia; Shigeru Ban- Architecture & Design (Australia)

ANN Feature: What is "Quiet Design" and Why Should It Matter? Some Troubling Queries for Cathleen McGuigan and Sundry Fans of "Architectural Quietism." By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



-- Estudio Entresitio: Villaverde Municipal Health Care Center, Madrid, Spain...certainly one fine result.
-- After the Tsunami, at the 'Women's River'; ...former residents – and architect initiatives such as Architecture for Humanity – disagree with the hasty reconstruction plans made up by the central government. By Ulf Meyer
-- "A Question of Qualities: Essays in Architecture": Jeffrey Kipnis' collection of mind-blowing theoretical essays...a remarkable insight into the mind of one of today's most piercing and playful architectural thinkers. By Martin Søberg

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