

Today's News - Friday, February 14, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: We were right - our Internet tubes were not happy being buried by about 18 inches of snow yesterday (and now awaiting tomorrow's snow - is there such a thing as Spring?!?!). Happy Valentine's Day!

- Dunlap reports that MoMA "is intent on carefully preserving" the former AFAM building - well, the façade (in pieces), anyway, but there's no word on where it might end up.
- Jacobs channels Marshall Berman and Goethe re: the MoMA/AFAM saga: "There is something decidedly Mephistophelian..."
- Is MoMA's decision to preserve the façade "a brave curatorial decision or damage control?" - some pundits and architects weigh in ("a bronze bone thrown to the masses," says Goldberger; or perhaps coffee tables in MoMA's catalog?).
- The artistic director of London's Young Vic Theater tapped to "draft a programming vision" for a performing arts center at Ground Zero, but Gehry may not be part of that vision: "We love his models" but... (one of the more back-handed compliments we've ever come across).
- Crosbie is crazy for Foster's "stunning, very elegantly detailed, hip, innovative" Yale School of Management - except "it belongs in an office park."
- Wainwright wrangles with RSH+P's Y:Cube flat-pack homes for homeless people: they "look like Monopoly hotels. But are they really the 'answer to Britain's housing crisis'?"
- Things "are looking up" for Philip Johnson's "folly" in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park: the Queens Borough President gets behind efforts to bring the 1964-65 World's Fair New York State Pavilion "space-age beauty" back to life.
- Jeffries has a most interesting conversation with English Heritage's Thurley re: Stonehenge ("We were victims of our own success"), why he's no fogey, and why he's proud to be English brutalism's greatest champion.
- UNESCO puts a stop to German archaeologists rebuilding Afghanistan's Bamiyan Buddhas, and taps an Italian architect to supervise four new initiatives for the site.
- Two we couldn't resist (in honor of Valentine's Day!): "Match-Maker" in Times Square is a "perfect installation for a city that has been accused of keeping its dwellers single" + V-Day cards "for planners, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, transportation engineers, and those who love them" ("I love you like Jane Jacobs loved front stoops").
- Weekend diversions:
 - Glancey gabs with the architects celebrated in "The Brits Who Built the Modern World": they "belong to a generation of brilliant Britons who changed the course of architecture," and "have been highly influential around the world in terms of invention, skill and sheerchutzpah."
 - "Bunkers, Brutalism, Bloody-mindedness: Concrete Poetry" is Meades's A-to-Z of brutalism on BBC4: "It was mocked and misunderstood. But it produced some of the most sublime, awe-inspiring buildings on the planet" (hopefully coming to a PBS station near us soon!).
 - Wim Wenders' "Cathedrals of Culture" is a 3D tour of modern buildings, "giving all new meaning to the expression 'if these walls could talk': it's "overlong and only intermittently absorbing" (better suited to 2D TV audience).
 - MacLowry's "The Rise and Fall of Penn Station" documentary "gets a lot right. Yet it's difficult to shake the feeling that this is an outline or proof-of-concept for a larger documentary."
 - Kats and Tan parse MoMA's "Frank Lloyd Wright and the City: Density vs. Dispersal": "despite its celebratory premise, it takes on a somber tone - contemplating his schemes gets you thinking in fresh ways about what ails our cities."
 - Nashville's Frist Center offers "Frank Lloyd Wright: Building the Imperial Hotel" as part of "Looking East," an exhibition that looks at "how architects and artists were influenced by the Japonisme trend."
 - In Shanghai "Beyond Architecture" shows off "a collection of all manner of designs" by architects - except for architecture.
 - "Transforming Cityscapes: Winning Entries of the 8th Ibero-American Architecture and Urban Design Biennial" in Washington, DC, shows off buildings and urban environments in nine countries that are "astounding."
 - "100 Years of Architectural Drawing" is the only book we want for Christmas (great pix!).
 - Pedersen has a most interesting Q&A with Stern re: "Paradise Planned" and how it "rescues the garden suburb from the periphery of urban design, and repositions it at the heart of the debate on cities."
 - Fortmeyer cheers Mazzoleni's "Architecture Follows Nature": "It is certainly refreshing" for those looking for something beyond Benyus' "somewhat cheerleading" 1997 "Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature."
 - We cheer Lambert's "Building Seagram" being named the Designers & Books first annual Design Book of the Year.

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[American Folk Art Museum Building May Be Lost, but Facade Will Live: In Storage Somewhere: Contrary to what you may have read lately, the Museum of Modern Art is intent on carefully preserving the former \[AFAM\]...At least, the part of it that is most recognizable to the public..."We will take the facade down, piece by piece, and we will store it...We have made no decision about what happens subsequently, other than the fact that we'll have it and it will be preserved."](#) By David W. Dunlap -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects; Diller Scofidio & Renfro; Darcy Mro- New York Times

[Faust on West 53rd Street: The fate of the former American Folk Art Museum has our columnist thinking about Marshall Berman and Goethe: There is something decidedly Mephistophelian about the way Lowry obscured the controversy over the excessively tall Nouvel tower behind the shadow of the tiny former museum. By Karrie Jacobs -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects; Diller Scofidio + Renfro- Metropolis Magazine](#)

[MoMA to Preserve Folk Art's Bronze Facade and Stop There: A brave curatorial decision or damage control? See how architects and critics are reacting to the news.- Metropolis Magazine](#)

[London Director to Draft Arts Vision for Ground Zero: David Lan, the artistic director of the Young Vic Theater...will draft a programming vision for the performing arts center...the choice of architect could change..."We love his models...So many mistakes are made when genius architects design a building and that comes before the workhorse of the building. It's not a comment on Gehry as an architect. It's a different skill set."](#) By Robin Pogrebin -- Frank Gehry; Charcoalblue [image]- New York Times

[Yale's Evans Hall Stunning, But Too Darn Big: ...invites multiple perspectives...home of the Yale School of Management...The first perspective is that of a light-filled, polished structure that offers some of the most innovative spaces and technology for teaching business in the 21st century...a very elegantly detailed, hip, innovative, coolly corporate facility...a player on the world's stage of business schools. But...it's too darn big. It belongs in an office park. By Michael J. Crosbie -- Norman Foster/Foster + Partners \[images\]- Hartford Courant \(Connecticut\)](#)

[Richard Rogers and YMCA unveil £30k flatpack homes for homeless people: ...'move-on' homes look like Monopoly hotels - and are bigger than many private studio flats. But are they really the 'answer to Britain's housing crisis'? ...could the Y-Cube have lessons for volume housebuilding beyond the move-on sector? By Oliver Wainwright -- Roger Stirk Harbour + Partners; Homeshell- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[A New Day for the New York State Pavilion? Queens Borough President striving to save Philip Johnson folly: ...was about looking into the future. But today, nearly 50 years after...it's clear that "The Future" has not been kind to the pavilion...But things may be looking up for this rusty ruin...despite its current condition, the abandoned Pavilion retains its iconic stature and its space-age beauty. -- "People for the Pavilion" \[images\]- The Architect's Newspaper](#)

Simon Thurley: 'With Stonehenge we had six days of bedlam. We were victims of our own success': The chief executive of English Heritage tells Stuart Jeffries why he's no fogey and why he's proud to be English brutalism's greatest champion...why didn't he celebrate it in "The Building of England: How the History of England Has Shaped Our Buildings"? "When it comes out in paperback we may find that the story has sneakily slipped to 1952 if my publisher will let me." [images]- Guardian (UK)

Unesco stops unauthorised reconstruction of Bamiyan Buddhas: Organisation says actions of German archaeologists who have partially rebuilt one of the statues "border on the criminal"...has asked Andrea Bruno's architecture studio in Turin to supervise four projects. [images]- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Young Projects Play "Match-Maker" in Times Square: ... interactive Valentine's Day installation...heart-shaped sculpture is designed to cosmically connect people based on their zodiac signs by arranging curious passerby's at twelve points surrounding the installation...A perfect installation for a city that has been accused of keeping its dwellers single. [images]- ArchDaily

Planning Love: V-Day cards for planners, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, transportation engineers, and those who love them: "Will you be my prime consultant?" "I love you like Jane Jacobs loved front stoops." [images]- Anivan and Bamali

The Brits who built the modern world: According to a new BBC4 series, Norman Foster, Richard Rogers and Terry Farrell belong to a generation of brilliant Britons who changed the course of architecture...have been highly influential around the world in terms of invention, skill and sheerchutzpah. By Jonathan Glancey -- Michael and Patty Hopkins; Nicholas Grimshaw [images]- Telegraph (UK)

The incredible hulks: Jonathan Meades' A-Z of brutalism: It was mocked and misunderstood. But it produced some of the most sublime, awe-inspiring buildings on the planet. "Bunkers, Brutalism, Bloodmindedness: Concrete Poetry" starts on BBC4 on Sunday. [images]- Guardian (UK)

Berlin Film Review: 'Cathedrals of Culture': Wim Wenders continues to push the boundaries of 3D with this tour of modern buildings: Giving all new meaning to the expression "if these walls could talk"...six-part omnibus invites half a dozen international helmers to imagine the personalities of various cultural institutions...overlong and only intermittently absorbing...- Variety

"The Rise and Fall of Penn Station": Randall MacLowry's documentary airing on PBS [Feb. 18] gives some flesh to the ghost of New York City's original Penn Station...gets a lot right. But it zips by—or ignores altogether—far too many aspects of the terminal's story...With less than an hour to work with, hard choices surely had to be made. Yet it's difficult to shake the feeling that this is an outline or proof-of-concept for a larger documentary. -- McKim, Mead & White- Architectural Record

What Might Have Been: Frank Lloyd Wright's Strange Urban Vision at MoMA: ...despite its celebratory premise, "Density vs. Dispersal" takes on a somber tone...a show about utopian American urbanism, staged at a moment when cities across the country are flailing and in some cases failing...contemplating his schemes gets you thinking in fresh ways about what ails our cities. By Anna Kats, Dion Tan [slide show, video]- Artinfo

Frist exhibit looks at legendary architect's designs for Japanese hotel: "Frank Lloyd Wright: Building the Imperial Hotel" examines aspects of the Tokyo hotel..."Looking East"...visitors will come away with a deeper understanding of how architects, as well as artists, were influenced by the japonisme trend. Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville- The Tennessean

"Beyond Architecture": ...exhibition is a collection of all manner of designs - except for architecture - by a group of renowned architects; at the China Building Center (CBC) Architects Art Center, Shanghai -- Chen Zhanhui/MADA s.p.a.m.; Wang Yan/Architects Ring; Zhang Jiajing/Gom Architecture; Tadao Ando; Chen Xudong; Cao Xiaoxin/China Architecture Design & Research Group- Global Times (China)

"Transforming Cityscapes: Winning Entries of the 8th Ibero-American Architecture and Urban Design Biennial" at the Art Museum of the Americas: Across the entire body of structures and sites in these nine countries, the range of buildings and ensembles of buildings, and urban environments is astounding. -- Ginés Garrido/Francisco Burgos/Burgos & Garrido Arquitectos- InTowner (Washington, DC)

Extraordinarily Beautiful Architectural Drawings From the World's Greatest Architects: "100 Years of Architectural Drawing" by Neil Bingham...highlights 300 architectural drawings from the 20th century that illustrate the evolution of the form. By Kristin Hohenadel [images!]- Slate

The Charms of Suburbia: "Paradise Planned: The Garden Suburb and the Modern City" by Robert A.M. Stern, David Fishman, Jacob Tilove: A comprehensive history rescues the garden suburb from the periphery of urban design, and repositions it at the heart of the debate on cities..."I hope people will look at this book and say, 'You know, these are some pretty damn good ideas we've lost sight of. Why don't we take another look?'" By Martin C. Pedersen- Metropolis Magazine

Act Naturally: Russell Fortmeyer checks out "Architecture Follows Nature: Biomimetic Principles for Innovative Design" by Laria Mazzoleni with Shauna Price: Biomimicry is increasingly becoming one of those loaded words...rendered meaningless by overuse and over-application...It is certainly refreshing for those who only have Janine Benyus' somewhat cheerleading 1997 "Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature" and wondered, "what next?" - The Architect's Newspaper

"Building Seagram" by Phyllis Lambert named the Designers & Books 2013 Design Book of the Year: "The Houses of Louis Kahn" and "Various Small Books" as Runners-Up- Designers & Books



-- "Zaha Hadid + Suprematism" by Charlotte Douglas, Hans Ulrich Obrist, et al. portrays another side of the London-based architect...

-- "Will it Sustain?" Danish Architecture Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark: three wonderful international exhibitions, all under one roof!

-- Rudy Ricciotti Architecte: MuCEM (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations), Marseille, France. By Kirsten Kiser

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