

Today's News - Monday, March 3, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Apologies for not posting last Thursday and Friday, but we've been battling (and losing to) a nasty flu-bug. Now, slowly on the mend, we have a lot of catching up to do!

- ArcSpace brings us Beijing's new media center, and Meyer's take on Berlin's new Museum for Architectural Drawing.
- Pedersen ponders Hadid's response to whether architects should be responsible for workers' safety (and rights): even with her "tone-deaf comments - might Zaha be right?"
- Woodman, Wainwright, and Moore weigh in on Holl's Glasgow School of Art Reid Building: it's a "disappointment" (though "happily, the interior proves more assured") + "lives up to its critics' worst fears, from the outside at least" + "with all the good intentions that went into the new one, could have been something marvelous" (all well worth reading - they do find some good points - but green-tinted glass in the photo studio?!?!).
- Philly's Historic Commission finds the design for new Market Street tower "inappropriately bland" and asks for a re-design; "We thought that this is what they would want. Looks like we guessed wrong," sayeth the developer.
- Saffron x 2: Philly's "sadly bland" new Family Court building is lacking "public art to soften the clinical ambience" (blame it on politics and/or corruption).
- On a brighter note, she finds the Paseo Verde apartment development is "a lot more than just a utopian experiment in mixed-income living. It's environmentally friendly, transit-friendly, and urban-friendly. All that, and still manages to slip some real architecture into the mix."
- Heathcote mourns "the loss of London's utopian modernist vision...The 1960s may not have been a complete success, but there was a vision for a mixed city defined by urbanism. What is the vision now?"
- Brussat, on the other hand, sees "light at the end of this dark tunnel" created by modernists: "So ugliness might lose its place in the world to beauty with the same surprising speed" that classicism fell from grace.
- Nosowitz ponders why anyone would want to rebuild London's Crystal Palace, and "why it makes sense that some billionaires are trying to resurrect it."
- Bozikovic parses the six proposals for Canada's first National Holocaust Monument: "The jury has several powerful options from which to choose" (though in his mind, one "is both too flashy and too didactic"; others are more "compelling").
- Eyefuls of Heatherwick's design for a gallery inside grain silos in Cape Town: "We could either fight a building made of concrete tubes or enjoy its tube-iness" ("tube-iness" - our newest favorite word!).
- Eyefuls of four starchitect-studded proposals for a new arts venue in Arnhem, Netherlands.
- Proposals by five impressive teams vying to re-do London's Natural History Museum go on view (anonymously) for public comment.
- Australian Institute of Architects Melbourne now has an oh-so green (and very cool!) HQ.
- Speck visits his own "personal version of hell" - a sprawling 'burb in Utah that is "about the least happy place I can imagine."
- SHoP makes Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies 2014: it "has managed to please both architecture critics and real estate developers - perhaps its most impressive trick of all."
- King reports that Gang may have towering plans for San Francisco - it is "provocative news" for "a skyline where much of what is going up seems interchangeable" (no images yet, and it may not happen, but one can hope!).

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-- Shao Weiping: Phoenix International Media Center, Beijing, China. By Kevin Holden Platt
-- Sergei Tchoban & Sergei Kuznetsov: Museum for Architectural Drawing, Berlin, Germany. By Ulf Meyer

Governments, Not Architects, Should Shoulder Responsibility for Worker Deaths, Says Hadid: ...might Zaha be right? Her tone-deaf comments elicited a firestorm of predictable outrage, but I'd contend they had a near-truth about them...She may have been ham-fisted in her response...but her remarks reveal an ugly truth about unprotected (and yes, non-union) workers all over the world. By Martin C. Pedersen- Metropolis Magazine

Building next to a masterpiece: The disappointment of Steven Holl's new Reid building at Glasgow School of Art only emphasises the brilliance of Charles Rennie Mackintosh...Happily, the interior proves more assured...an exciting and provocative environment...an ambitious and serious piece of work. He may not be able to claim a talent on a par with that of Mackintosh but we should be wary of holding him to too high an account. After all, who, among his contemporaries, can? By Ellis Woodman- Telegraph (UK)

Green giant: can Glasgow's new School of Art eclipse Mackintosh's marvel? An emerald hulk has emerged next door to Rennie Mackintosh's...Steven Holl tells Oliver Wainwright how he refused to be daunted by taking on Scotland's best-loved architectural feat..."The critics almost killed this building! ...They'll eat their words when they see it"...the building lives up to its critics' worst fears, from the outside at least...a level of detail is needed beyond the broad brushstrokes of the watercolour sketch and catchword concepts. [images]- Guardian (UK)

Reid Building: 1909 Glasgow School of Art has a new neighbour: Steven Holl Architects aim to forge 'a symbiotic relation' with Charles Rennie Mackintosh's masterpiece...The old and the new are said to "sing" and "dance" together. Heard with eyes shut, this is a terrific building...rich, complex and intriguing, but the more you look, the less convincing it becomes...with all the good intentions that went into the new one, could have been something marvellous. By Rowan Moore [images]- Observer (UK)

Philadelphia Historic Commission: Plan for Market St. tower too bland: It seems the developers of a proposed 35-story tower...were too successful in their attempt to keep the building unobtrusive...panel requested a redesign..."We thought that this is what they would want...Looks like we guessed wrong." -- Stantec Architecture [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

The gaping hole at Family Court: The sadly bland new building still lacks the quality art that could redeem it. Why? The Philadelphia Art Commission held its nose...made the sign-off conditional on...the inclusion of public art to soften the clinical ambience...Maybe the Mural Arts Program would contribute a piece...Failing that, the courts may try to get schoolchildren to contribute some of their drawings. No offense to either one, but that's not good enough. By Inga Saffron -- EwingCole- Philadelphia Inquirer

New apartment development near Temple University finds a better way: Paseo Verde is a lot more than just a utopian experiment in mixed-income living...is a trifecta of socially responsible development. It's environmentally friendly, transit-friendly, and urban-friendly. All that, and...still manages to slip some real architecture into the mix. By Inga Saffron -- WRT [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Mourn the loss of London's utopian modernist vision: Destruction of 1960s architecture has a social cost: ...developers demolished them to triple the lettable space...More serious is the loss of 1960s social housing...we are losing a layer of history – much of it eminently salvageable with a little care and ingenuity...The 1960s may not have been a complete success, but there was a vision for a mixed city defined by urbanism. What is the vision now? By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

Modern architecture and its coup d'etat: Didn't anyone stand up and say no? Well, no. Not really...Modernism has obliterated indigenous cultures across the globe on behalf of elites...If there is light at the end of this dark tunnel, it is in the degree to which modernists have experienced atrophy in their ability to argue against a classical revival. So ugliness might lose its place in the world to beauty with the same surprising speed. By David Brussat- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

What Was The Crystal Palace, And Why Are We Trying To Rebuild It? ...Can we resurrect it? For Londoners...a symbol of the moment when their city was the peak of human achievement - when they could shock the world with what they could make. In the 1970s, the site was used as a concert venue...And that's why it makes sense that some billionaires are trying to resurrect it. By Dan Nosowitz - Fast Company

Designing a Holocaust memorial for a new generation: ...six teams...unveiled their plans for Canada's first National Holocaust Monument planned for Ottawa...range from broad symbolism to more abstract gestures. The jury...has several powerful options from which to choose. By Alex Bozicovic -- Daniel Libeskind/Claude Cormier/Edward Burtynsky/Gail Lord; David Adjaye/Ron Arad/Janet Rosenberg; Saucier + Perrotte/Marie-France Brière; Hossein Amanat/Esther Shalev-Gerz; Krzysztof Wodiczko/Julian Bonder; Quadrangle Architects/SWA Group [links to images, info]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Heatherwick Studios unveils gallery inside grain silos for Cape Town's V&A Waterfront: [Zeit Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeit MOCAA)] dedicated to contemporary African art within the cluster of 42 concrete tubes that make up a historic grain silo structure..."We could either fight a building made of concrete tubes or enjoy its tube-iness." -- Van Der Merwe Miszewski; Rick Brown Associates; Jacobs Parker [images]- Dezeen

Four Proposals for Arnhem, Netherlands Arts Project: ...tasked with developing a concept that would merge two existing arts venues, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem (Museum of Modern Art Arnhem) and Focus Filmtheater Arnhem, under one roof...now named ArtA... -- BIG/Bjarke Ingels Group/Alard Architecture; Kengo Kuma & Associates; NL Architects; SO-IL/Architectuurstudio HH/ABT [images]- Architect Magazine

Natural History Museum contenders go on display: Five teams chasing deal...being displayed anonymously...at the museum until March 11 with visitors able to make comments... -- Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG)/Martha Schwartz Partners; Grant Associates/Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios; Niall McLaughlin Architects/Kim Wilkie; Land Use Consultants/Design Engine; Stanton Williams Architects/Bradley-Hole Schoenaich Landscape Architects [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Architecture has a new home – new strata tower for the Australian Institute of Architects opened in Melbourne: ...41X is a 22-storey Five Star Green Star strata-titled commercial tower that accommodates the AIA's Melbourne offices, including the Victorian Chapter, over five levels. -- Lyons Architects; Hassell [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Ballet of the Sidewalk: Jeff Speck asks how lively streets can make for not just walkable cities, but good and just ones: My confidence has been steeled [by] Charles Montgomery's "Happy City"...and also by a recent visit to my personal version of hell...the sprawl was West Jordan, Utah...about the least happy place I can imagine...Somewhere, at the intersection of the quality-of-life city, the sustainable city, the equitable city, and the happy city, lies the good city. I don't doubt that it is also the walkable city, but walkability alone does not get us there. - Metropolis Magazine

Most Innovative Companies 2014: From Barclays Center To Modular High Rises, SHoP Architects Is Changing The Way We Build Buildings: A band of seven is drafting a different kind of firm - one that values more than fancy blueprints or lucrative scut work...has managed to please both architecture critics and real estate developers - perhaps its most impressive trick of all. - Fast Company

Chicago's Jeanne Gang eyes S.F. skyline: This is provocative news for a skyline where much of what is going up seems interchangeable...the project is at a very early stage, with no designs for public consumption. And things might not materialize at all... By John King -- Studio Gang- San Francisco Chronicle

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