

## Today's News - Friday, March 7, 2014

- In honor of International Women's Day tomorrow (March 8), The Architectural Review offers a fab round-up of articles (penned by some of our faves) that put the spotlight on some amazing women architects (hopefully a step in making architecture less "stale, male and pale").
- A young architect tackles the profession's "addiction to architectural competitions": it's a "mad traveling circus" that encourages "the proliferation of these sham exercises - but there is always hope for rehabilitation."
- Davidson parses NYC's "whole new attitude toward development" in the post-Bloomberg era: the new mayor's administration "cares a lot about affordable housing, less about how high the towers grow, and not at all about the minutiae of design" (it's all about numbers, which is either scary or reassuring, depending on...).
- Holl's Reid Building may add to "Glasgow's newfound glitz," but the "exterior does not deliver a powerful, poetic compliment to the Mackintosh. What we get is a tepid, ambiguous, and confused building that does not quite fit in."
- Popkin calls for a design revolution for Philly's planned Museum of the American Revolution: "The designers have the tools to invent a bold, organic, and quite multifaceted museum that speaks to the power and audacity of revolution" (the current "brick box" just doesn't cut it).
- Rinaldi finds the new Denver Museum of Nature & Science addition to be "a fortress of brick and block that turns a cold shoulder to its surroundings in the city's most treasured open space" (if it were anywhere else in the city, the "handsome, clean and contemporary design would be a standout").
- Reunification Memorials in Berlin and Leipzig were supposed to be ready in time for the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall this autumn, but won't be (blame it on bats and politics).
- Weekend diversions:
  - Stephens cheers MoMA's FLW show: "While Broadacre City is blamed today for America's overwhelming sprawl, his elegant solutions to the skyscraper show that the tall building could be artistically considered."
  - NYSID offers New Yorkers an in-depth "intriguing look" at starchitect-designed Maggie's Centres that "showcases architecture's power to heal."
  - NYC's Morgan Library celebrates the 70th anniversary of a children's classic with "The Little Prince: A New York Story" that "surprises as a field guide for urban living."
  - Jacobs finds the Guggenheim's "Italian Futurism" to be "terrifically engrossing" and "a powerful reminder that there emerged, in the first decades of the 20th century, many modernisms. And that some of those modernisms were crazier than others."
  - Altabe, on the other hand, says "Futurism is a crock - it died in the last century and should stay that way" - along with Aycocock's public art on the Park Avenue median "(Yawn)" and 3D printers: "Where are the Luddites when you need them?"
  - Betsky, on the other, other hand, cheers two Aycocock retrospectives in Santa Barbara which survey a career that "offered us an alternative way of looking at and making our human-made environment - one that is both scarier and more ideal than what we have actually constructed."
  - Zara cheers Francois Halard's photographs that "depict rarely seen spaces as well as more famous, commonly photographed structures, shown here with a surprising intimacy."
  - Q&A with Weder, curator of a Ron Thom retrospective at Toronto's Gardiner Museum re: "Canada's best, unsung modernist architect" and "why every Canadian should get to know him a little bit better."
  - Jones finds "Ruin Lust" at Tate Britain to be "a brilliant but bonkers exhibition" that is "bold and clever" (fab slide show!).
  - Darley dallies at the ICA's Drew exhibition that celebrates "her role in affirming the place of women in the profession" (see lead story).
  - Green gives thumbs-up to Benfield's "People Habitat: 25 Ways to Think About Greener, Healthier Cities" and his argument "that sustainable places are really just places people love."
  - Titchmarsh, following a most amusing tirade about architects' "arrogance when explaining to us that we have no idea what makes a great building," shares the "delights" of Sagharachi and Steil's "Traditional Architecture: Timeless Building for the Twenty-First Century."
  - Meades' "defiant defense of Brutalism" in the BBC4 series "is a much needed change from televised architectural travelogues. It has been a long time since architectural history has been presented in this way."

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The Women Who Built the World: Architecture is stale, male and pale...a convenient rhyme scheme that paints a dreary picture of a lofty profession dominated by white men...To mark International Women's Day [March 8]...a special homepage celebrating the lives and work of just some of the 20th and 21st century women who have built and are building the world we live in. By Joseph Rykwert, Martin Meade/Charlotte Ellis, Paul Davies, Rowan Moore, Michael Webb, etc. -- Jane Drew; Eileen Grey, Charlotte Perriand; Farshid Moussavi; Lesley Lokko; Denise Scott Brown/Robert Venturi; Lina Bo Bardi; Alison and Peter Smithson; Alison Brooks; Sharon Davis Design; Zaha Hadid; etc. - Architectural Review (UK)

Comment> Kick the Architectural Competition Habit: Marshall Brown delineates the down side of architectural competitions: ...not just emergent practices, but also the leaders of our profession have become captive to the systematic exploitation of design competitions...Developers and institutions gain fantastic and relatively affordable publicity...we encourage the proliferation of these sham exercises...We clearly have an addiction to architectural competitions, but there is always hope for rehabilitation. - The Architect's Newspaper

The Domino Sugar Plan Signals a Whole New Attitude Toward Development: ...as the first major real-estate adventure of the post-Bloomberg era, it does offer one crucial lesson: that the de Blasio administration cares a lot about affordable housing, less about how high the towers grow, and not at all about the minutiae of design...The new atmosphere brings fears and reassurance on all sides. By Justin Davidson -- SHoP Architects - New York Magazine

Steven Holl's Reid Building Adds to Glasgow's Newfound Glitz: According to the architects, the Reid Building is meant to complement the Charles Rennie Mackintosh through a juxtaposition of materials...The exterior does not deliver a powerful, poetic compliment to the Mackintosh. What we get is a tepid, ambiguous, and confused building that does not quite fit in. By Matt Shaw [images] - Architizer

Design revolution needed: If we wish to tell ourselves that the American Revolution was an upper-class affair...then perhaps the brick box design for the Museum of the American Revolution is exactly right...It's a lost chance, in an era of protest, to make the American uprising feel relevant and inspiring today...The designers...have the tools to invent a...museum that speaks to the power and audacity of revolution and the excitement of the contemporary city. By Nathaniel Popkin -- Robert A.M. Stern - Philly.com (Philadelphia)

Denver Museum of Nature & Science addition gets the science, misses the nature: ...a fortress of brick and block that turns a cold shoulder to its surroundings...DMNS has the privilege of taking up land in the city's most treasured open space, City Park...If the building were in any other part of the city, handsome, clean and contemporary design would be a standout. By Ray Mark Rinaldi [images] - Denver Post

Going Bats: German Reunification Memorials Hit the Wall: Two monuments to East Germany's peaceful revolution of 1989 were supposed to be unveiled in time for the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall this autumn [in Leipzig and Berlin]. But due to a raft of obstacles, from roosting bats to technical challenges, neither project will be ready on time. -- Milla & Partner/Sasha Waltz; Marc Weiss/Martin de Mattia [images] - Der Spiegel (Germany)

Frank Lloyd Wright, High and Low: Museum of Modern Art offers a fresh look at the influential architect's ideas for skyscrapers and city planning..."Frank Lloyd Wright and the City: Density vs. Dispersal"...While Broadacre City is blamed today for America's overwhelming sprawl, his elegant solutions to the skyscraper, no matter how high, show that the tall

building could be artistically considered... By Suzanne Stephens [slide show]- Architectural Record

"Maggie's Centres: A Blueprint For Cancer Care": A striking set of designs for patient treatment centers showcases architecture's power to heal...an intriguing look into at the challenges of healthcare design; at the New York School of Interior Design -- Charles Jencks; Frank Gehry; Arabella Lennox-Boyd; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Dan Pearson; Zaha Hadid; Rem Koolhaas/OMA; Lily Jencks; Piers Gough/CZWG; Steven Holl [slide show]- Dwell

The Little Prince Meets the Big City: When considering city life, we often look to Jane Jacobs or William H. Whyte. But an exhibit commemorating the 70th anniversary of the children's classic..."The Little Prince: A New York Story" at New York's Morgan Library surprises as a field guide for urban living. By Hayley Richardson- PLANetizen

The Conflicted Legacy of the Italian Futurists: The Guggenheim explores the movement's dizzying design ideas and its embrace of Fascism: Love the Futurists or loathe them, "Italian Futurism, 1909–1944: Reconstructing the Universe"...is terrifically engrossing...a powerful reminder that there emerged, in the first decades of the 20th century, many modernisms...the movement, initially so exhilarating, was overtaken and subsumed by the history it was trying to leave in the dust. By Karrie Jacobs [images]- Architect Magazine

Futurism is a crock: ...Futurism...died in the last century and should stay that way...consider the new public art on the Park Avenue median in Manhattan...by Alice Aycock, which looks like a prime example of Futurism - intended or not...(Yawn)...new manufacturing tool that could use some wrecking: the Fabricator (Fabber for short)...that makes a solid object from a blueprint on your computer screen...Where are the Luddites when you need them? By Joan Altabe- Examiner

Alice Aycock: Decades of "Nonfunctional Architecture": Museums in Santa Barbara, Calif. survey the artist's career: ...[she] has, for over a third of a century, offered us an alternative way of looking at and making our human-made environment—that is both scarier and more ideal than what we have actually constructed in that period; "Alice Aycock Drawings: Some Stories Are Worth Repeating"... By Aaron Betsky [images]- Architect Magazine

"Francois Halard: Architecture": A photographer best known for shooting fashionable interiors takes a sidelong glance at architecture: The photographs depict rarely seen spaces...as well as more famous, commonly photographed structures, shown here with a surprising intimacy. Demisch Danant gallery, NYC. By Janelle Zara [slide show]- Architectural Record

"Ron Thom and the Allied Arts": Gardiner Museum honours Canada's best, unsung modernist architect: ...curator Adele Weder discusses Thom's work, his impact on architecture and why every Canadian should get to know him a little bit better. [images]- National Post (Canada)

"Ruin Lust" at Tate Britain – a brilliant but bonkers exhibition: This show of artists' obsessions with broken stones, Nazi bunkers and decaying castles is bold and clever. But its name is misleading – the 'lust' Tate insists on is actually sweet sorrow...from the maudlin to the romantic and the downright comical. By Jonathan Jones [slide show]- Guardian (UK)

Celebrating the ICA's contemporaries: The Institute of Contemporary Arts...pays fitting tributes to Richard Hamilton and Jane Drew: ...celebrates Drew's contribution to the formation and housing of the ICA...but also her role in affirming the place of women in the profession...The Jane Drew Award commemorates her clarity and achievements; this year it went, tragically posthumously, to Kathryn Findlay... By Gillian Darley- BD/Building Design (UK)

Loveable Places Are Sustainable: Kaid Benfield's "People Habitat: 25 Ways to Think About Greener, Healthier Cities" argues that sustainable places are really just places people love...Unfortunately, too much of our country has been taken over by throw-away housing and nowhere "town centers" in sprawled-out developments...designed for cars...there's no there there...also shows up how green-washing has been applied to sell communities as green when they are actually "brown." By Jared Green- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

We can't forget our architectural legacy: ...we may not know much about [buildings] but we know what we like...I just wish that some of the more renowned architects would display a little less arrogance when...explaining to us that we...have no idea what makes a great building...Tirade over. Instead of complaining...let me share the delights of a new book that will please anyone with an eye for line and form and, it has to be admitted, grandeur. "Traditional Architecture: Timeless Building for the Twenty-First Century" by Alireza Sagharchi and Lucien Steil... By Alan Titchmarsh- Telegraph (UK)

A Taste for Brutalism: Concrete Poetry: Jonathan Meades' defiant defence of Brutalism in his recent BBC4 series is a much needed change from televised architectural travelogues...Not all people who called themselves Brutalists were as good as Le Corbusier, or Lasdun, or Goldfinger. The Smithsons were frightful...It is the critique of defiance – that is, of the individual against the organised, and the visual against the literary. It has been a long time since architectural history has been presented in this way... - Architectural Review (UK)

-- 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

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