

Today's News - Monday, March 24, 2014

- ArcSpace brings us Kiser's take (and great pix!) of Chateau La Coste, "a place of wine, art and architecture" that continues to evolve, and a Q&A with German photographer Juergen Nogai, who loves to tell tales (talk about great pix!).
- Townsend tackles "smart cities," and offers "three easy steps for a smart urban future."
- Ratti makes the case that "we don't need to build new cities - a simple reboot of the existing ones will do"; what we need is "not smart cities but smart citizens."
- Ransford calls for younger people to get involved in community planning: what he sees are "people like me - those of us with a lot of grey hair. We need to find new ways of reaching out to the people who are going to be living 25 and 30 years from now."
- Lamster x 2: Houston's Astrodome finds itself in a real Catch 22: "in a twist that would make Joseph Heller proud, it sits in vacant limbo as work crews empty it of toxins, a derelict symbol of the future, unsure of what tomorrow will bring."
- He offers a great (though sad) round-up of "Modernism under threat in Texas and beyond" (some already lost).
- Hume waxes practically poetic re: Toronto's soon-to-open Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre: "a dramatic intrusion of elegance" that "has quietly but decisively remade the neighborhood"; the landscape alone is "an act of urban reclamation, it is unprecedented, magnificent."
- Kamin gives (mostly) thumbs-up to the new Godfrey Hotel Chicago: "What could have been just another cereal box of a building is an eye-grabbing composition...successfully synthesized into a muscular Chicago whole."
- Moore gives a standing ovation to the new Everyman Liverpool theater, "a thoughtful, well-crafted space" that "imparts an exceptional sense of wellbeing" throughout.
- Eye candy for the day: Google Amsterdam's makeover, where the "garage meets Dutch pride" with a lot of "quirky elements" (you expected anything else?).
- Ulam reports on the uplifting winning design (and runners-up) in a competition for a green affordable housing development that "will integrate low-income families with ex-convicts recently released from prison."
- Saffron minces no words about huge murals planned for Philly's Fairmount Park (and murals in general): "The standard-issue images of Boathouse Row and scullers are clichéd and already look old."
- Four postgraduate landscape architecture students from Down Under explore how NYC's "'landscape celebrities' Central Park and High Line connect people to the city": they may "sit at two ends of a design spectrum in approach, yet they share critical experiences."
- Clouse offers an in-depth look at how trade sanctions have unleashed an "urban farming revolution" in Cuba, and how Havana's agricultural infrastructure "provides an exemplary precedent that could be applied worldwide."
- Arieff goes in search of the sound of silence in an adventure at Arup's Sound Lab (architects: take heed, says she).
- Heller's hilarious (and disdainful) take-down of Florence, Italy's search to rebrand itself: "opening up the creation process to every Tomasso, Ricardo, and Harry can lead to mediocrity - and in this case, I'd argue, it did."
- USITT opens the curtains on its 2014 Theatre Architecture Award winners.
- Eyefuls of Think Space's Culture & Society competition results.
- Call for entries: SEFA's 2014 Student Design Competition/Scholarship Award: design a piece of lab furniture to "enhance the laboratory learning experience."

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-- Chateau La Coste, Le Puy Ste Réparate, France: a place of wine, art and architecture that will continue to evolve as new projects and installations are developed. By Kirsten Kiser -- Tadao Ando; Jean Nouvel; Gehry Partners; Jean Prouvé; Sou Fujimoto
-- Q&A with Juergen Nogai, German architecture, art and documentary photographer: his decade long collaboration with Julius Shulman...and more

Utopolis: Building new, efficient and successful cities is the 21st century's Space Race. There are no ready-made solutions for "smart cities", but a lot to be learned from our past mistakes. Three easy steps for a smart urban future. By Anthony Townsend- The European magazine

The sense-able city: We don't need to build new cities -- a simple reboot of the existing ones will do. An account of human sensors and smart trash: Humans have always needed, and will continue to need, the same physical structures for their daily lives...Ambient intelligence and sensing networks will not change the container but the contained; not smart cities but smart citizens. By Carlo Ratti- The European magazine

Community planning must include input from younger people: Other generations should have their say: Far too often, those participating in planning and influencing the important decisions are not the people who will be most impacted by those decisions over the long term...We need to find new ways of reaching out to the people who are going to be living 25 and 30 years from now... By Bob Ransford- Vancouver Sun

Escaping Astrodome? Why the derelict Astrodome sits in limbo: Demolition, contrary to popular belief, does not appear imminent...in a twist that would make Joseph Heller proud, [it] sits in vacant limbo as work crews empty it of toxins, a derelict symbol of the future, unsure of what tomorrow will bring. Catch-22. How did we get here? By Mark Lamster [images]- Dallas Morning News

Modernism under threat in Texas and beyond: Across the nation, the architecture of the years after World War II, sold to Americans as the epitome of progress and a manifestation of technological progress, is under threat. By Mark Lamster -- Richard Neutra; Frank Lloyd Wright; Kenneth Bentsen; Lawrence Halprin; Eugene Aubry; Welton Beckett; Caudill Rowlett Scott/Zeb Rike/J. B. Hancock; John Johansen; O'Neil Ford, etc. [images]- Dallas Morning News

Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre a dramatic intrusion of elegance: Toronto's next important cultural institution...Surrounded by anonymity, the new arrival has quietly but decisively remade the neighbourhood. The quality of design and materials alone make it a landmark...The very idea of putting such a garden in land marooned by highways may seem...oxymoronic, but as an act of urban reclamation, it is unprecedented, magnificent. By Christopher Hume -- Charles Correa; Fumihiko Maki; Vladimir Djurovic- Toronto Star

Unwrapped, Godfrey Hotel Chicago comes to life beautifully: Recession stalled River North building for years: What could have been just another cereal box of a building is an eye-grabbing composition of floating masses, shifting planes, bold shadows, and bridge-like trusses, successfully synthesized into a muscular Chicago whole. By Blair Kamin -- Valerio Dewalt Train; Gettys Group [image]- Chicago Tribune

Everyman Liverpool: the new theatre where everyone's a player: ...a thoughtful, well-crafted space...in which the play comes first...imparts an exceptional sense of wellbeing that runs from the public areas through the auditorium to back-of-house spaces of unusual quality. This wellbeing gives a kind of dignity and self-awareness, which is a good starting point for putting on a show. By Rowan Moore -- Haworth Tompkins [slide show]- Observer (UK)

Garage meets Dutch pride at Google Amsterdam office by D/DOCK: ...renewed interior has been conceived off of the garage where Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin started the company, boasting quirky elements... [images]- designboom

Housing for Rehabilitation: Curtis + Ginsberg Architects and Saratoga Associates have won a competition for a green affordable housing development project in Syracuse, New York called Freedom's Gate, which will integrate low-income families with ex-convicts recently released from prison. By Alex Ulam -- Solid Objectives-Idenburg Liu (SO-IL)/Holmes-King-Kallquist +Associates, Architects; ISA Architecture/Research/HealthXDesign; SWBR Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Mural Arts Program's entry into Fairmount Park crosses boundaries: Whether you love murals or, like me, had your fill long ago, their incursion into Philadelphia's beloved beauty spot should be a call to attention...The serenity of the city's parks have been increasingly under assault from modern distractions...The standard-issue images of Boathouse Row and scullers are cliched and already look old...the 16-foot-high, 100-foot-long paintings overwhelms the nature around it. By Inga Saffron [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Narratives of place: Four postgraduate landscape architecture students from the University of Western Australia travelled to New York to explore how the city's "landscape celebrities" Central Park and the new High Line connect people to the city...[They] sit at two ends of a design spectrum in approach, yet they share critical experiences. One is Picturesque, the other Post-Industrial. -- Frederick Law Olmsted; Calvert Vaux; James Corner Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Piet Oudolf [images]- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Cuba's Urban Farming Revolution: How to Create Self-Sufficient Cities: Havana's unique agricultural infrastructure emerged from punishing trade sanctions...but today provides an exemplary precedent that could be applied worldwide. By Carey Clouse [images]- Architectural Review (UK)

The Search for Silence: We're always taking in what our environment looks like...we're also aware of its odors. But what of its sound? ..."Architects for the most part strive for beauty...When we bring them into the Sound Lab, they're forced to experience what they've designed for people." And that just might be the best incentive for change out there. By Allison Arieff -- Interim Office of Architecture; Arup; NBBJ- New York Times

Florence's New Logo: Crowdsourced Design That's Bad for Design: The Italian city held an open contest to rebrand itself—with mediocre results...[its] answer to "I Love New York"...has kicked off debate over whether design can or should be democratic...opening up the creation process to every Tomasso, Ricardo, and Harry can lead to mediocrity—and in this case, I'd argue, it did. By Steven Heller -- Fabio Chiantini/Limite Design [images]- The Atlantic

USITT Announces 2014 Theatre Architecture Awards: Seabury Hall Creative Arts Center...on Maui in Hawaii, will receive...the Honor Award. Three other venues – the SF Jazz Center and the Bing Concert Hall, both in California, and the Jerome Robbins Theater in New York - will receive Merit Awards. -- Flansburgh Architects/Riecke Sunnland Kono Architects/Theatre Projects Consultants; Ennead Architects/Fisher Dachs/Nagata Acoustics; Mark Cavagnero Associates/Auerbach Pollock Friedlander/SIA Acoustics; Wasa/Studio A/Arup/David Taylor [images]- United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT)

Culture & Society Competition Results -- Haroon Noon/Mariam Iqbal/Curtis Martyn; Andrea Maria Jandricek; Marcel Wilson/Sarah Moos; etc. [images]- Think Space

Call for entries: SEFA's 2014 Student Design Competition/Scholarship Award: design a piece of lab furniture that will enhance the laboratory learning experience; open to students enrolled in U.S. college/university; deadline for abstracts: April 1 [scroll to end for link to rules & guidelines]- Scientific Equipment and Furniture Association (SEFA)

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