

Today's News - Friday, April 11, 2014

- A call for planners to "shift their attention to the informal economy that is the invisible engine of true urban greatness. We want to redefine the 'world-class city' as an inclusive city."
- Swope, reporting from the World Urban Forum in Medellín, offers a sweeping, 4-part Q&A with Colombia cities expert Gerard Martin re: how Medellín grew, and "how reform mayors have used new local powers to create a strategy they call 'social urbanism.'"
- Adding to the "great density debate" in Melbourne: "before attempting to accommodate the rapidly increasing population, we must first understand what constitutes a good housing design. But is this merely an idea that is easier said than done?"
- Olcayto explains why dynamiting Glasgow's Red Road housing towers as a TV stunt for the Commonwealth Games "sends the wrong message" about the city's regeneration, and how the city's "architects are among the wiser figures speaking on its behalf. If ever there were a time for architects to reaffirm their civic leadership role," it's now.
- Jacobs weighs in on the 10 Rebuild by Design proposals that show "no shortage of resilient design options" for a post-Sandy world: they "don't feature monumental objects or extravagant built form, which makes them poor fodder for the architecture press," but "many seem reasonably easy to implement, even by local governments."
- Australia's former Prime Minister calls plans for the Sydney Botanical Gardens "a bloody disgrace," a money grab, and "the most appalling and outrageous plan Sydney has ever seen for the misappropriation of its public lands." And this quote was one of the nicer ones."
- Some prominent architects from Down Under chime in with their thoughts on the controversial plans for the Royal Botanic Gardens, "one of Sydney's most cherished and tranquil landmarks."
- Davidson waxes poetic about the "long, slow death" of glamour in Midtown Manhattan as media companies head to cheaper digs downtown. "To the current crop of creative young ladder-climbers, a corner office in a midtown tower was their grandparents' dream, not theirs."
- Which is why we couldn't resist "The Hilda Stories," in which the eloquent (and glamorous) Hilda Longinotti recalls some very amusing tales from her 21-year run as George Nelson's aide-de-camp in the Mad Men era.
- King gets a hard-hat tour of SFMOMA's transformation: "the past is ghostly as the future takes shape."
- Former leaders of RIBA's now-abolished procurement reform group are up in arms about the institute "promoting a PQQ masquerading as a design competition" that discourages young practices from entering: "What I find most galling is there's no design element at all at this stage."
- Weekend diversions:
- Menking cheers the Lebbeus Woods retrospective opening at NYC's Drawing Center: "Though his ethical voice and the demanding worlds he created inside his drawings will no longer confront the major issues of the day we still have his drawings to remind us of his thinking and vision."
- Campbell-Dollaghan cheers "Maggie's Centres: A Blueprint for Cancer Care" at the New York School of Interior Design (great pix!).
- Kamin gives (mostly) thumbs-up to "Chicagisms" at the Art Institute of Chicago: it is "engaging but uneven" show. "Yet there's an appealing playfulness to the installation," which suggests that the city's "future can be as bright as its legendary past - if only the city rediscovers its capacity for boldness. That critique is not entirely on target."
- Betsky went bounding out of "Buildering" at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center, "looking for urban fun everywhere" - it "puts a smile on your face and reminds you not to take architecture too seriously."
- Dunlop's "Marking the Millennium: 21st Century Miami Architecture" at the Coral Gables Museum "depicts an architectural coming-of-age in Miami" while raising some serious questions: "Will developers' increasing infatuation with star architects snuff out opportunities for the talented locals?"
- The best of Ezra Stoller, "modern architecture's master photographer," on view at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh.
- Stephens and the former Massachusetts secretary of transportation have different takes on Most's "The Race Underground: Boston, New York, and the Incredible Rivalry that Built America's First Subway": for former explains why the "tale lacks drama for one crucial reason"; the latter says it "is as much about American bravado as it is about a transformative transportation project."

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What Makes a "World-Class" City? Planners must shift their attention to the informal economy that is the invisible engine of true urban greatness: ...the quest to become "world-class" has resulted in misplaced priorities and in decisions that are harmful to the urban poor...We want to redefine the "world-class city" as an inclusive city. By Oren Ahoobim, Laura Goldman, and Shanti Mahajan- Stanford Social Innovation Review

How Medellín revived itself, Part 1-4: Fast growth in a verdant valley: Q&A with Colombia cities expert Gerard Martin explains the story of Medellín: how the city grew, the fight against drug violence, and how reform mayors have used new local powers to create a strategy they call "social urbanism." By Christopher Swope [from World Urban Forum in Medellín, Colombia- Citiscope

The Great Density Debate: ...before attempting to accommodate the rapidly increasing population of Melbourne, we must first understand what constitutes a good housing design. But is this merely an idea that is easier said than done? By Sarah Hurst -- Stuart Harrison; Breathe Architecture; MAKE Architecture; Six Degrees [images]- Australian Design Review

Dynamiting homes as a TV stunt sends the wrong message: ... wrong way to promote Glasgow's regeneration...Glasgow is being let down by those who represent it...and repeatedly its architects are among the wiser figures speaking on its behalf...if ever there were a time for architects to reaffirm their civic leadership role - think of our own Skyline campaign, Terry Farrell's review and this sorry farce in Glasgow - it is now. By Rory Olcayto -- Alan Dunlop- The Architects' Journal (UK)

The Top 10 Ideas from Rebuild by Design: ...competition unveiled no shortage of resilient design options for areas affected by Sandy...proposals don't feature monumental objects or extravagant built form, which makes them poor fodder for the architecture press. At the same time, many...seem reasonably easy to implement, even by local governments. By Karrie Jacobs -- Henk Ovink; MIT Center for Advanced Urbanism/ZUS/De Urbanisten; Interboro Partners; Diana Balmori/OMA; SCAPE/Landscape Architecture; BIG/Bjarke Ingels Group; HR&A Advisors/Cooper, Robertson & Partners; WXY/West 8; Sasaki Associates/Rutgers University/Arup; PennDesign/OLIN; Waggonner & Ball Architects/Unabridged Architecture/Yale University/ARCADIS- Architect Magazine

"A bloody disgrace": Paul Keating on concept for Sydney Botanical Gardens and Domain: ..."the most appalling and outrageous plan Sydney has ever seen for the misappropriation of its public lands." And this quote was one of the nicer ones...labelled the plans as a mere grab for money by the developing trusts... -- Cox Richardson [images, video]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Do Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens need redeveloping? We asked several prominent architects for their take on the controversial plan to redesign one of Sydney's most cherished and tranquil landmarks. -- Cox Richardson; Philip Thalís/Hill Thalís architecture; Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture; Glenn Murcutt; Adam Haddow/SJB Architects; Philip Drew; Ken Woolley; Caroline Pidcock- Guardian (UK)

The Long, Slow Death of Midtown Glamour: As Mad Men fades out and Time Inc. eyes downtown digs, an era comes to a close: ...the embattled icon of old (not to say dying) media is heading towards cheaper digs downtown...To the current crop of creative young ladder-climbers, a corner office in a midtown tower was their grandparents' dream, not theirs. By Justin Davidson- New York Magazine

The Hilda Stories: George Nelson's longtime aide-de-camp, Hilda Longinotti, recounts some of the greatest anecdotes from her 21-year run at the legendary New York City design atelier...animated by Damien Florebert Cuypers and produced by Hello Design.- Herman Miller

A look inside SFMOMA's transformation: Inside the red-brick shell of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art...the past is ghostly as the future takes shape...clearing the way for what follows and, in the process, learning what still must be done to adapt the designed expansion to the structure that exists...."Drawings are one thing, but reality is something else...It's a little like pulling out a tablecloth without upsetting dishes." By John King -- Snøhetta; EHDD [slide show] - San Francisco Chronicle

Fury over RIBA competition: Two former leaders of the RIBA's now-abolished procurement reform group have attacked the institute for promoting a PQQ masquerading as a design competition...practices are still required to jump through hoops such as supplying two years of accounts. This would discourage young practices or new creative collaborations from entering..."What I find most galling is there's no design element at all at this stage."- BD/Building Design (UK)

Lebbeus Woods Retrospective to Open at the Drawing Center in NYC: "Lebbeus Woods: Architect"...Though his ethical voice...and the demanding worlds he created inside his drawings will no longer confront the major issues of the day we still have his drawings to remind us of his thinking and vision. By William Menking [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

5 Buildings Designed To Make Cancer Treatment a Little More Bearable: "Maggie's Centres: A Blueprint for Cancer Care" at the New York School of Interior Design...designed by the most famous architects in the world..."Charles Jencks has come under fire from both the scientific community, who question the validity of his claims (or media distortions of them), and the design community, who wonder if they aren't injecting more architecture into small healthcare facilities than they strictly need." By Kelsey Campbell-Dollaghan -- Snøhetta; Rem Koolhaas/OMA; MJP Architects; Piers Gough/Paul Smith; Richard Rogers; Steven Holl [images]- Gizmodo

"Chicagoisms," a small gallery stuffed with big architectural ideas: ...an engaging but uneven new architecture show at the Art Institute of Chicago...Yet there's an appealing playfulness to the installation...Juxtaposed with the historical photos are nine colorful architectural models...Encased in transparent domes that pop out of the walls like soap bubbles, the models suggest that Chicago's future can be as bright as its legendary past — if only the city rediscovers its capacity for boldness. That critique is not entirely on target. By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

"Buildering: Misbehaving the City": Parkour Turned into Art at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center: A swing attached to a war memorial, a man kissing a pole on a train, construction workers throwing bricks at each other—this exhibit has it all...puts a smile on your face and reminds you not to take architecture too seriously. It also shows that even the most serious architecture can be rescued from its monumental death-wish and death-grip on us with some inventive art making. I went bounding out of the CAC, looking for urban fun everywhere... By Aaron Betsky [images]- Architect Magazine

Coral Gables Museum exhibit depicts an architectural coming of age in Miami: Does architecture, finally, matter in Miami? The answer to...intriguing questions posed by "Marking the Millennium: 21st Century Miami Architecture"...is a tentative yes, says...Beth Dunlop...raises a third, unanswerable question: Will developers' increasing infatuation with star architects snuff out opportunities for the talented locals? It's a real concern... -- Arquitectonica; Rene Gonzalez; Allan Shulman; Duany-Plater Zyberk; Rodriguez and Quiroga Architects; Herzog & deMeuron; Frank Gehry; Cesar Pelli; William Lane; Bernard Tschumi; Carlos Zapata Studio [images]- Miami Herald

The Best Of Ezra Stoller, Modern Architecture's Master Photographer: "Architecture + Photography": A new exhibit at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh examines how he captured the 20th century's greatest architecture, from Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal to Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. April 12–May 26- Fast Company

The Original Big Digs: The gridlock in American cities today doesn't compare to the crush on streets in Boston and New York City in the mid- to late-1800s. In "The Race Underground," Doug Most chronicles the occasionally synchronous development of the nation's first subways...tale lacks drama for one crucial reason: even if the cities were competing against each other, they were running a "race" that both had already lost. By Josh Stephens - PLANetizen

A can-do attitude: "The Race Underground: Boston, New York, and the Incredible Rivalry that Built America's First Subway" by Doug Most: A recounting of the race to build the nation's first subway is as much about American bravado as it is about a transformative transportation project. By James Aloisi, former Massachusetts secretary of transportation- CommonWealth Magazine (Massachusetts)

ANN Feature: Crowdsourcing Design: The End of Architecture, or a New Beginning? Why the criticism that crowdsourcing design sites like Arcbazar are taking jobs away from architects doesn't wash. By Michael J. Crosbie- ArchNewsNow

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