

Today's News - Monday, May 5, 2014

- ArcSpace brings us Holden Platt's interesting Q&A with Patrik Schumacher re: the global rise of parametric design, the advent of robotics in architecture, and the influence of "The Matrix" on creating intelligent buildings.
- Bozickovic ponders what H&deM's Vancouver Art Gallery will look like: "Who knows? Two things to bet on: What they come up with will be surprising, and it will help shape the cityscape for a long time to come."
- Schumacher, on the other hand, thinks the "best decision might be not to build an addition" to the Milwaukee Art Museum with the proposed "dose of dullness" distilled from Shields' "much more elegant design unveiled two years ago."
- Betsky draws up a list of what he considered some of the best new minimalist art museums - until he took a closer look and saw "how tortured, warped, and otherwise deformed even the best of these buildings appear."
- New research finds that gentrification poses a potential health risk to communities, with findings that "raise serious questions about making development equitable for all residents."
- Hume has high praise for a 1970s housing project that "remains a shining example of Toronto getting things right," reaching "the Holy Grail of urban planning" by breaking "every planning rule in the book. If only we could remember how we did it."
- Hawthorne revisits L.A.'s Union Station on its 75th anniversary: there's much to praise about its architecture, but "as a piece of urban design," it "served as a precursor to later 'slum clearance' efforts."
- Another gigantic L.A. project will give new life to an old race track as a 388-acre mixed-use community (no slum clearance involved, it seems): "The importance they're placing on the public realm is very valuable," says master planner Mia Lehrer.
- Eyefuls of MVRDV's plans to turn a 200-acre Moscow factory site into a walkable neighborhood (a High Line-like park included).
- Studio V's Valgora takes a tour of the crumbling Empire Stores warehouses in Dumbo, Brooklyn, that will soon be "New York's next big tech and business epicenter" ("not everyone is a fan").
- Wainwright offered his list of the 10 worst London towers last week; now he offers his pick of the 10 "best examples of aiming high. They prove that big doesn't necessarily mean bad."
- Down Under, an unsolicited proposal has architects pondering whether an iconic building perched on Perth's waterfront is really the way to go (warnings of "white elephants" included).
- Vernon says it's time to finally seriously consider (again) a monument to Walter and Marion Griffin on the centenary of their arrival in Canberra, with an in-depth look at the lengthy - and fascinating - history (dating back to 1937) of efforts to do so.
- Scotland's presence at the Venice Biennale, crafted by Reiach and Hall, will focus on the country's "loved and loathed" Modernist "masterpieces."
- Brussat comes to the defense of the Raleigh, NC, neighborhood that doesn't want an architect's quasi-modernist house to rise: "The neighbors are right to consider the Cherry house too ugly for the neighborhood."
- Volner offers a great profile of the husband-and-wife team behind Studio Fuksas: "they are motivated not by the pursuit of banner projects for their own sake but by...a strong belief in the power of design as a force for good."
- A good reason to find oneself in the Big Apple at the end of the week: 2nd Annual NYCxDESIGN.
- One we couldn't resist: eyefuls of upside-down houses in China, Russia, Germany, and Austria "looking to draw tourists" (and apparently finding them).
- Call for entries: Metropolis/DuPont Corian Shape the Future Design Competition.

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Interview: Patrik Schumacher: Zaha Hadid Architects' director talks about the global rise of parametric design, the advent of robotics in architecture, and the influence of 'The Matrix' on creating intelligent buildings. By Kevin Holden Platt [images]

Herzog & de Meuron's Vancouver Art Gallery will shake up the city: So what is the new VAG going to look like? The answer is: Who knows? Two things to bet on: What they come up with will be surprising, and it will help shape Vancouver's cityscape...for a long time to come. By Alex Bozickovic - Globe and Mail (Canada)

Milwaukee Art Museum's best decision might be not to build an addition: No one would have designed the MAM site as it exists today with three buildings uncomfortably joined: Eero Saarinen's sober War Memorial, Santiago Calatrava's curvy addition and David Kahler's work horse...Unfortunately, the museum is proposing a dose of dullness...a revision of a much more elegant design unveiled two years ago by architect Jim Shields. By Mary Louise Schumacher [images] - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Tortured Minimalism: Even some of the best new minimalist art museums are merely deformed boxes: A visit to the new seat of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra designed by Tomasz Konior reveals a sharp contrast between this beautiful building and other recent minimalist architecture...I made a list...what became clear to me...was how tortured, warped, and otherwise deformed even the best of these buildings appear. By Aaron Betsky - Architect Magazine

Gentrification as public health concern? ...findings have led the Centers for Disease Control to identify gentrification as a potential health risk to communities...raise serious questions about making development equitable for all residents...St. Louis...can look to other U.S. cities...as textbook cases of what happens when development poses a threat to existing communities. By Samuel H. Taylor - St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Big Ideas: Learning the lessons of St. Lawrence Neighbourhood: The ground-breaking '70s housing project hasn't been forgotten, but not so its lessons: ...remains a shining example of Toronto getting things right...achieved the Holy Grail of urban planning: It became a successful, fully-functioning, mixed-use, mixed-income community...broke every planning rule in the book, but that's exactly what made it so successful...If only we could remember how we did it. By Christopher Hume -- Stephen McLaughlin; Frank Lewinberg; Ken Greenberg; Alan Littlewood; Jane Jacobs - Toronto Star

Union Station's complexity grows 75 years down the line: ...has played such a pivotal role in so many aspects of Los Angeles's growth and evolving self-image...Its architecture, spare and Spanish on the outside and ornate and eclectic on the inside...As a piece of urban design, however, it was ruthlessly modern, a powerful engine for an urban-renewal plan that displaced hundreds of residents...served as a precursor to later "slum clearance" efforts... By Christopher Hawthorne -- John Parkinson/Donald Parkinson (1939); Architectural Resources Group [slide show] - Los Angeles Times

Hollywood Ending: Los Angeles racetrack gets new life...In its place is rising a 388-acre mixed-use community...with 525 mixed-use residential units, 675 single-family homes, 1,500 townhomes, and 1,500 condominiums...a retail center, offices, a hotel, and a small casino... "The importance they're placing on the public realm is very valuable." By Sam Lubell -- Mia Lehrer

+ Associates; Hart Howerton Architects & Planners; BCV Architects; Quatro Design Group; SWA; JcJ [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

This Moscow Factory Was A Symbol Of Soviet Industry - Now It's A Walkable Neighborhood: Hammer & Steel Factory is so huge...it has room to eventually include apartments for 19,000 people and offices for 16,000 more. The development will also include schools, shops, a local hospital, and green spaces. An old elevated track will be turned into a High Line-like park. -- MVRDV [images]- Fast Company

Coming Soon To Brooklyn: A Silicon Valley-Like Tech Hub On The East River: In the 19th century, Empire Stores was a busy row of warehouses used to store and ship coffee. Abandoned in the 1950s, now Jay Valgora is transforming the area...being billed as New York's next big tech and business epicenter...Not everyone is a fan... -- Studio V [images]- Fast Company

Stunners in the sky: London's top 10 towers: As the city skyline is threatened by a frenzy of ugly skyscrapers...10 towers that show how building big can be beautiful...best examples of aiming high. They prove that big doesn't necessarily mean bad... By Oliver Wainwright -- Richard Siefert (1980); Alison & Peter Smithson (1964); Mies van der Rohe; Foster + Partners; Erno Goldfinger; Herzog & de Meuron; Chamberlin, Powell & Bon; Renzo Piano [images]- Guardian (UK)

Quay white elephant warning: Top Perth architects have warned against rushing to build an iconic building at Elizabeth Quay...Debate over what sort of building should be put up on nearly 50,000sqm of prime waterfront real estate was ignited when...Shane O'Riley unveiled his unsolicited vision for a new concert hall. [images]- The West Australian

Memorialising the Griffins at Canberra: The centenary of Walter and Marion Griffin's arrival down under makes it timely to (re)consider erecting a memorial to the city's authors at the national capital, Australia's greatest achievement in landscape architecture. By Christopher Vernon [images]- Australian Design Review

Loved and loathed modernist architecture to be celebrated: They are controversial buildings that have divided architectural and popular opinion. But the modernist structures of Scotland are to be celebrated...at the Venice Architecture Biennale...Reiach and Hall have been selected to represent Scotland...Modernist "masterpieces" in Scotland will be the focus... -- Peter Womersley; Gillespie, Kidd & Coia; Robert Matthew - The Herald (Scotland)

This old neighborhood: A modest modernist house a Raleigh, N.C., historic district has all of Christendom up in arms. Paul Goldberger has ridden to the defense...The neighbors are right to consider the Cherry house too ugly for the neighborhood. What they have designed is not a modernist house but a house that has compromised its modernist credentials in order to fit in. The result...does not qualify to be in the neighborhood. By David Brussat- Architecture Here and There

Meet the Dynamic Duo Behind Studio Fuksas: Doriana and Massimiliano Fuksas make up the husband-and-wife team behind the Rome-based architecture firm...which generates some of the world's most technically and aesthetically daring structures...they are motivated not by the pursuit of banner projects for their own sake but by the same conviction that drove Bruno Zevi—a strong belief in the power of design as a force for good... By Ian Volner [images]- Wall Street Journal

New York City to Celebrate Design with 2nd Annual NYCxDESIGN, May 9-20: ...hundreds of events including art + design new york, BKLYN DESIGNS, Collective 2 Design Fair, Frieze New York, the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF), Sight Unseen OFFSITE and WantedDesign. - NYCxDESIGN

Upside Down Houses: Around the world, a number of groups looking to draw tourists have constructed upside-down houses, complete with inverted furnishings and decor...four recent examples of his topsy-turvy architecture in China, Russia, Germany, and Austria...click on photos to flip the view and see it "right side up." [images]- The Atlantic

Call for entries: Shape the Future Design Competition: ...take a bold leap with DuPont Corian; cash prizes; deadline: August 1 - Metropolis magazine / DuPont Corian

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