

Today's News - Thursday, May 29, 2014

- ArcSpace brings us a fab travel guide to Barcelona, and a Q&A with architectural photographer Thomas Mayer (with great pix).
- Kimmelman offers a thoughtful (though not so kindly) appraisal of the WTC memorial grounds: "It feels like a swath of the National Mall plunked in downtown Manhattan...built to awe, something for tourists...the site has been given over to overly literal symbolism."
- Jeffrey offers an eloquent tribute to the fire-ravaged Glasgow School of Art: "Glasgow has lost its beating heart - the building represents an almost unattainable dream of a historic structure that still feels experimental, that meets its purpose and is fiercely loved."
- Meier remembers Vignelli + video of the two "reflecting on their respective crafts, city life and enduring friendship."
- Rosenblum reflects on Israel's exhibit for the Venice Biennale, which takes a critical look at the country's "banal, identical high-rises and cookie-cutter cities...architects trying to push existing plans aside in an effort to create something new and better actually continue to build the same thing."
- PBS takes a look at "Survey L.A.," a new initiative "to identify, catalogue and preserve its diverse cultural history in electronic form...a great American city wanting to know itself a little better."
- King cheers new "signs of architectural energy" (with a touch of brashness) along a San Francisco boulevard "that for too long has been treated with too little respect."
- From the other side of the Big Pond, Moore bemoans Boris's disappointing response to the London skyline debate: "A major city is being fundamentally redesigned with an amazing absence of real knowledge. Most kitchens are planned with a better overview than this."
- Wainwright minces no words about what he thinks of the "glassy lumps" of mini-Shards and "Shardettes" (and a "marooned iceberg") on the rise in London: "Piano's building has become a beacon for designers bereft of inspiration - it's hard not to wish it had all remained on the drawing board."
- Waite reports on further delays in FCBS's Southbank revamp, though much-needed repairs and conservation work is about to begin on the original buildings (thanks to Arts Council England grant).
- Gibberd and Hill cheer a growing roster of architect/philanthropists creating "beauty from adversity" around the world.
- Polsky delves into why and how SHoP Architects "became NYC's go-to megaproject architects: it seems to manage the balance between control and compromise to a degree other firms haven't" (a great read).
- Nobel parses Norton's Rutgers Business School: never mind the building's "big move" - it is "a whip-smart interior study in non-programmed space - the building is alive inside, and the students are taking the architects' cues and running with them."
- A report on the National Complete Streets Coalition new report that crunches the numbers re: urban traffic fatalities and how safer street design can spare thousands upon thousands of lives.
- A Parisian planner and transportation engineer compares public spaces in Paris and New York - fascinating!
- The "poster child of sprawl," a.k.a. Phoenix, AZ, "is pulling off an urban miracle, transforming into a walkable city" (from personal experience, this we'll have to see to believe).
- Gang raises the bar (again) by venturing into two atypical architectural typologies: marine spatial planning for a dolphin sanctuary: "When I first heard the term a year ago, I said, 'Why aren't architects leading this?'" + A "dynamic, modular" acoustical shell for Chicago's Lyric Opera in the "cavernous" Ardis Krainik Theater.
- Music for the ear and eye (music, pg. 1; pix, pg. 2): Jack Diamond's "exuberant" pipe organ for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra at Maison Symphonique: "Too many organs simply look like radiators" (not this one! A must-see/hear!).

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- Travel guide: Barcelona: There is no city like it. It's a place of colourful contrasts. Of culture and nightlife. And truly spectacular architecture.
- The Camera: Q&A with Thomas Mayer: How did you start being involved in architectural photography? "In fact, I always was addicted to architecture."

Finding Space for the Living at a Memorial: It feels like a swath of the National Mall plunked in downtown Manhattan...built to awe, something for tourists...the site has been given over to overly literal symbolism: fountains the size of the towers' footprints; America's tallest tower...a museum underground with a pavilion that resembles a collapsed building. The place doesn't do much to celebrate the city's values of energy, diversity, tolerance openness and debate. By Michael Kimmelman - Snohetta; Michael Arad; Peter Walker [slide show]- New York Times

Glasgow has lost its beating heart: It is almost impossible to quantify the collective shock amongst the arts and architecture community worldwide after the terrible fire at the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Building at Glasgow School of Art...the building represents an almost unattainable dream of a historic structure that still feels experimental, that meets its purpose and is fiercely loved... By Moira Jeffrey- The Scotsman (UK)

Richard Meier Remembers Massimo Vignelli: "He Made Me Look Twice": ...spoke to ARTINFO about one of his best friends. + link to video: Richard Meier x Massimo Vignelli: On the Edge of Modernism With the Master Architect and the Genius Designer...reflecting on their respective crafts, city life and enduring friendship.- Artinfo

A critical look at Israel's 'little boxes on the hillside': "The URBURB: Contemporary Lifestyles" at Venice Biennale of Architecture focuses on the historic blandness of construction in Israel...banal, identical high-rises and cookie-cutter cities...architects trying to push existing plans aside in an effort to create something new and better actually continue to build the same thing. By Keshet Rosenblum -- Roy Brand; Keren Yeala-Golan; Uri Scialom; Edith Kofsky- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Preserving the cultural treasures of Los Angeles, one block at a time: The city of Los Angeles is constantly reinventing itself. But now, a project called "Survey L.A." is digging beneath the city's layers to identify, catalogue and preserve its diverse cultural history in electronic form...a great American city...wanting to know itself a little better. -- Getty Conservation Institute [video]- PBS Newshour

S.F.'s Van Ness Avenue shows signs of architectural energy: ...if the most recent additions are no match for the classically flavored high points along the way, they add energy and heft to a boulevard that for too long has been treated with too little respect. By John King -- Kwan Henmi; Christiani Johnson Architects [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

London's skyline: Boris, we agree London is a great city. So help us keep it that way: Boris Johnson's response to our debate on the capital's tower blocks has been disappointing...A major city, in short, is being fundamentally redesigned with an amazing absence of real knowledge. Most kitchens are planned with a better overview than this. By Rowan Moore- Observer (UK)

Shardenfreude: London's copycat craze is crystal clear: The Shard has spawned a host of angular glassy lumps across the

capital. But is this new crystal city full of Shardettes a welcome change? Renzo Piano's building has become a beacon for designers bereft of inspiration...it's hard not to wish it had all remained on the drawing board. By Oliver Wainwright -- Pelli Clarke Pelli; Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM); Wilkinson Eyre; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) [images]- [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios' Southbank revamp faces further delays - but repairs to begin: Southbank Centre has said it will not make a decision on the proposed £120 million overhaul by FCBS until the end of this year...proceeding with a £24 million backlog of repairs and conservation work...thanks to a £16.7 million grant from Arts Council England. By Richard Waite- [The Architects' Journal \(UK\)](#)

When architects become philanthropists: With innovative designs constructed from low-cost, sustainable materials, architects like Shigeru Ban create beauty from adversity. By Matt Gibberd and Albert Hill -- David Adjaye Architects; Nest; Architecture Sans Frontières; Maxwell Hutchinson/Article 25; Cameron Sinclair/Kate Stohr/Architecture for Humanity; KMDW; Make it Right; Frank Gehry; GRAFT Architects; Eskew+Dumez+Ripple; Hitoshi Abe Atelier [images, links]- [Telegraph \(UK\)](#)

How SHoP Architects Became NYC's Go-To Megaproject Architects: ...the guiding idea was one of what architecture should and shouldn't be, rather than a grand urban planning vision...[its] ability to talk about the work the firm does is an underrated but crucial aspect of its rise...seems to manage the balance between control and compromise to a degree other firms haven't, perhaps because its approach is more philosophical than aesthetic. By Sara Polsky -- Christopher Sharples; William Sharples; Coren Sharples; Kimberly Holden; Greg Pasquarelli; Jonathan Mallie; Vishaan Chakrabarti; Philip Nobel [images]- [Curbed New York](#)

Rutgers Business School: The new TEN Arquitectos--designed facility in Piscataway, N.J., is a whip-smart interior study in non-programmed space, but don't get distracted by the building's "big move"...the building is alive inside, and the students are taking the architects' cues and running with them. By Philip Nobel -- Enrique Norten [images]- [Architect Magazine](#)

Safer Street Design Can Spare Tens of Thousands: ...new report released by the National Complete Streets Coalition..."Dangerous by Design 2014"...finds that traffic fatalities can be prevented through changes to the design of our streets: providing sidewalks, installing high-visibility crosswalks and refuge islands, and calming traffic speeds. [link to report]- [The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects \(ASLA\)](#)

Shared Space and Slow Zones: Comparing Public Space in Paris and New York: ...there is no a priori solution to deal with sustainable mobility...Some actions and policies overlap between both cities but a real focus on context is necessary to define what is replicable and what needs to be adapted to suit foreign situations. By Clémence Morlet [images]- [Project for Public Spaces \(PPS\)](#)

Phoenix Is Pulling Off An Urban Miracle: Transforming Into A Walkable City: The city that had long been the poster child of sprawl is putting its gears in reverse. With a new light rail line and a plan to make the city's core denser and more desirable, it's on the path to success. By Adele Peters -- Galina Tachieva/Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company [images]- [Fast Company](#)

Going deep for dolphins: ...Jeanne Gang challenged her Rice University School of Architecture students to decode a problem she characterized as "beyond complex"...designing a marine sanctuary for dolphins...marine spatial planning, a discipline that to date has not required architects..."When I first heard the term a year ago, I said, 'Why aren't architects leading this?' We began our own research at Studio Gang..." [images]- [Phys.org](#)

Jeanne Gang designing shell for Lyric Opera: The dynamic, modular stage enclosure...to replace Lyric's existing stage shell with a more efficient, more visually appealing enclosure that will improve the projection of acoustical sound in the cavernous, 3,500-seat Ardis Krainik Theater and relate, in a design sense, to the Art Deco style of the stage proscenium, with its receding perspective. -- Studio Gang Architects [image]- [Chicago Tribune](#)

Montreal Symphony Orchestra Inaugurates Pipe Organ at Maison Symphonique: This is the architect's first organ commission..."This is an exuberant organ, built into the room as part of the architecture, not just an insert," said Jack Diamond. "Too many organs simply look like radiators." -- Diamond Schmitt Architects; Aedifica Architects [images, video]- [Broadway World](#)

INSIGHT: Anonymous Cities: The Erosion of Urban Identity: If we embrace the special characteristics of our American cities, we could begin to construct new projects that enhance the sense of place within the distinctly different urban settings that still exist. By Peter Gisolfi- [ArchNewsNow](#)

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