

Today's News - Tuesday, October 21, 2014

- ArcSpace brings us lots and lots of eye candy with the International Photography Awards winners in the architecture categories; a Swiss artist who has turned to photography (amazing!); and Kiser's take on the Barbican's "Constructing Worlds."
- A (mostly) good-news day for bunches of starchitects and stellar critics: It's (mostly) Oui, Oui! for Gehry's grandes aventures in Bois de Boulogne and at the Pompidou Center, as Wainwright, Moore, Merrick, Giovannini, and Hawthorne weigh in with some very pithy (and priceless) observations (at least read the headlines below).
- Kamin finds One World Trade Center to be "a bold but flawed giant. It says 'we're back' but not with the artistry it could have. It's solid, occasionally scintillating, yet it's no masterpiece" (some great pix, too)
- Gardner talks to Calatrava for two hours "before I realized how appropriate the placement is of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, which will overlook the 9/11 Memorial - how different the experience will be from the voids of the reflecting pools" (with lost of new pix!).
- Betsky is quite taken with Viñoly's 432 Park Avenue and the "three things make it work. It is a refreshing alternative to the mediocrity of the buildings around it," and makes it "clear that it is still possible to make a beautiful skyscraper."
- Graves returns to Portland to make the case for saving his now-threatened Portland Building: he is pained by its "shortcomings and controversial reception - his mix of openness (to changing the design) and defiance (about the building's aesthetics), made a strong statement."
- An engaging Q&A with Graves re: why he "loves open-air hotels, hates cheap trophies - and why his next commission might be a tree house."
- Hume hails the "urban migration" to Toronto's downtown South Core: "The guiding principles here are connectivity, compactness and closeness. Mixed use is the mantra. The Gardiner has been crossed, but other obstacles remain."
- But there's some serious trouble brewing for Toronto's towering housing boom: many buildings are so poorly constructed that some fear the money-spinners of today could become the slums of the future" (buy today, sell by tomorrow!).
- Baranes makes an eloquent case for rewriting Washington, DC's height ordinances to "give architects the freedom to build, burnish and bequeath a skyline that elegantly complements" the city's heritage, and would offer upward glances more than "only 21st-century advances to air-conditioning equipment."
- Rinaldi offers a rather dark take on the seemingly bright success of Denver's "urban playground" at Union Station: it "isn't drawing people of color and it may be the building's fault. A dangerous discussion? Yes. But this project has defined us narrowly, darkly, negligently. There is danger in that, too" (snarly, gnarly comments follow).
- On a brighter note, the Guardian invited four award-winning American architects to "sketch and describe their unofficial visions" for the Obama Presidential Library: "hopefully these bold ideas will change the way you think about a politician's legacy" (nary a fuddy-duddy gesture anywhere).
- We cheer Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin receiving the 2014 ULI J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development.
- Call for entries: 2015 AIA Housing Awards + Winter Stations international design competition to re-imagine Toronto's winter waterfront.

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-- The International Photography Awards: winners of the 7 architecture subcategories.
-- Irene Kung: ...has expanded her repertoire to include photography..."I am fascinated by architecture as an extraordinary and indicative expression of human beings."
-- "Constructing Worlds - Photography and Architecture in the Modern Age," Barbican Art Gallery: These photographs offer a way of understanding the architects' intentions in relation to the lived reality... By Kirsten Kiser

Frank Gehry's Fondation Louis Vuitton shows he doesn't know when to stop: ...new art museum, and an accompanying retrospective at the Pompidou, reveal the danger of big budgets: ...an avalanche of glass sails. Piled up in a staggered heap...it could also be a gigantic Louis Vuitton perfume bottle, smashed to smithereens...it is certainly a spectacle, but it makes you wonder quite what it's all for...There are exhilarating moments... By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris – everything and the bling from Frank Gehry: It is a coalition of brands, of LV and Frank, and looks much as if it might be a work of starchitecture after all. The question with this project is which Gehry, the serious architect or the hired signature, wins...Rarely, meanwhile, have I found myself wishing so much that a project had had its budget cut, and that the sails had been value-engineered away. They get in the way of the potentially delightful connections the building tries to make... By Rowan Moore- Observer (UK)

Frank Gehry's new Paris mega gallery: Can a building be described as crazy and tender? ...he has produced a building that comes together as if it's also just about to fall apart...The Fondation Louis Vuitton's giddy geometry is hard to resist...Welcome to Paris's new arts fun palace. By Jay Merrick- Independent (UK)

An Architect's Big Parisian Moment: In Paris, Frank Gehry's new Vuitton Foundation museum is drawing all eyes, and the Pompidou Center does a retrospective of his work: ...promises to add a major contemporary monument to Paris's long list of historic architecture...builds on the Bilbao precedent, creating a more complex structure...like a Cubist sailboat, with glass sails and spinnakers rising above the tree line... By Joseph Giovannini- New York Times

Gehry's Louis Vuitton Foundation museum is a triumph, but to what end? Nearly 20 years after his Guggenheim in Bilbao...architect has again provided a brilliant backdrop for a controversial art-world initiative: the personal museum for the new gilded age...And the design is brilliant, a late-career triumph...as ambitious as anything Gehry has ever produced but also, surprisingly, as refined. By Christopher Hawthorne- Los Angeles Times

Comprehensive "Frank Gehry" retrospective in Paris draws sociological blank: The exhibition is an impeccable vacuum. The curators have worked strenuously...to keep at bay the full range of issues that have given the rest of the architecture world a full-on identity crisis in the last decade or so...There is a genuine humanism at the core of his work that helps protect him from charges that he is merely chasing showy projects from one continent to the next. By Christopher Hawthorne- Los Angeles Times

One World Trade Center a bold but flawed giant: ...will not satisfy those who hoped for a more poetic skyline statement and a transformation of the original World Trade Center's lifeless, windswept superblock into a thriving urban precinct built to a more human scale...is not the engaging urban presence it should have been...It says "we're back" but not with the artistry it could have. It's solid, occasionally scintillating, yet it's no masterpiece. By Blair Kamin -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [images]- Chicago Tribune

A Church Near Ground Zero Reimagined: It took two hours of talking with Santiago Calatrava...before I realized how appropriate the placement is of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, which will overlook the 9/11

[Memorial...how different the experience will be from the voids of the reflecting pools. By Ralph Gardner Jr. \[images, video\]- Wall Street Journal](#)

[432 Park Avenue and the Importance of Being There and Being Square: ...uses its slenderness and height to full advantage...Three things make it work. The first is that height...The second is its location...The third is the simplicity of its design...It is a refreshing alternative to the mediocrity of the buildings around it...appearance \[and\] elegance...make it clear that it is still possible to make a beautiful skyscraper. By Aaron Betsky -- Rafael Viñoly Architects \[images\]- Architect Magazine](#)

[Michael Graves Makes a Case for Saving the Portland Building: Graves returns to Portland to argue that his Postmodernist landmark should not be razed..."I don't know where the hostility comes from"...also made clear his pain over the building's shortcomings and controversial reception...his mix of openness \(to changing the design\) and defiance \(about the building's aesthetics\), made a strong statement. By Brian Libby \[images\]- Architect Magazine](#)

[Michael Graves on Design Hits and Misses: The Post-Modernism master loves open-air hotels, hates cheap trophies and has forgiven his mother for worrying that he would become a starving artist...the kind of furniture he'd break the bank for and why his next commission might be a treehouse. By Dan Rubinstein \[images\]- Wall Street Journal](#)

[New Toronto downtown South Core is rising fast: The quickly filling zone south of Union Station demonstrates how urban migration has changed downtown...The difference now is that it is a place to live as well as work. The guiding principles here are connectivity, compactness and closeness. Mixed use is the mantra...The new ideal is location, not space. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star](#)

[While Toronto's housing boom rolls on, some of the housing itself is falling apart: ...condo prices that are up 25.7% in the city over the past five years. The trouble is, many buildings are so poorly constructed that some residents fear that the money-spinners of today could become the slums of the future.- Financial Post \(Canada\)](#)

[Rescuing Washington's skyline: Sadly, it appears that, instead of seizing a moment to expand the District's architectural horizons, the D.C. Council will rubber-stamp Congress's penthouse realignment language...Visitors...who glance upward will see only 21st-century advances to air-conditioning equipment...rewriting the ordinances...could give architects the freedom to build, burnish and bequeath a skyline that elegantly complements the historic national monuments that represent our heritage. By Shalom Baranes- Washington Post](#)

[Did diversity miss the train in Union Station's architecture? The urban playground at Union Station isn't drawing people of color and it may be the building's fault...A dangerous discussion? Yes...But this project has defined us narrowly, darkly, negligently. There is danger in that, too. By Ray Mark Rinaldi- Denver Post](#)

[Obama's presidential library: four radical visions of the future from top architects: Hope and change may have been a little overdramatic. But hopefully these bold ideas will change the way you think about a politician's legacy – or at least design...four award-winning, firm-founding architects sketch and describe their unofficial visions... -- Alfonso Medina/T38 Studio; Richard Dattner/Dattner Architects; Elizabeth Ranieri/KuthRanieri Architects; Paul Preissner Architects \[images\]- Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Honoring Excellence in Community Building: Dr. Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, is the 2014 Recipient of the ULI J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development- Urban Land Institute \(ULI\)](#)

[Call for entries: 2015 AIA Housing Awards: open to architects licensed in the U.S. for built projects in the U.S.; deadline: November 21- American Institute of Architects \(AIA\)](#)

[Call for entries: Winter Stations open international design competition: re-imagine Toronto's winter waterfront; honorarium and budget for construction; deadline: December 5- RAW Design / Ferris + Associates / Curio](#)

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