

Today's News - Tuesday, October 28, 2014

- ArcSpace brings us Kiser on Kuma's Contemporary Art Center (FRAC) in Marseille; and a round-up of new books.
- Heathcote and Ijeh are less kind than others re: Gehry's Fondation Louis Vuitton: "It is being hailed as a masterpiece...But is it?" and it "shoots for the spectacular. But does it thrive or flounder?" (though there are moments they like).
- Anderton offers "5 takeaways from Gehrygate: he is "a crusty, difficult guy who makes warm, welcoming, interesting, places. Let's give him a break on his bad boy behavior" (i.e., giving the now-infamous finger).
- Kamin x 2: while he regrets a grove of trees being sacrificed for a university parking garage and visitors center, P+W's design is "a welcome and welcoming surprise - hardly the rude, crude intruder many predicted it would be" (and trees will be planted elsewhere).
- He cheers Harboe's "meticulous restoration" of Mies's "God Box" at IIT that "simultaneously attended to form and function."
- King reports that Snøhetta has been tapped for its third San Francisco project - and its first tower - to replace a Meier tower plan that bit the dust.
- Saffron x 2: Philadelphia's "scandal-plagued" Family Court project may be a "dispiriting example of bland, office-park architecture," but "there is real compassion hidden behind its cheap, corporate-looking glass veneer" (thanks to the architects and family law advocates).
- She bemoans the sad fate that could befall a number of Philly's long-standing community gardens that have become easy targets for developers and the city's "autocratic leadership" who find it "hard to accept that community gardens, long seen as a better-than-nothing option, might be an amenity in need of preservation."
- Christensen delves into the pitfalls of turning public housing over to private developers: often, "the results aren't pretty - so-called 'public-private partnerships' often exacerbate the very problems they claim to be addressing."
- Duarte delves into the gentrification debate, and the "need to begin to embed income inequality within the debate" - and just what is the difference between affordable housing and cheap housing.
- NJIT formally questions the need for Kean University's Michael Graves School of Architecture in New Jersey (never mind the Wenzhou, China, campus).
- Bernstein queries the school's acting dean re: the decision to open an architecture school in NJ that has "left some bewildered," but Mohney argues that "Chinese officials wanted a new architecture school with U.S. accreditation and the Michael Graves School was created to serve their needs."
- Meanwhile, Graves thinks his design for his school on Kean's Wenzhou campus is "an A-plus. It's one of my better buildings, if not my best building" (we'll withhold judgment for now).
- Speaking of China, Horton ponders "how seriously should architects take" the Chinese president's recent remarks on "weird architecture": "the real question now is how this will be used in the design procurement process."
- Eyefuls of some young Chinese firms that prove there's some wonderful, very "un-weird" local talent around (though archi-babble abounds).
- Stratford offers a fabulous take on overlooked L.A. architecture that has "fueled dystopian fancies" by some of the greats in science fiction: too bad the "facelessness" of new McMansions and "the ruthlessness with which they are built...makes them feel like the architecture that comprises the sort of dystopian world Bradbury described so trenchantly."
- Grima takes the helm of the New Museum's IDEAS CITY Festival (yay Joseph!).
- Call for entries (deadline looms!): AIA 2015 Small Project Awards, themed "Pleasure."

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[Frank Gehry's Fondation Louis Vuitton: ...a monumental billboard for the cultural credentials of France's biggest luxury house. How did LVMH manage to build this blockbuster in the Bois de Boulogne...The story is a good one...It is being hailed as a masterpiece...But is it? This might be radical architecture in its construction...but it is conservative in its conception. There is nothing radical about hiring Gehry...This is an architecture of spectacle...a building as much about Paris as it is about itself. By Edwin Heathcote - Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[LVMH Foundation for Creation by Frank Gehry: Bringing his futuristic flourishes to suburban Paris, Gehry's privately funded art gallery shoots for the spectacular. But does it thrive or flounder...? ...leaves one wondering whether it carries any more substance than its resemblance to the crushed, collected shards of the Moët champagne bottles skilfully purveyed by its patron. By Ike Ijeh -- Fondation Louis Vuitton \[images\] - BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[DnA/Frances Anderton: 5 Takeaways From Gehrygate, and Why He Might Be Right: Frank Gehry is an intriguing mix: a crusty, difficult guy who makes warm, welcoming, interesting, places. Let's give him a break on his bad boy behavior...- KCRW \(Los Angeles\)](#)

[Northwestern University's lakefront parking garage a winner: ...now that the \\$35 million garage and visitor center is here, I come to praise it, not to bury it beneath a pile of harsh adjectives...it reminds us that parking garages can be enhancements, not eyesores...a welcome and welcoming surprise...hardly the rude, crude intruder many predicted it would be. By Blair Kamin -- Ralph Johnson/Perkins+Will; Peter Schaudt/Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects - Chicago Tribune](#)

[Mies chapel at IIT gets winning renovation: If you like your chapels with stained glass and gargoyles, then stay away from the "God Box"...Mies designed greater buildings...At the chapel, he made more with less...a meticulous restoration...restored a piece of living architectural history...The key is that the project simultaneously attended to form and function. By Blair Kamin -- Mies van der Rohe; T. Gunny Harboe/Harboe Architects - Lansing State Journal \(Michigan\)](#)

[Snøhetta to take over S.F. development project near Civic Center: ...will replace...Richard Meier...whose firm has been working on a tower in the same location since 2008..."We want to combine an iconic high-rise with really intimate place-making"... By John King -- SCB - San Francisco Chronicle](#)

[Family Court: It's not all bad: The mediocrity of a scandal-plagued project houses an interior with thoughtful amenities...dispiriting example of bland, office-park architecture...there is real compassion hidden behind its cheap, corporate-looking glass veneer...the architects, together with family law advocates, fought hard to ensure that the building was equipped with several important amenities. By Inga Saffron -- EwingCole - Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

[Autocratic leadership vs. community gardens: As developers scramble for any available site where they can throw up a few houses, community gardens, lovingly tended for decades, have become easy targets...The city still thinks of itself as land-rich and development-starved. It's hard to accept that community gardens, long seen as a better-than-nothing option, might be an amenity in need of preservation. By Inga Saffron - Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

[Turning Public Housing Over to Private Developers Has Unfortunate Consequences: In cities like Baltimore, the housing crisis is being outsourced to private developers. The results aren't pretty...so-called "public-private partnerships" often exacerbate the very problems they claim to be addressing. By Dusty Christensen - AlterNet.org](#)

[The False Choice in the Gentrification Debate: The income of original residents is more important to the gentrification debate than any opposition to luxury development or price controls. We need to begin to embed income inequality within the gentrification debate...Affordable Housing vs. Cheap Housing... By Reuben](#)

NJIT formally questions Kean University's plan for architecture program: New Jersey Institute of Technology issued a formal statement...questioning Kean's intentions to open another public architecture program in the state, saying the initiative was duplicative and costly...will grow to 500 students evenly divided between the stateside [Michael Graves School of Architecture] and one in Wenzhou, China.- The Record (New Jersey)

Q&A: David Mohney, Acting Dean of the Michael Graves School of Architecture: ...Kean University...will have two campuses, one in New Jersey and the other in Wenzhou, China. But the decision to open an architecture school in New Jersey left some bewildered...Chinese officials wanted a new architecture school with U.S. accreditation and the Michael Graves School was created to serve their needs. By Fred A. Bernstein- Architectural Record

Kean University announces Michael Graves School of Architecture: ...Graves is designing a new facility for his school at the university's campus in Wenzhou, China. "I think [it's] an A-plus...It's one of my better buildings, if not my best building." [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

On China's Problem with "Weird" Architecture: How seriously should architects take Xi Jinping's remarks on unusual buildings? ...the real question now is how this will be used in the design procurement process. By Guy Horton -- OMA; Alex Yong/Jerde Partnership; Ai Weiwei; Mike Tunkey/CannonDesign- Metropolis Magazine

China's "Un-Weird" Architecture: In response to Chinese leader Xi Jinping's call for an end to "weird architecture" in China, we...highlight some firms working in a different vein. -- Wang Shu/Lu Wenyu/Amateur Architecture Studio; AZL Atelier Zhanglei; John Lin/Joshua Bolchover/Rural Urban Framework; Zhu Xiaofeng/Scenic Architecture; Zhang Ke/Zhang Hong/Claudia Taborda; standardarchitecture; Hua Li/TAO (Trace Architecture Office); Tong Ming/TM Studio; Gong Dong/Vector Architects [images]- World-Architects.com

Home and History in the Fiction of Los Angeles: ...despite the sprawl and isolating car culture that fueled dystopian fancies, the city has certainly not been a dystopia...we tend to overlook the beauty, inventiveness, and quirky charm of so much of LA's architecture....The facelessness of the mansions, the ruthlessness with which they are built...makes them feel like the architecture that comprises the sort of dystopian world Bradbury described so trenchantly. By Sarah-Jane Stratford- Los Angeles Review of Books

New Museum Names Joseph Grima as Director of IDEAS CITY: ...the institution's high-profile ideas festival that explores the future of cities with culture as a driving force...Partnering with like-minded cities that believe culture is fundamental to urban growth and innovation, the initiative has been taken global over the past two years...- Broadway World

Call for entries: AIA 2015 Small Project Awards: 11th annual award program to recognize the work of small project practitioners...theme, PLEASURE, intends to recognize projects that express joy and pleasure through architecture; open to architects licensed in the U.S.; deadline: November 3- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

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