

Today's News - Wednesday, January 21, 2015

- CTBUH crunches the skyscraper numbers and crowns 2014 the "tallest year ever" (with lots of charts and graphs to prove it).
- Lucas could take his museum to L.A. if Chicago falls through: "I do want to get it done in my lifetime."
- Eyefuls of Holl and Lake|Flato's expansion plan for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: "It doesn't stoop to cheap tricks to attract attention."
- Lamster says the museum's expansion plan "is a bright idea, but "does not come free of controversy...Despite this potential landmine, Holl's ambitious plan promises to outshine, in every sense, major new museum buildings by signature architects in L.A., NY, and Chicago."
- Hawthorne has less enthusiasm for the Huntington Library's new visitor center: it's not bad, but "there's something dispiriting going on here" - and it's not all the architect's fault, but the client's "reluctance to give architecture more than a narrow functional role."
- Saffron is totally dispirited by revised proposal for an apartment building behind Cret's Rodin Museum, "now nearly twice as tall as before - a tsunami instead of a wave. Won't someone in City Hall please come to the rescue of this Philadelphia treasure?"
- King x 2: he gets a kick out of a "goofy" new San Francisco building dripping with "heartfelt charm" - it may be "an overbaked soufflé of architectural embellishments," but he'll "take heartfelt over humdrum any time" (with pix to prove it).
- He delves into the demise of DS+R's "Facsimile": it may be a "rule-breaking public artwork, but it's just plain broken" (and a cautionary tale for "other buzzed-about architects").
- Bentley ponders whether Baby Boomers could make cohousing in the U.S. mainstream, though it's still "not an answer to the growing problem of affordable housing."
- A sleek, stainless-steel-clad micro-housing project in Seoul is designed for flexibility and "encourages inhabitants to interact with their neighbors."
- Hough hopes Raleigh, NC, can get its act together in planning a (huge) new urban park: "there is reason for both hope and skepticism. It is hard to make big moves while thinking with small minds."
- Brussat visits Providence, Rhode Island's "newly sanitized" Kennedy Plaza and finds "blank sterility" in its "wind-swept vastnesses of unused space" (reference made to "lipstick on a pig," too).
- Groves cheers the powers-that-be in Beverly Hills defeating a move to weaken laws protecting historic buildings.
- Nouvel defends (and lays blame) for his boycott of the opening of his concert hall: "The Philharmonie de Paris has shot itself in the foot - in both feet."
- Winners of the Workplace of the Future competition "outsmart the open office" + Eyefuls of winners of the Cities for Our Time urban design competition (SCAD made out like a bandit!).
- One we couldn't resist: thousands of fish are being removed from an abandoned, roofless shopping mall in Bangkok (ya gotta see the pictures!).
- Call for entries: 2015 IOC/IAKS Award for Exemplary Sports and Leisure Facilities & IPC/IAKS Distinction for Accessibility.

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Skyscraper surge makes 2014 the "tallest year ever": a chart-busting 97 skyscrapers over 200 metres tall were completed in 2014 – and a record-breaking 58 of them are in China...experts predict skyscraper construction will further increase in 2015. -- Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) [images]- Dezeen

George Lucas says museum could land in L.A. if Chicago falls through: ...complications in his plan to build his Lucas Museum of Narrative Art on the Chicago lakefront may put Los Angeles back in the running..."I do want to get it done in my lifetime." -- MAD Architects - Los Angeles Times

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston unveils dramatic \$450 million redevelopment plan: ...project intends to reframe institution as heart of city's cultural life...designed to complement the existing structures..."It doesn't stoop to cheap tricks to attract attention"... -- Steven Holl Architects; Lake|Flato Architects; William Ward Watkin (1924); Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1974) [images]- Houston Chronicle

Planned expansion of Houston's Museum of Fine Arts is a bright idea: ...plan does not come free of controversy...entails the demolition of S.I. Morris's Glassell building of 1979, itself a luminous structure of iridescent glass block...Despite this potential landmine, Holl's ambitious plan promises to outshine, in every sense, major new museum buildings by signature architects in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. By Mark Lamster -- Steven Holl; Lake|Flato [images]- Dallas Morning News

Huntington Library's new visitor center strikes studiously neutral pose: ...there's something dispiriting going on here...reluctance...to give architecture more than a narrow functional role...What's missing is any real trust in architecture's ability not just to ease a visitor's experience but to deepen it. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Architectural Resources Group (ARG); Office of Cheryl Barton [images]- Los Angeles Times

Mediocrity and a masterpiece: ...revised design for 2100 Hamilton...now nearly twice as tall as before - a tsunami instead of a wave...long slab of a building would create a new Chinese Wall behind the little Rodin Museum. Won't someone in City Hall please come to the rescue of this Philadelphia treasure? By Inga Saffron -- Paul Cret; Barton Partners [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

1645 Pacific Ave.: Goofy new neighbor with heartfelt charm: ...in an age when too many buildings look formulaic and thin, I'll take heartfelt over humdrum any time. All this is by way of explaining my mixed reactions...It's an overbaked soufflé of architectural embellishments, delivered with such conviction and care...a genuinely good neighbor, which in dense urban settings can be the best attribute of all. By John King -- Scientific Art Studio; Richard Beard Architects [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

A rule-breaking public artwork, but it's just plain broken: "Facsimile"...designed to be an icon of subversive design...by what is now one of the nation's hottest architectural firms. So why is it likely to be dismantled this winter? For a reason that other buzzed-about architects should take into account the next time they propose adventurous designs that defy convention... By John King -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Can Boomers Make Cohousing Mainstream? ...still a fringe option in the U.S. But the number of cohousing communities here is set to climb, thanks to Baby Boomers...not currently an answer to the growing problem of affordable housing. By Chris Bentley -- Kathryn McCamant/Charles Durrett/McCamant & Durrett Architects; The Cohousing Company; Jan Gudmand-Høyer; Christopher Leinberger - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Living Social: Through generous communal spaces, the Songpa Micro-Housing project in Seoul encourages inhabitants to interact with their neighbors: ...most striking feature...stainless-steel facade...creating patterns that serve many functions... By Mikki Brammer -- Single Speed Design (SsD) [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Big Park, Great City? ...we are in the midst of an urban park renaissance...Raleigh, North Carolina may soon be added to this list...has the potential to be a shining example of how to build a 21st century urban park, but it could just as easily become a cautionary tale...there is reason for both hope and skepticism...It is hard to make big moves while thinking with small minds. By Mark Hough - PLANetizen

Kennedy Plaza reopens [in Providence, RI]: ...newly sanitized bus hub...blank sterility achieved by its redesign. Wind-swept vastnesses of unused space greet us now, no longer the elegant Art Nouveau waiting kiosks...what had been among the nicest bus hubs on the East Coast, if not the world. By David Brussat -- Union Studio Architecture & Community Design [images]- Architecture Here and There

Beverly Hills defeats move to weaken laws protecting historic buildings: ...beat back two planning commissioners' efforts to push through changes that many preservation activists said were too extreme and would have gutted the ordinance. By Martha Groves - Los Angeles Times

Jean Nouvel blames chief exec for concert hall no-show: ...defends decision to boycott opening of his own building...described himself as a scapegoat who had been publicly vilified as a "spoilt-star artist" and contractually forced to keep quiet at risk of being thrown off the job..."The Philharmonie de Paris has shot itself in the foot – in both feet..." - BD/Building Design (UK)

The Workplace of the Future Will Have Sky Gardens to Harvest Your Lunch: The winners of the second annual design competition outsmart the open office. -- Sean Cassidy/Joe Wilson; Edward Ogosta Architecture [images]- Metropolis Magazine

Winners: Cities for Our Time: an Urban Design Competition: A design competition for Practical Ideas for Equitable and Sustainable Cities [images]- Cities for Our Time

Removing Fish From a Surreal Abandoned Shopping Mall: Thousands of carp, tilapia and catfish will be relocated to less absurd settings by Bangkok officials: Devoid of shoppers for years, Bangkok's New World shopping center is losing the thousands of fish that have more recently called the condemned mall home. By Mark Byrnes [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Call for entries: 2015 IOC/IAKS Award for Exemplary Sports and Leisure Facilities & IPC/IAKS Distinction for Accessibility (international); deadline: March 31- International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities (IAKS)



-- "Friedensreich Hundertwasser - 1928-2000" by Wieland Schmied: an inspirational portrait of one of the most prolific artists of the 20th century...his sustainable principles are highly compelling and should warrant consideration by architects today.

-- What's On? Architectural Exhibitions, January 2015 edition: Russian avant-garde, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; Studio Mumbai, Bordeaux; Highrise City Frankfurt, DAM; "Architecture in Uniform," MAXXI, Rome; National Building Museum, Washington, DC; "After Hurricane Sandy - Rebuild by Design," Aedes am Pfefferberg, Berlin

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