

## Today's News - Tuesday, February 3, 2015

- We are so, so saddened to learn of the passing of Jordan Gruzen: I will miss his friendship, graciousness, eloquence - and infectious smile - kr.
- Bernstein tackles nationalism and contextualism, using the controversy swirling around Hadid's Tokyo stadium as a starting point: while critics "have not suggested that the job go to a Japanese architect," what would happen if it did "for reasons of contextualism, or national pride, or both" - could it kick off "a kind of architectural trade war?"
- Hansen enters the Betsky/Bingler/Pedersen style-war debate: "People need shelter and better designed places. But buildings as art, and avant garde design? Not so much. We need architects to do their best for the rest of us."
- St. Hill pens a (practically poetic) ode to 20 years of Maggie's Centres that started out as a "pile of hope" to "a diverse family of architectural delights" that are "iconic as experiments in healthcare design" (a great read)
- Heathcote is happy with English Heritage listing 14 postwar office buildings that "might not instantly set hearts racing. Yet perhaps that is why they need protection - preservation is important because it indicates where we have come from, why we are here and, occasionally, how little we have progressed since then."
- Gehry "was hesitant to say he was actually happy" with his "crumpled paper bag" building for the University of Technology Sydney - when students arrive "is when we'll see whether his bold vision works in reality."
- He took on "the dual role of architect and master builder to control costs" - and came in on time and on budget: "What if I hadn't? I would have had to cough up the remainder."
- The master builder says "he won't build anything quite like" his UTS building again (we're trying to find out who called it "a masterpiece to rival Sydney Opera House in distinctiveness").
- Moore marvels at MUMA's makeover of the Whitworth Art Gallery with a "clever but subtle redesign" that "tears up the red tape and lets the light, and surrounding park, flood in."
- Betsky gives a thumbs-up (and down) to the Cooper Hewitt makeover: "The good news is that it has done a remarkable job rethinking its exhibitions and programs to live up to its mission. Ironically, however, architecture keeps defeating it. Yet the curators and designers have done a remarkable job" (and maybe "some day it can escape from its gilded cage").
- Hume hails a new aquaponic farm sprouting in a suburban industrial park: "This is the 21st-century version of Jane Jacobs' argument that new ideas need old buildings."
- Hosey has issues with Americans' obsession with their lawns that are "extraordinarily expensive, wasteful, and bad for the environment" - and offers some alternatives.
- A great Q&A with Halsband re: how she got her start in Woodstock (yes, that Woodstock), and the challenges of "working as an architect when few women were in the profession."
- A new RIBA survey offers some chilling findings re: how badly architectural education is failing students.
- Urban Realm crowns Aberdeen with the 2015 Plook-on-the-Plinth award for being "Scotland's most dismal town" with "a solid if dour demeanor"; Edinburgh follows with both the Pock Mark and Zit Awards (ouch!).
- Four reasons why Aberdeen won the Plook on the Plinth. "But it's not all bad" (debunking claims it's "where architecture goes to die").
- The 2015 Alvar Aalto Medal goes to Spanish firm Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos "for their profound understanding of the local cultures where they work" (there's that "contextualism" again).
- The Society of Architectural Historians names an architectural historian as winner of the 2014 H. Allen Brooks Travelling Fellowship.
- The Library of Congress names the winner of 2014 Holland Prize for Drawings of Historic Buildings, Structures and Landscapes.
- Call for entries: MASH Pad Unit (Mobile Architectures for Strategic Healing) international competition to house patients infected with Ebola.

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Obituary: Jersey City native Jordan Gruzen, 80: To remember Jordan Gruzen...one only needs to head to the waterfront and look up...you will undoubtedly see some of the dozens of buildings Gruzen designed and built throughout his 60-year career...His firm, IBI Group Gruzen Samton, built structures all around the world... [images]- The Jersey Journal (New Jersey)

Comment> On Nationalism and Contextualism: Fred A. Bernstein juggles the dicey issues surrounding Zaha Hadid's controversial design for a Japanese stadium...The critics...have not suggested that the job go to a Japanese architect...what would happen if the Japan Sports Council put its thumb on the scale in favor of a Japanese architect, for reasons of contextualism, or national pride, or both? Would that induce other countries to retaliate, in a kind of architectural trade war? -- Fumihiko Maki; Toyo Ito; Arata Isozaki; SANAA- The Architect's Newspaper

Architecture Should Be Functional, Not Merely Daring: Architecture, especially modernist architecture, has been in the crosshairs recently: While the profession needs the discussion, I don't think blanket condemnations are warranted...People need shelter and better designed places...But buildings as art, and avant garde design? Not so much. We need architects to do their best for the rest of us. By Steve Hansen -- Steven Bingler; Martin C. Pedersen; Aaron Betsky; Rural Studio/Samuel Mockbee/D.K. Ruth- Sourceable

Pile of hope - 20 years of Maggie's Centres: Maggie Jencks' modest vision has been transformed from her husband Charles Jencks' 'pile of hope'...to the ambitious charity of today...a diverse family of architectural delights, the buildings becoming iconic as experiments in healthcare design...Architects are a competitive bunch and each centre has set the bar a little higher. By Cate St Hill -- Richard Rogers; Zaha Hadid; Frank Gehry; Rem Koolhaas; Carmody Groarke; Richard Murphy Architects; Page/Park Architects; Reiach and Hall; Wilkinson Eyre; Steven Holl Architects; Ted Cullinan; Norman Foster [images]- DesignCurial / Blueprint Magazine (UK)

UK postwar office blocks make the grade for listing: ...14 postwar offices built between 1964 and 1984...might not instantly set hearts racing. Yet perhaps that is why they need protection...Some of the choices are a little surprising...preservation is important because it indicates where we have come from, why we are here and, occasionally, how little we have progressed since then. By Edwin Heathcote -- English Heritage; Albert Richardson; Peter Foggo/Arup Associates; Whinney, Son and Austin Hall; Fitzroy Robinson; Richard Seifert; Foster Associates; John Madin- Financial Times (UK)

Sydney's Frank Gehry building officially opened: ... the star architect was hesitant to say he was actually happy with the structure...When business students flow into the building for the first semester...later this month is when we'll see whether Gehry's bold vision works in reality. By Cameron Jewell [images]- The Fifth Estate (Australia)

Frank Gehry's UTS Dr Chau Chak Wing Building opened: From little squiggles, big treehouses grow...the architect...[took] on the dual role of architect and master builder to control costs and the process...came in on time and on budget...If it hadn't, he would have been obliged to pay for the cost overruns himself. "What if I hadn't? I would have had to cough up the remainder." - Sydney Morning Herald

Frank Gehry says his 'crumpled paper bag' building will remain a one-off: Architect says he won't build anything quite like the Dr Chau Chak Wing again as the building is hailed a masterpiece to rival Sydney Opera House in

distinctiveness...“Frank got us. He understood our vision,” said the UTS vice-chancellor Vicki Sara. [Australian Associated Press]- Guardian (UK)

Whitworth Art Gallery redesign – a breath of fresh air: This clever but subtle redesign for Manchester’s Whitworth tears up the red tape and lets the light, and surrounding park, flood in: The virtues...sustainable, accessible, sensitive, thoughtful – could all be synonyms for “dull” or at least “worthy”. But, thanks to its pleasures of light and material, it is not. It is a job very well done. By Rowan Moore – MUMA; Sarah Price Landscapes [images]- Observer (UK)

The Cooper Hewitt’s Gilded Cage: The good news is that it has done a remarkable job rethinking its exhibitions and programs to live up to its mission of being our go-to place to learn why design matters. Ironically, however, architecture keeps defeating it...Yet the curators and designers have done a remarkable job...has made the most of its site and of its curatorial talent; I just hope that some day it can escape from its gilded cage. By Aaron Betsky [images]- Architect Magazine

Aquaponics turn suburban industrial park into farmland: The future has arrived...just north of Pearson Airport in Mississauga...new aquaponic farming operation, Aqua Greens, is setting up business...This is the 21st-century version of Jane Jacobs’ argument that new ideas need old buildings. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Lawns Gone Wild: The suburban lawn is extraordinarily expensive, wasteful, and bad for the environment. So why are Americans obsessed with it? ... a new study just published in the Journal of Environmental Management shows that closely cropped lawns - the mainstay of suburbia - actually can produce more greenhouse gases than they absorb...What are the alternatives? By Lance Hosey/RTKL- Huffington Post

Pioneering architect Frances Halsband got her start on Woodstock’s Village Green: ...began working as an architect when few women were in that profession...“I was fascinated by the combination of architecture and making drawings, and that it could have a social and cultural purpose.” -- Kliment Halsband Architects - Hudson Valley Almanac

Universities failing students, RIBA survey says: ‘They don’t have the right skills for work,’ report warns: Skills Survey...found that 74% of students and recent graduates and 81% of employers think architectural education puts theoretical knowledge ahead of practical ability...survey laid bare a generation gap on attitudes to drawing. [link to report]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Aberdeen heads 2015 Carbuncles with Plook-on-the-Plinth award: ...crowned Scotland’s most dismal town...a solid if dour demeanour...with durability and sustainability sacrificed in favour of flimsy, throwaway buildings...A ‘Pock Mark’ award for worst planning decision was handed to Edinburgh City Council...Edinburgh Airport’s recently completed eastern terminal expansion netted a ‘Zit’ accolade for Scotland’s worst building.- Urban Realm (Scotland)

Four reasons why Aberdeen won the Carbuncle Award: Dour, dismal and no durability – Urban Realm pulled no punches when listing the failures that led to Aberdeen winning the Plook on the Plinth trophy...But it’s not all bad... [images]- STV News (Scotland)

Spanish Firm Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos Awarded 2015 Alvar Aalto Medal: ...Fuensanta Nieto and Enrique Sobejano were commended by the jury for their profound understanding of the local cultures where they work. [images]- ArchDaily

SAH Announces 2014 H. Allen Brooks Travelling Fellowship Recipient: Architectural historian Patricia Blessing will spend a year visiting sites in Turkey, Greece, Bosnia, Albania, Croatia, Italy, Spain, Morocco and Tunisia.- Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)

Library of Congress Announces Winner of 2014 Holland Prize: Award for Drawings of Historic Buildings, Structures and Landscapes: Paul M. Dennehy/Dennehy Architects made his prize-winning drawing of the Broadview Park Pavilion in Fort Worth, Texas...- Library of Congress

Call for entries: MASH Pad Unit (Mobile Architectures for Strategic Healing) international competition: improve the environment in which patients infected with the Ebola disease are housed; deadline: March 16- Habitat for Healing

Inexhaustible Nostalgia, Inexhaustible Shocks of the New: How to Navigate Through a Fake Controversy: A path to avoid the quagmire of architecture’s style wars...During my proposed “time out” to retire the word “style” – let’s dive into the depths of the word “cost.” And I’m not just talking about money. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow.com



-- Steven Holl: Watercolors: ...an important reminder of just how much you can do with the simplest of means. Holl’s watercolors has become his signature...

-- Tezuka Architects: Fuji Kindergarten, Tokyo [image library]

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