

Today's News - Wednesday, February 4, 2015

- **Giovannini x 2:** He lambasts Orange County legislators and their plans for Rudolph's OCGC: "The administrative bullying was transparent; the chutzpah was breathtaking; the taste level was Neanderthal" (with a reference to the Taliban thrown in for good measure).
- He offers a viewpoint re: the Hadid/Filler/NYRB episode that is different from anyone else's we've read: Filler's article "morphed into a cautionary tale about the arrogance of critics - they were criticizing a victim who refused to be victimized. Criticism, not architecture, lost this battle" (a must-read for all you critics and critics of critics out there!).
- Davies sees a bigger problem with the Bingler/Pedersen take on architects not caring about their buildings' users: it's "a real issue, but let's not lose sight of the fact there's also much they get right - it's primarily a problem with the ethos of the profession - reinforced especially by many architecture schools."
- Kamin takes Lucas Museum boosters to task: "The avant-garde's defense of the mountainous blob speaks volumes about all that's wrong with architecture today: a celebration of object-making at the expense of public space - Superrich clients! Icons! The Bilbao effect! They need to sober up" (he means you, Gehry and Sorkin).
- Capps explains why Dallas is home to "the best U.S. architecture per square mile - no place packs in better design than the Dallas's Arts District. Houston comes in at a close second."
- Rao mourns that Marfa is losing its magic: "When we love something we inevitably ruin it with our enthusiasm" - it's turning "into something closer to a ritzy suburban enclave for the world's wealthy."
- Davies warns against a "dystopian vision of a Melbourne ruined by towering 'slums of the future' - greedy developers, mercenary (Asian) investors, vertical sprawl, and dogbox-sized apartments" are "risks that can and should be managed."
- Meanwhile, a group of Melbourne architects have created the Nightingale Model, "a new development model that will deliver environmentally, socially and financially sustainable homes."
- Brake cheers the Cooper Hewitt's makeover as "a refreshing example of public stewardship, institutional self-reflection, and intelligent restraint."
- A look at how Senator Renzo Piano's G124 team is using "urban patching" to revitalize three Italian cities' peripheries "one shipping container at a time."
- Let the office wars begin, starting with a look at some "thought-provoking" designs for "a realm often woefully lacking in design inspiration for the average desk-bound employee: the workplace interior."
- Kaufman delves deep into why "Google got it wrong" - the open plan "is destroying the workplace. Workplaces need more walls, not fewer" (and studies are proving it).
- Another take on why open-plan offices can be "a recipe for skyrocketing anxiety, productivity ground to a screeching halt, and a host of other problems that can be quite dangerous" (especially for the "Highly Sensitive Person/HSP").
- On the other hand, furniture manufacturer CEO Zalcborg says: "Bashing the open office is getting a little too easy. It's not destroying the workplace or trapping America's workers on the dark side, and it doesn't need to die."
- A good way to end such a heavy-handed news day: Eyefuls (and great presentations!) of Contract's 36th Annual Interiors Awards + Arch League's intriguing Emerging Voices 2015 winners + A smattering of images from the winners of the Chicago Architectural Club/Chicago Architecture Foundation's competition to design a hypothetical Obama Library (an international lot it is!).

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[Less America Soon: ...legislators and chief executive...seem keen on rivaling the Taliban for barbarism by irreversibly damaging the comparably magnificent and monumental Orange County Government Center, by Paul Rudolph...the administration had conducted a campaign of destructive architectural activism...The administrative bullying was transparent; the chutzpah was breathtaking; the taste level was Neanderthal. By Joseph Giovannini -- Gene Kaufman/Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman Architects \[images\]- Los Angeles Review of Books](#)

[The Arrogance of Criticism: Martin Filler wrote a scathing appraisal of...Zaha Hadid...She sued Filler and NYRB for defamation...Was she a petulant diva? ...the episode has become a case study about the moral responsibility of critics to their subjects...Filler's article on the insolence of architects has now morphed into a cautionary tale about the arrogance of critics...most managed to find fault with Hadid's reaction: they were criticizing a victim who refused to be victimized...Criticism, not architecture, lost this battle. By Joseph Giovannini- Los Angeles Review of Books](#)

[Do architects care what the users of their buildings want? An increasingly familiar critique...is they don't create buildings that resonate with users. That's a real issue, but let's not lose sight of the fact there's also much they get right...Those who criticise...are almost always ignorant of the unavoidable need to make trade-offs...it's primarily a problem with the ethos of the profession...reinforced especially by many architecture schools... By Alan Davies -- Stephen Bingler; Martin C. Pedersen - Crikey \(Australia\)](#)

[Stars War Over Chicago's Lakefront: The problem with the Lucas Museum? Not just the design but the planning and the politics: The avant-garde's defense of the mountainous blob...speaks volumes about all that's wrong with architecture today: a celebration of object-making at the expense of public space...The defenders...who include Frank Gehry and critic Michael Sorkin, still want to party like the recession never hit. Superrich clients! Icons! The Bilbao effect! They need to sober up. By Blair Kamin -- MAD Architects; Jeanne Gang- Architectural Record](#)

[For the Best U.S. Architecture Per Square Mile, Head to Dallas: New York has the nation's tallest skyscraper. Chicago has some fancy buildings. But one city wins when it comes to sheer density of urban design...no place that packs in better design than the Dallas's Arts District...Houston comes in at a close second. By Kriston Capps -- Dallas: Foster+Partners; REX|OMA; Morphosis; I.M. Pei; Renzo Piano Building Workshop; Philip Johnson; Houston: Steven Holl; Rafael Moneo; Renzo Piano; Venturi Scott Brown; Yoshio Taniguchi; Johnston Marklee; Michael Graves; Mes van der Rohe \[images\]- CityLab \(formerly The Atlantic Cities\)](#)

[Goodbye Marfa, Texas: When we love something we inevitably ruin it with our enthusiasm...Marfa is a city on the brink of proving this rule. ...The irony, of course, is that its appeal was always its edge-of-the-planet vibe...real estate has become prohibitively expensive for longtime locals, turning the tiny city of some 2,000 residents into something closer to a ritzy suburban enclave for the world's wealthy. By Mallika Rao \[images\]- Huffington Post](#)

[Is it time to cap "the era of the skyscraper"? Victoria's new government shouldn't dismiss CBD residential towers...It should think about the wider benefits from increased housing supply...A dystopian vision of a Melbourne ruined by towering "slums of the future" ...along with greedy developers, mercenary \(Asian\) investors, vertical sprawl, and dogbox-sized apartments...most of these aren't certainties or inevitabilities; they're risks that can and should be managed. By Alan Davies - Crikey \(Australia\)](#)

[Melbourne architects call for support for affordable, quality housing that isn't about profit maximisation: ...have created a new development model that will deliver environmentally, socially and financially sustainable homes...the Nightingale Model seeks to provide quality urban housing at affordable prices. -- Breathe Architecture; Six Degrees Architects; Robin Boyd Foundation; Architecture Architecture; Andrew Maynard Architects; Clare Cousins; MRTN Architects; Wolveridge \[images\]- Architecture & Design \(Australia\)](#)

[Crit> Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum: Alan G. Brake enjoys the revamped mix of traditional and](#)

contemporary spaces at the nation's design museum: ...a refreshing example of public stewardship, institutional self-reflection, and intelligent restraint. By Alan G. Brake -- Local Projects; Pentagram; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Thinc Design.; Beyer Blinder Belle; Gluckman Mayner; Hood Design [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Senator Renzo Piano's G124 Team Is Poised to Transform Italy's Cities, One Shipping Container at a Time: ...the first step to revitalizing the suburbs is to deal with the community and local associations. "It's important guarantee a local shared design"...six architects...have been working on three projects of "urban patching" along Turin, Catania, and Rome peripheries. [images]- Architizer

Thought-provoking offices as we head back to work in 2015: ...a realm often woefully lacking in design inspiration for the average desk-bound employee: the workplace interior...Whether it's the introduction of green space, the eradication of chairs, or installing play equipment for adults, it seems evident that businesses worldwide have the infinite potential to benefit from implementing innovative design solutions in the workplace. -- Heldergroen; Rietveld Architecture Art Affordances (RAAAF)/Barbara Visser; HASSELL Architects; [images]- Australian Design Review

Google got it wrong. The open-office trend is destroying the workplace. Workplaces need more walls, not fewer: ...employers are getting a false sense of improved productivity..."ease of interaction" with colleagues - the problem that open offices profess to fix - was cited as a problem by fewer than 10% of workers...the benefits in building camaraderie simply mask the negative effects on work performance. By Lindsey Kaufman - Washington Post

How Does a Highly Sensitive Person Survive the Hell of the American Workplace? If 70% of people work in open floorplans, and one out of five of those people is an HSP, what you've got is a recipe for skyrocketing anxiety, productivity ground to a screeching halt, and a host of other problems that can be quite dangerous. - AlterNet.org

It's Time to Stop the War Against the Open Office: It's no longer fashionable to hate the cubicle. The hot new trend is to bash the open office...Some of this criticism is grounded in genuine concerns...But bashing the open office is getting a little too easy. It's not destroying the workplace or trapping America's workers on the dark side, and it doesn't need to die. By Blake Zalberg, CEO, OFM- Huffington Post

The winners of the 36th Annual Interiors Awards + Designer of the Year: Martin Lesjak/INNOCAD/13&9 Design + Legend Award: David Mourning/IA Interior Architects -- Neumann/Smith Architecture; ZGF Architects; One Plus Partnership; 5G Studio Collaborative; Rockwell Group; Park + Associates; Davis Brody Bond; Munge Leung; ZGF Architects/Firm 151; Thaddeus Lee [images]- Contract magazine

Emerging Voices 2015: ...eight emerging practitioners...with distinct design voices and the potential to influence the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, and urbanism. -- Benjamin Aranda/Chris Lasch/ArandaLasch; Manuel Cervantes Céspedes/MANUEL CERVANTES CESPEDES / CC ARQUITECTOS; Gabriela Etchegaray/Jorge Ambrosi, AMBROSI | ETCHEGARAY; Alejandro Guerrero/Andrea Soto/ATELIER ARS; Neri Oxman/Mediated Matter Group, MIT Media Lab; Brian Phillips/ISA; Studio Roberto Rovira; Elizabeth Whittaker/Merge Architects [images]- Architectural League of New York

This is What The Obama Library Could Look Like In Downtown Chicago: ...won't be built Downtown, and it might not land in Chicago at all. Still, that didn't stop the Chicago Architectural Club and Chicago Architecture Foundation from asking architects...for their best designs of a hypothetical library..."There was Plan A and Plan B, but also Plan O. Plan O was better." -- Zhu Wenyi; Aras Burak Sen; Ann Lui/raig Reschke; Drew Cowdrey/Trey Kirk; Dániel Palotai [images]- DNAinfo Chicago

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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