

Today's News - Wednesday, February 11, 2015

- ArcSpace brings us a Q&A with architectural photographer Åke E:son Lindman (and lots of pix); and a round-up of February exhibitions worth attention.
- Farrelly gives her verdict on Gehry's UTS building in Sydney: "Frank Gehry is the Kim Kardashian of contemporary architecture: all curves, no content. Misconceived, thoughtless, counterproductive, dumb" (and "surprisingly hostile" - ouch!).
- Kennicott minces no words about what he thinks of Washington, DC's new mayor killing a cultural project two years in the making: it "shows only money matters. The lack of imagination in this decision staggers the mind."
- Jurors have "washed their hands of the developer's decision to select Morphosis" for a hotel in Vals.
- An ultimatum to the Chinese developer behind the £500m Crystal Palace plans: pay "£5m and detail its intentions or risk losing the project."
- Dittmar asks "Can architecture reclaim the lost territory of the good ordinary? - and parses the RIBA Skills Survey, the Bingler/Pedersen/Betsky debate, and a petition to the AIA.
- Massengale explains why he is "not a fashionista," and why he launched a petition for AIA and Architect magazine "to more accurately represent the diversity and breadth of work by the members."
- Davies lays out all the reasons a new report re: how high-rise density in Melbourne compares to other cities is so flawed: "A report of a study tour isn't the same as a scholarly research document."
- Why the battle for the "Beaux Arts heart of Manhattan" (next to Grand Central) "could be an object lesson for other cities."
- Capps tackles why "London's obsession with flashy 'maggie infrastructure' solutions is short-sighted: the London Underline "might be its silliest yet. Just don't tell London that."
- Mock delves deep into the dilemma: "How gentrification dirties up environmental cleanups" - but there is "a growth model that can usher in neighborhood improvement without displacing longtime residents. The private sector might do well to follow the same playbook."
- Word is that Koolhaas will be the latest to join the High Line architectural petting zoo: "It was always a question of when - not if - he would join the starchitect party" (sadly, not a lot of details - yet).
- More details about MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program winner Jaque and his COSMO, that "aims to get the public thinking about the sustainability of water use - but to have fun doing it"; it will be "'a disco ball about nature.' Party on."
- Grafton Architects co-founders Farrell and McNamara win fourth annual Jane Drew Prize "for their 'massive influence' on the architectural profession" and "outstanding contribution to the status of women in architecture."
- A good reason to be in NYC on 2/26: BWAFF Leadership Awards Gala "honoring the legacy of Beverly Willis and firms and individuals supporting and advancing women in the building professions."
- Tomorrow is the start of Palm Springs' 10th annual "Mod, Mod, Modernism Week: Insider tips, celebrity designer introductions and a survival guide."
- A good reason to make plans to be in Chicago in April: Society of Architectural Historians' 68th Annual Conference: Chicago at the Global Crossroads.
- Also in April, Building Trust International's Design + Build Workshop will be hands-on at a conservation charity in Laos.
- Call for entries: Field Constructs Design Competition (international) for temporary installations at the Circle Acres Nature Preserve in Austin, Texas (early registration deadline looms!).

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-- Åke E:son Lindman: a prolific architectural photographer based in Sweden; Q&A with Julia Tedroff from Gothenburg Photography School, and a selection of his photographic work  
-- What's On? Architectural Exhibitions, February 2015 edition

The verdict on the Gehry building: A brown bag worthy of the Kardashians: Frank Gehry is the Kim Kardashian of contemporary architecture: all curves, no content....It pushes our buttons the way we like them pushed. I believe it is wrong. Not morally wrong. Misconceived, thoughtless, counterproductive, dumb...As a distant object, it's engaging, eminently instagrammable. But up close, where it counts, it's clunky and surprisingly hostile. By Elizabeth Farrelly-Sydney Morning Herald

Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's killing of D.C. cultural project shows only money matters: ...has abruptly canceled one of the most promising cultural projects to take root in the District in decades...the Institute of Contemporary Expression...Why? Because the city thinks it can harvest more money by turning the Franklin School over to commercial developers...The lack of imagination in this decision staggers the mind...it appears to be a dark day for nonprofit entities and arts organizations... By Philip Kennicott- Washington Post

Jury disowns client's decision to appoint Morphosis in Vals; A raft of high-profile judges have washed their hands of the decision to select Morphosis for a 100-suite hotel next to Peter Zumthor's legendary Therme Vals spa in Switzerland. -- Louisa Hutton/Sauerbruch Hutton; Stefan Cadosch/Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects/SIA; Sacha Menz; Vittorio Lampugnani/ETH Zurich; Daniel Niggli/EM2N- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Ultimatum issued over £500m Crystal Palace scheme: The Chinese developer behind plans...has been asked to make an upfront payment of £5m and detail its intentions or risk losing the project...A shortlist of six big-name architects was announced a year ago, with a winner expected to be announced last summer, but negotiations then stalled. - - David Chipperfield Architects; Grimshaw; Haworth Tompkins; Marks Barfield; Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners; Zaha Hadid/Anish Kapoor [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Can architecture reclaim the lost territory of the good ordinary? ...the profession needs to get better at the mundane: RIBA's 2014 Skills survey...should be a wake-up call for architectural education and for the profession as a whole...There has been something of a revolt within the profession in the US lately...One senses we are not far from that kind of debate here. By Hank Dittmar -- Steven Bingle; Martin C. Pedersen; Aaron Betsky; John Massengale- BD/Building Design (UK)

Architecture: I am not a Fashionista: Starchitecture is both promoted and taught as the work architects should aspire to do. But really, it's the equivalent of the High Fashion...where designers make extreme statements to be provocative and distinguish themselves among the cognoscenti. [link to petition for AIA and Architect to more accurately represent the diversity and breadth of work by the members] By John Massengale- Massengale.com

More overreach on the problem of high-rise towers? Another week, another negative story...There's a need for better planning of towers but there's also a need for better public debate...a "scathing new report" ...says high-rise towers in the CBD are far more densely populated than those in five other international cities...A report of a study tour isn't the same as a scholarly research document though. By Alan Davies - Crikey (Australia)

City Chips Away at Beaux Arts Heart of Manhattan: Brouhaha over development near Grand Central Terminal could be an object lesson for other cities...preservationists are dismayed about its future next-door neighbor...One Vanderbilt...has offered the city a package of transit infrastructure improvements...that the city and Metropolitan Transit Authority say are needed but that they cannot afford to build. By Cara Greenberg -- Kohn Pedersen Fox/KPF; Warren & Wetmore (1912); Carrere & Hastings (1922); Van Alen & Severance (1924); Charles Berg (1911); George B. Post (1924); James Gamble Rogers (1915)- Architectural Record

Taking Cyclists Off Roads Is No Way to Improve Transit: London's obsession with flashy "magpie infrastructure" solutions is short-sighted: ...latest overture...might be its silliest yet. Just don't tell London that...Solutions that take cyclists off streets - whether they're cool-looking or merely grumpy - do nothing to improve safety for pedestrians or drivers...can't solve congestion because bikes are not the cause of congestion. Cars are. By Kriston Capps -- Gensler/London Underline; Foster + Partners/SkyCycle; River Cycleway Consortium [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Can we green the hood without gentrifying it? How gentrification dirties up environmental cleanups: ...proponents of "equitable development," a growth model pushed lately by urban planners who say that it can usher in neighborhood improvement without displacing longtime residents. The private sector might do well to follow the same playbook. By Brentin Mock- Grist Magazine

Rem Koolhaas is the latest starchitect to join the High Line scene: It was always a question of when - not if - he would join the starchitect party...While there are very few details...it will certainly be significant given that it is the world-renowned architect's first major project in New York City. -- OMA- The Architect's Newspaper

Evaporate the Dance Floor: Andrés Jaque designs a water purifying pavilion for MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program: ...COSMO, a gargantuan water-purifying pavilion...aims to get the public thinking about the sustainability of water use...but to have fun doing it...The best part? ...microbes that will become phosphorescent...illuminating the courtyard at night..."a disco ball about nature." Party on. -- Office for Political Innovation [images, video]- Architectural Record

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara win fourth annual Jane Drew Prize: ...awarded jointly to Grafton Architects co-founders for their 'massive influence' on the architectural profession...given to the Dublin-based duo in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the status of women in architecture. [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

BWAF Leadership Awards Gala honoring the legacy of Beverly Willis and firms and individuals supporting and advancing women in the building professions. Thursday, February 26 in NYC. -- HOK; Gregory Hodkinson/Mahadev Raman/Arup Group; Aine Brazil/Thornton Tomasetti; Arielle Assouline-Lichten/Slash Products; Caroline James; Maryanne Thompson Architects - Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation (BWAF)

It's a Mod, Mod, Modernism Week: Insider tips, celebrity designer introductions and a survival guide: What started as a small-town community event 10 years ago has flourished into a happening that has become an international cultural phenomenon. Palm Springs, February 12-22- The Desert Sun (Palm Springs, CA)

SAH 68th Annual Conference: Chicago at the Global Crossroads, April 15-19. 75th anniversary of the Society of Architectural Historians founding.- Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)

Design + Build Workshop, Laos 2015: hands-on participatory workshop... working alongside conservation charity, Free the Bears Fund at their Rescue Centre within the beautiful Tat Kuang Si Park; April 18 - May 2- Building Trust International (UK)

Call for entries: Field Constructs Design Competition (international):  
proposals for temporary installations at the Circle Acres Nature  
Preserve in Austin, Texas...realization of up to eight submitted entries;  
earlybird registration deadline (save money!): February 15  
(submissions due April 1)- Texas Architect magazine / Ecology Action of  
Texas / Pentagram

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