

Today's News - Wednesday, March 4, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is this week's "floating" no-newsletter day - we'll be back Friday, March 6.

- Kimmelman hopes legislators do the right thing tomorrow, and rescue Rudolph's Orange County Government Center from demolition.
- A parsing of UC Berkeley's "aesthetically displeasing" Brutalist buildings, "the product of a handful of frustrated mid-20th century architects. Perhaps we ought to recognize the hidden beauty in our ugliest buildings - despite their subjective designation as eyesores, they are lenses into the past."
- Sturgis delves deep into "why Africa's booming cities need more autonomy in urban planning," and "are right to want a seat at the table - educated, tech-savvy middle classes are unlikely to sit by and watch their cities develop without a local voice" (a fascinating read).
- Hawthorne hails (for the most part) the Heatherwick/BIG design for Google's "both monumental and neighborly" new HQ, "meant, above all, to send a restorative message - a curious, charismatic sort of Arcadian retro-futurism."
- Olcayto parses Silicon Valley starchitects designing for Google, Apple and Facebook: it's "exciting, yes, but also - for those of us interested in starchitects, PR and the insufferably smart world of tech - more than a few things to mull over."
- How could we resist John Oliver's take on America's infrastructure: while "many find the whole topic 'a bit boring,' his funny explainer will win over a few more of the currently disinterested" (references to Porta-Potties and the yellow brick road included).
- Prix on the "robot revolution" and the future of construction: "The next revolution in architecture will come, and that will destroy all the 5000 years of thinking in bricks. Whether we want it or not."
- Vienna's HoHo tower will be the "world's tallest wooden skyscraper," but the "plans didn't go down so well with the Viennese fire department."
- Eye-fuls of architecture "inspired by, and responsive to, the realities of an increasingly volatile natural environment."
- The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts in St. Louis picks an impressive shortlist of three for its new building.
- Q&A with Betsy re: his new gig as dean of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, "the school's path to autonomy, its fundraising efforts, and the goal of expansion."
- He pens a poetic ode to why he's moving to Taliesin to become dean: "Being at Taliesin rekindles my love of the basic building blocks of architecture."
- Q&A with Szanto re: the Davidoff Art Initiative, "the program's aims, the Caribbean context, and why not all corporate-sponsored art is created equal."
- Nouvel goes to court, demanding "not to be associated with Philharmonie de Paris," and has "applied for a court order to ensure amendments are carried out at 26 locations that do not comply with his original design."
- Contract magazine's parent company buys "leading brands in the healthcare and senior living design market."
- Eye-fuls of the 2014 BSA Design Award winners.
- One we couldn't resist: Researchers at Cornell University create a model of "what would actually happen if zombies attacked. Spoiler: The news is not good for city-dwellers" (you can play the simulation, too!).
- Call for entries deadline reminder: 1st Annual Dencity Competition for new ideas to better handle the growing density of unplanned cities.

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Clock Ticks for Paul Rudolph's Orange County Government Center: Thursday is the deadline for legislators in Goshen, N.Y., to rescue his modernist building from demolition...design was about openness, transparency, accountability..."That's why they really hate it." This is a provocative theory. Legislators can try to prove it wrong. They can do the right thing...overturn the veto and reconsider demolition. By Michael Kimmelman -- Gene Kaufman; Clark Patterson Lee - New York Times

Breakdown of Brutalism: ...the fate of UC Berkeley's aesthetically displeasing structures on campus...Brutalist architecture is the product of a handful of frustrated mid-20th century architects...experimented with austere structures...Perhaps we ought to recognize the hidden beauty in our ugliest buildings to gain a renewed appreciation for them...despite their subjective designation as eyesores, are lenses into the past. - The Daily Californian

Why Africa's Booming Cities Need More Autonomy in Urban Planning: The continent is embarking on an urban revolution, and African cities are right to want a seat at the table...some say Africa's urban hubs aren't ready to take the lead in their development...African cities are on a cosmopolitan trajectory - grooming educated, tech-savvy middle classes who are unlikely to sit by and watch their cities develop without a local voice. By Sam Sturgis - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Google's new headquarters design takes transparency to new levels: The remarkably ambitious plans...are communitarian, flexible, robotic and dipped in nostalgia...both monumental and neighborly...meant, above all, to send a restorative message...a curious, charismatic sort of Arcadian retro-futurism...ambitious enough to seek to repair the damage of suburban sprawl while rebalancing the relationship between architecture and nature. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Thomas Heatherwick; BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group [images] - Los Angeles Times

Silicon Valley starchitects: For all that they fondly recall starting out in garages and student dorms, Google, Apple and Facebook are global super-clients on an imperial scale. What do their design choices say about tech firms? Something exciting, yes, but also -- for those of us interested in starchitects, PR and the insufferably smart world of tech -- more than a few things to mull over. By Rory Olcayto -- Heatherwick Studios; BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; Fosters + Partners; Frank Gehry; NBBJ - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Maybe Laughter Is the Best Medicine for America's Infrastructure Ills: "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver"...tackled the mounting problems with U.S. dams, highways and bridges...notes that many find the whole topic "a bit boring." Perhaps his funny explainer - there are references to Porta-Potties, Botox, the yellow brick road - will win over a few more of the currently disinterested. - Next City (formerly Next American City)

The Robot Revolution: Coop Himmel(l)au Founder Wolf D. Prix on

the Future of Construction: ...his thoughts on the future of construction and the role of the architect in an increasingly technological practice..."students and young architects should think about issues such as: what do we do with the workers on the site when the robots take their job? ...not talking about clay and the climate inside the building...The next revolution in architecture will come, and that will destroy all the 5000 years of thinking in bricks. Whether we want it or not." [images, video]- ArchDaily

World's tallest wooden skyscraper planned for Vienna; city's fire service concerned: The HoHo project...will be 76% wood...plans didn't go down so well with the Viennese fire department...now working with the architects to ensure the building meets safety standards...shows that planners and designers alike have a growing faith in the safety of timber structures. -- Rudiger Lainer + Partner [image]- CityMetric (UK)

Shelter and sanctuary: design inspired by disaster: a look at architectural design that is both inspired by, and responsive to, the realities of an increasingly volatile natural environment. -- Charles Wright Architects; Designs Northwest Architects; Designology; Van Der Architects [images]- Australian Design Review

Architecture Research Office (ARO), KieranTimberlake, and Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects make shortlist for Washington University in St. Louis Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts - The Architect's Newspaper

Q&A: Aaron Betsky and a New Era for the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture: ...talks about the school's path to autonomy, its fundraising efforts, and the goal of expansion..."Everyone seems of good will and good faith that we're going to work towards and achieve a situation in which the school will have its proper and independent place in Taliesin."- Architect Magazine

On Going to Taliesin: I am moving to Taliesin to become Dean of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture because I believe in that task. I think that architecture must be a way of understanding both the human-made and the natural world...Being at Taliesin rekindles my love of the basic building blocks of architecture... By Aaron Betsky- Architect Magazine

Q&A: Andras Szanto on the Davidoff Art Initiative: Altos de Chavón School of Design in the Dominican Republic cut the ribbon on a new campus facility...courtesy of the Basel-based cigar purveyor Oettinger Davidoff...The initiative's chief architect talks about the program's aims, the Caribbean context, and why not all corporate-sponsored art is created equal. - Artinfo

Jean Nouvel goes to court to airbrush himself out of Paris concert hall he designed: ...demands not to be associated with Philharmonie de Paris...has applied for a court order to ensure amendments are carried out at 26 locations that do not comply with his original design. - BD/Building Design (UK)

Emerald Expositions Acquires Healthcare Design Brands from Vendome Group; ...parent company of Contract magazine...acquiring several leading brands in the healthcare and senior living design market...- Contract magazine

Boston Society of Architects Reveals 2014 BSA Design Award Winners: 17 projects were awarded the highest honors... -- Foster + Partners/CBT Architects; William Rawn Associates; Stephanie Horowitz/Zero Energy Design (ZED); Fred Koetter/Susie Kim/Koetter Kim & Associates; Payette; Interface Studio Architects/Urbanica Design; Ann Beha Architects; Peter Rose + Partners; Kennedy & Violich Architecture; estudio.entresitio; Matt Burgermaster; NADAAA; Perkins+Will; The S/L/A/M Collaborative; Cooper Robertson & Partners; Shepley Bulfinch; Paul Lukez Architecture- Architect Magazine

Scientists Agree: In Case of Zombie Outbreak, Leave the City: Researchers at Cornell University modeled what would actually happen if zombies attacked. Spoiler: The news is not good for city-dwellers....simulation, which you can play with here... By Aarian Marshall [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Call for entries deadline reminder: 1st Annual Dencity Competition (international): new ideas on how to better handle the growing density of unplanned cities; cash prizes; deadline: March 15 (submissions due April 20)- Shelter

INSIGHT: Speaking with a Quiet Voice: Some notes on designing the Huntington Education and Visitor Center, San Marino, California. By Stephen J. Farneth, FAIA, LEED AP [images]- ArchNewsNow



COBE + Transform: Porsgrunn Maritime Museum, Porsgrunn, Norway: The new saw-toothed museum manages to fit into its surroundings, by mirroring the shapes of the town's characteristic gabled roofs, while at the same time appearing contemporary with its abstract shape and aluminum facades. By Ulf Meyer [images]



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