

Today's News - Friday, April 24, 2015

- A day of slings and arrows, kudos and caveats: Giovannini doesn't just parse Zumthor's latest design iteration for LACMA - he dissects it (sans chloroform): "A warmed-over vision, stuck in caution, camouflaged as artistic sensitivity - dragging the museum toward mediocrity, sliding it into a yawn" (and curators' needs don't count).
- Anderton's Q&A with Giovannini re: why he's against the LACMA design by "a certain architectural mystic in Switzerland," and why the critic chose to be a "voice in the wilderness": "I think the critical establishment has been largely supine and passive..."
- The new Whitney (mostly) wow's more of the critiratti glitterati (lots more in Monday & Tuesday's ANN - if you missed them, click "Yesterday's News" above):
- Wainwright: Piano's "steel-clad icebreaker...trumpets its awkwardness in a strangely compelling way" in a neighborhood being transformed by the "real estate fairy dust of the High Line."
- Saffron: it's "functional, reliable, not lovable," but "the architectural details are so fine that even a humble wall joint becomes a gorgeous piece of precision craft," and "politely defer to their surroundings - and, especially, to the museum's art."
- Glancey likens "the muscular new building to a freighter berthed alongside the Hudson, nosing its way into the city. If you think it a little cold or even artless from the street, step inside."
- Eyefuls of the 6 Guggenheim Helsinki finalists that, along with 15 honorable mentions, go on view at the Kunsthalle Helsinki.
- Lange's first foray as Curbed's architecture critic (yay!): she takes on Heatherwick's Diller/von Furstenberg-funded Pier55 on the Hudson River: is it a "pocket gadget, meme-ecture, or something more nefarious? The last thing the Parks Department needs is another expensive, limited-use bauble."
- Vogel cheers Koolhaas's about-to-open Prada Foundation in Milan, set "on the site of an old distillery in a scruffy industrial neighborhood" with "original industrial buildings juxtaposed with dramatic new ones (and lots of gold leaf).
- Speaking of the Kool guy, OMA is tapped by L.A.'s ornate, 1929 Wilshire Boulevard Temple to design a special events building (though "the congregation has not yet pledged money").
- Eyefuls of Safdie's design for the National Medal of Honor Museum in South Carolina, which alludes to the five-pointed star of the medal itself + Q&A with Safdie re: "his vision for Singapore and what his iconic buildings are supposed to remind us of."
- A historic but long-closed jail in Bendigo, Australia, is transformed into the "stunning, trailblazing" Ulumbarra Theatre - thick metals bars on the windows and the gallows trapdoor included.
- King has a thoughtful conversation with Peterson re: the future of Public Architecture and The 1% program: "the buzz that accompanies the latest gyrations of so-called starchitects...doesn't lessen the need for architects and designers who want to make a fundamental impact at a human scale."
- Eyefuls of AIA 2015 COTE Top Ten and Top Ten Plus Awards (great presentation).
- Weekend diversions:
  - Lina Bo Bardi takes center stage at Chicago's Graham Foundation in the U.S. debut of an exhibition that pays tribute to her work and legacy.
  - MCNY's "Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks" exhibition "documents preservation failures and triumphs, and highlights juxtapositions of new architecture in historic contexts" (and panoramic views of the city by Baan).
  - Christo's "The Floating Piers" will invite the public "to walk on water" with "shimmering yellow walkways" on Italy's Lake Iseo for 16 days in June.
  - Brownell and Swackhamer's "Hypernatural: Architecture's New Relationship with Nature" explores 42 examples of how innovative architects are re-defining building.
  - Two new books on Corbu that depict him "as an out and out fascist have shocked admirers," while the Centre Pompidou's Corbu exhibition "faces allegations of totally failing to mention the controversy."
  - Meanwhile, Grima's "99 Dom-ino" film series looks at how Corbu shaped Italy with structures he didn't design, but "bear his fingerprints. The narration is sparse, but the cinematography is jaw-dropping."

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[Peter Zumthor at LACMA: A Preacher in the Wrong Church: ...fails nearly every metric in the museum design book for viability...represents a failure of aspiration...conservative, even regressive...No disruption; no surprise; just comfort Modernism on steroids...A warmed-over vision, stuck in caution, camouflaged as artistic sensitivity...dragging the museum toward mediocrity, sliding it into a yawn...an alarming remark offensive to some curators: "I don't want art historians to tell me what's important." By Joseph Giovannini - Los Angeles Review of Books](#)

[DnA/Frances Anderton: Joseph Giovannini: Why I'm Against Peter Zumthor's Design For LACMA: "Michael Govan has chosen to tap a certain architectural mystic in Switzerland to come off the mountain"...Why have you taken this upon yourself to be this voice in the wilderness? "I think the critical establishment has been largely supine and passive and I think it's necessary that somebody actually clarify what the issues are." - KCRW \(Los Angeles\)](#)

[All aboard Renzo Piano's steel-clad icebreaker: ...Whitney Museum of American Art...designed by an architect who says he's proud still to be a 'bad boy'...From the outside it might be shockingly ugly to most eyes, but it trumpets its awkwardness in a strangely compelling way...in an area that has been transformed into something of an architectural laboratory by the fertilizing real estate fairy dust of the High Line...does it live up to the magic of the original, much-loved home? By Oliver Wainwright -- Marcel Breuer \[images\] - Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Renzo Piano's new Whitney: functional, reliable, not lovable: ...galleries glow with an effervescent natural light. The architectural details are so fine that even a humble wall joint becomes a gorgeous piece of precision craft...politely defer to their surroundings, to their forebears and, especially, to the museum's art. It's as if Piano had no ego. By Inga Saffron - Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

[Renzo Piano: "My new Whitney Museum is a symbol of American freedom": I liken the muscular new building to a freighter berthed alongside the Hudson, nosing its way into the city...the servant of art - a factory for art - rather than a self-conscious artwork...this really is a relaxed building...Its quietly stated architectural glories lie in its accomplished structure, its superb galleries and its meticulous yet robust detailing...If you think it a little cold or even artless from the street, step inside... By Jonathan Glancey -- Marcel Breuer - Telegraph \(UK\)](#)

["Guggenheim Helsinki Now: 6 Finalist Designs Unveiled:: free exhibition at the Kunsthalle Helsinki includes 15 designs awarded honourable mentions. -- AGPS Architecture; Asif Khan; Fake Industries Architectural Agonism; Haas Cook Zemmrich STUDIO2050; Moreau Kusunoki Architect; SMAR Architecture Studio \[images\] - Guggenheim Museum](#)

[Barry Diller-Funded Pier55 Plan: Pocket Gadget, Meme-ecture, or Something More Nefarious? ...the culmination of two forces: private funding for public parks, with the High Line as reference point for elaborated outdoor urbanism...The last thing the Parks Department needs is another expensive, limited-use bauble...Gadgets are not for the ages, and good design would take that into account from the get-go. By Alexandra Lange -- Thomas Heatherwick \[images\] - Curbed](#)

[The Prada Foundation's New Arts Complex in Milan: ...putting down roots on the site of an old distillery in a scruffy industrial neighborhood...a sprawling complex with nearly 120,000 square feet of exhibition space...Seven years in the making...includes original industrial buildings juxtaposed with dramatic new ones. By Carol Vogel -- Rem Koolhaas/OMA \[images\] - New York Times](#)

[Los Angeles Temple Chooses Koolhaas for a Grand Expansion: Wilshire Boulevard Temple, famous for its ornate 1929](#)

synagogue, wants Rem Koolhaas to design a new building for special events...The congregation has not yet pledged money specifically for the Koolhaas project. -- OMA- New York Times

Their Finest Hour: Safdie Architects Unveils Design for the National Medal of Honor Museum at Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant, S.C....dedicated to those who received the nation's highest military honor...Alluding to the five-pointed star of the medal itself, the main museum building is composed of five inclined volumes that radiate outward to form a pentagonal structure. [images]- Architizer

What actually are Singapore's iconic buildings supposed to look like? Q&A with Moshe Safdie re: his vision for Singapore and what his iconic buildings are supposed to remind us of...What's the Marina Bay Sands supposed to represent? "I don't design in a way that tries to say this is a kettle or this is that or this is that"...Jewel at Changi Airport..."I think it's going to redefine what airports are all about." [images]- CNN

Gold strike: Goldfields jail converted into stunning 1000 seat theatre: Bendigo's new Ulumbarra Theatre, the culmination of a \$28-million project...theatregoers will see the thick metal bars on the windows...And if they look up while queuing for a ticket, they will spot the gallows trapdoor...The redevelopment of the jail, built between 1859 and 1864 and decommissioned in 2006, is considered a unique and trailblazing project. -- Y2 Architecture- The Age (Australia)

Designing a strategy for making a difference: The change at Public Architecture does not signal the decline of the idea that assertive nonprofits can reshape how architects view their place in the world. That reality can get lost amid the buzz that accompanies the latest gyrations of so-called starchitects...But none of this lessens the need for architects and designers who want to make a fundamental impact at a human scale by assisting the communities that need it the most. By John King -- John Peterson; The 1%; Loeb Fellowship- San Francisco Chronicle

AIA 2015 COTE Top Ten/Top Ten Plus Awards: top examples of sustainable architecture and ecological design projects that protect and enhance the environment. -- ZGF Architects; Diamond Schmitt Architects; SERA Architects/CO Architects; ISA-Interface Studio Architects/Urbanica Design; Overland Partners; RTKL; Eskew+Dumez+Ripple/NBBJ; LEDDY MAYTUM STACY Architects; David Baker Architects; The Miller Hull Partnership; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [images]- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

"Lina Bo Bardi: Together" at the Graham Foundation, Chicago: U.S. debut of an exhibition that pays tribute to the work and legacy of 20th-century, Italian-Brazilian architect...Curated by Noemi Blager and designed by London-based Assemble... [images]- Graham Foundation (Chicago)

Museum of the City of New York Opens "Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks": explores the impact of NYC's landmark preservation movement from the 1960s to the present, and features panoramic views of the city shot by Iwan Baan...documents preservation failures and triumphs, and highlights juxtapositions of new architecture in historic contexts [images]- Architect Magazine

Christo invites public to walk on water: Artist best known for wrapping Reichstag turns his attention to creating paths in Italian lake...shimmering yellow walkways on Lake Iseo that will link two of its islands to the mainland for the first time..."The Floating Piers"...first major project since 2005's "The Gates," in New York, and the first since the death of...Jeanne-Claude...will be in place for only 16 days in June before being dismantled and recycled. [images]- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Architects around the world look to nature to create our residential and commercial buildings today and in the future: "Hypernatural: Architecture's New Relationship with Nature" by Blaine Brownell and Marc Swackhamer explores 42 examples of how innovative architects are re-defining building.- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Le Corbusier was 'militant fascist', two new books on French architect claim: Controversy erupts in France over books depicting [him] as an out and out fascist...have shocked admirers and threaten to cast a shadow over commemorations of the 50th anniversary of his death...Pompidou Centre exhibition dedicated to Le Corbusier...faces allegations of totally failing to mention the controversy. -- "Le Corbusier, un fascisme français" by Xavier de Jarcy and "Un Corbusier" by Francois Chaslin- Telegraph (UK)

The Radical Le Corbusier Design That Shaped Italy: ...[he] didn't design these structures, but they bear his fingerprints. Each is built in the image of the Maison Dom-ino, his World War I-era blueprint for standardized housing...they are steeped in design history but rarely noticed. When they are, it's not always favorably..."99 Dom-ino," a film series Joseph Grima created with Space Caviar...The narration is sparse, but the cinematography is jaw-dropping.- Wired



Interview: Enrique Norten/TEN Arquitectos: ...his recent projects and general approach to architecture..."It's a process and a lot of it is trial and error...It is not, as you say, a magical inspiration. It's not a doodle on a napkin. It's a lot of work...architecture is a group effort." By Morten Wilhelm Scholz [images]

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