

Today's News - Thursday, July 23, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is this week's "floating" no-newsletter day - we'll be back Monday, July 27.

- Giovanni digs deep into what could be considered some dubious dealings - and a "dubious design" regarding LACMA: "from the very beginning the ambitious project has been personality driven" rather than based "on a compelling and original design or trustable financial facts" (sure to rankle some).
- Jacobs ponders the rise of supertall observation decks designed to be "tourist magnets" embracing the "contrived concept of 'experience'": they're "a machine. You come in. You experience. You go through it. You come out."
- Brussat x 2: He takes issue with the NYT's endorsement of Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial: "If it is built, the entire idea of national consensus on any issue will receive a severe blow. It will become conventional for monuments to be incomprehensible, because a bland nothingburger of meaning is the least potentially offensive."
- He makes a case for saving "an old monstrosity" Brutalist building from demolition (gasp!) if its replacement is going to be an "even uglier" hotel.
- Grimshaw's The Ship (a.k.a. the Western Morning News building) in Plymouth, U.K., becomes the youngest building to be listed, staving off the threat of demolition.
- CTBUH announces the 2015 Urban Habitat Award winner and finalists.
- The 2015 Palladio Awards recognize 10 firms for outstanding work in traditional design (great presentation).
- Weekend diversions (and lots of 'em!):
- Iovine gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Heatherwick's "Provocations" at the Cooper Hewitt, and a resounding ovation for "a young talent of startling originality who's on a mission to vanquish all things ugly - he is fighting the good fight."
- Traub (mostly) hails MCNY's "Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks": "In its determination to celebrate the landmarks law," it "can seem to leave the most difficult questions unasked. But the sort of city we would have without the landmarks law is clear."
- Kolson Hurley has a ball at Snarkitecture's "The BEACH" at the National Building Museum: "Visiting definitely feels like an escape from the everyday, and there's no risk of getting sand in your eyes."
- "Contemporary Architecture. Made in Germany" at the German embassy in Paris shows off how German architects are "solving modern urban problems" in developing markets by "focusing on sustainability, urban development and technology."
- Kats cheers Arch League's "30 Years of Emerging Voices": it "accomplishes a rare feat, presenting a comprehensive testament to and analysis of the architectural styles and discourses that dominated the years covered."
- Douglas gives (mostly) thumbs-up to three new tomes about "informal urbanism," though they "lack sufficient cautions and critiques," and raise "questions to ask about rewarding these efforts when many people want for basic shelter and services."
- Day delves deep into "the iUrbanisms of Los Angeles": a "range of insightful protagonists" in "(In)Formal L.A.: The Space of Politics" offers "a valuable new perspective for urbanists, one that underscores not just the link between intent and impact but also, and crucially, the link between intent and form."
- Corbu's architecture and politics "are at the heart of fresh controversy in France set off by three new books and an exhibition at the Pompidou Center" (was he "a fascist-leaning ideologue" or "a political naïf"?)
- Newman cheers "BIG, HOT TO COLD," a 700-page "decadent and wholly optimistic treatise" and "rhapsodic hymn to architectural evolution. Someday, perhaps, the world will catch up to Bjarke Ingels and his band of renegade rationalists."
- Filler fills his page with some fascinating history about Gaudí's Sagrada Família, and CCNY's exhibition catalogue that "suggests why the version being realized today seems somehow less Gaudiesque than might have been expected."

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[Inconvenient Truths at LACMA: Sweeping Debt, Dealmaking, and Dubious Design under the Red Carpet: ...from the very beginning the ambitious project has been personality driven, based much more on Govan's determination, enthusiasm, and charisma than on a compelling and original design or trustable financial facts...\[he\] skipped over too many of the stepping stones normally leading to responsible museum design, starting with how to choose an architect...After four years, the absence of plans shows either an alarming lack of progress or an alarming state of secrecy.](#) By Joseph Giovanni -- Peter Zumthor; Frank Gehry- Los Angeles Review of Books

[One World Observatory and the Rise of the Supertall Deck: Karrie Jacobs on how these contrived tourist magnets can test the Philippe Petit in all of us: The business of observation decks has lately embraced the contrived concept of "experience"...a machine. You come in. You experience. You go through it. You come out"...The sleepy, unmediated observation deck experience is, I'm sorry to say, a thing of the past.](#) -- Montrøy Andersen DeMarco Group; Hettema Group; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Gensler; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture [images]- Architect Magazine

[Frank Gehry's Ike vs. the nation: If \[it\] is built, the entire idea of national consensus on any issue, or even general cultural understanding, will receive a severe blow...It will become conventional for monuments to be incomprehensible, because a bland nothingburger of meaning is the least potentially offensive. This is already conventional, almost mandatory, in architecture for public and private buildings.](#) By David Brussat- Architecture Here and There

[Eyesore vs. eyesore: The Fogarty should not be torn down unless something better...is proposed...Unfortunately, the building proposed...looks even uglier...An old monstrosity always holds out the hope of replacement by something the public can admire...A new monstrosity promises to glare at us for decades. Why replace a building we can blame on our fathers with a building we can blame only on ourselves?](#) By David Brussat -- Castellucci, Galli & Planka Associates (1967); Albert Kahn (1934) [images]- Architecture Here and There

[Grimshaw's The Ship is listed by new heritage minister: Western Morning News building in Plymouth...is the youngest building to be added to the list, at just 22 years old...The former newspaper HQ and printworks...was given grade II* protection on the advice of Historic England following a request by the Twentieth Century Society.](#) [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

[CTBUH Announces 2015 Urban Habitat Award Winner and Finalists: PARKROYAL on Pickering, Singapore -- WOHA Architects; Robert A.M. Stern Architects/SRA Architects; Cox Richardson Architects & Planners; Zaha Hadid Architects/RSP Architects; Kohn Pedersen Fox \(KPF\)/Wong & Ouyang/Benoy/Hirsch Bedner Associates/Shanghai Institute of Architectural Design & Research/Super Potato](#) [images]- Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH)

[Winners of the 2015 Palladio Awards Competition: ...recognized 10 architectural firms for outstanding work in traditional design... -- Treanor Architects; The S/L/A/M Collaborative/Sullivan Buckingham Architects; BKSK Architects; David Scott Parker Architects; Marcy Wong Donn Logan Architects; Robert A. M. Stern Architects; Peter Zimmerman Architects; Khoury & Vogt Architects; Curtis & Windham Architects; Hamady Architects](#) [images]- Traditional Building Magazine / Period Homes

["Provocations: The Architecture and Design of Heatherwick Studio": Whimsical design from a young talent of startling originality who's on a mission to vanquish all things ugly: Thomas Heatherwick is a design talent of startling originality...not a typical architect...His unorthodox - slightly antimodernist - inclinations emphasize human scale, textured materials and the importance of visual pleasure...if that is a provocation, he is fighting the good fight; at the Cooper Hewitt.](#) By Julie V. Iovine- Wall Street Journal

[The Vanishing City: The story of the Landmarks Preservation Commission's emergence as a powerful force in city politics is documented by a revealing new exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, "Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City](#)

Landmarks"...In its determination to celebrate the landmarks law...can seem to leave the most difficult questions unasked. But the sort of city we would have without the landmarks law is clear... By Alex Traub [images]- New York Review of Books

Balls to the Walls: Sharkitecture Creates Gigantic Ball Pit in National Building Museum: ...almost a million plastic balls that visitors can float on or swim through..."The BEACH" revels in the immense scale of the museum's 300-foot-long Great Hall...Lying on your back in the plastic sea, the ceiling seems as distant as the sky. Visiting definitely feels like an escape from the everyday, and there's no risk of getting sand in your eyes. By Amanda Kolson Hurley [images]- Architectural Record

German architects tackle global issues: ...expanding in developing markets by solving modern urban problems...making the most of the positive attributes associated with the Made in Germany label - like quality and reliability - and focusing on sustainability, urban development and technology..."Contemporary Architecture. Made in Germany"...at the German embassy in Paris. -- Auer Weber Architects; Albert Speer & Partners; Nickl & Partner; Graft architects; Gerber Architects; Braun Schlockermann Dreesen; KSP Jürgen Engel; RSAA [images, video]- Deutsche Welle (Germany)

The Emerging Voices Prize Comes of Age: There are a great many awards for architecture...awarded by the Architectural League of New York since 1982, stands out from this crowd..."30 Years of Emerging Voices"...accomplishes a rare feat, presenting a comprehensive testament to and analysis of the architectural styles and discourses that dominated the years covered...Anne Rieselbach and Rosalie Genevro approach the future of the field with trepidation... By Anna Kats - Artinfo

Informal Urbanism: Three new books offer contributions to this discourse...all unwavering proponents of their subjects, lack sufficient cautions and critiques. There are simple issues of safety and responsibility...also questions to ask about rewarding these efforts when many people want for basic shelter and services. This critical perspective is still missing from the conversation. "Villages in the City: A Guide to South China's Informal Settlements" edited by Stefan Al; "Handmade Urbanism" by Marcos Rosa and Ute Weiland; "Tactical Urbanism" by Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia. By Gordon Douglas - Architectural Record

The iUrbanisms of Los Angeles: For ambitious L.A. architects, city talk is out of fashion. Yet insightful designers continue to seek a better future: A modest but sharply framed manifesto, "(In)Formal L.A.: The Space of Politics" brings together a range of insightful protagonists...ambitious design and urban critique could use some realignment...it introduces a valuable new perspective for urbanists, one that underscores not just the link between intent and impact but also, and crucially, the link between intent and form. By Joe Day/Deegan-Day Design- Places Journal

Le Corbusier's Architecture and His Politics Are Revisited: Was the paradigm-changing architect...a fascist-leaning ideologue...or a humanist who wanted to improve people's living conditions - a political naïf...These questions...are at the heart of fresh controversy in France set off by three new books that re-examine that master Modernist's politics and an exhibition at the Pompidou Center..."Le Corbusier, a French Fascism" by Xavier de Jarcy; "Le Corbusier, a Cold Vision of the World" by Marc Perelman; "A Corbusier" by François Chaslinother. By Rachel Donadio -- Antoine Picon/Le Corbusier Foundation; Jean-Louis Cohen; Nicholas Fox Weber/"Le Corbusier: A Life"- New York Times

Free Bjarke Ingels: Bjarke Ingels Group's latest book, "BIG, HOT TO COLD: An Odyssey of Architectural Adaptation" leans heavily on progressive concepts, speculative work, and graphic fireworks...a decadent and wholly optimistic treatise on the built environment of the near future...a rhapsodic hymn to architectural evolution...Someday, perhaps, the world will catch up to Bjarke Ingels and his band of renegade rationalists. By Brian Newman- The Architect's Newspaper

Gaudí's Great Temple: In "Sagrada Família: Gaudí's Unfinished Masterpiece, Geometry, Construction and Site" - the book of the illuminating exhibition recently held at the City College of New York...curated by George Ranalli and Fabian Llonch...Judith Rohrer suggests why the version being realized today, based on that final revision, seems somehow less Gaudiesque than might have been expected... By Martin Filler -- Jordi Faulí- New York Review of Books

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