Today's News - Thursday, September 24, 2015

EDITOR’S NOTE: It's a Zaha Gold Medal kind of day! (And a shorter-than-usual newsletter - we're in a mad dash to get to Manhattan before the Pope does, so we can get to BIG's LafargeHolcim Award celebration this evening!)

• Peter Cook hails Hadid winning RIBA’s Royal Gold Medal: “Let’s face it, we might have awarded the medal to a worthy, comfortable character. We didn’t, we awarded it to Zaha: larger than life, bold as brass and certainly on the case. Our Heroine.”
• Heathcott hails Hadid: “If there is anything surprising about the Gold Medal going to Dame Zaha, it is that it has taken so long.”
• Wainwright x 2: “Zaha has grown into something of universal brand. But the ride to global ubiquity and expensive tabletop trinkets hasn’t always been an easy one” (some thorny roads on “Planet Zaha”).
• He wonders why Hadid is “given a harder time than her starchitect rivals”: “she is typecast as the famously grumpy, demanding old diva, while Koolhaas is the charismatic maverick. Richard Rogers can throw his toys out of the pram when things don’t go his way, but all the media sees is a kindly veteran with natty neon dress sense.”
• Olcayto considers the same re: why “many in the profession still consider Hadid an exotic anomaly,” and “still thought of as an outsider” - especially after bagging the “grand slam” of RIBA Gold, Pritzker Prize, Praemium Imperiale, and the Stirling (twice) + Waite’s Q&A with Dame Zaha.
• Wainwright and Gibson fact-check the now-infamous Radio 4 interview that Hadid walked out on: “how and why it went so wrong.”
• Needless to say, the twitter-sphere lit up: The questioning in the “twisted” interview “sparked an outcry from architects.”
• Australia appoints new Minister for Cities and the Built Environment, and the Australian Institute of Architects approves and offers an agenda.
• Eyefuls of Viñoly’s proposed 76-story tower at the south end of Chicago’s Grant Park (which might also sprout a twin): it “ups the ante when it comes to selecting notable architects for projects in the area.”
• Rand Elliott works his magic on two new garages “that make parking a pleasure” by bringing “a level of sophistication, attention to detail, and desire to create enjoyable spaces that is not typically associated with the typology.”

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Zaha Hadid awarded 2016 Royal Gold Medal: ...first woman to be awarded the medal in her own right...She has also won the Stirling Prize twice...Archigram founder Peter Cook adds: “Let’s face it, we might have awarded the medal to a worthy, comfortable character. We didn’t, we awarded it to Zaha: larger than life, bold as brass and certainly on the case. Our Heroine.” - BDBuilding Design (UK)

Zaha Hadid blazes trail for women with RIBA architecture award: If there is anything surprising about the Gold Medal going to Dame Zaha, it is that it has taken so long...has been responsible for the most expressively sculptural and astonishingly futuristic architecture of the modern age...“I suppose I must be part of the establishment now. I’ve always been independent and because I’m ‘flamboyant’ I’ve always been seen as difficult...It’s OK, I like being on the edge.” By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

Zaha Hadid: from Baghdad to global ubiquity (and the RIBA gold medal): One of the most sought-after architects in the world...when the exotic forms concocted on Planet Zaha have to interface with reality, things don’t always work out...She receives the medal in part for her influence beyond buildings. Indeed, “Zaha has grown into something of universal brand...But the ride to global ubiquity and expensive tabletop trinkets hasn’t always been an easy one. By Oliver Wainwright - Guardian (UK)

Why is Zaha Hadid given a harder time than her starchitect rivals? On the day Hadid was awarded RIBA’s gold medal, her Radio 4 walkout shows she is held to a different standard to the likes of Foster and Koolhaas: ...it was a sloppily researched interview...she is typecast as the famously grumpy, demanding old diva, while Koolhaas is the charismatic maverick, Richard Rogers can throw his toys out of the pram when things don’t go his way, but all the media sees is a kindly veteran with natty neon dress sense. By Oliver Wainwright - Guardian (UK)

Many in the profession still consider Hadid an exotic anomaly: Why is it that Zaha Hadid, recipient of this year’s Gold Medal, is still thought of as an outsider? ... the grand slam: she’s bagged the Pritzker Prize, the Praemium Imperiale, the Stirling (twice) and now the Gold Medal...despite her success and her seemingly all-conquering practice...There is still a problem, she says, of how women are treated in the profession; but in her case she’s not sure if it’s because she’s a woman, a foreigner, or because, in her words, she does ‘funny work. I’d say it's all three. By Rory Olcayto + Exclusive Q&A with Richard Waite - The Architects’ Journal (UK)

Zaha Hadid Radio 4 interview: how and why it went so wrong: Oliver Wainwright and Owen Gibson look at how the line of questioning led to the architect cutting short the interview - Guardian (UK)

Anger as Zaha grilled on BBC Today Programme: The profession has been angered by a ‘twisted’ interview in which Zaha Hadid was questioned over Tokyo stadium and workers rights in Qatar: The questioning on the programme sparked an outcry from architects with many taking to twitter to voice their anger. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Prime Minister Turnbull appoints new Minister for Cities and the Built Environment: ...Jamie Briggs in the newly created role...will work within the Ministry of Environment...to develop a new Australian government agenda for our cities”...The Australian Institute of Architects has supported the announcement...also called for the minister and his department to: appoint a federal government architect to further promote high quality buildings and public spaces...adopt an urban design policy...- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Roadside Renzo: High design graces the new offices of a Des Moines-based convenience store chain: Kum & Go Headquarters...The attention Piano has focused on the city is reason to be proud...but it is also an opportunity to exorcise some fly-over-country anxiety. -- Renzo Piano; OPN Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

76-Story Rafael Viñoly-Designed Tower Would Become Tallest in South Loop: ...might not just be one building, but possibly twin skyscrapers for the south end of Grant Park...ups the ante when it comes to selecting notable architects for projects in the area. [images]- Curbed Chicago

Car Park Three & Four at Chesapeake: Rand Elliott + Associates Architects turn in two new garages that make parking a pleasure: ...has invested a level of sophistication, attention to detail, and desire to create enjoyable spaces that is not typically associated with the typology...“Give me a warehouse, or a parking structure. They have such potential to do something great.”
A Building Worth Its Salt? ...the New York Times ran a splashy article on Manhattan’s new Spring Street Salt Shed...while applauding the building’s aesthetics and symbolism...neglects to ask an important question about its purpose: Does the city need all that salt? Road salt can damage both human and ecological health...Many communities are exploring "nature-friendly substitutes"...Why build such a functionally specific and long-lasting structure when the function it supports is already outmoded? By Lance Hosey -- Dattner Architects - Huffington Post

A Wonderfully Clear Explanation of How Road Diets Work: Planner Jeff Speck leads a video tour of four different street redesigns. By Eric Jaffe - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Initial Design Team Shortlist Announced for New U.S. Embassy Project in Brasilia, Brazil: 48 firms were accepted for consideration to compete. -- Diller, Scyardio + Renfro; Morphosis Architects; Pelli, Clarke, Pelli Architects; Rafael Viñoly Architects; Steven Holl Architects; Studio Gang Architects - U.S. Department of State

Dwell on Design New York: "design(ed) for you"; October 2-4: 3-day event upends the standard trade show format by constructing a forum for unique ideas and a fresh point of view. - Dwell

Sydney Architecture Festival returns with new format and a packed schedule of design and architecture events: The ninth edition...begins on Friday 2 October, and will feature a packed schedule of design and architecture inspired activities at various inner Sydney locations. - Architecture & Design (Australia)