

Today's News - Tuesday, June 21, 2016

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of Library at the Dock, "a warm and welcome addition to Melbourne's Docklands precinct - it brings some much needed civic life and vitality to this new part of the city" (and it's timber).
- Menking minces no words about the Venice Biennale's U.S. Pavilion that allows "freeform architectural fantasy to predominate" in (most of) the projects for Detroit: "is their 'Americanness' so specific to our corporate society and culture as to be of little interest or importance" to others?
- Till tallies up the Biennale: is it really about good intentions, or "just part of a cycle of architectural jamborees" where "we suffer all this worthiness for a bit," and then we "get on with what we all really enjoy and want to do, all the irresponsible fun and high testosterone stuff of Real Architecture?"
- Saunders explains how "Arrival City," his book on immigration, "became the voice of Germany at the Venice Biennale. They needed new ideas about migration and cities, and they needed them fast."
- Hatherley doesn't [heart] the Serpentine Pavilion initiative: it "represents everything that's wrong with 'high' architecture today - invariably over-engineered, superficial and aloof" (though BIG's "effort is a good one, it has just one fatal flaw").
- Kamin x 2: he explains why all but one of the Chicago Architecture Biennial lakefront kiosks have been delayed: "While the holdup is a disappointment, it is not unexpected. Bold new designs often bust budgets or arouse opposition."
- He bemoans Chicago's Block 37, which has ended up with "ordinary architecture on an extraordinary site" - dreamy visions have been "devoured like a fire-breathing medieval monster. It's astonishing - and depressing - that it took so long (and so much public money) to deliver so little."
- Meanwhile, there's "a new twist" in the ongoing Lucas Museum vs. Friends of the Parks saga that "supports rumors" that there's at least interest in negotiating.
- Ma Yansong, meanwhile, "bemoans 'conservative' opponents" to his design for the Lucas Museum (it's just about his design - he hasn't followed the saga, it seems).
- King, on a brighter note, sees "hints of lyricism" emerging in San Francisco's Transbay transit hub: despite some "value-engineering along the way - the architectural ambition has shaken off the politics and budgetary problems that still could pull it down."
- Moore marvels at Tate Modern's Switch House: "there's some danger that the architecture might steal the show," but if it "could be accused of having too much architecture, it is architecture that, once found, you wouldn't want to lose."
- Hawthorne parses the "quiet, low-key rollout" of Gehry's L.A. River plan that some consider "a kind of high-design architectural cover for rampant real-estate speculation"; meanwhile, "the race to reimagine it is growing more crowded."
- Wainwright is won over by Allies & Morrison's plan for "a cheap, cheerful and wholly supportable alternative" to the pricey Garden Bridge that "could be a truly public space."
- The winner of Van Alen's challenge to handle New York's L-train shutdown is like a very NYC take on Venice's vaporetto system (we'll let you decide which finalist must be there just to be click bait - grrrrr).
- Pedersen has an engaging Q&A with Duany re: the "unique challenges of working in Cuba" now that he is "actively engaged in helping planners in Havana rezone the harbor."
- Virginia's only Breuer building gets a "temporary stay of demolition": county planners took another look at the "Brutalist gem" and "admitted to 'a major screw up.'"
- Instead of facing the wrecking ball (though it might), Breuer's only Australian building, designed with Seidler, is up for sale.
- Betsky, Lange, Lambert, and Freeman take a dim view of the upcoming Four Seasons restaurant auction: it's "a sort of interior façadism, and a perversion of the idea of a landmark interior."
- Why architects aren't front-and-center at the decision-making table is "because of the perception of what we do. We need to reinvisage what architecture means."
- Five Canadian architects "look beyond lowest fee bidding practices" and offer 7 best practices that take architecture beyond "a lowest-price-wins commodity."

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[Clare Design: The Library at the Dock, Melbourne, Australia: ...a warm and welcome addition to Melbourne's Docklands precinct. A cross between a library and a community center, it brings some much needed civic life and vitality to this new part of the city...a building that prioritizes the interior experience, and as such is cozy, comfortable and welcoming. By Jennifer McMaster \[images\]](#)

[Is the U.S.'s Biennale Pavilion actually the Quicken Loans Pavilion? How did it happen that only one American project \(from Rural Studio\) was included in the main exhibition? "The Architectural Imagination"...12 speculative projects for...Detroit...is their "Americanness" so specific to our corporate society and culture as to be of little interest or importance to architects in other countries? Might their reliance on the power of the imagination to suggest solutions to profoundly troubling problems come at the expense of a more expansive definition of architecture and a deeper urban analysis? By William Menking -- Cynthia Davidson; Monica Ponce De Leon; Detroit Resists - The Architect's Newspaper](#)

[The Architecture of Good Intentions: Reflections on 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale: If \[it\] is about good intentions, then what are all the others about? ...if \[it\] is just part of a cycle of architectural jamborees, is the implication that we are somehow bound to...suffer all this worthiness for a bit...and when it is all over get on with what we all really enjoy and want to do, all the irresponsible fun and high testosterone stuff of Real Architecture? By Jeremy Till - Reading Design](#)

[How my book on immigration \["Arrival City"\] became the voice of Germany at the Venice Biennale: ...officials who chose our pavilion proposal...were explicit about this: They needed new ideas about migration and cities, and they needed them fast...A core component...is a database...more than 400 refugee-housing projects currently under way in Germany...Some of them are awful. Some are ingenious. By Doug Saunders \[images\] - Globe and Mail \(Canada\)](#)

[The Serpentine Pavilion represents everything that's wrong with "high" architecture today: ...invariably over-engineered, superficial and aloof...an interesting combination of celebrity and obsolescence...Bjarke Ingels's effort is a good one, doing all the right things...It has just one fatal flaw...it doesn't keep the rain off...Zaha Hadid Architects' Sackler Restaurant...ETFE bellyflop has already started to wilt and warp... By Owen Hatherley - Icon \(UK\)](#)

[Chicago architecture biennial lakefront kiosks delayed: The little buildings...were supposed to be up and running in Chicago's lakefront parks this summer...only one...has been built at its permanent location...While the holdup is a disappointment, it is not unexpected. Bold new designs often bust budgets or arouse opposition. By Blair Kamin -- Sarah Herda; Paul Andersen/Paul Preissner; Mauricio Pezo/Sofia von Ellrichshausen; Kunlé Adeyemi; Ultramoderne \[images\] - Chicago Tribune](#)

[Block 37 represents a painful missed opportunity: Hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds have been spent to bring about rejuvenation. And what does Chicago have to show for it...ordinary architecture on an extraordinary site...This prime parcel...has devoured dreamy visions like a fire-breathing medieval monster...It's astonishing - and depressing - that it took so long \(and so much public money\) to deliver so little. By Blair Kamin -- Solomon Cordwell Buenz; Gensler; Perkins+Will - Chicago Tribune](#)

Friends of the Parks lists demands for Lucas Museum of Narrative Arts: There is a new twist in the story of the proposed MAD Architects-designed museum in Chicago...latest move by FOTP supports rumors that the city and the group are at least interested in negotiating. - The Architect's Newspaper

Exclusive: Ma Yansong bemoans 'conservative' opponents to his design for George Lucas' legacy museum in Chicago: "It's sad. I don't understand why they are trying to block it. Chicago used to be very open...I think there's a certain community that has become too conservative now, which is a shame." -- MAD Architects - CLAD (Community of Leisure Architects & Designers)

Hints of lyricism now in transit at transbay hub: The glossy visions of 2007 are becoming reality and, so far, [the] architectural ambition has shaken off the politics and budgetary problems that still could pull it down...If City Hall had taken the reins a year earlier, the quest to trim costs by cheapening the finishes could have grabbed a few daily headlines but dumbed down what we'll be living with for decades to come. By John King -- Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

Tate Modern's Switch House - richness and grandeur: ...architecture might brood and trouble, contradict...Then, slowly, the building unfolds its generousities...responds brilliantly to the punk urbanism of the commercial developments around it...there's some danger that the architecture might steal the show...if [the] extension could be accused of having too much architecture, it is architecture that, once found, you wouldn't want to lose. By Rowan Moore -- Herzog & de Meuron - Observer (UK)

Frank Gehry's controversial L.A. River plan gets quiet, low-key rollout: ...suggests that River LA is less interested in giving a clear picture of what Gehry's plan eventually may include than in tamping down charges that it has been born of secrecy...a kind of high-design architectural cover, for rampant real-estate speculation...as the river takes on new shades of economic and political meaning...the race to reimagine it is growing more crowded. By Christopher Hawthorne -- Laurie Olin - Los Angeles Times

Why build the garden bridge when we could plant trees on Blackfriars bridge? Rather than spending £175m on Thomas Heatherwick and Joanna Lumley's floating park, Allies & Morrison suggest we try a cheap, cheerful and wholly supportable alternative: Freed from the burden of a huge debt and the demands of corporate sponsors, the Blackfriars bridge garden could be a truly public space. By Oliver Wainwright [images] - Guardian (UK)

Ideas for Handling L-Train Shutdown Range from Fun to Far-Out: ...community members...have become more welcoming to the gamut of ideas that city and outside planners have created to ease the transition...winning concept at a Van Alen Institute charrette imagined...combining ferry use...with routing trains over an unused freight line. -- Youngjin Yi/Buro Happold; Dillon Pranger/Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Greg Reaves/Moshe Safdie Architects; Steven Haardt/Haardt Studio; Petra Kempf/Ziyang Zeng/Urbantransits.Net; Gonzalo Cruz/Xiaofei Shen/Garrett Avery/Rayana Hossain/AECOM; Jaime Daroca/Columbia University C-Lab; Nicolas Lee/Hollwich Kushner/HWK; Daniela Leon/Harvard GSD; John Tubles/Pei Cobb Freed [images] - City Limits (NYC)

Q&A: Andres Duany on the Unique Challenges of Working in Cuba: ...he spent his early childhood in Cuba...and is now actively engaged in helping planners in Havana rezone the harbor. By Martin C. Pedersen - Common Edge

Temporary Stay of Demolition Granted for Virginia's Sole Marcel Breuer Building: The former headquarters of the American Press Institute [API] in Reston was slated for demolition until a last-minute proposal...convinced Fairfax County planners to take another look at the Brutalist gem in a bucolic setting...the commission admitted to "a major screw up"... By Deane Madsen [images] - Architect Magazine

Marcel Breuer's only Australian building for sale: The former Torin factory building...in Penrith, western Sydney...was designed in collaboration with Harry Seidler and landscape architect Bruce Rickard...completed in 1976... [images] - ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Critics slam "painful" auction of items from Philip Johnson's The Four Seasons restaurant: "To say that [the] space is 'preserved' with just the walls and those signature bead curtains is a sort of interior facadism, and a perversion of the idea of a landmark interior." -- Mies van der Rohe; Hans J Wegner; L Garth Huxtable/Ada Louise Huxtable; Aaron Betsky; Alexandra Lange; Phyllis Lambert; Belmont Freeman - Dezeen

The good, the bad and the built: why architects should put people first: But clients also have a responsibility to "not set architects up to fail"..."architects aren't even at the [decision-making] table because of the perception of what we do...We need to reinvisage what architecture means." -- Tony Lee/Robin Boyd Foundation; Rufus Black; Esther Charlesworth/Architects without Frontiers - Sydney Morning Herald

Race to the Top: At a time when many firms compete on low fees, what are the best practices for setting Healthier FEE expectations? ...5 Canadian architects explained how they prepare clients to look beyond lowest fee bidding practices...7 best practices by architects who are thinking beyond architecture as a lowest-price-wins commodity. By Sharon VanderKaay -- David Premi/DPAI Architecture; Maureen O'Shaughnessy/CS&P Architects; Jamie Wright/IBI Group; Bill Birdsell; Marco VanderMaas/Quadrangle Architects - Canadian Architect

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