

Today's News - Thursday, August 4, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow and Monday will be no-newsletter days. We'll be back Tuesday, August 9.

- Getting the odd/scary/bad news over with: San Francisco's 58-story, luxury residential Millennium Tower is sinking - developers blame construction of the nearby Transbay Transit Center; of course, the Transbay folks say otherwise.
- And from the other side of the Big Pond: eyefuls of London's £1.3 billion cultural quarter Olympicopolis, a.k.a. Stratford Waterfront.
- Jenkins compares the Stratford plans to the Museum of London's Smithfield plans: one is a "predictable mausoleum to £9 billion of public money"; the other, an "alternative exemplar" that "will have no need to call itself Smithfieldopolis."
- The Stratford Waterfront architects brush off critics' "flurry of abuse": "It's a shame the grumpy old men don't like it, but it's hardly designed for them."
- Critics have not yet weighed in on the just-released images of Robin Hood Gardens' replacement.
- Dittmar weighs in on this year's Stirling Prize shortlist: "All told most of this year's shortlist are at least making some urban gestures and at least half are doing a good job" (but the House in Essex "deserved to be on the list").
- Lange lines up a list of universities that "are investing in big, high-tech buildings in the hope of evoking big, high-tech thinking."
- Heneghan Peng's Palestinian Museum honors "ongoing struggles while speaking to future aspirations."
- Hopes are high for a Universal Hip Hop Museum in a landmarked courthouse in the Bronx, and the challenge is to "find ways to work a raucous history into a very staid building."
- Call for entries: eVolo 2017 Skyscraper Competition (we can't wait to see what evolves - whatever we think of the winners, they're never dull!).
- Weekend diversions:
 - Martin mulls the film version of Ballard's "High-Rise" that brings his dystopian vision of "the psychological effects of 'the tower block'" to life (the first sentence will keep us away).
 - Something we would like to see: "Glenn Murcutt: Architecture of Faith" in Melbourne: the Australian Islamic Centre "establishes a new architectural language for Islamic architecture in a contemporary Australian context."
 - "raumlaborberlin: 4562 Enright Avenue" at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis assembles a skeleton of the house to "inspire public discussions about why such homes were abandoned" and what potential they hold.
 - Yum yum: Mattingly's "Swale" is a "floating food project" where food can be picked for free; then the barge will float on to other waterfront parks in NYC.
 - Green brings us eyefuls of "A World of Wonders" in Tokyo, "a fascinating and bizarre collection of spaces" where visitors "shape the ever-changing works in real-time" (we love the Koi pool!).
 - Snarkitecture's "The Beach" heads to Tampa with a lot more balls than it had at the National Building Museum.
 - "The Tale of Tomorrow: Utopian Architecture in the Modernist Realm" is filled with "vibrant, eccentric architecture" that left Meier "yearning for that kind of experimental optimism in our structures today" (with a caveat).
 - Budds finds a moral in the story of "William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism": "There could stand to be less ego in contemporary architecture - and perhaps more butterfly roofs."
 - Pedersen's great Q&A with Rybczynski re: "Now I Sit Me Down," his new book that "feels loose and relaxed, as well s grounded and authoritative. In a way, it's like a good chair."
 - Koonos' fifth book of her "Prefabulous" series explores how prefab "has evolved and become part of a broader conversation about how we build," and how "lifestyle shifts are pushing it mainstream as well."

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San Francisco's Millennium Tower is sinking say experts: Since completing in 2008, the 58-storey [tower] has sunk 16 inches (41 centimetres) and tilted two inches (five centimetres)...was only predicted to drop six inches (15 centimetres) during its lifetime...developers have blamed construction of the nearby Transbay Transit Center... -- Arup; Handel Architects; Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects - Dezeen

New images reveal Olympicopolis vision by Allies and Morrison and O'Donnell + Tuomey: ... includes outposts for the V&A museum and Sadler's Wells Theatre...£1.3 billion cultural quarter at London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park...called Stratford Waterfront. -- Arquitecturia; Gustafson Porter - Dezeen

Simon Jenkins: The best way to bring life to London's two new cultural quarters: The proposed developments at the former Olympic site and Smithfield Market could not be more different: The Stratford site, ploddingly named Olympicopolis, has become the predictable mausoleum to £9 billion of public money...British architects are hopeless at streets. They dislike them because they celebrate inhabitants, not architects...Switch to our alternative exemplar...The Museum of London...will do what a museum should do...It will have no need to call itself Smithfieldopolis. -- Stanton Williams; Asif Khan - Evening Standard (UK)

Olympic architects brush off criticism from 'grumpy old men': The architects behind the £1.3 billion Stratford Waterfront Olympic quarter have come out fighting for the project after critics subjected it to a flurry of abuse..."It's a shame the grumpy old men don't like it, but it's hardly designed for them." -- O'Donnell & Tuomey; Allies & Morrison; Arquitecturia - BD/Building Design (UK)

First images of Robin Hood Gardens replacement: Haworth Tompkins and Metropolitan Workshop submit plans: ...will replace the soon-to-be-demolished Smithsons' landmark...The two practices have designed two buildings each. They share a common architectural language but are different in style and expression... [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)

The urbanist's Stirling Prize: Hank Dittmar assesses this year's contenders for what they give back to the street: All told most of this year's shortlist are at least making some urban gestures and at least half are doing a good job. That's good news for the flaneur. -- Michael Laird/Reiach & Hall; Loyn & Co Architects; Hertzog & de Meuron; dRMM Architects; Wilkinson Eyre; Caruso St John - BD/Building Design (UK)

The Innovation Campus: Building Better Ideas: Can architecture spur creativity? Universities are investing in big, high-tech buildings in the hope of evoking big, high-tech thinking: ...there's little research on the designs needed to facilitate the process. Still, there are commonalities. By Alexandra Lange -- Morphosis; Yazdani Studio of Cannon Design; ZAS Architects; Gensler; Steven Holl Architects; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Payette [images] - New York Times

Complex geometry: Heneghan Peng Architects' Palestinian Museum takes its cue from a natural context: ...perched on a hillside in Birzeit...a building that emerges organically from the site. Employing construction methods used for thousands of years...in a place of barriers there is no perimeter wall...honouring ongoing struggles while speaking to future aspirations.-- Lara Zureikat [images] - Wallpaper*

The Universal Hip Hop Museum and 'Design Justice': As work on the museum progresses, its architects and designers must find ways to work a raucous history into a very staid building: ...founders hope to give it a home in the Bronx...But it will also live in other formats, including ones that can travel. By Brentin Mock -- Mike Ford; Bryan Lee [images] - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Call for entries: eVolo 2017 Skyscraper Competition (international); cash prizes; earlybird registration deadline (save money!): November 15 (submissions due February 7, 2017)- eVolo Magazine

The brutality of vertical living: JG Ballard frequently offered dystopian visions of modernity...often echoing Brutalism's fall and partial rehabilitation..."High-Rise" explores the psychological effects of 'the tower block', which has now been brought to life on film...Brutalism continues to court controversy...Love it or loathe it, Brutalism makes news. By Colin Martin- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Murcutt's 'extraordinary enlightenment': Australian Islamic Centre: ...will be the subject of "Glenn Murcutt: Architecture of Faith" at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The mosque, designed with Elevi Plus Architects...establishes a new architectural language for Islamic architecture in a contemporary Australian context. [images]- ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Two Times the House, in Hopes of Sparking Dialogue in St. Louis: A skeleton of an abandoned home north of the Delmar Divide will be assembled at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation: ...Berlin-based architecture collective raumlaborberlin will assemble a skeleton of the house...they hope will inspire public discussions about why such homes were abandoned and what possibilities there are for their future renewal. By Hilarie M. Sheets- New York Times

A Look at Mary Mattingly's Floating Garden Project, 'Swale': ..."floating food project," opens to the public at Concrete Plant Park in the Bronx...barge containing a forest garden of edible and medicinal plants...Visitors are welcome to come and pick items for free...After a month-long stint at [the park], the barge will continue its tour of the city. -- A Blade of Grass [images]- Artinfo

A Universe of Interactive Art in Tokyo: In a leap for interactive art environments, teamLab...has put together a fascinating and bizarre collection of works...The pieces are truly responsive: visitors impact and shape the ever-changing works in real-time. "A World of Wonders" By Jared Green [images, video]- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Snarkitecture's "The Beach" is coming to Tampa, Florida: ...landing in the Amalie Arena...will up the ante from its last iteration, with 1.2 million balls instead of 750,000.....August 5 - 25...free, but you'll need to reserve a ticket. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

"The Tale of Tomorrow: Utopian Architecture in the Modernist Realm": ...discusses some buildings that became icons [and] exhumes some architects who are now overlooked...Looking at...such vibrant, eccentric architecture, it's hard not to feel a yearning for that kind of experimental optimism in our structures today. However, the era is also a reminder that architecture can't solve our problems. By Allison C. Meier -- Robert Klanten, Sofia Borges, editors [images]- Hyperallergic

Why Midcentury-Modern Architecture Endures: A new book on the masterful architect William Krisel documents the golden age of midcentury-modern design: "William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism" by Heidi Creighton and Chris Menrad...Moral of the story? There could stand to be less ego in contemporary architecture - and perhaps more butterfly roofs. By Diana Budds [images]- Fast Company / Co.Design

Q&A: Witold Rybczynski's New Cultural History of the Chair: "Now I Sit Me Down: From Klismos to Plastic Chair: A Natural History" feels loose and relaxed, as well as grounded and authoritative. In a way, it's like a good chair...a sweeping look, rendered in concise breezy prose, blends first person accounts of the author's experience, with the cultural history of the chair. By Martin C. Pedersen- Common Edge

Prefab Housing Isn't A Subculture Anymore, It's A Necessity: In the fifth book of her "Prefabulous" series, author Sheri Koonen hits upon "the ideal method" for building homes: ...prefab has evolved and become part of a broader conversation about how we build...Changing demographics, the volatile housing market, and lifestyle shifts are pushing prefab mainstream as well. By Diana Budds [images]- Fast Company / Co.Design

Alcoholic Architecture: No this post isn't implying that architectural design is aided by a few drinks...the beautiful result when wine-makers and architects team up...six of the best... -- Renzo Piano; Foster + Partners; PLANT - Atelier Peter Kis; Santiago Calatrava; Mario Botta; Herzog & de Meuron [images]- ArcSpace

When Architecture Meets Art: Some say Architecture is the mother of all arts while others say that it is just the slowest. But what happens when Art and Architecture collide? -- Grayson Perry/FAT Architecture; Herzog & de Meuron/Ai Weiwei; Henning Larsen Architects/Olafur Eliasson; HASSELL/Ned Kahn; Peter Zumthor/Louise Bourgeois; Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA/Rei Naito [images]- ArcSpace

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