• Betsky weighs in on SOM's master plan for a second Downtown Philly: “Do we really need another ersatz Oz of skyscrapers?” Even with a sprinkling of public amenities, “it could be better. Philadelphia will still be Philadelphia. This will not.”

• Preservationists are concerned about Moscow’s rush to redevelop derelict industrial areas; now on their radar: the city’s former ZIL car factory - it’s an “attempt at a good compromise” between preservation and profit, but it’s “more destructive than expected.”

• Motor City issues an RFP for Pink Zoning Detroit, which invites architects and planners to tear down zoning red tape.

• Musca minces no words about what he thinks of Miami’s Porsche Design Tower, which, beyond being “a bland monument of hubris” and “an apt symbol for the self-absorbed hedonism” of Miami’s 1%, it’s indicative of Florida’s climate-change denial stance that doesn’t bode well.

• Moore considers London’s growing network of bike lanes: even with its “glitches,” the lanes “have the potential to change the spirit and character of the capital,” and “they might even prove that the city’s former mayor was capable of doing something right.”

• Elton Musk is getting into Architecture Now: The chairman of SolarCity takes his first steps into architecture by proposing to expand the company’s presence in the roofing market..."developing a "solar roof"...It makes us wonder if full-scale solar homes are next."

• Perkovic x 2: 2016’s "10 most unusual architectural gems" + "10 most exciting new buildings announced" this year.

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• Musca marvels at Italian architect Renzo Picasso’s proposal to build “superstreets” through American cities: “there are lessons here” for contemporary urban planners.

• Misra marvels at the "massive, mysterious underbellies," and "Zen-like beauty" of Seoul’s 27 river bridges.

• Conti’s eloquent ode to the “strength and beauty of design” of Pittsburgh’s many (many!) bridges.

• Sisson parses how Big Data is “changing the design of our workplaces.” with companies and architects “using computer modeling and data analysis to make our offices work as hard as we do.”

• Hawthorne is not happy with news that Thomas Mann’s house by midcentury great J.R. Davidson is “being marketed as a tear-down” - a “reminder of how unusually fragile the cultural patrimony of Los Angeles remains - often vulnerable to the whims of their owners.”

• A hi-tech, big-data kind of day: Bailey and Villaggi ponder "data-fication" - what "if architects and their clients viewed the value of their real estate data on par with the actual value of real estate?"

• Sisson parses how Big Data is “changing the design of our workplaces,” with companies and architects “using computer modeling and data analysis to make our offices work as hard as we do.”

• Perkovic x 2: 2016’s "10 most unusual architectural gems" + "10 most exciting new buildings announced" this year.

• Construct a Narrative: David Adjaye tells us why The National Museum of African American History and Culture, opening in September, challenged him like never before: “Questions about the new institution, its symbolic significance, and the blurry boundary between monument and museum...what I’m really proposing as a strategy for narrative museums.” By Vanessa Quirk [images]- Metropolis Magazine

• Design, the good, the bad, and the odd: Form follows function with steroids...effective commercial buildings that look like what they sell...maybe we should chalk up buildings that mimic the goings-on inside them the relief we need from all those banal, anywhere buildings that pass for architecture today. By Joan Altabe- Blasting News

• Design as quantification: what if buildings could talk? When the built environment goes through a process of data-fication, what does a world of bytes mean for the architect? What would it mean if architects and their clients viewed the value of their real estate data on par with the actual value of real estate? By Carlo Bailey/WeWork & Lorenzo Villaggi/The Living- Architect
modeling and data analysis to make our offices work as hard as we do...part of a move to increase satisfaction and profit by introducing the product development methodologies of the startup world into architecture and design. By Patrick Sisson -- CASE; Gensler [images]: Curbed

What can architects learn from No Man's Sky? Architecture as a discipline has struggled to manage and understand virtual design...While the tools that videogame designers and architects use have begun to overlap, the use of those tools will never be quite the same because of the inherent nature of the physical world architects must respond to. By Youssef Maguid [images]: Kill Screen

An Italian Architect's Wild American Dream: Renzo Picasso wanted to build seven-layer "superstreets" through American cities; if nothing else, [he] certainly grasped something important about American cities: We would soon want a lot more room for cars...there are lessons here that contemporary urban planners can learn from Picasso. By Tanvi Misra [images]: CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

The Art of Illusion: Vast archive of famed architectural illustrator Carlos Diniz is now housed at UCSB's Art, Design & Architecture Museum: Described as the "last great architectural illustrator to work in the techniques and materials of the hand-drawn perspective," Diniz touched thousands of projects around the world, for some of the world's best architects...[images]: University of California, Santa Barbara

Photo Essay: Machines for living: modernist American architecture: Photographer Julius Shulman visited the visionary modernist buildings of mid-century America - where sober geometries rub against playful details. [images]: Guardian (UK)

10 Most Unusual Architectural Gems in 2016: Alongside the completion of some remarkable, long-awaited buildings, 2016 has also given us some extraordinary buildings of a more unusual kind. By Jana Perkovic -- ThePlus Architects; XTU Architects; Avanto Architects; Studio Andrew Todd; Vector Architects; Foster + Partners; Farshad Mehdizadeh Architects + Ahmad Batheai; Fiction Factory; BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; Achim Menges/Moritz Do¨rstelmann/Van Knippers/Thomas Auer [images]: Artinfo

10 Most Exciting New Buildings Announced in 2016: ...the most ambitious, imaginative buildings announced this year. By Jana Perkovic -- Zaha Hadid Architects; Shigeru Ban; Thomae Heatherwick; Kengo Kuma; Dorte Mandrup; Open Platform for Architecture; MAD Architects; MVRDV; Napur Architect [images]: Artinfo

Pittsburgh's bridges exemplify strength and beauty of design: One of the most visually powerful aspects...is the plenitude of bridges that connect us...there are said to be about 540 bridges within the city boundaries alone. And maybe four times that when you count all of Allegheny County. By John Conti -- George S. Richardson; Stanley Roush; Benno Janssen; Charles Stratton Davis; Charles Morse Stotz; Gordon Bunshaft [images]: Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

The Zenlike Beauty of Seoul's 27 River Bridges: A photographer investigates the massive, mysterious underbellies of Han River overpasses. By John Metcalfe -- Manuel Alvarez Diestro [images]: CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Architecture for Fashionistas: When top profiles of both worlds join forces, lines between architecture and advertisement blur...surreal settings are created, and magical spaces occur. -- Frank Gehry/Gehry Partners; Olafur Eliasson; Massimiliano and Doriana Fuksas; Rem Koolhaas/OMA; Gluckman Mayner Architects; William Russell/Pentagram; Legoretta + Legoretta; Kumiko Inui; Toyo Ito; Peter Marino; Renzo Piano; Jun Aoki [images]