Today's News - Thursday, December 8, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow and Monday will be no-newsletter days. We'll be back Tuesday, December 13.

- The team led by London-based Lifschutz Davidson Sandlands and U.S. light artist Leo Villareal wins the Illuminated River competition to design light installations for 17 London bridges (looks cool!).
- Post-Ghost Ship reckonings: Anzilotti says the "devastating warehouse fire has made it clear" that Oakland "has turned a blind eye" to "the horrifying extreme of a crisis of displacement that has gone unchecked."
- After the Oakland fire, "two architects are putting together building resources to make DIY spaces safer for people in need of or offering immediate services."
- Piano's "contentious" Paddington Cube wins planning permission, despite criticism and "new concerns about the revised design."
- Hawthorne has (mostly) high praise for SO-IL's UC Davis Shrem Museum of Art, "an unusual combination of exuberance and modesty" that "suggests that a new approach - more deliberate, tougher to parse, less self-promotional and in the end richer - for American architecture."
- Mathematics writer Bellos gives two thumbs-up to the Science museum's new maths gallery in London that "soars with stunning Zaha Hadid design" (with lots of space to walk around because there's now less than a quarter of objects on display in the same space).
- Studio a+i's NYC AIDS Memorial opened on World AIDS Day.
- London's Coppa Club adds "pop-up igloos" along the Thames riverbank to attract visitors to "dine, drink and socialize" in winter months (heaters and sheepskin blankets included).
- Kamim cheers 2016 as "a rousing year" for "exceptional designs that rose above the norm of a mostly-mediocre building boom."
- Small-business expert Marks explains why small firms shouldn't get their hopes up too high in the anticipated building boom, though "there are some bright sides for smaller firms."
- Capps on Paul Revere Williams winning the 2017 AIA Gold Medal - posthumously: considering architecture's diversity problem, "why can't architecture manage to identify living women and architects of color for their most prestigious award?"
- Leddy Meytum Stacy Architects takes home the 2017 AIA Architecture Firm Award.
- Weekend diversions:
  - Gaudio and Drechsler's documentary "Within Formal Cities" focuses on "architecture's role in global housing issues - a must-see for design professionals."
  - Grice ponders: "If architecture is so complicated and boring, why are movie architects so popular?" (especially when "the profession is often viewed as aloof and insensitive, even by its own members”).
  - Croaker coaxes comments from Murcutt re: his "mosque without minarets, and architecture designed to transform - with the powerful and possibly unprecedented potential to transform relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians," and "Spirit of Faith" at the National Gallery of Victoria.
  - Moore picks his best architecture books of 2016: "Books about building for peace in times of war are among the standout volumes."
  - Green makes his pick of 15 books "for the best on the environment, cities, and landscape."
  - Jacobs chases "the elusive promise of big data" in de Monchaux's "Local Code," and Burrington's "Networks of New York" - they tell "two different chapters of the same story."
- New books deal with the "re-emergence of a new style of Japanese architecture": "In comparison to the rather Neanderthal showmanship of modern, 20th-century architecture, the ancient Kingdoms of Japan haven't moved far in centuries."

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Lifschutz Davidson Sandlands has won the Illuminated River design competition for a £20 million light installation covering all 17 central London bridges: a collaboration with US light artist Leo Villareal. "Current" will deliver a slowly moving and colour-changing lighting scheme synchronised across all the bridges. [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Ellie Anzilotti: After a Tragedy, Reckoning With Oakland's Affordability Crisis: A devastating [Ghost Ship] warehouse fire has made it clear that the city has failed to support its artist community...lies at the horrifying extreme of a crisis of displacement that has gone unchecked...illegal living situations - from shipping containers to overcrowded group houses - have proliferated...[city] has turned a blind eye...[CityLab] (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Building Back: After Oakland...two architects are putting together building resources to make DIY spaces safer...created a "resource-in-progress" site, safer spaces, for people in need of or offering immediate services. - Melissa J. Frost's III Columns; Susan Surface - The Architect's Newspaper

Renzo Piano's £775 million 'Paddington Cube' approved: ...has won planning permission for a contentious 14-storey office block in west London...24-storey skyscraper...Paddington Pole, was ditched in January following criticism...Historic England raised new concerns about the revised design... - William Matthews Associates; Pringle Richards Sharratt; TP Bennett; BDP [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Christopher Hawthorne: New UC Davis art museum hints at fresh directions for American architecture: ...Shrem Museum of Art, An unusual combination of exuberance and modesty...suggests that a new approach - more deliberate, tougher to parse, less self-promotional and in the end richer - is finally moving from the edges of the profession toward the center. ...Solid Objectives-Idenburg Liu/SO-IL; Bohlin Cywinski Jackson [images] - Los Angeles Times

Alex Bellos: Science Museum's maths gallery soars with stunning Zaha Hadid design: ...Mathematics: The Winton Gallery tells stories of how maths underpin the world...with fascinating objects beautifully laid out, yet which eschews explaining any maths...a wonderfully attractive space, full of interesting and thought-provoking objects, and a very welcome addition [geddit?] to London's museums. [images] - Guardian (UK)

New York City's AIDS memorial completed in time for World AIDS Day: designed by...Studio a + i and features an 18-foot metal canopy made from three connected triangles. Artist Jenny Holzer engraved Walt Whitman's poem, "Song of Myself" in the granite pavers...and a water feature designed by Rick Parisi of M. Paul Friedberg & Partners...[images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Coppa Club: London keeps it cool: Pop-up igloos line the Thames riverbank by Tower Bridge: ...for people to dine, drink and socialize in...Heaters and sheepskin blankets keep the hemispheres cozy and aim to attract visitors to the area in the less busy winter months. - Theresa Obermoser [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Blair Kamin: Celebrating a rousing year, from public spaces to preservation: ...and exceptional designs that rose above the norm of a mostly-mediocre building boom. -- Ross Barney Architects; Sasaki Associates; James Corner Field Operations; Goettach Partners; Studio Gang Architects; Valerio Dewalt Train; Booth Hansen; Gensler; Antunovich Associates; Bertrand Goldberg; Greg Corso/Molly Hunkef - Chicago Tribune

Gene Marks: A coming boom for construction firms? Don't get your hopes up: ...six of the 10 fastest-growing industries here are tied to construction...from contracting and carpentry to architectural services...the construction business, regardless of any new infrastructure spending initiatives, will continue to be a challenging area for small businesses to make money. There
are some bright sides for smaller firms. - Washington Post

Kriston Capps: The AIA Finally Awards Its Gold Medal to a Black Architect - Posthumously: Why can't architecture manage to identify living women and architects of color for their most prestigious award? Paul Revere Williams...won the Gold Medal...comes two years after the AIA awarded...a woman [Julia Morgan] for the first time ever - posthumously. Architecture has a diversity problem...But the AIA specifically has an awards problem. [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects Wins the 2017 AIA Architecture Firm Award: The San Francisco practice takes home the Institute's highest honor awarded to an architecture firm. [images]- Architect Magazine

Informal Cinema: "Within Formal Cities": ...a 50-minute documentary by Brian Gaudio and Abe Drechsler...primary narrative - the profession of architecture's role in global housing issues - is set in the disorderly outskirts of South America...it must see for design professionals...challenges our ambivalence about whether decent housing is a human right or a privilege... -- Juan Ignacio Cerdá/Alejandro Aravena/Elemental; Carlos Medellín/El Equipo de Mazzanti- Downstream (Pittsburgh, PA)

Gordon S. Grice/Forrec: Character building: The way architects are portrayed in film runs the gamut of personality types, from idealistic dreamers to harried workaholics:...why are movie architects so popular? The answer [is] in what an architect is - or is imagined to be...even today the profession is often viewed as aloof and insensitive, even by its own members. "100 + 25 Years: OAA Perspectives on a Quarter-Century," Ian Ellingham and Gordon Grice, eds. – Ontario Association of Architects - CLAD (Community of Leisure Architects & Designers)

Trisha Croaker: Glenn Murcutt on mosque without minarets, and architecture designed to transform:...[he] is stoically committed to discussing a work-in-progress that's "too important" not to...the Australian Islamic Centre. Anticipated both for its social and political ambitions, and architecturally...with the powerful and possibly unprecedented potential to transform relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Australians..."Spirit of Faith" at the National Gallery of Victoria chronicles the project.... [images]- The Age (Australia)

Rowan Moore’s best architecture books of 2016: Books about building for peace in times of war are among the standout volumes: "The Battle for Home" by Marwa al-Sabouni; "Mortal Cities Forgotten Monuments" by Arwa Mackic; "Raw Concrete" by Barnabas Calder; "This Brutal World" by Peter Chadwick; "Breuer" by Robert McCarver;"A Forward-Minded Retrospective" by Samantha Hardingham; "Spitalfields" by Dan Cruickshank; "Vertical" by Stephen Graham- Observer (UK)


Karrie Jacobs: The Elusive Promise of Big Data: Nicholas de Monchaux's "Local Code: 3,659 Proposals about Data, Design & The Nature of Cities," a collection of dense essays and data-driven urban concepts, and Ingrid Burrington's "Networks of New York," a slender volume that decodes the infrastructure of the city's information networks...What I loved about reading the two books back to back is that they are telling two different chapters of the same story.- Architect Magazine

Chairs, mindfulness and exploring the deftness of Japanese design:...new books dealing with...the re-emergence of a new style of Japanese architecture: Imagine a Trumping, swashbuckling, gold-plated Tower - a phallic monument to narcissism...Gulf State bordello. Now envisage it's exact opposite...in comparison to the rather Neanderthal showmanship of modern, 20th-century architecture...the ancient Kingdoms of Japan haven't moved far in centuries; "The Japanese House Reinvented" by Philip Jodidio; "Chairs by Architects" by Agata Toromanoff; "William Morris: An Arts & Crafts Colouring Book"- Irish Examiner

Studio Gang: WMS Boathouse, Chicago: ...small infrastructure projects like [this] have begun to catalyze previously unusable sections of the Chicago River...brings modern, whimsical design to the previously unoccupied site on the North Branch of the river...Equal parts poeticism and practicality.... [images]