

Today's News - Thursday, April 22, 2010

- Happy Earth Day: a 70-year timeline of environmental change.
- Incredibly in-depth presentations of AIA/COTE 2010 Top Ten Green Projects (much more than just pretty pictures).
- How green can one of the winners - built in the Saudi desert - be?
- Hume calls for Earthling Day: "Perhaps it should be about saving ourselves."
- An economist weighs in: "When will we see an Earth Day where it is finally recognized that the market's invisible hand also has a green thumb?"
- Makower ponders what's happened to Earth Day: it seems to have become "largely an exercise in symbolism" (and lots of other Earth Day coverage).
- Chakrabarti takes Jaime Lerner's transformation of Curitiba as a powerful call to action for designers to initiate change in architectural, ecological, political, and urban terms.
- Seoul sets its sights on becoming the world's most beautiful city in terms of architecture and image, but critics wonder how much of the city's soul will be destined for the wrecking ball.
- 12 cities' gallant efforts to become perfect that "we hope all future cities will embrace."
- There is no silver bullet to make a downtown successful, but an essential ingredient is public interest and involvement.
- A fascinating and informative look at Ahmedabad, India's new bus rapid transit system that mixes "transit innovation and traditional culture, and even offers yoga classes to the drivers" (great pix, too).
- Kennicott begs to differ with preservationists' objections to D.C.'s streetcar plans they say will spoil views: have they "actually gone out in the street and looked for a view anytime recently"?
- Consensus (!) in the U.S. government: "urban parks can't be separated from broader urban revitalization efforts."
- Glancey on U.K. election and architecture: "If I were to cast my vote solely on the basis of architectural and planning manifestos, no party would win."
- Brussat cheers Campbell's call for Bostonians to consider the city's ugliest buildings, but would rather "tear them down. Build beauty instead."
- Three Bostonians defend Brutalism: "Heroic buildings can be tough to love," but "before we tear it down, we should consider what will be lost."
- Call for entries: Faith & Form/IFRAA International Awards Religious Architecture.
- Final thoughts on Earth Day: U.S. forests finally making a comeback? "We're beginning to recognize forests as something far more fundamental and profound, forests as part of the critical infrastructure of our country"; and we couldn't resist a gallery of some of the oldest trees on the planet (we should look so amazing at that age!). Be kind to the planet, please - and not just for today.

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[Timeline: 70 Years of Environmental Change: Environmental milestones over 13 presidential administrations.](#) - New York Times

[AIA/COTE 2010 Top Ten Award for Green Projects -- Aidin Darling Design; Leddy Maytum Stacy; HOK; Centerbrook Architects and Planners/Hopkins Architects; VMDO Architects; Smith Carter Architects/Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects \(KPMB\); BNIM Architects; John C. Williams Architects/KieranTimberlake; ZGF Architects; WRNS Studio \[links to images, info\]- AIA Committee on the Environment \(COTE\)](#)

[Is LEEDing the Saudi Desert Really Green? ...world's largest project to be awarded a LEED Platinum designation...King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia...How green is it? "The king was going to build in that location regardless"...If Saudi Arabia is going to develop as a nation, it does the world a favor by building to LEED standards.](#) By Michael Arndt -- HOK - BusinessWeek

[An occasion to make nice with the planet: Earth Day is about saving the planet. Perhaps it should be about saving ourselves. Earthling Day might be a better name, or Humanity Day, People Day, Survival Day ... any one would be more to the point.](#) By Christopher Hume - Toronto Star

[Op-Ed: Earth Day: Humanity - Earth's best friend: When will we see an Earth Day where it is finally recognized that the market's invisible hand also has a green thumb?](#) By Pierre Desrochers - National Post (Canada)

[What's Happened to Earth Day? ...seems largely an exercise in symbolism, much like that car-bashing of 40 years ago: a series random acts that allow people to feel environmentally engaged, even powerful, at least for a day.](#) By Joel Makower - GreenBiz.com

[To LEED is Human; to Lead, Divine: Vishaan Chakrabarti takes Jaime Lerner's transformation of Curitiba as a powerful call to action for designers to initiate change in architectural, ecological, political and urban terms.](#) - Urban Omnibus

[Can Seoul become the world's most beautiful city?...embarking on perhaps the most ambitious facelift in its 600-year-history, aimed at catapulting it into the top ranks of global cities in terms of architecture and image...But critics wonder...how much of what distinguishes Seoul will be destined for the wrecking ball. -- Zaha Hadid; Daniel Libeskind - Sydney Morning Herald](#)

[Fast Cities 2010: Constructing the perfect city means blending the best and boldest ideas from across the nation. Here are 12 we hope all future cities will embrace. \[images\]-](#) Fast Company

[Engaged public means success: ...various things that Saskatoon has done right over the years...this don't happen by accident...They are the products of far-thinking planners and councillors, and a great deal of public consultation...there is no silver bullet to make a downtown successful...But there is an essential ingredient...public interest and involvement... -- Jennifer Keesmaat/Office of Urbanism - Saskatoon Star-Phoenix \(Canada\)](#)

[People's Way: Urban Mobility in Ahmedabad: Bus rapid transit...isn't as](#)

sexy or telegenic as light rail, yet it might be the more promising alternative to the car...Janmarg...the new BRT system in Ahmedabad, India, a system that manages to mix transit innovation and traditional culture, and even offers yoga classes to the drivers. By Meena Kadri [images, slide show]- Places Journal

Would streetcars in D.C. spoil the city's vistas? Do we want to preserve the early 20th-century sense of ourselves as a grand, imperial city that overawes tourists? Or do we want to be a model city...where visitors...can be inspired by innovative experiments in sustainable urban life?...what to make of historic preservation concerns...One wonders if they've actually gone out in the street and looked for a view anytime recently. By Philip Kennicott [slide show]- Washington Post

The Value of Urban Parks: The U.S. House Urban Caucus' Urban Parks Taskforce organized a briefing...a new consensus is forming among the administration and legislative branch: urban parks can't be separated from broader urban revitalization efforts.- The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Bubbles and troubles: What have Labour done for architecture? There were big promises, striking galleries, two new parliaments. But they made shocking mistakes, too...none of the major political parties has a handle on architecture or planning...If I were to cast my vote solely on the basis of architectural and planning manifestos, no party would win. By Jonathan Glancey- Guardian (UK)

You pick your city's ugliest building: I'm for murdering ugly buildings because they murder us. They sear our eyes and degrade our civic life. Tear them down. Build beauty instead. By David Brussat -- Robert Campbell- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Tough Love: In Defense of Brutalism: The concrete architecture of a few decades ago, once lauded, is now mostly viewed with scorn. Before we tear it down, we should consider what will be lost...Here are our reasons...Heroic buildings can be tough to love. By Michael Kubo, Mark Pasnik, Chris Grimley -- at pinkcomma; over,under; Paul Rudolph, Marcel Breuer, and Eero Saarinen; I.M. Pei [slide show]- Architect Magazine

Call for entries: Faith & Form/IFRAA International Awards Religious Architecture, Liturgical/Interior Design, Sacred Landscape, Religious Arts, and Unbuilt Work (a new category for 2010); deadline: June 18- Faith & Form Magazine

Forests growing back in U.S. face man-made tests: "We're beginning to recognize forests as something far more fundamental and profound, forests as part of the critical infrastructure of our country."- Washington Post

The Oldest Trees on the Planet: ...a gallery of some of the oldest, most venerable and impressive trees on earth. [images]- Wired

Disappearing Act: North Carolina Museum of Art West Building by Thomas Phifer and Partners and Pearce Brinkley Cease + Lee: A new museum building strives to nearly disappear, deferring to the beauty of the artworks and the surrounding landscape. By Lisa Delgado- ArchNewsNow



SANAA: Rolex Learning Center, Lausanne, Switzerland

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