

Today's News - Wednesday, June 2, 2010

- In Moscow, the new Strelka Institute of Architecture is "a philanthropic venture that aims to teach a new generation of architects - for free and in English - how to solve Russia's urban nightmare" (Koolhaas and a former chocolate factory included).
- A conversation with the founder of the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre; some battles he wins, some he loses, but "He remains optimistic."
- The new "Climate Change Adaptation in New York City" report "is fairly optimistic," but requires cooperation among different factions - including designers: "if New York can do it, any city can."
- Meanwhile, Roland Lewis is fairly optimistic about NYC's "Blue Movement" and the city's WAVES program in connecting people to the waterfront.
- Biomimicry gaining traction in both manufacturing and design.
- Leigh bemoans what George Lucas and his architects have wrought for USC's School of Cinematic Arts: praise for a "passion for historic architecture" (circa 1929) - but the "complex might look less like unintentional pastiche" had the focus been "on quality rather than quantity when it came to detail" (alas, no pix).
- Betsky x 2: he's filled with sadness about Whitney's plan to relocate to the High Line nabe, but a bit more cheerful about Gehry's "mouse that roared" in Las Vegas.
- 13 million tenners aren't quite the 800 million the Sydney Opera House requested, but it's enough to keep the ageing stage machinery from offing performers in mid-note.
- Oxford University gets the go-ahead for major new academic buildings (with some major names attached).
- UCLA's newest building will get the Meier touch.
- Governors Island will be awash in visual and performing artists sharing studio space.
- King cheers the "ever-inventive" Rebar Group's latest effort: a "parklet" in place of parking spots (the program could spread, depending on how it's used or abused).
- Q&A with new A+D Architecture and Design Museum > Los Angeles president/co-founder and museum director: "Now we know where we're going to be for the next five years."
- Scottish Design Awards include a most intriguing compost shed.
- Six make the shortlist for V&A at Dundee on the city's waterfront (only one is from Scotland).
- Safe Trestles competition down to five finalists: "Some adopt a light touch...while others more aggressively introduce capital-A architecture into the site."
- We couldn't resist: a German sewage plant plays Mozart to its "biomass-eating microbes, hoping the sweet sounds will make them work harder" and could/should save €\$\$€, too (we want that stereo system!).

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Teaching Better Russian Cities, In English, For Free: ...new Strelka Institute of Architecture, Media and Design...to make Russian cities "more welcoming, more beautiful, more humane and more easy to live in"...a philanthropic venture that aims to teach a new generation of architects — for free and in English — how to solve Russia's urban nightmare. -- Rem Koolhaas - The Moscow News (Russia)

He Shuzhong's battle to save China's classic architecture: ...has spent nearly three decades battling to save traditional hutongs and temples, some dating back hundreds of years, from the wrecking ball...Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre has waged dozens of battles against proposed developments, with mixed results. - AFP

How Can Big Cities Adapt to Climate Change? In "Climate Change Adaptation in New York City"...report is fairly optimistic...but it explains that adaptation will require cooperation between a number of different factions, including designers, the insurance industry, local government, and more...if New York can do it, any city can. By Ariel Schwartz [link to report] - Fast Company

Creating a Plan to Connect New Yorkers and Their Harbor: ...activists and organizations have formed a unique "Blue Movement" demanding change in how we use and manage this shared and precious resource...Bloomberg has caught and contributed to this civic wave, most recently with his announcement of WAVES (Waterfront Vision and Enhancement Strategy). By Roland Lewis/Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance [links] - Gotham Gazette (NYC)

Nature Is the Model Factory: The emerging field of biomimicry taps the manufacturing secrets of spiders, abalone shells, and lotus plants...brings together biologists, engineers, and designers... -- Janine Benyus; Biomimicry Institute; Biomimicry Guild; Mick Pearce; Arup; HOK - Newsweek

What George Lucas Wrought: ...[wanted] USC's School of Cinematic Arts...to look like it was built in 1929...SCA complex might look less like unintentional pastiche had Lucas and his architects focused on quality rather than quantity when it came to detail...There's plenty for SCA students to like...But let's hope future institutional benefactors who share Lucas's passion for historic architecture will note where this ambitious project went astray. By Catesby Leigh -- Urban Design Group - Wall Street Journal

Missing the Whitney: Last week's announcement that the Whitney Museum of American art will eventually relocate to a new downtown building fills Aaron Betsky with sadness. -- Marcel Breuer (1966); Renzo Piano; Michael Graves; Koolhaas/OMA [images] - Architect Magazine

The Mouse that Roared: ...the Lou Ruvo Center's big roar is a stainless steel drape that cascades down the clinic stack...With none of the glitz that has become the Vegas cliché, this space offers the city a different kind of spectacle, a place where light and form create an oasis - and an attraction. By Aaron Betsky -- Gehry Partners [images] - Architect Magazine

Coming soon to the Sydney Opera House, the 13 million tenners - a \$130 million rescue package for the iconic Harbour building: ...comes after...an internal engineering report showed there were risks of

"multiple fatalities" because of ageing stage machinery. - Daily Telegraph (Australia)

Major new academic buildings by Rafael Viñoly, Bennetts Associates and Wilkinson Eyre for Oxford University have been granted planning permission. [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)

Jules Stein Eye Institute, Geffen School of Medicine to share new facility at UCLA: Richard Meier's firm will handle the \$115.6-million, 100,000-square-foot project, the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building. -- Michael Palladio/Richard Meier & Partners [image] - Los Angeles Times

Artists Drop Anchor at Governors Island: Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) studio space designed pro bono by Davis Brody Bond Aedas creates first permanent home since city takeover...providing workspace for 30 visual and performing artists... [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Inner Mission 'parklet' adds splash of variety: For the next six months the "parklet" will be evaluated on how it is used and/or abused, the same test being applied to all spaces within the city's young Pavement to Parks effort. If nothing else, hey, there's a kick in seeing this welcoming swirl...where smart and self-assured modern design is scarce. By John King -- Rebar Group [image] - San Francisco Chronicle

A+D Architecture and Design Museum > Los Angeles opens permanent space: Q&A with museum president and co-founder Stephen Kanner, FAIA, and museum director Tibbie Dunbar about the new building. -- 20/20 Foundation Group; Kanner Architects; Richard Meier & Partners; Gensler [image] - Residential Architect

Scottish Ballet's new headquarters has been voted the country's best new building in the Scottish Design awards: An Edinburgh compost shed won the best low-cost project. -- Malcolm Fraser Architects; Groves-Raines Architects; Graeme Massie Architects; Elder + Cannon - BBC (UK)

V&A at Dundee architect shortlist announced: Six firms vying for the right to design the new [£47 million] landmark building on city's waterfront. -- Delugan Meissl; Kengo Kuma/cre8architecture/Optimised Environments/CBA; REX; Snøhetta/Gareth Hoskins/Davis Langdon; Steven Holl/Arup/Thomas and Anderson; Sutherland Hussey - STV News (Scotland)

Design Loose: Safe Trestles competition aims to make surf hole safe while keeping it pristine...drew 104 entries...field has been narrowed to five finalists...Some adopt a light touch...while others more aggressively introduce capital-A architecture into the site. -- Architecture for Humanity; kola+kle; Co-Lab Design Office; ERG04; Ken Smith Landscape Architect; Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Symphonic Sewage: A sewage plant near Berlin is playing Mozart to its biomass-eating microbes, hoping the sweet sounds will make them work harder. The Austrian composer may save the facility as much as €1,000 a month. - Der Spiegel (Germany)

Move the Farnsworth House: Mies built the Farnsworth in spitting distance of the mighty Fox River, and the house is paying a price for his hubris. By Fred Bernstein [images] - ArchNewsNow



Exhibition: Greg Lynn: Fountain of Toys - Hammer Museum, Los Angeles -- FORM

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