

Today's News - Monday, August 9, 2010

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of SO-IL's "Pole Dance" at MoMA/P.S.1.
- New Orleans Index five years later: "new evidence shows that greater New Orleans is emerging as a healthier, more resilient region," but "much work lies ahead."
- An ambitious goal to build 80 classrooms throughout Haiti by September is well underway.
- Moore muses about Astana, Kazakhstan: "It's a city of fable or dream...Except it's not quite so magical: it's also like a battery-operated plastic toy, all whirring noises and flashing colors" (and a slide show to prove it!).
- In the UAE, some architectural wonders are turning out to be a burden for some businesses who work inside them.
- An Armenian architect bemoans his country's inability to build good cities - without penalties for ignoring planning rules, hotels rise where parks should flourish.
- Kamin x 2 - both from St. Louis and its "multitude of design pleasures"; as for the CityArchRiver2015 competition: it "looms as a test of our ability to make great but humane public places out of modest means."
- Hawthorne finds a silver lining in the bad economy: the trajectory of gentrification is usually "entirely predictable - and more than a little depressing," but Downtown L.A.'s transformation from sleepy to energized is frozen "at a particularly appealing spot."
- An eyeful of Santa Monica Place makeover: it "swaps Gehry for airy," making it "a classy joint - at least by mall standards."
- In Madison, WI, and Aspen, two Weese's could face the wrecking ball, but do they really deserve to die?
- Pogrebin ponders the fate of formerly unknown Philip Johnson treasure trove of an archive - its formerly unknown owner (former partner Ahuja) hopes it will be bought en masse (aside from the goody sold to the V&A).
- Hume on the sad state of cycling in Toronto: "bicycle policy is no policy at all," just "a hodge-podge of rules, regulations and lanes that probably make a bad situation worse."
- Litt sees little to cheer in three "profoundly ho-hum options" of "snooze-worthy" designs for a major Cleveland bridge; bicycle lanes not included (don't expect to make a fortune selling postcards of the winner).
- Great design for hospitals is still a hard sell, despite all the evidence that good design affects health and healing: "we still don't have any certainty that the design of hospitals is fundamentally changing in ways that respond to this knowledge."
- Waikiki hotel owners consider harnessing deep-sea water to power air conditioning that "could substantially cut electricity costs and help the tourism industry market the resort area as a green destination."
- The Yestermorrow Design/Build School in Vermont continues to innovate: teaching "architects how to build might not seem revolutionary, but it was - and still is - unusual."
- We couldn't resist: a Dutch firm has big plans for all that plastic flotsam floating around the Pacific Ocean: Recycled Island would be 3,861 square miles of sustainable living space (better than ending up in gulls' guts).

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MoMA/P.S.1 2010 winner: Florian Idenburg & Jing Liu POLE DANCE -- SO-IL (Solid Objectives)

The New Orleans Index at Five: Five years following Hurricane Katrina - a tragedy compounded and made more complex by the Great Recession and the current Gulf oil spill - new evidence shows that greater New Orleans is emerging as a healthier, more resilient region...much work lies ahead... - Brookings Institution

Transitional Classrooms Help Haiti Head Back to School: Plan International this summer completed a cluster of six classrooms in Jacmel...as the first step toward an ambitious goal of building 80 classrooms throughout Haiti by September. -- Jack Ryan/3SIXØ [images, links] - The Architect's Newspaper

Astana, Kazakhstan: the space station in the steppes: ...where artificial trees glow at night...and a presidential vision has been made reality in concrete and glass in less than a decade...It's a city of fable or dream...Except it's not quite so magical: it's also like a battery-operated plastic toy, all whirring noises and flashing colours... By Rowan Moore -- Kisho Kurokawa; Foster + Partners [slide show] - Observer (UK)

Architectural wonders can be a burden for businesses: Melding the exotic forms of new buildings to everyday business function can be difficult but certainly not impossible...While iconic buildings add to the distinctive skylines of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, they can also impact the companies who work inside them. Sometimes older is better. -- Romi Sebastian/Aecom; Antonio Girardi/Studiomobile - Gulf News (UAE)

Mkrtich Minasyan: Yerevan has lost its own style: The present problem of the Armenian architecture is inability to build good cities...in many cases there are no penalties for the deviations from the plans of the cities..."For example, hotels are being built in the places where gardens must be. I think it is very bad" - Public Radio of Armenia

Beyond the Arch: St. Louis offers a multitude of design pleasures, starting with its Citygarden sculpture park...has brought new life to two blocks of the mall that once featured nothing more than grass, gravel paths and "unloved trees"... By Blair Kamin -- Eero Saarinen; Louis Sullivan; Cynthia Weese; Philip Durham/studio|durham architects; Nelson Byrd Woltz; Cass Gilbert; Tadao Ando; Brad Cloepfil/Allied Works Architecture; Fumihiko Maki - Chicago Tribune

Upgrading the Gateway Arch's environs: A visit reveals it needs to be done; a design competition is about to determine how...CityArchRiver2015 competition looms as a test of our ability to make great but humane public places out of modest means. By Blair Kamin -- Eero Saarinen; Dan Kiley; Behnisch Architekten/Gehl Architects/Stephen Stimson Associates/H3 Studio; MVA/Michael Van Valkenburgh/Greenberg Consultants/Uhlir Consulting/Steven Holl/Guy Nordenson/Arup/James Carpenter; PWP Landscape Architecture/Foster + Partners/Civitas; SOM/Hargreaves/BIG; Weiss/Manfredi/SWT Design/Beyer Blinder Belle/Atelier Ten/Arcturis/D.I.R.T. studio [images, links] - Chicago Tribune

City walk: Time to return to L.A.'s core: Usually the trajectory that neighborhoods go through as they gentrify is entirely predictable - and more than a little depressing...When the bottom fell out of the economy in 2008...managed to freeze downtown's transformation from sleepy to energized - and freeze it at a particularly appealing spot. By Christopher Hawthorne - Los Angeles Times

Santa Monica Place Swaps Gehry for Airy: Stodgy mall by starchitect transformed into luxury galleria hocking sunlight and sea breeze...Save for some chain link signage, it is an entirely different place, less jazzy and more natural, less claustrophobic and more connected, a classy joint - at least by mall standards... -- Gruen Associates; Omniplan; Jerde Partnership [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Mosse Humanities Building architect a hot topic: All of a sudden there is a flurry of interest in Harry Weese, who designed the most controversial building in Madison history...Ever since 2003, when UW-Madison unveiled its long-range plan...demolition - there has been a debate over whether the building really deserves to die. -- Robert Brueggmann- Wisconsin State Journal

Records show Given Institute subsidy details: ...University of Colorado...cite the subsidy...as reasons why the property must be sold. A private buyer has reportedly offered \$17 million [if] the conference center building and a cottage on the property are demolished before the sale...considered by historic preservation experts to be one of the finest examples of modernist architecture in town. -- Harry Weese (1972)- Aspen Daily News (Colorado)

The Hand of a Master Architect: A previously unknown trove of archival material from Philip Johnson's architectural practice is expected to be put up for sale by a former business partner...25,000 design sketches, working drawings, renderings and photographs from...1968 to 1992...hopes it will be bought en masse...so that it will be available to scholars and students. By Robin Pogrebin -- Raj Ahuja; John Burgee [slide show]- New York Times

Cycling in Toronto is a joke: ...bicycle policy is no policy at all; it's a series of half-measures that add up to little...a hodge-podge of rules, regulations and lanes that probably make a bad situation worse. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Proposals for I-90 bridge in Cleveland are predictably dull: After spending 10 years and more than \$13.5 million in consultant fees, ODOT has come up with several profoundly ho-hum options for one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the state's history. No one will make a fortune selling postcards of the winner, no matter which one gets built. By Steven Litt -- FIGG Engineering Group; Parsons Transportation Group; HNTB [images]- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Beautifying hospitals: a tough sell..."there is general agreement that even though we have all this knowledge, we still don't have any certainty that the design of hospitals is fundamentally changing in ways that respond to this knowledge." -- International Academy for Design & Health; Farrow Partnership Architects; Jacqueline Vischer- Canadian Medical Association Journal/CMAJ

The cooling wave: A project in Waikiki hopes to harness deep-sea water to power air conditioning. Hotel owners are looking at the possibility...in a move that could substantially cut electricity costs and help the tourism industry market the famed resort area as a green destination. -- WCIT Architecture- Honolulu Star-Advertiser

At Yestermorrow, don't just watch: Build: ..."a subversive school"...the Bauhaus of Birkenstock Nation"...To teach architects how to build might not seem revolutionary, but it was - and still is - unusual...The Yestermorrow Design/Build School continues to innovate...It's surprising in some ways that, after 30 years, [its] approach would still be so unusual. - Burlington Free Press (Vermont)

Recycled Island: plastic fantastic? Plastic flotsam is the bane of the Pacific Ocean -- now Dutch conservationists want to turn some of it into an inhabited island...plan to clean up 44 million kilos of plastic waste...and provide 10,000 square kilometres (3,861 square miles) of sustainable living space in the process. -- Whim Architecture [image, links]- Observer (UK)

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