

Today's News - Thursday, September 30, 2010

- Hatherley minces no words about new, highly-touted developments that are more spaces "of hubris," dated even before completed, built on ideas that are "as derelict and desolate as the buildings themselves" (ouch!).
- Does Masdar really offer lessons for Jakarta (or anywhere) as the "answer to the sustainable urban planning conundrum," or will it "turn out to be another method of separating the rich from the poor?"
- Perhaps we'd be better off studying Fathy's 1952 New Gourna Village in Luxor, now to be safeguarded by UNESCO.
- TV's "Extreme Makeover" project inspires local Buffalo groups to tackle a new strategy of transforming whole blocks instead of one house at a time.
- Russell ruminates on MVA's plans for the St. Louis Arch: "Can skating and eco-education hope to reverse the effects of...decades of wrong-headed urban renewal? I say yes, with caveats" (perhaps other finalists' proposals were better?).
- Van Valkenburgh reflects on the long-term evolution of Brooklyn Bridge Park: it's about more than open space.
- Gruber almost gasps at "two words one rarely hears" at public discussions re: plans for Santa Monica park, where "residents typically express themselves in terms that are the lowest common denominator versions of 'less is more'" - not "striking and extraordinary" (and he hopes Corner stays "ambitious").
- Wilkie's latest masterpiece: a pleasurable stroll to the Underworld.
- Kansas City residents are riled by plans for a treasured place: the "current design proposed for this location is simply not good enough"; the developer regrets the controversy it generated (and brings in some back-up talent).
- BMW Guggenheim Labs: a way to "engage with architects without collecting more buildings."
- Pogrebin on the growing trend of firms changing their monikers to names "that sound more like video games than architecture practices" (!@#? didn't quite work).
- FLW's Marin County Civic Center is "a prime example of his long-held view that organic architecture was the best way to build a building" (terrific slide show!).
- A new, pricey federal regulation requires street signs across the country to use upper and lower case letters: "I see my tax dollars are hard at work."
- Has NYC lost its \$300 million gamble on synthetic turf?
- We couldn't resist LaBarre's take on Marcel Wanders' "wacky" Moooi showroom in London: "it looks like a 19th-century British tearoom smashed into a Salvador Dali painting" (with pix to prove it!).

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[Jolly Containers For a Perpetual Present: Dublin Docklands is a space of new ruins...The ideas behind it – of an architecture and an economy suspended without any visible, concrete means of support – are as derelict and desolate as the buildings themselves. There are innumerable places like this... By Owen Hatherley -- Kevin Roche; Manuel Aires Mateus; Santiago Calatrava; Martha Schwartz; Future Systems; Herzog & de Meuron; Ian Simpson; Foster + Partners; Caruso St John \[images\]- TATE ETC.](#)

[From the Desert, a Lesson for Jakarta About Going Green With Local Designs: A move away from globalized urban centers towards indigenous solutions...seems to provide a solution to both mitigate climate change and make people happier. But is the model provided by Masdar really the answer to the sustainable urban planning conundrum...it could simply turn out to be another method of separating the rich from the poor. -- Foster + Partners- The Jakarta Globe](#)

[UNESCO launches safeguarding project at New Gourna Village in Luxor, Egypt, part of Ancient Thebes World Heritage site: ...designed and built by the famous Egyptian architect, Hassan Fathy...bring to fruition the idea that, with the aid of local materials and techniques, sustainable human development and social cohesion can be met with vernacular architecture. - UNESCO World Heritage Centre](#)

[Rebuilding neighborhoods: Momentum of 'Extreme Makeover' leads to more renovation efforts...provided local groups a heightened cachet and fresh approach...a new strategy of transforming blocks at a time, instead of piecemeal, and more headway into green reconstruction that provides safer and healthier homes. -- People United for Sustainable Housing; PUSH Buffalo; WNY AmeriCorps - Buffalo News](#)

[Ice Rink, St. Louis Arch Tapped to Fight Urban Blight: Saarinen and Kiley created a stirring image of the river's majesty and the immensity and industry of American aspiration...Regrettably, the blueprint by Michael Van Valkenburgh would ruin the effect...Can skating and eco-education hope to reverse the effects of long-term economic forces and decades of wrong-headed urban renewal? I say yes, with caveats. By James S. Russell -- Stefan Behnisch; Weiss/Manfredi \[images\]- Bloomberg News](#)

[Park as Process: Brooklyn Bridge Park: Michael Van Valkenburgh reflects on the design process and the long-term evolution of Brooklyn Bridge Park...\[it\] is about more than open space. -- MVA \[images, video, links\]- Urban Omnibus](#)

[Striking and Extraordinary in Santa Monica? ...two words one rarely hears at workshops like this...where residents typically express themselves in terms that are the lowest common denominator versions of "less is more," as when people complain that three-story buildings will "Manhattanize" Santa Monica...I hope the designers stay ambitious. By Frank Gruber -- James Corner Field Operations \[images, links\]- The Lookout News \(Santa Monica, CA\)](#)

[Hell for pleasure: I have just been to the Underworld, propelled there by a very talented boatman...landscape architect Kim Wilkie has been paddling me along to see his latest masterpiece...If you want to know how to widen a river for posterity Boughton is now the place to study. \[images\]- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[Highwoods' handling of the Country Club Plaza touches a raw nerve: "People look at it as a public place rather than something privately owned as an investment vehicle"...current design proposed for this location is simply not good enough..."We regret the controversy that it generated ... and we are continuing to make changes." -- 360 Architects; Rule Joy Trammell + Rubio-Kansas City Star](#)

Guggenheim to Create Architect-Designed 'Labs': ...has been looking for ways to extend its global reach even further, without bricks and mortar...Over the next six years, three 5,000-square-foot BMW Guggenheim Labs will travel, in consecutive cycles, to three locations...and "engage with architects without collecting more buildings." -- Atelier Bow-Wow- [New York Times](#)

Architecture Now Building New Names: ...firms are moving away from calling themselves by a slew of partner names and toward nomenclature that better reflects the collective nature of the enterprise. By Robin Pogrebin -- Polshkek/Ennead; /Hugh Hardy/H3; Obra; Brian Price/Jonathan Lott/PARA-Project; Indie; Amale Andraos/Dan Wood/Work Architecture Company/WORKac; Michael Meredith/Hilary Sample/MOS/!@#?; Florian Idenburg/Jing Liu/Solid Objectives — Idenburg Liu (SO-IL); Pei Cobb Freed; Davis Brody Bond Aedas; Gehry Partners; Thom Mayne/Morphosis/ Rem Koolhaas/OMA/Office for Metropolitan Architectur; Gropius/The Architects' Collaborative/TAC; Fox & Fowle/FXFowle- [New York Times](#)

A Frank Lloyd Wright gem in Northern California: ...he wanted the Marin County Civic Center to be a prime example of his long-held view that organic architecture was the best way to build a building..."only when we know that the good building is not one that hurts the landscape, but is one that makes the landscape more beautiful than it was before that building was built." [slide show, links]- [CNET](#)

New Yorkers outraged as bureaucrats order city to change lettering on every single street sign: Street names will change from all capital letters to a combination of upper and lower case on roads across the country thanks to the pricey federal regulation...drivers identify the words more quickly...and can sooner return their eyes to the road..."I see my tax dollars are hard at work."- [NY Daily News](#)

NYC's Fake Grass Gamble: A \$300M Mistake? In 1998, New York City began installing synthetic turf fields in parks and playgrounds, saying the artificial material would be more durable than grass. But a City Limits investigation finds that many turf fields are falling apart...- [City Limits \(NYC\)](#)

Marcel Wanders' Wacky Moooi Showroom Opens in London: Get your horse lamps! Your hog tables! Your bludgeoned piggy banks!..his latest bit of insanity...it looks like a 19th-century British tearoom smashed into a Salvador Dali painting. By Suzanne LaBarre [images]- [Fast Company](#)



Exhibition: John Pawson: Plain Space, Design Museum, London, UK

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