

Today's News - Friday, January 7, 2011

- Millard cheers Gehl's "Cities for People": Copenhagen's "urban-space guru" has "clearly earned his increasing influence, which this masterful book will help spread and cement."
- Appelbaum wonders if the USGBC can "polish LEED's tarnished standards and explains why "there's a big problem with snapping LEED ratings into building codes."
- Saffron sings high praise for the "small stuff" making Philly better: "small parks, small houses, small improvements, small plans, but not necessarily small thinking."
- Jenkins calls for preservation - not demolition - of London's prefab estate Excalibur: it "may be scruffy," but it's a "small piece of working-class history, no less worthy for not being conventionally beautiful."
- Knight has more than a few quibbles with DS+R's The Broad: "The Romantic, 19th century Beaux Arts ideal of sky-lighted art galleries has unfortunately guided the design... natural light just doesn't matter to most contemporary art."
- Lubell is a bit kinder: it's "a design that in many ways - but not all - embraces Downtown LA."
- Farrelly's random thoughts in her "holiday head" re: "modernist tyranny" and "pink pomo flummery...still flumming bravely (or hopelessly) on" - with a bit of blobitecture and slobitecture thrown in - have us laughing out loud.
- Likewise, Linn makes us laugh with his commentary about "one-hit wonders" (musically and architecturally): "If a client asks you to imitate yourself, is that the sincerest form of flattery?"
- Q&A with Kéré (most recently of MoMA's "Small Scale, Big Change" fame): he may live in Berlin, but he "remains focused on designing (and raising money for) sustainable buildings in Africa."
- It looks like the honeymoon between RMJM and Hillier is over (and it's not a pretty picture).
- Weekend diversions (and lots of 'em!):
- On view in L.A., "Decolonizing Architecture" is a "compact and provocative display" that is "simultaneously politically theoretical and architecturally concrete" that asks: "What will happen to the houses left behind when Palestinians take over Israeli settlements in the West Bank?"
- Kamin gives (mostly) thumbs-up to "Hyperlinks" at the Art Institute of Chicago: its "visually arresting, often entertaining, but not entirely persuasive...a mostly scrumptious visual feast."
- Iovine finds "John Pawson: Plain Space" at London's Design Museum "a rich and engrossing show about minimalism."
- A U.K. firm brings an inflatable artwork called "Mirazozo" to the forecourt of the Sydney Opera House: "Is it a gothic cathedral, a mosque or a giant, inflatable jumping castle?" (great slide show).
- The exhibition at Philly's new President's House "would work better in a more sheltered space."
- In NYC, a show challenges the notion that Ezra Stoller's photographs "were uncritically celebratory of their subjects"; they "are not just abstract or awe-inspiring, they employ a full arsenal of emotion."
- Stirling as "an architect's architect...who taught others...how to look before they ever considered leaping."
- Hatherley finds "Jim Stirling and the Red Trilogy," which focuses on three projects "loathed by large proportions of the laity and adored by an almost equally large percentage of architects...a fascinating and visually sumptuous contribution to a seemingly endless argument."
- Welton queries Rybczynski re: his new book "Makeshift Metropolis" that looks at "the past 100 years of trends and development in American cities, but also offers a wise and perceptive look into our urban future."
- "Networks Cities" suggests "how Chinese urban planning can sprout actual neighborhoods, not just collections of apartment buildings" (it needs its own version of a "slow movement").
- "READ: Renewable Energy Art & Design" is "an exhaustive, beautifully laid-out digital handbook that is "well organized, accessible, multi-disciplinary, and relevant...its divergence from the boring rhetoric that dominates mainstream energy news is nothing short of radical."

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[Book Review: "Cities for People" by Jan Gehl: Copenhagen's urban-space guru explains the principles, practices, and priorities that make cities more livable - beginning, but not ending, with dethroning King Car...He's clearly earned his increasing influence, which this masterful book will help spread and cement](#) By Bill Millard - ArchNewsNow

[Can the Green Building Council Polish LEED's Tarnished Standards? There's a big problem with snapping LEED ratings into building codes...there are no consequences for buildings that end up consuming more energy than originally planned...Some engineers are already challenging LEED's prominence, claiming that the codes are producing dud buildings and that taxpayers are footing the bill through subsidies.](#) By Alec Appelbaum - Fast Company

[Small stuff makes Philly better, a bit at a time: ...just because banks aren't lending and governments aren't spending doesn't mean we should assume urban design is dead...Welcome to the year of small - small parks, small houses, small improvements, small plans, but not necessarily small thinking...](#) By Inga Saffron -- PennPraxis; Brian Phillips/Interface Studio Architects (ISA) - Philadelphia Inquirer

[Excalibur's castles built from postwar dreams must not be demolished: ...prefab estate in south London may be scruffy, but it's a precious chapter in the nation's story worth preserving...a small piece of working-class history, no less worthy for not being conventionally beautiful.](#) By Simon Jenkins - Guardian (UK)

[Design of the Broad museum building is still upside down - and now we know why: The Romantic, 19th century Beaux Arts ideal of sky-lighted art galleries has unfortunately guided the design program of a building intended for 20th and 21st century art...The play of natural light just doesn't matter to most contemporary art.](#) By Christopher Knight -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro [images, fly-through, links] - Los Angeles Times

[Broad Museum Hits The Streets: Sculptural DS+R design seen as major draw for downtown LA: ...a design that in many ways — but not all — embraces Downtown LA, adding visual energy and inviting people in.](#) By Sam Lubell -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Arup; Gensler [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

[Oh no, random thoughts pop into my holiday head: In architecture, the removal of the modernist tyranny devolved into pink pomo flummery...the architects' best remedy so far is simple recidivism, hence the neo-modern boxes you see everywhere. Some, though, are still flumming bravely \(or hopelessly\) on, and it's this that brings me to that offence against God and good manners...blobitecture...Sydney has its own Gehry on way...Less blobitecture than slobitecture...](#) By Elizabeth Farrelly - Sydney Morning Herald

[One-Hit Wonders: If a client asks you to imitate yourself, is that the sincerest form of flattery? ...the idea that Richard Meier somehow owes his clients private residences that are different from those he is known to do and does well strikes me as a little unfair.](#) By Charles Linn - Architectural Record

[Newsmaker: Diébédo Francis Kéré: ...grew up in poverty-stricken Burkina Faso...lives in Berlin but remains focused on designing \(and raising money for\) sustainable buildings in Africa...his background, his current projects, and his aspirations for the future. -- Kéré Architecture \[slide show\] - Architectural Record](#)

[US employees sue RMJM over \\$24m Hillier deal: Lawsuit accuses troubled practice of asset stripping and renegeing on merger deal.](#) - BD/Building Design (UK)

[Architects ask: What might a Palestinian West Bank look like? "Decolonizing Architecture"...The three architects behind](#)

the show appear to have no doubt that those areas will be transferred to Palestinian control...compact and provocative display is simultaneously politically theoretical and architecturally concrete..."How to inhabit the house of your enemy?" - Alessandro Petti; Sandi Hilal; Eyal Weizman; Doug Suisman - The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles

New frontier: "Hyperlinks: Architecture and Design"...a provocative new exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago argues that a new kind of hyperlinking is under way...visually arresting, often entertaining, but not entirely persuasive...gives us a lot to think about — and a mostly scrumptious visual feast. By Blair Kamin -- Zoe Ryan; Joseph Rosa; Evan Gant/Alex Tee; Simon Heijdens; Greg Lynn; Shigeru Ban; Herman Diaz-Alonso; etc. [images] - Chicago Tribune

The Pared Minimum: Not everyone would expect a rich and engrossing show about minimalism...But "John Pawson: Plain Space"...at London's Design Museum...escapes such preconceptions while still remaining true to his essential approach..."if you have simpler things, you'll see more of the architecture and it might be more comfortable for living." By Julie V. Iovine - Wall Street Journal

Architects of Air create Mirazozo, a 48m long inflatable artwork, or "luminarium", erected on the forecourt of the Sydney Opera House: Is it a gothic cathedral, a mosque or a giant, inflatable jumping castle? ...made of inflatable vinyl domes and corridors which reflect light and colour. [slide show, links] - The Australian

All the President's Men: "The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation"...Situating within a deliberately fragmentary re-creation of the house, the exhibition...would work better in a more sheltered space...design owes more than a little to Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's Franklin Court... -- Kelly/Maiello Architects - Wall Street Journal

Ezra Stoller: Canonizer: New York will have a chance to look at some lesser-known works by the great architectural photographer...challenging the notion that Stoller's photographs were uncritically celebratory of their subjects...photographs are not just abstract or awe-inspiring, they employ a full arsenal of emotion...through February 12 at the Yossi Milo Gallery -- Esto [images] - Metropolis Magazine

The legacy of James Stirling, an architect's architect: To define Stirling's influence — through Yale or other places — is to say something about how architecture can support engineering as well as art in the cause of making something useful for people...point to an architect who taught others...how to look before they ever considered leaping. By William Richards - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

"Jim Stirling and the Red Trilogy": ...centres on three University buildings which, it asserts, are loathed by large proportions of the laity and adored by an almost equally large percentage of architects...a fascinating and visually sumptuous contribution to a seemingly endless argument. By Owen Hatherley - Icon (UK)

Q&A with Witold Rybczynski: "Makeshift Metropolis": His new book not only addresses the past 100 years of trends and development in American cities, but also offers a wise and perceptive look into our urban future...he talks about planning, architecture, cities and development. By J. Michael Welton [images] - Dwell

Architects Push Rezoning Of Over-Planned Cities: ...Chinese urban planners are building super-zoned residential enclaves...policymakers have forgotten to build actual neighborhoods..."Networks Cities," by James Brearley and Fang Qun suggests how Chinese urban planning can sprout actual neighborhoods, not just collections of apartment buildings...bottom line is architecture in China needs something like a "slow movement." -- Brearley Architects + Urbanists/BAU - Wall Street Journal

"READ": LAGI's Guide To Making Renewable Energy Beautiful: "READ: Renewable Energy Art & Design" cuts through the noise...informative and inspiring...an exhaustive, beautifully laid-out digital handbook...Everything about it is smart: well organized, accessible, multi-disciplinary, and relevant...its divergence from the boring rhetoric that dominates mainstream energy news is nothing short of radical. -- Studied Impact; Land Art Generator Initiative [links] - Green Prophet (Middle East)



Michael Maltzan Architecture: New Carver Apartments, Los Angeles: ...explores how architecture can create new possibilities for its highly vulnerable, dramatically under-served residents...

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