

Today's News - Thursday, May 19, 2011

- Cathy Lang Ho takes an in-depth (and really terrific) look at the rise in national architectural policies in Europe - and what the challenges are to making such a thing even close to being established in the U.S. (cheers to efforts underway!).
- Glancey tours the first phase of Masdar City and finds "it's the determinedly ultra-modern aspects that prove to be a mirage" + A more technical take on Masdar Institute (with lots of images): despite all the "bells and whistles, the completed institute buildings are most remarkable for their reliance on low-tech, passive strategies."
- Dvir digs into the details of the "firestorm" swirling around plans for the new wing of Tel Aviv University's school of architecture: is it "a labor of love or a grave mistake?"
- Architecture firms are still flocking to China's "construction playgrounds," but "architects are not sure how much of an opportunity this offers to smaller companies" + Atlanta firms "haven't been left behind in this architectural gold rush," but "their expertise might have a limited life span in China."
- Kamin x 2: he cheers Jahn's new Mansueto Library as an "audacious, convention-busting marvel" (great pix, video) + He reflects on changes in plans for the base of 1 World Trade Center: "after \$10 million already had been spent on the glass, the architects have been sent back to the drawing board."
- An in-depth report on NYC's efforts to create a more permeable city that "could well be one of PlaNYC's most lasting effects" - and inspire other urban centers (with links to excellent resources).
- As the Mississippi River rises and the Yangtze recedes, Watson wonders what "these two waterways tell us about how buildings and countries alike will need to manage water use."
- Saffron sings high praise for Philly's "delightful" new pier park, with high hopes "it will become harder for the city to continue ceding precious frontage to undesirable uses like big-box stores, casinos, and parking garages."
- A tribute to the "father" of landscape architecture in the Philippines who brought the field "to mainstream consciousness."
- One of Tucson's 50 most significant examples of Modern architecture is at risk.
- Kennicott on the now-demolished Pearl Statue in Bahrain: it may have been "a classic piece of meaningless, made-to-order modernism, drab but sleek," but "it remains an icon of democracy...Expunging a symbol is never an easy process."
- Glancey ruminates on the RIBA Awards 2011: "This year's gongs went to a bewildering range of buildings, from grandstanding urban monuments to teetering rural titter-fests" (with an eye-ful of his faves).
- The 2011 North American Copper in Architecture Awards showcase versatility and preservation with an emphasis on sustainability.
- Call for entries: 2011 Record Interiors (deadline looms!) + Architect Barbie Dream House Design Competition (alas, open only to AIA members).

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In Design, We Trust: Ask not what design can do for you. Ask what your nation can do to promote design: In Europe, a national architectural policy is becoming as standard as, say, adopting a national policy on climate, energy, or housing...Would such action...be feasible in the United States? By Cathy Lang Ho -- European Forum for Architectural Policies (FEPA); Adam Yarinsky/Architecture Research Office/ARO; Mark Robbins; Jason Schupbach/National Endowment for the Arts/NEA; Guy Nordenson-Architect Magazine

Inside Masdar City: a modern mirage: The first phase of this zero-carbon Gulf city is up and running. But behind the futuristic facade of driverless pods, medieval streets twist and turn back the clock to traditional design...It's the determinedly ultra-modern aspects of Masdar that prove to be a mirage. By Jonathan Glancey -- Foster + Partners - Guardian (UK)

Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, Abu Dhabi: The original \$22 billion budget has been reduced by 15% and completion pushed back to 2025...the drawn-out schedule has a silver lining. "The slowing [of construction] means we can improve the project as we go along"...despite...bells and whistles, the completed institute buildings are most remarkable for their reliance on low-tech, passive strategies. -- Foster + Partners; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill [slide show]- Architectural Record

A labor of love or a grave mistake? The new wing of Tel Aviv University's school of architecture, designed by benefactor David Azrieli, has unleashed a firestorm..."you don't look a gift horse in the mouth"...In the end, the teachers voted with heavy hearts in favor of the new wing...poses a number of fundamental problems...it is alien to its surroundings..."it simply shouts about itself outwardly"... By Noam Dvir -- Moshe Tzur Architects & Town Planners; Nachum Zolotov [image]- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Dreaming spires: Beijing's construction playground keeps attracting architecture companies, following in the footsteps of major names like Rem Koolhaas, Steven Holl, Norman Foster and Zaha Hadid...the first Portuguese architecture studio to debut...China's growth is spreading outside first tier cities but architects are not sure how much of an opportunity this offers to smaller companies. -- Saraiva & Associados; OPEN Architecture - Global Times (China)

Atlanta Architects Have Designs on China: Atlanta firms haven't been left behind in this architectural gold rush...They all seem to agree on a few things: China is a fast-moving market with vast potential...But they also agree that their expertise might have a limited life span in China. -- John Portman & Associates; Hostetler Zhang & Studer; tvsdesign; Niles Bolton Associates; Ben Wood - GlobalAtlanta

Beneath this bubble, a book-storing marvel; Helmut Jahn's ambitious design for new Mansueto Library will prove good for students as well as their research material...Call it the Book Bubble. The Dome for Tomes. Or the Spaceship That Made Reading Oh-So-Cool...audacious...convention-busting marvel... By Blair Kamin [images, video]- Chicago Tribune

Reflections on the glass base of 1 World Trade Center: With prismatic glass abandoned, can architects avoid the Bunker Effect? ...after \$10 million already had been spent on the glass, the architects have been sent back to the drawing board. By Blair Kamin -- David Childs/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [images, link]- Chicago Tribune

Cracking the Concrete: Trying to Create a More Permeable New York: The Bloomberg administration not only wants a greener New York, it wants a more permeable one...how green infrastructure could cut costs and clean city waterways...represents a sea change in the city's approach to managing stormwater pollution and could well be one of PlaNYC's most lasting effects. [images, links]- Gotham Gazette (NYC)

Radical Confidence: A Tale of Two Rivers: The Yangtze River is at near-record low levels as the Mississippi River floods over its banks. What do these two waterways tell us about how buildings and countries alike will need to manage water use? By Rob Watson [links]- GreenBiz

Delightful pier park brings hope to waterfront: If Race Street Pier makes the Delaware a place to hang out, it will become harder for the city to continue ceding precious frontage to undesirable uses like big-box stores, casinos, and parking garages. By Inga Saffron -- James Corner Field Operations [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

A tribute to the father of RP's [Philippines] landscape architecture: One of the key figures that brought landscape architecture to mainstream consciousness is Ildefonso P. Santos Jr...perhaps the biggest contribution Santos gave was his influence in establishing the first undergraduate program in landscape architecture at the University of the Philippines in 1971... -- Cornell, Bridges and Troller - Manila Bulletin (Philippines)

Tucson Brutalist Bank at Risk: After the 9/11 attacks...Tucson set aside \$92 million to build a command center where police, fire, and emergency personnel could coordinate emergency responses...selected the former Valley National Bank building...now preservationists are concerned that sections...will be destroyed...Cited as one of the 50 most significant examples of Modern architecture in Tucson... -- Cain, Nelson, Wares & Cook Architects (1972); Modern Architecture Preservation Project [images, link] - The Architect's Newspaper

Bahrain's Pearl Statue is gone, but it remains an icon of democracy: ...was a classic piece of meaningless, made-to-order modernism, drab but sleek in a style beloved by high-end hotels and authoritarian governments...became the unlikely symbol of a vigorous democratic movement...Expunging a symbol is never an easy process. By Philip Kennicott [images, video] - Washington Post

RIBA Awards 2011: This year's gongs from the Royal Institute of British Architects went to a bewildering range of buildings, from grandstanding urban monuments to teetering rural titter-fests + RIBA awards offer a bird's eye view of British architecture. By Jonathan Glancey -- Sutherland Hussey; MDRV; Peter Beard/Landroom; Haysom Ward Miller; Marsh and Grochowksi; O'Donnell + Tuomey; Caruso St John; PagePark Architects; Stephen Marshall; Tonkin Liu; Bennetts Associates; Sarah Wigglesworth; Zaha Hadid; John McAslan; UNStudio; Tabanlıoğlu; Foster + Partners [slide show, links] - Guardian (UK)

2011 North American Copper in Architecture Awards: Recipients Showcase Versatility, Preservation, Top Copper Projects with Emphasis on Sustainability -- SmithGroup; Carpenter Sellers Del Gatto Architects; HGA; McInturf Architects; TRB Architecture; Shore Tilbe Perkins+Will; Steven Dodd Architect; OMNI Architects; DFS Inc. Architecture & Design; Northeast Collaborative Architects; Allen Architectural [images] - Copper Development Association/Canadian Copper & Brass Development Association

Call for entries: 2011 Record Interiors (international); special consideration will be paid to works that incorporate innovations in design, program, building technology, sustainability, and/or materials; deadline: June 1 - Architectural Record

Call for entries: Architect Barbie Dream House Design Competition (open to AIA members); deadline: June 27 - American Institute of Architects (AIA) / Mattel



MVRDV: China Comic and Animation Museum, Hangzhou, China

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