

Today's News - Monday, October 17, 2011

- ArcSpace brings us an eyeful of Zaha's show in Philly (the setting alone is eye-boggling).
- Kimmelman and Kayden weigh in on Occupy Wall Street and the "power of place": it is "a reminder of the civic ideal of public space, and how far modernity has drifted away from it" + "If the outcome results in a discussion about uses of and improvements to public space, then its members could add yet another accomplishment to their already impressive achievements."
- Rich re-examines Interboro's "Holding Pattern" at P.S.1 that explored "the power of temporary design to create systemic change," but "in the end, an inspirational gesture is not systemic change...longer-term commitments to progressive forms or progressive politics sit with the institution and not its guest architects."
- Cary minces no words about what he thinks of "architecture's identity problem": "It is high time that architecture focus less on enforcement of titles and fortifying its barriers to entry, and more on creating an inclusive profession truly dedicated to the health, the safety, and the welfare of the public."
- Wing takes a "macro look at unemployment and the economy" and what the architecture industry can do: "First, they must stop simply immersing themselves in a narrow vision of the profession and be involved politically...A collective voice of both the unemployed and employed in architecture would prove powerful indeed."
- An in-depth look at "bad boy architects" in China: are they creating "towering landmarks or lasting eyesores" with designs that "would never be accepted by the architects' home countries"?
- Meanwhile, foreign firms continue to take advantage of the "exponential growth" in the Chinese building market: "With more foreign designs, however, has come fierce criticism of their concepts" (and cheers for the rising tide of local talent).
- Ian Simpson's Canary Wharf tower is deemed "elegant" - but the affordable housing component seems lacking (alas, not unique to this project).
- Currid-Halkett takes an in-depth look at why it "takes more than tax breaks" to build successful arts districts: "before we go tossing money at anyone with a paintbrush or an art space, we have to understand the complex ways artistic communities shape our cities' fortunes."
- Safdie talks about his new Kauffman Center in Kansas City and "the moral purpose of architecture" and cultural projects.
- How Steve Jobs "left an indelible stamp on architecture, especially the retail kind, traditionally a backwater of the profession."
- An eyeful of a Paris/NYC firm's winning design for a French museum honoring Australian soldiers killed on the Western Front during WWI.
- Pennsylvania Ballet takes a northward trek on Philly's Avenue of the Arts in "a journey of unimaginable transformation."
- Welton cheers the restoration of Hemingway's Finca Vigia in Cuba: ""The story of the house's recent rebirth is something of an unlikely miracle."
- Glancey reviews the week in architecture that includes lots of leaning (and non-leaning) towers, pylons, and Venice Biennale flap.
- Rybczynski cheers the U.S. Post Office's "handsome set of stamps honoring Pioneers of American Industrial Design. 'Pioneers' is the right word."
- Gallagher cheers a Detroit architect with so few projects on the boards, he decided to design an electric vehicle charging station that looks like it might have just the right spark (and maybe merits a postage stamp down the road?).
- A few New Zealand real estate agents are in hot water for "inflating the value of houses by claiming they are designed by 'award winning architects' when they are not."
- Brussat cheers the winners of the 2nd annual Bulfinch Awards that "show a refined appreciation of how the principles of classicism beautify and ennoble the past and the future."

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Exhibition: "Zaha Hadid: Form in Motion," Philadelphia Museum of Art

In Protest, the Power of Place: Occupy Wall Street is a reminder of the civic ideal of public space, and how far modernity has drifted away from it...We tend to underestimate the political power of physical places. Then Tahrir Square comes along. Now it's Zuccotti Park...Politics troubles our consciences. But places haunt our imaginations...on the ground is where the protesters are building an architecture of consciousness. By Michael Kimmelman [images]- New York Times

Comment: Occupying Wall Street at the public-private frontier: Given its legal provenance, how should one judge the current use of Zuccotti Park by the hundreds of people...The true answer is, no one knows...If the outcome...results in a discussion about uses of and improvements to public space, then its members could add yet another accomplishment to their already impressive achievements. By Jerold S. Kayden/Advocates for Privately Owned Public Space (APOPS)- The Architect's Newspaper

Social Skills: Interboro at P.S.1, a postscript: ...a recent community-facing installation "Holding Pattern" at New York's P.S.1 explores the power of temporary design to create systemic change...In the end, an inspirational gesture is not systemic change...Any hopes to initiate longer-term commitments to progressive forms or progressive politics sit with the institution and not its guest architects. By Damon Rich- Domus

Why Architecture's Identity Problem Should Matter to the Rest of Us: ...architecture remains one of the most elite and homogenous professions, clinging to institutional barriers...It is high time that architecture focus less on enforcement of titles and fortifying its barriers to entry, and more on creating an inclusive profession truly dedicated to the health, the safety, and the welfare of the public. By John Cary- GOOD Magazine

A Macro Look at Unemployment and the Economy: ...issues are all important for those in the architecture industry to understand since its unemployment rate...as high as 40%...So what can those in the architecture profession do? First, they must stop simply immersing themselves in a narrow vision of the profession...be involved politically..."Agitate, agitate." A collective voice of both the unemployed and employed in architecture would prove powerful indeed. By Sherin Wing- Archinect

Bad Boy Architects & China's New Face: ...is China a playground for international architects or an abused testing ground for bad design? Liu Yujie examines the landscape and finds out if these new buildings are towering landmarks or lasting eyesores...many of these designs would never be accepted by the architects' home countries... -- Herzog & de Muron; Paul Andreu; Rem Koolhaas/OMA; Norman Foster/Foster + Partners; Zaha Hadid; Peng Peikeng; Wu Liangyong; Raimund Abraham; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill/SOM; Liu Xiaodu/Urbanus Architects; Wu Xuefu; Wang Shu; GMP Architects [images]- China Daily

Crowning glory: Capitalizing on the exponential growth in the building market, many foreign architecture firms are opening offices in Beijing and Shanghai...despite the opportunities...challenges are equally numerous...With more foreign designs, however, has come fierce criticism of their concepts. -- Graft; Herzog & de Meuron; OMA/Rem Koolhaas; Zaha Hadid; RMJM; Gensler- China Daily

Ian Simpson unveils Canary Wharf tower scheme: ...a 31-storey 'crystalline' tower on the Dollar Bay site, providing 121 homes, and a separate six to eight storey block in Thomas Street, providing a further 64 flats...Design Council CABE...describing the 108m-tall tower as "elegant"...it was more critical of the affordable housing scheme... [images]-

Gray Matter: Where Do Bohemians Come From? It takes more than tax breaks to build a successful arts district...There's nothing wrong with looking to art as a way to raise a city's economic development. But before we go tossing money at anyone with a paintbrush or an art space, we have to understand the complex ways artistic communities shape our cities' fortunes. By Elizabeth Currid-Halkett - [New York Times](#)

Moshe Safdie Makes Sure Everything Stays up to Date in Kansas City: ...architect of the...Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts talks about the moral purpose of architecture and the need for a building to reflect the cultural essence of its location while remaining timeless. [video, transcript] - [PBS](#)

A Genius of the Storefront, Too: Apple's free-standing stores...are a testament to the design notions of Steve Jobs...Just as [he] transformed the notion of the personal computer and the cellphone, he left an indelible stamp on architecture, especially the retail kind, traditionally a backwater of the profession. -- Peter Bohlin/Bohlin Cywinski Jackson [images] - [New York Times](#)

Design triumph: French museum honours fallen Australians: The winning design has been chosen...to honour thousands of Australian soldiers killed...on the Western Front during the First World War...designs by Paris and New York-based Serero Architects will form the Museum of the Battle of Fromelles. [images] - [Architecture & Design \(Australia\)](#)

Pennsylvania Ballet stepping toward new home on North Broad Street: ...the northward trek has been a journey of unimaginable transformation...project that will feature five dance studios, offices, and facilities for a soon-to-return School of the Pennsylvania Ballet...will provide another anchor for the Avenue of the Arts... -- Erdy McHenry Architecture [images] - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

Hemingway's Finca Vigia restored in partnership of Cuban, U.S. preservationists: ...author Michael Connors and photographer Brent Winebrenner were granted carte blanche for "The Splendor of Cuba: 450 Years of Architecture and Interiors"...Nothing has been removed, and nothing added...The story of the house's recent rebirth is something of an unlikely miracle... By J. Michael Welton -- National Trust for Historic Preservation; Lee Cott/Bruner/Cott; William A. Dupont - [Washington Post](#)

Constructive criticism: the week in architecture: Big Ben is becoming the leaning tower of London, but architects the world over have begun deliberately tilting towers, from the Capital Gate in Abu Dhabi to Anish Kapoor's Olympic Orbit. By Jonathan Glancey -- RMJM; Vladimir Tatlin; Dixon Jones; Cecil Balmond; Arup; Kathryn Findlay Architects; Bystrup Arkitekter; Gillespie Kidd & Coia (1963); Paul Stallan Studio; Ricky Burdett; Aaron Betsky [links] - [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

Great American Industrial Designers: The U.S. Post Office has issued a handsome set of stamps honoring "Pioneers of American Industrial Design." Pioneers is the right word. By Witold Rybczynski -- Walter Dorwin Teague; Raymond Loewy; Henry Dreyfuss; Norman Bel Geddes; Eliot Noyes; Russel Wright; George Nelson; Charles and Ray Eames [slide show essay] - [Slate](#)

Architect's electric vehicle charger gets wider attention: Jim Blain did not have enough buildings to design because of the economy, so he came up with electric vehicle charging stations...He got a big boost last month when national distributor...selected Blain's PEP Station as the model that it will include in its catalog for national marketing. By John Gallagher -- James Blain & Associates [image] - [Detroit Free Press](#)

Bogus architect claims inflate house values: The real estate industry is again under fire amid allegations some agents are inflating the value of houses by claiming they are designed by "award winning architects" when they are not. - [New Zealand Herald](#)

Announcing the winners of the second annual Bulfinch Awards: These five examples...show a refined appreciation of how the principles of classicism beautify and ennoble the past and the future. By David Brussat -- DeCarol & Doll; Dell Mitchell Architects; Jan Gleysteen Architects; Gregory Lombardi Design; Carter & Company Interior Design [images] - [Providence Journal \(Rhode Island\)](#)

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