

Today's News - Friday, October 28, 2011

- Why, "in the name of universal design and equality, do architects continue to design uniform one-size-fits-all environments?" Blame Plato's philosophy of essentialism.
- Iovine reports on the competition heating up to build NYC's own (massive) version of Silicon Valley.
- Politics puts the kibosh on plans for the Royal Alberta Museum.
- Arief cheers Baker's ability to prove "designing for density doesn't have to be ugly, or scary."
- Litt cheers the renewal of a Bucky/Kelly project that "has struck generations of Clevelanders as something of a lovable folly" so it now "has a second shot at the wider attention it truly deserves."
- British architects fume over the Foreign Office tapping U.S. firms in a procurement process that scores 80% on cost and 20% on quality: "It says to the rest of the world that we are a mean, penny-pinching, unimaginative bunch of people."
- Ingels anointed WSJ's inaugural Innovator of the Year in architecture: "Ingenious solutions to messy design challenges have become a BIG trademark."
- We couldn't resist: the next generation of urban agriculture could include shipping containers.
- Weekend diversions:
- Kimmelman finds "Design With the Other 90%: Cities" at the U.N. an "inspired show about remaking the world...And that's thrilling."
- Heathcote and Merrick find "Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915-35" a "superb show" that showcases "radical work of great prescience and experimental power...its influence is still felt today."
- Lots of Rem + "Metabolism": Worrall says "the material excavated is quite simply stupendous" that shows how much "the insipid language and perfunctory themes emanating from the UIA Congress underscores the dispiriting realization of how much the aura and promise evoked by the word "reconstruction" has evaporated in the Japan of today."
- Q&A: Rem talks about his latest book "Project Japan."
- He had lots to say in a dialogue Mori Art Museum director: "Without Tange, there would have been no metabolism."
- Liddell reports that "Tadao Ando: Sights on the Mainland" in Tokyo "seems to place him alongside other media-savvy globalist architects, whose shimmering creations could be dropped down from the sky almost anywhere in the world to astound the baffled locals."
- "Imperfect Health: the Medicalization of Architecture" at the CCA "reveals contradictions in how architecture and urban environments engage and influence health."
- McGuirk says Hustwit's "Urbanized" is a "brave and timely movie that manages to strike almost exactly the right tone."
- Levy and Hustwit talk about urbanist strategies: "We need more city-to-city sharing of ideas and projects. I'm surprised by how little of that happens now."
- Halprin's posthumously published memoir displays "an innate modesty" that doesn't "specify if the places were changed for the better - as indeed they were."
- Dvir delves into architectural historian Kroyanker, who "wouldn't trade the present for another period, but his many articles and books about Jerusalem are filled with affection for the good taste and craftsmanship of days of yore."

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[The Plato Effect in Architecture: Designing for Human Diversity: Why...in the name of universal design and equality, do architects continue to design uniform one-size-fits-all environments? Answering that is not so simple...the most likely culprit is Plato's philosophy of essentialism... By Christopher N. Henry- ArchDaily](#)

[Silicon Island: Let the competition to turn New York into tech-central begin...the "Genius School," as it's been tagged...a 30-year build-out; two million square feet of construction...and four sites for free to choose from...two front runners—Cornell and Stanford—and one site—Roosevelt Island—are coming into focus. By Julie V. Iovine -- SOM/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; James Corner Field Operations; Ennead \[images\]- The Architect's Newspaper](#)

[Political fight leaves Royal Alberta Museum plan in limbo: a new premier has put the last premier's legacy project on indefinite hold...federal government...had withdrawn a commitment to provide \\$92.5 million...It's outrageous. But it's also not quite true...Both sides are telling half-truths at best...taxpayers pick up the tab for all the architectural competitions and the designs that never get built. By Paula Simons -- Ledcor; Donna Clare/Dialog; Michael Lundholm- Edmonton Journal \(Canada\)](#)

[Designing for Density Doesn't Have to Be Ugly, or Scary: David Baker finds beauty in buildings that house lots of people...Among the many tools in his impressive design arsenal is one you might not expect: an ability to humanize the data. He's designing not for stats and acronyms but for citizens. By Allison Arief -- David Baker + Partners Architects \[images\]- The Atlantic Cities](#)

[A Second Chance: A bold collaboration between Buckminster Fuller and John Terence Kelly gets a new lease on life...ASM International...has struck generations of Clevelanders as something of a lovable folly..."This is the future of historic preservation"...thanks to its recent renewal, it has a second shot at the wider attention it truly deserves. By Steven Litt -- Chesler Group; Dimit Architects \[images\]- Metropolis Magazine](#)

[Anger as US firms chosen for embassy framework: Call for procurement reform grows as Foreign Office appoints RTKL and URS Scott Wilson: ...procurement process allocated 80% of the marks to cost and only 20% to quality..."It says to the rest of the world that we are a mean, penny-pinching, unimaginative bunch of people"... -- Richard Murphy; John McAslan; Allies & Morrison- BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Innovator of the Year Award 2011: Building a Better Future: Shunning "the Protestant idea that it has to hurt to do good," Bjarke Ingels thinks that buildings can address environmental concerns and still be beautiful, perplexing, comfortable, ironic, joyful and fun..."Pragmatic Utopianism"...Ingenious solutions to messy design challenges have become a BIG trademark. -- Bjarke Ingels Group \[images\]- Wall Street Journal](#)

[Is This the Future of Farming? Two Atlanta entrepreneurs may shake up urban agriculture by using shipping containers to grow food anywhere...As urban farming outfits go, Podponics is exceptionally focused on business viability and growth. \[images, video\]- The Atlantic](#)

[Rescued by Design: "Design With the Other 90%: Cities," an infelicitously titled but inspired show organized by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and now installed...in the United Nations visitors' lobby...This is a design show about remaking the world...And that's thrilling... By Michael Kimmelman \[images\]- New York Times](#)

[Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915-1935, Royal Academy, London: Tatlin's Tower is the perfect trail for an exhibition of utopian visions and painful realities...Exquisite, fragile drawings...sit beside a series of superb photos by Richard Pare that reveal the decaying ruins of the era's surviving architectural monuments...This is a superb show... By Edwin Heathcote -- Solomon Nikritin; Vladimir Tatlin; Ivan Kliun; Alexandr Rodchenko; El Lissitzky- Financial Times \(UK\)](#)

[Russia's aesthetic revolution: How Soviet building still influences today's architects: "Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915-35" at the Royal Academy of Arts will showcase radical work of great prescience and experimental power...its influence is still felt today. By Jay Merrick- Independent \(UK\)](#)

[When the future was still ahead: "Metabolism: The City of the Future" is a trawl through the voluminous archive of the](#)

Metabolists...the material excavated is quite simply stupendous...a glance at the insipid language and perfunctory themes emanating from the JIA Congress underscores the dispiriting realization of how much the aura and promise evoked by the word "reconstruction" has evaporated in the Japan of today. By Julian Worrall -- Kenzo Tange; Noboru Kawazoe; Masato Otaka; Fumihiko Maki; Kiyonori Kikutake; Arata Isozaki; Kisho Kurokawa [images]- Japan Times

Q&A: Rem Koolhaas: High on Metabolism, Rem talks about his latest book "Project Japan: Metabolism Talks"...undertaken with Hans Ulrich Obrist to interview the founders and thinkers of what the architect calls "the first non-Western avant-garde movement in architecture" and the Dutch architect's search for a more meaningful engagement between architecture and societies. -- SANAA/Sejima; Arata Isozaki; Kenzo Tange; Kisho Kurokawa; Kenji Ekuan [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Rem Koolhaas x Nanjo Fumio: Why Metabolism now? Looking back at the period of the Metabolists through the eyes of today: Coinciding with the exhibition "Metabolism, the City of the Future: Dreams and Visions of Reconstruction in Postwar and Present-Day Japan" at Mori Art Museum, Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist [publish] "Project Japan"... "Without Tange, there would have been no metabolism"... [images]- Tokyo Art Beat

Tadao Ando's bold visions distractingly daring in design: ...he likes to present himself as a sensitive sort..."Tadao Ando: Sights on the Mainland" at Tokyo's Gallery GA gives us a chance to consider whether this is true...seems to place him alongside the likes of Zaha Hadid, Frank Gehry and other media-savvy globalist architects, whose shimmering creations could be dropped down from the sky almost anywhere in the world to astound the baffled locals. By C.B. Liddell- Japan Times

"Imperfect Health: the Medicalization of Architecture" reveals contradictions in how architecture and urban environments engage and influence health...that suggest new strategies and constitute an argument for the urgent 'demedicalization' of architecture. -- Rem Koolhaas/OMA/Office for Metropolitan Architecture; Morphosis; François Roche; Philippe Rahm; MVRDV; SANAA; B.I.G.; McLaughlin- Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA)

"Urbanized": a documentary about city design that comes in the nick of time: As the global population teeters on 7 billion, Gary Hustwit's film portrays the world's exploding number of city dwellers as the solution rather than the problem...a brave and timely movie that manages to strike almost exactly the right tone. By Justin McGuirk- Guardian (UK)

Urbanized: An Interview with Gary Hustwit about urbanist strategies that have ricocheted around the world, from Capetown to Bogotá: "I was looking for projects...where the design thinking was both evident and effective...ideas that can be spread from city to city...We need more city-to-city sharing of ideas and projects. I'm surprised by how little of that happens now." By Adam Harrison Levy- Places Journal

An American Landscape Architect and His Sabra Designs Shaped Israel and the U.S. as Well: "A Life Spent Changing Places," a posthumously published memoir by Lawrence Halprin...an innate modesty reflected in the very title of his memoir, which does not specify if the places were changed for the better — as indeed they were.- The Forward (NY)

A yearning free of illusions: Architectural historian David Kroyanker says he wouldn't trade the present for another period, but his many articles and books about Jerusalem are filled with affection for the good taste and craftsmanship of days of yore. By Noam Dvir - Ha'aretz (Israel)



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