

## Today's News - Friday, November 11, 2011

- Weinstein cheers Sorokin's "All Over the Map" as "a triumph of enlightened nay-saying and affirmation."
- Carlson takes a long look at Orr's Oberlin Project that could be "a model for fundamentally reshaping the American economy and its society" facing "a future of scarcity."
- Woodman sees Aberdeen as a poster child illustrating public referendums and "some of the dangers of putting complex urban proposals to a public vote."
- Ross takes a long (and very thoughtful) look at the valuable lessons to be learned from Phoenix, the "world's least sustainable city."
- A TV news report from Russia looks at America's post-9/11 "architecture of fear" (includes Rybczynski, who "calls the fixation on security 'bollard envy'").
- Kennicott finds Occupy D.C.'s "DIY urbanism" rather refreshing: the protesters "have done what so many planners, designers and architects strive for but fail to achieve: They have 'activated' the urban core."
- In London, good design (not just paint jobs) will be a key factor in the allocation of funds for post-riot regeneration.
- McCracken takes on Nussbaum: design thinking is not dead: "Designers can be definers" (unless "they take their balls and go home").
- Dvir tours the Tel Aviv Museum of Art's new wing with Cohen, who is quite pleased with his project, despite critics' claims that it "is in danger of upstaging the art rather than showcasing it."
- Cloepfil tours the about-to-open Clyfford Still Museum in Denver: "Wow," he says. "Everything is better than I hoped for."
- Rothstein gives (mostly) thumbs-up to the New-York Historical Society's revamp: the "overall effect is at once dizzying, alluring and disorienting... but it does inspire reflection."
- An eyeful of the 3R (Refurb, Rethink, Retrofit) Award winners.
- Weekend diversions:
- Worrall really wanted to be wowed by starchitect-studded "Architectural Environments for Tomorrow" in Tokyo, but instead finds the whole "is most definitely less than the sum of its parts... given the architectural firepower assembled, the show fails to ignite."
- Moore has a most amusing conversation with Conran on the eve of his one-man show at the Design Museum "despite his protestations."
- Arief suggests U.K. developer journey to AIA Seattle for an exhibit of shipping container with work by 22 international firms (so much for claims of intellectual property rights in Boxpark vs. City Mall Re:START).
- In California, "The Utopian City Project" uses Long Beach as a model in a new exercise in imagining the "perfect utopian city of the future."
- Weinstein finds the latter half of "Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture" to be "illuminating" (the "architects steal the show").
- Lanks looks longingly at seven of the world's best "Nano Houses."
- Editor's note: On this Veterans' Day (U.S.), let's hope 11-11-11 bodes well for a more peaceful future.

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**Michael Sorokin: Architectural Critic as Scam Scanner and Urban(e) Design Sage: "All Over the Map," a sprawling miscellany of recent essays on buildings and cities, is a triumph of enlightened nay-saying and affirmation.** By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

**Oberlin, Ohio: Laboratory for a New Way of Life: An environmental-studies professor tries to reinvent his town for a future of scarcity...The Oberlin Project...joins town and gown to create a resilient community for a post-fossil-fuel era...could make it a model for fundamentally reshaping the American economy and its society.** By Scott Carlson -- David W. Orr- The Chronicle of Higher Education

**Democratising planning: ...public referendums look set to play a significant role in the way that decisions about our built environment are reached in future...in Aberdeen City Council's proposal to put the development of Union Gardens to referendum, we begin to glimpse some of the dangers of putting complex urban proposals to a public vote.** By Ellis Woodman- BD/Building Design (UK)

**Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City: For decades Phoenix was one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S....today it's a prime casualty of the housing crash. Andrew Ross analyzes the contradictory political and economic forces...that have shaped modern Arizona — and made it so emblematic of our thorny national politics.** [images]- Places Journal

**Washington's architecture scarred by 9/11: Architects of Fear: Barricades a symbol of American terror culture...Witold Rybczynski...calls the fixation on security "bollard envy," where bollards, now ubiquitous fixtures in Washington, serve as a "symbol of bureaucratic status."** [video]- TV-Novosti / RT TV (Russia)

**In McPherson Square, Occupy D.C. creates a vibrant brand of urbanism: Set against the orderly but dull architectural backdrop...the encampment...has made this sleepy public space...one of the busiest public squares in Washington...the protesters...have done what so many planners, designers and architects strive for but fail to achieve: They have "activated" the urban core.** By Philip Kennicott- Washington Post

**"Good design is key to post-riot regeneration": ...will be a key factor in deciding how to allocate London's post-riot funding, the mayor's regeneration adviser Peter Rogers has said...money would not be spent on paint jobs but on making places better than they were before this summer's disturbances.** - BD/Building Design (UK)

**Is Design Thinking Dead? Hell No: Bruce Nussbaum may have delivered his eulogy, but design thinking...still has a lot to offer...we need this approach more than we ever did...Designers can be definers, making the world more intelligible, more habitable. But this won't happen if, confronted by the inevitable difficulty of the early days, they take their balls and go home.** By Grant McCracken- Fast Company

**Love triangle: The Tel Aviv Museum of Art's new wing has finally opened. Haaretz accompanied Preston Scott Cohen as he took his first tour around the completed \$50-million building. Critics contend, however, that the facility is in danger of upstaging the art rather than showcasing it.** By Noam Dvir - Ha'aretz (Israel)

**Clyfford Still Museum by Allied Works Opening This Month in Denver: Brad Cloepfil takes Architectural Record on a tour of his "introverted" building - a \$29 million project that exceeded his expectations.** - Architectural Record

**Museum's New Center of Gravity: The three-year, \$70 million remodeling of the New-York Historical Society is not just a cosmetic affair...modifications emphasize not monumental elevation but democratic accessibility...The overall effect is at once dizzying, alluring and disorienting...presentation filters out intimations of hierarchy or solemnity in the objects. I miss something in this approach, but it does inspire reflection.** By Edward Rothstein -- York & Sawyer (1908); Platt Byard Dovell White Architects [slide show]- New York Times

**AJ exclusive: Winners of retrofit Oscars revealed: Cambridge-based 5th Studio won the showpiece prize [at] 3R Awards (Refurb, Rethink, Retrofit) -- Bennetts Associates Architects; Penoyre & Prasad; Ian Ritchie Architects; Alford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects (AHMM); Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams; bere:architects; Cottrell & Vermeulen Architecture; Shepheard Epstein Hunter; Make [images, links]- The Architects' Journal (UK)**

Breathing life into the nature of architecture: With curation by SANAA and Yuko Hasegawa...the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo's "Architectural Environments for Tomorrow" has been eagerly anticipated...with a lineup of 28 architects and artists from 14 countries...Disappointingly, and remarkably given the architectural firepower assembled, the show fails to ignite. The whole is here most definitely less than the sum of its parts. By Julian Worrall -- Wim Wenders; Petra Blaisse; Toyo Ito; Junya Ishigami; Sou Fujimoto; Akihisa Hirata; Piet Oudolf; Matthias Schuler; Tetsuo Kondo; Office Kersten Geers David van Severen- [Japan Times](#)

Terence Conran at 80: He has been changing British homes and palates since the 1950s...the man who sold us lifestyle looks back at his achievements...He created and endowed the Design Museum in London in 1989 "to encourage this country to become a workshop again"...honouring Conran's 80th birthday with ["The Way We Live Now"] an exhibition about him, despite his protestations: "I don't want to be seen..." By Rowan Moore- [Observer \(UK\)](#)

Crazy for Containers: Perhaps UK developer Roger Wade [Boxpark] is due for a visit to AIA Seattle gallery...like anything, container architecture has its hits and misses. You won't find the latter at this comprehensive exhibit curated by Czech architect Jure Kotnik and featuring work by 22 international firms... By Allison Arieff -- Hybrid Architecture; Adam Kalkin; AFF Architekten; DeMaria Design; HVDN Architekten; Knock.Se; LOT-EK; Luc Deleu; MMW Architects; Nicholas Lacey & Partners; Phooey Architects; Pierre Morency Architecten; Platoon + Graft; Shigeru Ban Architects; Spillmann-Echlsle; Spillmann-Felser; Will Alsop Design [images, links]- [The Atlantic Cities](#)

The Collaborative Explores Cityscape: The desire to create an ideal society by envisioning a perfect city has been held by architects and urban planners for centuries..."The Utopian City Project: Giacomo Castagnola and James Rojas" uses Long Beach as a model in a new exercise in imagining the "perfect utopian city of the future"...betting on the public's interaction to inform them of what is considered "utopia."- [Gazette \(Long Beach, California\)](#)

"Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture" edited by Karla Britton: This inter-faith overview of contemporary religious architecture...showcases 20 essays...the architects steal the show. Outstanding insights from the likes of Stanley Tigerman, Richard Meier, Steven Holl, Zaha Hadid, and Peter Eisenman make half of this book illuminating, alas, the latter half...collection offers hints that God is in the details. By Norman Weinstein- [Architectural Record](#)

Smaller Than Your Living Room: 7 Of The World's Best Nano Houses: "Nano House" by Phyllis Richardson, compiles 40 outstanding examples of small-scale living. By Belinda Lanks [slide show]- [Fast Company](#)



[Preston Scott Cohen: Herta & Paul Amir Building, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel](#)

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