

Today's News - Wednesday, January 4, 2012

- Doig lines up seven bold urban projects that "point the way to a brave urban future" (one "should qualify Janette Sadik-Khan for sainthood").
- Sociologist Saskia Sassen looks back at the Occupy movement's many encampments: "The city emerges as a space where the powerless can make history; it is not the only space, but it is a critical one."
- A "crash program to build 36 million subsidized apartments" in China might help "prevent its economy from flaming out" - but pitfalls abound (including shoddy construction).
- Iovine x 2: she finds a silver lining in hard times for architecture: "closer scrutiny to the bottom line and even the need to lop off extras can lead to a sharper and more forceful design." - She is left wondering if Cornell/Technion will stand by SOM's "wholly sustainable, radically accessible design plan" for a new NYC Tech Campus: "Cornell administrators close to the project were vague when asked" (and alums want an alum).
- Litt offers his own litany of why the NEA's Landesman found Cleveland "a national example of how to blend historic preservation, community and economic development, and the arts" - "despite its status as a perennially shrinking city."
- Looking back (and forward) at some "much-needed renovations" to several major Manhattan theaters that "largely got things right - though there's always room to quibble."
- Hume cheers academic institutions that are teaching Toronto how to relearn the ways of urbanity.
- Pearman reports from Dresden's Military History Museum: it is "a provocatively symbolic design" conceived when Libeskind "was at a creative peak. It shows...this military museum is a force for good" (great slide show, too).
- Lavin on Scott Cohen's Tel Aviv Museum of Art Amir Building: it "emerges as a new kind of building, sent via special delivery to a place where negotiation is urgently needed and heroism inconceivable."
- A new museum in Kashmir could face a (costly) makeover before it even opens.
- Chaban reports on new trials and tribulations for Atlantic Yards Barclays Center: the façade maker has closed its special purpose-built factory for the project.
- Better news for the Art Deco Bank of Montreal building in Ottawa: it's being transformed into a grand ceremonial space for Parliament (great pix).
- It looks like the end could be near for Neutra's Cyclorama at Gettysburg: "Even the building's biggest booster predicts feds will tear it down."
- An almost intimidating encounter with Hadid (amusingly reported): "Does she think she's scary? 'No,' she says, even more tersely than before" (and where's her invite to the Olympic Games?).
- Kamin pays tribute: even though he "was not a big fan" of Legorreta's University of Chicago dorm, "the man himself was warm, genial, intelligent, intellectually honest, and, above all, a great humanist. In a field whose leading practitioners are often given to arrogance and self-indulgence, he'll be missed." + In San Jose, Legorreta "left behind a legacy of color and drama - and a story about bubble-gum pink paint."
- Kazovsky cheers the "many incredibly innovative ideas gathered and lovingly displayed" at L.A.'s Craft and Folk Art Museum in "Golden State of Craft: California 1960-1985" (show closes this weekend).
- We couldn't resist: The House on Chicken Feet, Part 3, where Nordenson re-envisions and re-engineer Rapunzel's tower.

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The bold urban future starts now: Cities are broke? Unimaginative? Hardly...pie-in-the-sky ideas are moving from brainstorm to blueprint to groundbreaking - and 2012 will prove it...From a massive re-imagining of a postindustrial Chicago landscape to the rebirth of the Los Angeles River, these seven ventures point the way to a brave urban future. By Will Doig- Salon

Imminent Domain: The eviction of protesters from New York's Zuccotti Park...has done little to diminish the significance of occupation as a mode of political action. Looking back on last year's many encampments—and their disruptions of urban space...sociologist Saskia Sassen discusses the relationship of occupation to notions of territory and power...The city emerges as a space where the powerless can make history; it is not the only space, but it is a critical one.- Artforum

China Pins Hopes on Public Housing: Beijing's subsidized-housing push will help determine whether China can remake its real-estate sector fast enough to prevent its economy from flaming out...in the midst of a crash program to build 36 million subsidized apartments...But the vast experiment faces a number of pitfalls...problems include inflated accounts of progress, shoddy construction...- Wall Street Journal

Why Hard Times Can Make Great Buildings: A slow economy is hard on architecture, except when it isn't. As the best buildings of 2011 amply show, closer scrutiny to the bottom line and even the need to lop off extras can lead to a sharper and more forceful design. By Julie V. Iovine -- Frank Gehry; Thomas Leiser; Allied Works Architecture; Rem Koolhaas/Shohei Shigematsu/OMA; Rafael Viñoly Architects [images]- Wall Street Journal

Will Cornell stand by SOM to build NYC Tech Campus? Multiple factors helped the Cornell/Technion team win...High on that list is SOMs...wholly sustainable, radically accessible design plan...And yet it is unclear if SOM will remain on the job...Cornell administrators close to the project were vague when asked... By Julie V. Iovine -- James Corner Field Operations [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

2011 was vital year in the visual arts in Northeast Ohio: ...despite its status as a perennially shrinking city...Reviving midcentury modern...Hospitals expanding...MOCA rising...Waterfronts...Green building...Public spaces... By Steven Litt -- Dimit Architects; John Terence Kelly/Buckminster Fuller (1950s); Farshid Moussavi; Doty & Miller Architects; Interactive Design Eight Architects- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Staging a Redesign: While 2011 brought much-needed renovations to several major Manhattan venues, 2012 will see the opening of a number of new theaters around town. Looking back, the renovations largely got things right — though there's always room to quibble. -- Ennead Architects; Serge Becker; Herzog & de Meuron; Brisbin Brook Beynon; H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture; Frank Gehry- Wall Street Journal

Toronto city campuses teach the lesson of urbanity: As whole swaths of the city are colonized by academic institutions, the city is relearning the ways of urbanity...post-secondary schools have wrought big changes to the landscape...Where once we blithely assumed students would make the necessary sacrifices on the altar of the city, now we've learned that they are a part of Toronto, too. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Piercing A Troubled Past: An expansion of a museum of the Military History Museum in Dresden results in a provocatively symbolic design: This is architecture that is appropriate for its function, combining geometric rigor with clear commentary...When Libeskind conceived the expansion a decade ago, he was at a creative peak. It shows. In this context, with this weight of history, this military museum is a force for good. By Hugh Pearman -- Studio Daniel Libeskind- Architectural Record

Surface Activation: Sylvia Lavin on the Herta and Paul Amir Building of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art: Architects are often asked to get blood from a stone...Rather than a generic box that purports to be a critique of star architects but displaces stardom to the artist...emerges as a new kind of building, sent via special delivery to a place where negotiation is urgently needed and heroism inconceivable. -- Preston Scott Cohen [images]- Artforum

New Shri Pratap Singh (SPS) Museum building to face vandalism: After spending crores of rupees on the construction...decks are being cleared for undertaking large scale modifications...the building is yet to be made functional despite missing many deadlines during past three years. -- Matrika Design Collaborative- Greater Kashmir (India)

Tip-Off Tip Over? Barclays Center Facade Maker Goes Out of Business, Possibly Imperiling Opening Day: This would seem like an easily solved problem — just hire another facade consultant...but ASI Limited created a special purpose-built facility for the express reason of creating this facade. By Matt Chaban -- SHoP [links]- New York Observer

'A grand space': Former Wellington Street bank to become ceremonial showcase: Closed since 2005, the old Bank of Montreal building is about to get a facelift and a sparkling new addition...formal banking hall in the original building is to be converted for ceremonial events and large meetings for Parliament. -- Ernest Barott (1932); NORR [images]- Ottawa Citizen (Canada)

End near for controversial Cyclorama? Even building's biggest booster predicts feds will tear it down: The Park Service has made no secret that it wants the building removed, and the study is only being done because the courts ordered it after the architects fought demolition plans...findings are expected to be released early in 2012...building has been hailed by architects as one of the flagships of the "Mission 66" program... -- Richard Neutra (1963); Dion Neutra; Vanasse Hangen Brustlin; Jason Hart/CUBE design + research [images]- The Evening Sun (Pennsylvania)

Zaha Hadid's fantastic future: London 2012's jaw-dropping centrepiece — and many more architectural wonders — are the product of one woman's formidable mind. So where's her invite to the Games? ...after decades of regarding her with suspicion and disapproval, there are signs that Britain is finally learning to love Zaha Hadid...Does she think she's scary? "No," she says, even more tersely than before...- Telegraph (UK)

Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta, known for bold splashes of color and humanism: I was not a big fan of Legorreta's University of Chicago dorm,...Nevertheless, the man himself was warm, genial, intelligent, intellectually honest, and, above all, a great humanist. In a field whose leading practitioners are often given to arrogance and self-indulgence, he'll be missed. By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

Designer of two San Jose museums: Above all, Ricardo Legorreta understood the light of San Jose. The Mexico City architect, who designed the Children's Discovery Museum and the Tech Museum of Innovation...left behind a legacy of color and drama - and a story about bubble-gum pink paint. [images]- Mercury News (California)

Product as Sculpture: "Golden State of Craft: California 1960-1985": There are so many incredibly innovative ideas gathered and lovingly displayed [at the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles through Jan. 8] By Alla Kazovsky -- Ruth Asaw; Peter Shire; Miller Fong; Gere Kavanaugh; Elsie Crawford [images, links]- Huffington Post

The House on Chicken Feet, Part 3: Guy Nordenson and Associates re-envisioning — and re-engineering — the tower in "Rapunzel." By Kate Bernheimer and Andrew Bernheimer/Bernheimer Architects [slide show]- Places Journal



Yayoi Kusama: Flowers That Bloom at Midnight, Jardins des Tuileries, Paris, France

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