

Today's News - Tuesday, June 12, 2012

- Easterling examines free trade zones and "some of the most radical changes to the globalizing world" being created not by laws or diplomacy, but "in the spatial information of infrastructure, architecture and urbanism."
- Chan delves into the pluses - and minuses - of the new "brand" of architecture "for social change" that "harvests" slums and favelas "for design inspiration."
- A big bang: Glasgow's once-successful, but now infamous Red Road Flats housing complex bites the dust (serenading hippies included).
- de Monchaux munches NYU 2031 plan that is "about to do the good thing badly" in "a shabbily, sometimes catastrophically, hit-or-miss process" (with "chubby dumpling-like residential towers" that "look like how a bleating trombone would sound among a cascade of elegant violins" - ouch!).
- The convention center building boom hasn't slowed, "but there's a problem with this building bonanza, and it's a doozy."
- Szántó wanders the new Barnes that walks "a fine line between nostalgia and modernity" and "seems to ask: 'Is this the right way to connect the present and the past?'" (apparently, yes).
- Saffron gives thumbs-up - and down - to Stern's Museum of the American Revolution in Philly: some elements he "aces," but "what's dismaying is its aesthetics" (using "gimcrack trickery and throwback style" - double-ouch!).
- King is "thrilled" that San Francisco wants to call out its "tucked-away" semi-public spaces "to, you know, the public" - now if only the owners would view them as assets instead of obligations.
- Yeang explains why bioclimatic architecture is "a surefire way to practice green building in a way that cuts through the greenwash."
- Go Green; Go Solar; Go White: 3 (short) videos illustrate the "evolution of NYC's billion-square-foot roofscape in the face of climate change."
- Heathcote "hearts" Dutch design, and explains why "the Netherlands has become the most distinctive and coherent nation in design today."
- Afghanistan's "most seasoned conservation architect" has a plan that "that focuses reverently" on the void left by the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas - the "very least the developed world can do to make up for the cultural damage it has done to the Afghans" - from its "rubbishy, consumerist TV to having failed to give them alternatives to bad modernist architecture."
- Growing concerns over Mali's "priceless heritage" now at risk (and already being destroyed) by extremists.
- In IPT's 2012 Emerging Trends in Parking survey, the need for parking operators to have a seat at the table with architects, engineers, developers, and planning officials has moved up in the ranking + winners of the 2012 Awards of Excellence Parking Design Competition (and nary a starchitect among 'em!).

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Zone: The Spatial Softwares of Extrastatecraft: ...some of the most radical changes to the globalizing world are being written...in the spatial information of infrastructure, architecture and urbanism...the free zone — a highly contagious and globalized urban form... By Keller Easterling [images, links]- Places Journal

Learning From Lagos: Contemporary Architects Harvest the Slums for Design Inspiration: "Favela Cloud" is meant to proclaim the dawn of a new age...The establishment of a specified brand of architecture "for social change" immediately divides architecture and the issues it addresses into two separate realms... By Kelly Chan -- eVolo; Johan Kure/Thiru Manickam/Kemo Usto; CIAM; John Turner; Rem Koolhaas; Teddy Cruz [images, links]- Artinfo

Famous Glasgow Slum Meets 600 Lbs. of Explosives: The Red Road Flats complex was once seen as the solution to urban overcrowding in Glasgow, Scotland. On Sunday, part of it became rubble...initially did quite well at providing comfortable housing to roughly 5,000 people...in the 1970s, the distinguishing features of the development became crime and blight. -- Sam Bunton (1969) [videos, links]- The Atlantic Cities

Right Place, Wrong Time: The NYU 2031 Process: Is it possible to do something bad so well that it becomes something good? ...NYU appears about to do the good thing badly...one more example of a shabbily, sometimes catastrophically, hit-or-miss process...that helps explain why the greatest city in the world fails, over and over and over, to build that greatness into its architecture, into its buildings, into its bones. By Thomas de Monchaux -- Toshiko Mori Architect; Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates; Grimshaw Architects [images, links]- Defenestrated / Curbed

Is It Time to Stop Building Convention Centers? The convention center market is over-saturated, but the race to keep building them bigger and better hasn't slowed...But there's a problem with this building bonanza, and it's a doozy: There aren't really enough conventions to go around.- The Atlantic Cities

The battle's over: but does the new Barnes work? The Barnes Foundation galleries, relocated to downtown Philadelphia, walk a fine line between nostalgia and modernity...gently probes questions about the ethics of institutional design...seems to ask: "Is this the right way to connect the present and the past?" By András Szántó -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects; Olin; Charles Sparks and Company; Fisher Marantz Stone- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Revolution lite: Robert A.M. Stern's design for the Museum of the American Revolution: The active ground floor of [his] design promises to help reactivate the crucial intersection...What's dismaying...is its aesthetics...Could [it] be constructed in a way to make its Georgian details feel plausibly like real architecture? ...something tells me it's a long shot. By Inga Saffron [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Tucked-away public spaces need upkeep by owners: I'm thrilled that planners and politicians want to make these public spaces known to, you know, the public...But signs are only part of the issue...all too often these (semi-)public spaces are maintained in such a way that it's clear they're viewed as obligations rather than assets. By John King -- Gensler; Smith + Smith [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Beyond the Greenwash: How do we break this communication breakdown and eliminate greenwash? Ken Yeang explains that bioclimatic architecture...a surefire way to practice green building in a way that cuts through the greenwash and truly represents environmentally responsible, sustainable design. [images]- DesignBuild Source (Australia)

New York's Roofscape Gets Climate Makeover: Witness the evolution of NYC's billion-square-foot roofscape in the face of climate change: Go Green; Go Solar; Go White [videos]- Mother Jones

Why lovers of design go Dutch: A look at how the Netherlands has become the most distinctive and coherent nation in design today...Where once it was German functionalists or Italian exhibitionists who were making the running, there is no doubt that it is now designers from Design Academy Eindhoven. By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

The victory of the void, a defeat for the Taliban: The Bamiyan Buddhas will not be rebuilt, says Unesco. Afghanistan's most seasoned conservation architect Andrea Bruno proposes a scheme that focuses reverently on their absence...sees all this as the very least the developed world can do to make up for the cultural damage it has done to the Afghans, from broadcasting rubbishy, consumerist TV...to having failed to give them alternatives to bad modernist architecture.- The Art Newspaper (UK)

Priceless heritage at risk from extremists: Rebel group in control of Timbuktu desecrates venerated tomb and seeks to obliterate thousands of ancient manuscripts: Concern for the cultural heritage of Mali is growing...a Unesco World Heritage Site...- The Art Newspaper (UK)

New Survey of Emerging Trends in Parking: ...a significantly higher ranking for an increase in collaboration between parking, transportation and planning decision makers...parking operators...need to have a seat at the table with architects, engineers, developers, and planning officials. - International Parking Institute (IPI)

2012 Awards of Excellence Parking Design Competition Winners Announced: ...recognized seven of the industry's most outstanding parking facilities...citing innovation, efficiency, sustainability and user-friendliness as key factors in the selection.
-- C.T. Hsu + Associates; LRS Architects; RATIO Architects; Louis K.C. Cheung Architect; Carlsen & Frank Architects; Walter P Moore/Roughton Nickelson De Luca Architects [images] - International Parking Institute (IPI)



-- Herzog & de Meuron: Museum der Kulturen, Basel, Switzerland
-- Snøhetta: Wolfe Center for the Arts, Bowling Green, Ohio

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