

Today's News - Thursday, June 5, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: We will not be posting tomorrow, but will return Monday, June 9 (and no, we're not in Venice...boo-hoo!).

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of airports where "the long walk to the terminal can be a quite rewarding experience" + A travel guide to Marseille and surrounds.
- Bayley, on the other hand, says "flight has been drained of enchantment," with Heathrow's new T2 being "typical of its genre" (designed by "a Spanish specialist in low-brow infrastructure" - ouch!).
- Hopefully, we're not the only ones who found the Queen's Speech more than a bit worrisome, with key points that include a "sell-off of government land," and "a fresh assault on planning laws" that will give developers "the power to push through applications without the need for council approval" - and allow "fracking to take place under people's homes without their permission" - yikes!
- Leigh pens a moving missive re: "memorial sprawl": in "a remarkable shift from the vertical to the horizontal," new memorials are being "designed as places rather than objects. They are symptomatic of a civic-art disease" (a great read!).
- Kimmelman cheers a better solution to two apartment towers threatening views of NYC's glorious Cathedral of St. John the Divine - it "could take years and cost millions," but "could produce a very special work of architecture...instead of what we're getting" (alas, "it's also a Hail Mary pass").
- Davidson explains why all the hand-wringing about the half-empty 1WTC isn't necessary: while it may be "looking a little like a very tall white elephant," its "situation looks less dire" when compared to the original Twin Towers.
- McKnight eloquently recalls her personal journey to Burkina Faso to see how Kéré "has used his architecture to transform his rural village" (fab slide show!).
- Carrington offers a splendid round-up of "Africa's most exciting architects" (and refreshingly new names!).
- The Mexican architect who won a competition to design a Dubai tourist attraction is up in arms about changes to his design: "The project is being transformed from a modern, public monument to a postmodern pastiche."
- La bella Venezia opens the Biennale; sadly, we're not there, but some of our favorite pithy wordsmiths are:
- Wainwright: Rem's "mammoth undertaking: smashing open the last 100 years of architecture and ripping out its innards for forensic analysis."
- Dvir delves into a conversation with the curators of "USOffice": the "curatorial project is not missionary."
- Bevan finds the British exhibition to be a "deft marriage of the high- and low-brow," and "a provocative and successful appeal to the imagination" (all well worth reading - more pith is sure to follow next week).
- Two we couldn't resist (eye candy for the soul): A Croatian designer turns giant shipyard cranes into a giant light show + "Lighting The Sails" on the Sydney Opera House - wow!
- Call for entries: International Competition to Prepare a Conceptual Framework for the Development of Sokolniki Park, Moscow's largest park.
- Weekend diversions:
- McEwen doesn't get why DS+R's design for the Met's "Charles James: Beyond Fashion" has garnered so little design press: "one might almost suspect that they have produced something 'not worth mentioning,'" but it is actually "amazing."
- Wainwright cheers "Dream, Draw, Work: Architectural Drawings by Norman Shaw" at the Royal Academy for being "exquisite and extreme."
- FLW called the Laurent House, designed for a paralyzed client long before the days of ADA, his "little gem" - now it's been polished for public viewing just in time for his 147th birthday.
- "Cape Cod Modern" opens a window onto a part of Cape life that has been secreted away in the woods for years" - with much of it under serious threat of demolition.

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-- We Wouldn't Mind Getting Stuck There: Airports: Airports are places where people gather voluntarily in a collective state of wanting to leave. In some cases, however, the long walk to the terminal can be a quite rewarding experience. -- Ricardo Bofill/Taller de Arquitectura; Rafael Viñoly; Foster & Partners; Santiago Calatrava; UNStudio
-- Travel guide: Marseille and Vicinity

The glamour of travel has taken flight: Once, air passengers dressed to the nines before they got on the plane. Now, airports and terminals such as T2 lack sophistication and style...Originally trumpeted as a high-brow Norman Foster design, creative credit is now being adjusted to acknowledge the real-world contribution of Luis Vidal, a Spanish specialist in low-brow infrastructure...if T2 is a disappointment, it is typical of its genre. Flight has been drained of enchantment. By Stephen Bayley - Telegraph (UK)

Queen's Speech key points: Ministers announce plans to 'get Britain building again'...new housing drive with garden cities, sell-off of government land and...mounted a fresh assault on planning laws...Under the infrastructure bill, developers will be given the power to push through applications without the need for council approval in a move described by planning experts as a "nuclear option"...also announced plans to enable fracking to take place under people's homes without their permission. - Telegraph (UK)

Curbing Memorial Sprawl: we have seen a remarkable shift from the vertical to the horizontal...major memorials designed as places rather than objects. They are symptomatic of a civic-art disease: memorial sprawl...both physically and conceptually ---and becoming unnecessarily expensive in the bargain...As it loses focus, the memorial easily morphs into a theme park. As it becomes less symbolic and more "educational," it loses aesthetic and emotional resonance. By Catesby Leigh -- Lawrence Halprin; Friedrich St. Florian; Frank Gehry; Maya Lin; Louis Kahn - Wall Street Journal

Letting a Mighty Nave Breathe, in Full View of a Neighborhood: A Potential Solution for Developers at St. John the Divine: ...a twin-towered apartment building that will obscure the great flying buttresses and stained-glass windows...the situation might still be remedied...a single 35-story tower...could produce a very special work of architecture complementing the majesty of the church, instead of what we're getting...It's also a Hail Mary pass...But it just might yet save the cathedral, for posterity, and from itself. By Michael Kimmelman -- Ralph Adams Cram; Handel Architects - New York Times

The Half-Empty One World Trade Has Plenty of Historical Precedent: ...is looking a little like a very tall white elephant. But by the standards of the original Twin Towers, which took a decade to populate and then only by padding them with government agencies, the new WTC's situation looks less dire...Immense, expensive buildings outlast the financial circumstances of ribbon-cutting day. By Justin Davidson - New York Magazine

Bringing It All Back Home: A firsthand look at how Diébédo Francis Kéré has used his architecture to transform his rural village...in Gando, a rural community in the West African country of Burkina Faso...[his] well-designed, sustainable, and low-tech buildings have earned him widespread acclaim. By Jenna M. McKnight [slide show] - Architectural Record

Beautiful buildings, ingenious innovation: Africa's most exciting architects: While foreign architects have clamored to make their mark in the region...local talent has also stepped forward to shape their landscape (and in some cases, export their aesthetic abroad). By Daisy Carrington -- Iain Low; David Adjaye; Kunle Adeyemi/NLE Architects; Diebedo Francis Kere/Kere Architecture; Mokena Makeka/Makeka Design Lab; Y Tsai Design Studio; Mick Pearce; Stefan Antoni/Philip Olmesdahl/Greg Truen/SAOTA; Nina Cohen and Fiona Garson [images]- CNN World

Architect in row over design of Dubai Frame: ...a tourist attraction set to be constructed in Zabeel Park. Fernando Donis, a Mexican architect, won a competition in 2009...selected from 926 designs in the ThyssenKrupp Elevator Architecture Awards..."The project is being transformed...from being a modern, public monument to a postmodern pastiche." [image, links]- ArabianBusiness.com

Rem Koolhaas blows the ceiling off the Venice Architecture Biennale: An exploded false ceiling and a lineup of lavatories become the stars as he delves into the overlooked innards of today's buildings -- and shows how architecture has become nothing more than cardboard...a mammoth undertaking: smashing open the last 100 years of architecture and ripping out its innards for forensic analysis. By Oliver Wainwright [images, slide show]- Guardian (UK)

The Global Office: ...American Pavilion, titled "OfficeUS: Criticism by Re-making," will focus on how American architecture has been exported around the globe since the early 20th century...a repository of 1,000 projects..."America's biggest contribution to architecture in the last century is the professionalization of the discipline...our curatorial project is not missionary. We are proclaiming neither the badness nor the goodness of the last century." By Noam Dvir -- Storefront for Art and Architecture; Praxis; Eva Franch i Gilabert; Ashley Schafer.; Ana Miljacki- Art in America

The British pavilion at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale: ...draws on Cliff Richard and A Clockwork Orange...A deft marriage of the high- and low-brow, "A Clockwork Jerusalem" takes us on a journey from Britain's pagan past to modernity...the mission is to rescue modernist architecture from its detractors...a provocative and successful appeal to the imagination... By Robert Bevan -- Sam Jacob/FAT; Crimson Architectural Historians [images]- Evening Standard (UK)

Croatian designer creates giant light show by illuminating shipyard cranes: Architectural lighting designer Dean Skira has turned eight cranes at one of the world's oldest working shipyards into a giant light show, creating a new tourist attraction in Pula, Croatia, called "Lighting Giants." [images]- Dezeen

Watch The Sydney Opera House Come Alive in Light: Last week, 59 Productions transformed their Opera House into a shattered orb of shape-shifting light...Vivid LIVE, a spectacular projection titled "Lighting The Sails." [images, video]- Architizer

Call for entries: International Competition to Prepare a Conceptual Framework for the Development of Sokolniki Park, Moscow's largest park; deadline: June 17- ArchPolis Centre for Territorial Initiatives

DS+R Scanning Beyond Fashion at the Met: Judging by the limited architectural press devoted to the Diller Scofidio + Renfro genre-busting exhibition design for "Charles James: Beyond Fashion" at The Metropolitan Museum of Art...one might almost suspect that [it] has produced something "not worth mentioning"...has seamlessly integrated a number of their own long-held research interests...What is amazing...[it] is something closer to the fundamentals of (architectural) design. By Mitch McEwen/McEwen Studio/A(n) Office [images]- Huffington Post

Exquisite and extreme: Richard Norman Shaw's architectural drawings: A new exhibition of...the great Victorian architect shows that innovation and perfectionism were the cornerstones of his practice...But was he too hard on his draughtsmen? "Dream, Draw, Work: Architectural Drawings by Norman Shaw" at the Royal Academy, London, brings the processes behind his production to life in vivid detail. By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

A Grand Opening for a "Little Gem": After an extensive restoration, the Laurent House [in Rockford, Ill.] that Frank Lloyd Wright supposedly designed in two hours will open to the public...grand opening coincides with what would have been Wright's 147th birthday on June 8...Long before the days of accessibility requirements by ADA, Wright recognized the how the home's design could accommodate Ken Laurent's needs. -- Eifer & Associates Architects [images]- Architect Magazine

Saving Modernism in Cape Cod: For nearly 40 years, Cape Cod was a melting pot of innovative architecture. Now the Cape Cod Modernist House Trust is attempting to preserve this legacy from the threat of demolition..."Cape Cod Modern: Midcentury Architecture and Community on the Outer Cape" by Peter McMahon and Christine Cipriani...opens a window onto a part of Cape life that has been secreted away in the woods for years... -- Peter McMahon; Marcel Breuer; Charles Zehnder; Walter Gropius; Jack Hall; Jack Phillips; Serge Chermayeff; Bernard Rudofsky; Nathaniel Saltonstall- Wall Street Journal

ANN Feature: One-on-One: A Cult of Objectivity: Interview with Massimo Vignelli: A conversation at Vignelli's home in Manhattan in 2012 is infused with his sincerity, wisdom, and, of course, his sense of style. By Vladimir Belogolovsky- ArchNewsNow

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