

Today's News - Monday, June 16, 2014

- Heathcote's (great!) take on the Venice Biennale: "an exuberant display of architectural anxiety. It is by turns witty, surprising, impressive, banal...a provocation about the diminishing influence of the architect - a brilliant and frustrating show."
- Glancey talks to the cheerleaders and the nay-sayers re: the second "Guggenheim invasion" of Helsinki: "To see Helsinki become a kind of dumping ground for 'global brands'...and, now, on modest means, to fund an American art foundation with an unsure record of success overseas is, indeed, somewhat bizarre."
- Paletta ponders Brutalism's need for its own "Penn Station moment," but "in the absence of such a moment, the greatest need for Brutalism is likely not buildings that die spectacularly but that simply live effectively" (great read).
- British residents of many post-war prefab bungalows are not happy at the prospect of seeing them torn down.
- Wainwright x 2: he cheers "social housing stars who really know what makes a city tick - crafting a future for London housing of simple, robust and generous new homes."
- He also cheers the 10-day International Architecture Showcase that is reviving the 1951 Festival of Britain energy, "dreaming up plans for east London estates."
- King has high hopes for Piano's "new gig": a suburban shopping center: it may sound "preposterous," but "the everyday nature of the commission is what makes it important, oddly heroic."
- Ransford calls for a change to Vancouver's "arbitrary rules" regulating the minimum size of dwelling units that "seem to defy both what has been successful and what many people are looking for."
- Bozиковic cheers the "fearless architects" at 5468796 who are "smashing preconceptions about what is possible for their city and their profession."
- Three case studies offer lessons in what to do - and not to do - when an architect departs a firm but still wants to get credit for his/her designs.
- A network spanning 30 European countries is "dedicated to finding ways to keep disused religious buildings open, if not for services, then for other uses."
- Meanwhile, Dunlap cheers NYC's 126-year-old Eldridge Street Synagogue's new, permanent exhibition that is "simultaneously dense with artifacts and relatively small - an appealing combination."
- A great Q&A with Lambert re: winning the Venice Biennale Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, Mies, the state of contemporary architecture, why she founded the CCA, and much more.
- Three we couldn't resist leads off with Capps's wry take on the "five letters driving Chicago out of its mind" (having to do with a certain orange-haired mogul-in-his-own-mind): is the city taking "its architecture just a tad too seriously?"
- How could we resist eye-fuls of Times Square recreated in a Moscow mall (we kid you not).
- Selfies from around the world cover the scaffolding on the Paris Pantheon as it undergoes extensive restoration.
- Call for entries/nominations: 2014 ADPSR Lewis Mumford Awards for people or organizations working to further peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice, and the development of healthy communities + Paradise Lost, Paradise Found: Smart Tourism.

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Architecture Biennale in Venice: Rem Koolhaas has shifted the discourse away from personalities: ..."Architecture not architects"...This is an exuberant display of architectural anxiety...of parallel and often contradictory histories. It is by turns witty, surprising, impressive, banal and, most visibly, free of conclusions...a provocation about the diminishing influence of the architect...It is unsettling and questioning...brilliant and frustrating show... By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

Finland fights the Guggenheim invasion: Helsinki has been here before all too recently, expensively and for no gain...To see Helsinki become a kind of dumping ground for "global brands"...and, now, on modest means, to fund an American art foundation with an unsure record of success overseas is, indeed, somewhat bizarre. By Jonathan Glancey- Telegraph (UK)

Brutalism's Bullies: As deep as the Brutalism bad vibes run...profit, not bile, is generally the strongest threat to its longevity...A Penn Station moment would be a great boon to Brutalism...In the absence of such a moment, the greatest need for Brutalism is likely not buildings that die spectacularly but that simply live effectively. By Anthony Paletta -- John Johansen; Bertrand Goldberg; Paul Rudolph; M. Paul Friedberg; Roebert Gatje; Erno Goldfinger; etc.- The Awl

War, prefabs and an unlikely friendship – between opposing soldiers: Britain's postwar housing shortage led to a unique solution: prefabricated bungalows put up by German POWs. Now one London council wants to tear them down, sparking an alliance between a British veteran and the German who built his home- Guardian (UK)

The social housing stars who really know what makes a city tick: "10 Social Housing Projects by Karakusevic Carson Architects" proves that they are crafting a future for London housing of simple, robust and generous new homes. And the real miracle? They're all driven by local councils themselves...there is a clear understanding of what makes a good piece of city: these places look and feel like real bits of London. By Oliver Wainwright- Guardian (UK)

Architects hark back to Festival of Britain with 'vertical carnival': The 1951 Festival had it all: the jaw-dropping Skylon tower, the Dome of Discovery and an unswerving optimism about the future. Now, International Architecture Showcase are reviving that energy, dreaming up plans for east London estates...a 10-day-long live workshop, pairing 10 international architects with 10 London practices to dream up ideas for the future of the area. By Oliver Wainwright- Guardian (UK)

Renzo Piano's new gig? A suburban shopping center: As preposterous as this might sound...Yet the everyday nature of the commission is what makes it important, oddly heroic...elegant in a way that's almost austere, embodies the belief...that even in the suburbs, less can be more...San Ramon City Center...an attempt to move beyond the splayed-out norm of retail pods surrounded by parking... By John King [slide show]- San Francisco Chronicle

Going big on very small spaces: Demand is there for compact homes that are well designed and flexible... Minimum suite sizes in Vancouver overall are regulated at 298 square feet. These arbitrary rules regulating size seem to defy both what has been successful and what many people are looking for. By Bob Ransford- Vancouver Sun

Reimagining Winnipeg: What these fearless architects can teach the rest of Canada: 5468796 is leading a new generation of local architects to invent a new city, and perhaps a new Canada, that gives innovative architecture a seat at the table...smashing preconceptions about what is possible for their city and their profession. By Alex Bozиковic -- Table for 1200- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Where Credit is Due: Conflict can occur when an architect departs a firm but still wants to get credit for the design...three case studies reflecting different approaches to the problems of attributing design credit, with advice on potential ways for avoiding conflict... By Cheryl L. Davis, Esq., and Suzanne Stephens -- Gensler; Marshall Strabala/2Define Architecture; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Rem Koolhaas/Office of Metropolitan Architecture/OMA; Buro Ole Scheeren; Joshua Prince-Ramus/REX- Architectural Record

An Afterlife for Europe's Disused Places of Worship: When a church closes its doors, it is a sad day for its parishioners. When it is slated for demolition, it is a sad day for the larger community...Future for Religious Heritage...a network of groups from more than 30 countries, dedicated to finding ways to keep...religious buildings open, if not for services, then for other uses.- New York Times

In Chinatown, Remembering the Origins of a 126-Year-Old Synagogue: A permanent exhibition...on the ground floor of the landmark Eldridge Street Synagogue, which is home both to K'hal Adath Jeshurun, the Orthodox congregation that built it, and to the Museum at Eldridge Street...simultaneously dense with artifacts and relatively small...appealing combination... By David W. Dunlap -- Kiki Smith/Deborah Gan (2007); Archimuse [images]- New York Times

Phyllis Lambert: The recipient of this year's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale discusses her career, Mies, the state of contemporary architecture, why she founded the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA)...her influential life in architecture. By Christopher Turner- Icon (UK)

Five Letters Are Driving Chicago Out of Its Mind: If Chicago sees Donald Trump as a threat, does that mean it takes its architecture too seriously? What might be greeted as a nuisance in many other cities has hit Chicago as an almost spiritual insult...where was it when the Prentice came down? Would things have gone differently had Trump been driving the wrecking ball? By Kriston Capps - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Philips Recreates NYC's Times Square In A Moscow Mall: ...installed a mix of connected LED façade lights, light panels and HD-screens into the interiors of the VEGAS Crocus City mall. [images]- DesignTAXI

Selfies from around the world used to cover up scaffolding on Paris Pantheon: A mosaic of black and white portraits will canvas renovations and scaffolding...while the iconic building undergoes extensive restorations. [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

Call for entries/Call for Nominations: 2014 ADPSR Lewis Mumford Awards (international); people or organizations that are working to further peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice, and the development of healthy communities, and who may have been under recognized in the past; deadline: June 30- Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR)

Call for entries: Paradise Lost, Paradise Found: Smart Tourism: proposals, ideas, information, projects and papers from the fields of architecture/design, planning, culture, environment, etc.; deadline: July 31- ANCB The Metropolitan Laboratory / Aedes Network Campus Berlin



"MRDV Buildings" by Ilka Ruby & Andreas Ruby (editors): ...a highly accomplished and quietly radical monograph that sums up the work of controversial Dutch architects - not by showing their buildings as objects but by portraying life as it's lived within them...this is not your dime a dozen architectural monograph.

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