

Today's News - Thursday, October 9, 2014

- Cramer ponders "the collective animus" toward Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial design that "seems visceral, almost feral. What gives? The problem, at least in part, is that Gehry's columns lack acanthus leaves."
- Miranda mulls Ando's Clark Art Institute expansion: "I'm hoping this bucolic little museum might serve as a template for other institutions that might confuse bigger with better."
- Bratishenko gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Maki and Correa's Aga Khan Museum of Islamic Art and Ismaili Centre, but wonders about it being set so far from Toronto's other cultural institutions: "Can Maki's beautiful fortress and its refined grounds lure visitors all the same?"
- Betsky reflects on his recent visit to three European cities and their "downtown dystopia": "what struck me was the continued march of sameness. It is on the edges where things are more vibrant."
- Benfield explains why, "for smart growth, not all density is created equal."
- Boston's new "Literary District" has high hopes that "literary tourists will promote business and enhance property values in their own eclectic, well-educated way."
- O'Sullivan minces no words when it comes to a proposed almost \$1 billion floating bike path on the Thames that is both "hilarious" and "insulting": "The proposal isn't just wrong. It's a whole club sandwich of wrongness, made of delectable layers of stupid" (and that's just for starters).
- Aitchison brings lessons he learned from visiting Japanese prefab housing companies back to Australia that "can soften the blow of the departing auto industry": "Japan shows us an established and sophisticated lean manufacturing future. But its outcomes, in design and social terms, also represent a kind of dystopia."
- O'Connell looks at a case study of a suburban office building being recycled as a school: the idea wasn't a hit with parents at first, but they've been won over: "going vertical is becoming more viable."
- Anderton has a lively Q&A with Scott Johnson, who "explains why skyscrapers look the way they do," what "performative" means, "gentler, kinder" skyscrapers - and what's in store for L.A. now they don't have to be flat-topped giants.
- A round-up of super-skinny skyscrapers that "offer great views, but also show off feats of engineering and design" (and no - they're not all in NYC).
- An architect considers stadiums, glass, and birds: "200,000 square feet of monumental glass walls" planned for the new the Minnesota Vikings stadium does not bode well for our feathered friends. "Glass is what we make it. It's time to make it safer."
- Speaking of feathered friends, the poor, endangered piping plover bird is at the center of a Sandy recovery controversy on New York's Fire Island: "Besides arguing that the bird's habitat is in jeopardy, critics say the \$207 million project would be a huge waste of money" (others say just get over it).
- Volner delves into the "emerging role of the design editor" as Nobel and McKnight don the new title for SHoP and SOM: "Whether other firms will follow suit will hinge on the tangible results that firm editors are able to produce" (and there's always a hitch).
- Bernstein has a most engaging Q&A with Malkawi, the just-announced founding director of the new Harvard Center for Green Buildings and Cities re: why he "believes the center is uniquely positioned to rethink the design, construction, and operation of buildings to enhance their efficiency - without regard to industry agendas."
- Ferro has a most thoughtful Q&A with Libeskind re: "how he works, embracing failure, and why he'd love to design an airport" (though we question calling him "Freedom Tower architect").
- Maya Lin wins \$300,000 Gish Prize for her "outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world."
- Capps has a field day cheering Norges Bank for overruling its own jury to pick "glitch art" by Snøhetta to adorn one side of Norway's new currency: "bank notes goes bonkers."
- Call for entries: 2015 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence.

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An Eisenhower Impasse: Nobody seems to like Gehry Partners' design for Ike's memorial on the National Mall. Where's the disconnect? ...the collective animus toward the design seems visceral, almost feral. What gives? The problem, at least in part, is that Gehry's columns lack acanthus leaves. By Ned Cramer - Architect Magazine

What museums can learn from architect Tadao Ando's Clark Art Institute expansion: I'm hoping this bucolic little museum might serve as a template for other institutions who might confuse bigger with better. By Carolina A. Miranda -- Daniel Deverell Perry (1955); Gary Hilderbrand/Reed Hilderbrand; Annabelle Selldorf/Selldorf Architects [images]- Los Angeles Times

Act of faith: Fumihiko Maki's Aga Khan Museum of Islamic Art and Charles Correa's Ismaili Centre are intended as places of "civic encounters"...yet are set in a formal garden miles from Toronto's other cultural institutions. Can Maki's beautiful fortress and its refined grounds lure visitors all the same? By Lev Bratishenko -- Vladimir Djurovic; Moriama & Teshima Architects; Sasaki and Associates [images]- Icon (UK)

Downtown Dystopia: ...I was in three European cities, and what struck me was the continued march of sameness...It is on the edges where things are more vibrant...Let's not worry about downtown so much...What we should be hoping for is...the development of vibrant cores or just moments of diversity away from our dead and deadening downtowns. By Aaron Betsky - Architect Magazine

For smart growth, not all density is created equal: People feel attracted to and comfortable in historic neighborhoods is not just because of their familiarity and walkability but also because they present urban density at a human scale...They work for people as well as for ideology. By Kaid Benfield - Better! Cities & Towns (formerly New Urban News)

Make Way for Literary Tourism: "Poe-Boy Sandwich," anyone? Boston's newly inaugurated "Literary District" is the latest and most concerted attempt by a city to make a vacation destination out of dead authors' haunts...hoping literary tourists will promote business and enhance property values in their own eclectic, well-educated way. - The Atlantic

A Proposed Floating Cycleway on the Thames Is Hilarious - and Insulting: The River Cycleway Consortium would build an expensive, buoyant bike path on the choppy Thames. But where's the money for Londoners who are actually in need? The [£600 million/\$965 million] proposal isn't just wrong. It's a whole club sandwich of wrongness, made of delectable layers of stupid. By Feargus O'Sullivan [image]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

20 shades of beige: lessons from Japanese prefab housing: At a time when some commentators in Australia are hoping the emerging "manufactured" housing industry can soften the blow of the departing auto industry, Japan shows us an established and sophisticated lean manufacturing future. But its outcomes, in design and social terms, also represent a kind of dystopia. By Mathew Aitchison/University of Queensland [images]- The Conversation (Australia)

What to do with dying suburban office buildings? Turn them into schools: ...a retrofitted office building in Falls Church [Virginia]. It's a unique project in a lot of ways but it may not be for long...The school-in-an-office building idea didn't go over so hot at the outset with parents...."But by the end of the project they really kind of embraced it...going vertical is becoming more viable." By Jonathan O'Connell -- Cooper Carry [images]- Washington Post

DnA/Frances Anderton: Software, Skyscrapers and Goodbye to Stumpy Towers in L.A.: Scott Johnson Explains

Why Skyscrapers Look the Way they Do: ...talks about what "performative" means, "gentler, kinder" skyscrapers, as well as...the retrofit of a Southland building by his onetime mentor Philip Johnson: the Crystal Cathedral. -- Johnson Fain [images]- KCRW (Los Angeles)

Secrets of skinny skyscrapers: 5 slender towers and how they do it: ...offer great views, but also show off feats of engineering and design. -- CetraRuddy; SHoP Architects; Fender Katsalidis; Triptyque; DLN Architects & Engineers; BKK architects [images]- Architecture & Design (Australia)

NYC architect comments on stadiums, glass, and birds: The proposed stadium for the Minnesota Vikings, designed with 200,000 square feet of monumental glass walls, is an example of the grave threat posed by a reflective glass building...Vikings have declined to revisit the stadium design...Glass is what we make it. It's time to make it safer. By Deborah Laurel/Prendergast Laurel Architects -- Audubon- Minneapolis Star Tribune

Piping Plover Bird At Center Of Sandy Recovery Controversy: A court fight over a protected bird is holding up a \$207 million plan to replenish the sand along a 19-mile stretch of New York's Fire Island...Besides arguing that the bird's habitat is in jeopardy, critics say the project would be a huge waste of money.- Huffington Post

The Emerging Role of the Design Editor: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and SHoP Architects recently created new positions to develop in-house content creation: Whether other firms will follow suit will hinge on the tangible results that firm editors...are able to produce...but what kind of pudding bears the proof for these new in-house editors? And there's the hitch... By Ian Volner -- Jenna McKnight; Philip Nobel- Architect Magazine

Newsmaker: Ali Malkawi: ...founding director of the new Harvard Center for Green Buildings and Cities...believes the center is uniquely positioned to rethink the design, construction, and operation of buildings to enhance their efficiency...without regard to industry agendas...will host an inaugural conference on November 7... By Fred A. Bernstein- Architectural Record

Freedom Tower Architect Daniel Libeskind: "Ground Zero Is Very, Very Close To My Original Idea": Q&A about how he works, embracing failure, and why he'd love to design an airport...and why design is all about patience...now describes his work as the master planner of the World Trade Center as something a bit different - more symphony conductor than star soloist. By Shaunacy Ferro -- David Childs/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [images, links]- Fast Company

Maya Lin Wins \$300,000, 2014 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize: Though she first rose to prominence for her Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC, she has remained a leading figure in art and architecture with her large-scale sculptures and installations, as well as new media projects like What Is Missing?, calling attention to mass extinctions and environmental degradation. - artnet News

Norway's Best Architecture Firm Designs the World's Best Money: A contest to design Norway's new print bank notes goes bonkers: ...in a stunning reversal, Norges Bank overruled its own jury's decision...decided to co-award the commission to The Metric System...The reverse side of each bill will feature what appears to be glitch art by Snøhetta. By Kriston Capps [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Call for entries: 2015 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence: projects must be a real place located in the continental United States; \$50,000 Gold Medal, four \$10,000 Silver Medals; deadline: December 9- Bruner Foundation



-- Anttinen Oiva Architects: Helsinki University Main Library: ...the largest academic library in Finland wedged in between dense city blocks...a truly urban campus...

-- 7 Visionary Zoo Designs -- Berthold Lubetkin (1934); Foster + Partners; LAM-architects; HUT Wood Studio/Ville Hara/SAFA; Schlaich Bergemann & Partner; Hassel; BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; JDS Architects

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