

Today's News - Thursday, February 12, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is this week's "floating" no-newsletter day - we'll be back Monday, February 16.

- Weinstein cheers Rogers Partners' "Learning Through Practice": "A new monograph highlights transformative designs by a firm strikingly dedicated to re-enchanting public space."
- Simpson delves deep into projects hoping for the Bilbao Effect in far-flung places: "Frank Gehry has much to answer for - some of the latest arty icons to open have been so 'out where the buses don't run' you wonder how anyone gave them the green light. But there are also notable successes."
- Woodman wanders Mons, the 2015 European Capital of Culture, and finds "the usual disappointment, delays, overspends, and Calatrava boondoggle," and Libeskind's new conference center that "remains stranded on what is emphatically the wrong side of the tracks" - and lots more (or less).
- Birnbaum pens an open letter to Obama with a plea to not approve the taking of Chicago public parkland for a Presidential Library: yesterday, the Chicago Park District Board "voted to approve this giveaway. What is becoming apparent is that the University of Chicago intends to locate the library within public parkland so that they can develop the 11 acres they own for commercial purposes."
- Canadian Architect magazine's editor Lam lays out why Ottawa's planned Memorial to the Victims of Communism "is both misguided and misplaced."
- London's mayor uses Boston's Big Dig as the place to announce he "wants to move major streets underground to make a pedestrian-friendly city. The 'Big Dig' is a tenuous paradigm" as a megaproject that took 20 years to complete and was plagued with problems.
- Google sends AHMM back to the drawing board to re-do the "boring" plans for its London HQ; the team's new marching orders: "come up with a new, more 'Googly' building, whose exterior lived up to its zany interior."
- Waite says word is that some AHMM "frustrated" staffers "who spent years working on the plans for Google's £1billion flagship office" have left.
- Wainwright cheers MUMA's makeover of Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery that "has breathed new air and light into the venerable institution" (with just a few minor quibbles).
- Kris Yao | ARTECH wins the competition for the new Taipei City Museum of Art with a design that intends to "fuse local landscape with cultural imagery."
- A fascinating slide show essay about "Germany's most famous family of architects: The Böhms."
- Weekend diversions:
 - Kolson Hurley visits BIG's "Hot to Cold" at the National Building Museum: "What really stands out is the simplicity and clarity of Ingels' concepts. This is why he's so good at a-ha moments. He gets us to say yes."
 - Wainwright and Bevan each have nothing but good things to say about "Mackintosh Architecture" at RIBA London: it's "a brilliant show that ditches the doilies and the tearoom tat, and exposes the raw talent of Mackintosh the architect." + "His career ended in tatters. What might he have achieved if the cards had fallen another way?"
 - Atak says "Ways to Modernism: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact" at the MAK in Vienna "brings forth a fresh history of an important moment in the history of modernism," and "puts forward important questions."
 - "Prague Functionalism: Tradition and Contemporary Echoes" makes its U.S. premiere at NYC's Center for Architecture.
 - Dvir and Rauchwerger's "Icons of Knowledge: Architecture and Symbolism in National Libraries" at Harvard GSD "looks beyond a library's collection of books to explore the building's cultural significance."
 - Olcayto x 2: "The Price of Desire" is a new movie that explores "the complex, unconventional life of Eileen Gray, who "saw her role in the development of Modernism brushed aside by chauvinist historians."
 - He highly recommends "Architecture an Inspiration": Ivor Smith "has put together a rather special tome" that "tells a straight story beautifully, with charm and eloquence" (it's good enough to get beyond the fact that it "looks awful").
 - "Beyond the Wall: Art and Artifacts from the GDR" is a 904-page "labor of love" that "exhaustively examines life and design in East Germany" (great pix!).
 - A great excerpt from Rockefeller Foundation's Rodin's "The Resilience Dividend" that looks at "how earthquake-torn Christchurch rebuilt itself" with "transitional" projects that, "until something more long-term moves in," promote and encourage social cohesion.

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Delicately Rearranging Intangibles in Public Space: The Art of Rogers Partners Architects+Urban Designers in "Learning Through Practice": A new monograph highlights transformative designs by a firm strikingly dedicated to re-enchanting public space. By Norman Weinstein [images]- ArchNewsNow

Veronica Simpson examines projects hoping to cash in on the 'Bilbao Effect': Frank Gehry has much to answer for...a widespread belief...that all you need...is to helicopter in some starchitect-designed building and let the allure of architecture do the rest...some of the latest arty icons to open have been so 'out where the buses don't run' you wonder how anyone gave them the green light...But there are also notable successes. -- SANAA; Zaha Hadid; Annabel Karim Kassar/Cai Light; Lacaton & Vassal; Kengo Kuma; Jakob & MacFarlane; Wilkinson Eyre; David Chipperfield; WORKac; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Rafael Moneo; Valode et Pistre; Jorge Otero Pailos; Annabelle Selldorf [images]- FXMagazine / DesignCurial

Mons hubris: 2015 European Capital of Culture: ...title brings the usual disappointment, delays, overspends, and Calatrava boondoggle...a new conference centre designed by Daniel Libeskind...remains stranded on what is emphatically the wrong side of the tracks...Given that the programme nominally serves to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity, it is also striking how utterly alike so many of the buildings that it has generated have turned out to be...the prevalence of a strain of kitsch, monumental expressionism entirely lacking in connection to any local culture. By Ellis Woodman- Architectural Review (UK)

President and Mrs. Obama -- Please Don't Approve the Taking of Public Parkland for the Obama Presidential Library: ...a troubling precedent that could...threaten the integrity of our nation's parks, and tarnish your legacy...Chicago Park District Board...just yesterday voted to approve this giveaway...What is becoming apparent is that the University of Chicago intends to locate the library within public parkland they don't own...so that they can develop the 11 acres they own for commercial purposes. By Charles A. Birnbaum/The Cultural Landscape Foundation- Huffington Post

Op-Ed: Ottawa's planned Memorial to the Victims of Communism is both misguided and misplaced: Generations of planners envisaged a

future building that would...complete a "Judicial Triad"...The design is literal in its depiction of violence...The project is planned in the midst of a monument frenzy, tinged with political rather than historical motivations... By Elsa Lam/Canadian Architect magazine -- Voytek Gorczyński/ABSTRAKT Studio Architecture - National Post (Canada)

London's mayor wants to move major streets underground to make a pedestrian-friendly city: And where better to make this announcement than in and around Boston's infamous "Big Dig" project? Beyond seeking a more livable city for Londoners, the plan is also designed to address and provide a solution for the city's significant population growth...The "Big Dig" is a tenuous paradigm... - The Architect's Newspaper

Google scraps 'boring' plans for London HQ: ...vision for its Kings Cross headquarters sounded more like a giant holiday camp than an office...shelved plans looked like an office block that might have belonged to any wealthy company...Larry Page ordered the team to come up with a new, more 'Googly' building, whose exterior lived up to its zany interior. -- Allford Hall Monaghan Morris/AHMM - Daily Mail (UK)

'Frustrated' AHMM staff leave over Google delays: The AJ understands a number of architects who spent years working on the plans for a £1billion flagship office in King's Cross have recently left the practice. By Richard Waite - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Hello world: the new Whitworth Art Gallery: Manchester's gallery was never the most welcoming building. But a £15m revamp has breathed new air and light into the venerable institution...There is great care evident in the details... By Oliver Wainwright -- MUMA; Sarah Price [images] - Guardian (UK)

KRIS YAO | ARTECH Wins Competition to Design New Taipei City Museum of Art: The winning scheme, a "Contemporary Museum of Art among the Reeds" aims to "fuse local landscape with cultural imagery"... [images] - ArchDaily

Germany's most famous family of architects: The Böhms: Over generations, Germany's Böhm family has left its architectural mark all over the world. A new film traces the aesthetic impact of the Cologne-based architecture dynasty...Gottfried Böhm...is the only German to have won the Pritzker Prize...in 1986... [slide show essay] - Deutsche Welle (Germany)

Bjarke Ingels Group's "Hot to Cold" at the National Building Museum: ...co-opt one of the building's best features - the arcaded balconies - as the setting. It was an inspired choice...What really stands out, though, is the simplicity and clarity of Ingels' concepts. This is why he's so good at a-ha moments. He gets us to say yes. By Amanda Kolson Hurley [images] - Architectural Record

Mackmania! Charles Rennie Mackintosh's genius shines in his first architecture retrospective: He's been stereotyped as difficult and uncompromising, but there's no denying his raw talent in this definitive look at his architectural drawings..."Mackintosh Architecture" at RIBA, London...a brilliant show that ditches the doilies and the tearoom tat, and exposes the raw talent of Mackintosh the architect. By Oliver Wainwright - Guardian (UK)

From Glasgow to London: a new exhibition at Riba charts the rise and fall of architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh: He was at the height of his powers when he moved to the capital in 1915, but - as "Mackintosh Architecture" shows - his designs for the city were never built and his career ended in tatters...What might he have achieved if the cards had fallen another way? By Robert Bevan [images] - Evening Standard (UK)

Ornament and Crime, Or Not: Tulay Atak visits "Ways to Modernism: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact" at the MAK in Vienna: ...brings forth a fresh history of an important moment in the history of modernism. In further emphasizing the role of design in the society...the exhibition puts forward important questions. [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

The Center for Architecture presents US Premiere of "Prague Functionalism: Tradition and Contemporary Echoes": showcases architecture from the interwar period and contemporary projects inspired by these designs. - Center for Architecture / AIANY (NYC)

Harvard Graduate School of Design Presents an Exhibition on National Libraries: Now that books can be downloaded with a single click, the relevance of libraries often comes into question..."Icons of Knowledge: Architecture and Symbolism in National Libraries" looks beyond a library's collection of books to explore the building's cultural significance. -- Noam Dvir; Daniel Rauchwerger [images] - Architectural Digest

"The Price of Desire": ...new movie will explore the complex, unconventional life of Eileen Gray, the Irish designer and self-taught architect behind E-1027, the Modernist house that for years was attributed to Le Corbusier...Gray saw her role in the development of Modernism brushed aside by chauvinist historians... By Rory Olcayto - The Architects' Journal (UK)

"Architecture an Inspiration": Never judge a book by its cover.

Especially an architecture book: Ivor Smith/Park Hill has put together a rather special tome...thoroughly recommended. It's personal, for sure, and conservative...What it does do is tell a straight story beautifully, with charm and eloquence...should be on the shelves of every aspiring architect, and every qualified architect too...With an appropriate new look, this smart, engaging book could become a real classic. By Rory Olcayto- [The Architects' Journal \(UK\)](#)

Cold War Culture: "Beyond the Wall: Art and Artifacts from the GDR" exhaustively examines life and design in East Germany...904-page volume that offers readers over 2,500 objects from the Los Angeles-based Wende Museum'...a repository for remnants of a fast-disappearing culture, repudiated by the former Soviet state that's uncomfortable with its history...a labor of love by Benedikt Taschen and Justinian Jampol... [images]- [Metropolis Magazine](#)

Taking advantage of destruction: how earthquake-torn Christchurch rebuilt itself: ...organizations working to provide "transitional" function...until something more long-term moves in...promoting and encouraging social cohesion...where there were once only grim reminders of the earthquake and the toll it took. [excerpt from "The Resilience Dividend: Managing disruption, avoiding disaster, and growing stronger in an unpredictable world" by Judith Rodin/Rockefeller Foundation] -- [Gap Filler](#); [Greening the Rubble](#); [Life in Vacant Spaces \[images\]](#)- [CityMetric \(UK\)](#)



-- Åke E:son Lindman: a prolific architectural photographer based in Sweden; Q&A with Julia Tedroff from Gothenburg Photography School, and a selection of his photographic work
-- [What's On? Architectural Exhibitions, February 2015 edition](#)

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