

Today's News - Wednesday, December 21, 2016

- The best question to ask when renovating a "work of art" like Ponti's 1971 North Building of the Denver Art Museum, and wanting "to stay true to his vision: What would Ponti do?"
- Meanwhile, Iranian architects battle to save a Ponti villa in Tehran - it was "listed as a national treasure," but a judge delisted it so the owner can build a 20-story hotel.
- The Australian Institute of Architects has launched an online petition to stop plans to erect a fence around Giurgola's Parliament House in Canberra that would "fundamentally change the character of the building and its symbolism as the people's house."
- On a brighter note, Niemeyer's cylindrical, "ostentatious" Hotel Nacional in Rio (with gardens by Burle Marx) reopens after closing its doors in 1995 (link to original article in Spanish for lots of images!).
- Klimoski takes a deep dive into the "political fissures" that have "rattled Finnish politics and sparked debate within the architecture community" re: the scrapped Guggenheim Helsinki plans (meanwhile, "the most valuable property in the city will remain a parking lot").
- Kennicott hops aboard the \$1.4 billion MGM National Harbor casino that "sits on the low bluffs of the Potomac like Fitzcarraldo's landlocked steamboat" (and includes a giant chocolate fountain circulating "two tons of sweet liquid death" and Bob Dylan's "hellish portal").
- 5468796 Architecture's new condo tower "eschews the norms" of new towers, while Land Art Design's landscaping "introduces the greenery of backyards to a high-rise typology," garnering "praise and criticism for its architectural boldness."
- Saffron cheers Philly's own "professional blight busters - a group of vigilante code enforcers who have become the city's go-to, blight-fighting consultants" (every city should have one!).
- Snell parses "an argument for justice" when dealing with density: "All the right density won't make for an interesting urban culture when those densely clustered together in starchitect/gold plated buildings aren't themselves interesting or are dissuaded from having or sharing interests."
- Campbell-Dollaghan details what's involved in relocating (for the first time) Hugh Broughton's Halley VI mobile research station in Antarctica because of a dangerously deep chasm emerging nearby (it will take two years).
- Budds parses Zaera-Polo's infographic that attempts to map the evolution of today's architectural movements.
- Paul Revere Williams' granddaughter and "many in the architecture industry believe" his AIA Gold Medal "is long overdue in a field that's been repeatedly critiqued for its lack of diversity."
- A "haunting image" of an underground sewer system in London wins the 2016 Arcad Images Architectural Photography Award (definitely worth checking out the other 19 on the shortlist!).
- A look at "some of the lesser-known and more fashion-focused elements" of Hadid's (a.k.a. "Queen of the Curve") legacy.
- Two we couldn't resist: a blast from the past video of Ada Louise Huxtable discussing the options for building at Ground Zero: "I don't want to see big buildings there."
- Lubell talks to architects and engineers who "shove a lightsaber through the Death Star's bad design": when asked "for their assessments, most were not kind" to the "planet-killing not-a-moon" structure (great images - but holding judgment until we see "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story").
- Happy Winter Solstice!

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Denver Art Museum Looks To Renovate A Work Of Art: Itself: ...Ponti's only completed North American project [1971 North Building] and one of the first "high-rise" art museums ever built...One hurdle...is juggling the desire to stay true to his vision with the need to update the facility...It has the architects constantly asking themselves: What would Ponti do? -- Machado Silvetti Architects; Fentress Architects [images] - KUNC / Community Radio for Northern Colorado

Iranian architects fight to save Gio Ponti villa from bulldozers: Replacing Villa Namazee in Tehran with hotel reflects country's indifference to its contemporary heritage, say campaigners: ...was previously listed as a national treasure. But a court decision has given its current owner permission to delist it, paving the way for the construction of a 20-storey hotel. The prospect has touched a nerve among the country's architects... -- Nashid Nabian; Leila Araghian; Faryar Javaherian; Parshia Qaregozloo [images] - Guardian (UK)

Petition to stop Parliament House fence plans: The Australian Institute of Architects has launched an online petition...the Australian government announced plans for a \$60-million security upgrade... "a 2.6-metre high perimeter fence will fundamentally change the character of the building and its symbolism as the people's house"... -- Mitchell/Giurgola Architects; Thorp Architects (1988) [link to petition] - ArchitectureAU (Australia)

Closed for 20 Years, Hotel Designed by Oscar Niemeyer Reopens in Rio de Janeiro: ...the reborn Hotel Nacional is ostentatious...33-floor cylinder...originally inaugurated in 1972...last guests checked out in 1995. -- Roberto Burle Marx - Folha de S.Paulo (Brazil)

Alex Klimoski: Scrapped Plan for Guggenheim Helsinki Reveals Political Fissures: ...has rattled Finnish politics and sparked debate within the architecture community...The project's turbulent history reflects the Finnish people's deeply divided opinion on the virtue of injecting a global franchise into Helsinki's cultural scene with taxpayers' money...Within the architecture community, criticism...tended to be in response to the corporatization of architecture... -- Moreau Kusunoki Architects; Michael Sorkin/Terreform - Architectural Record

Philip Kennicott: MGM's \$1.4 billion casino is a cruise ship to nowhere: Once you're aboard, there's little reason to leave. Spectacle surrounds you...sits on the low bluffs of the Potomac like Fitzcarraldo's landlocked steamboat...if one can't call it beautiful...it is nevertheless a fascinating structure...modern casinos also turn architecture into a narcotic, and this is no exception. -- Edward Abeyta/HKS; KNA Design [images] - Washington Post

Permeable Public Realm to Front 5468796 Architecture's Lake & East: With a 'living wall' spread across its anodized aluminum exterior, [it] eschews the norms...Land Art Design's landscaping introduces the greenery of backyards to a high-rise typology...has attracted both praise and criticism for its architectural boldness. [images] - Urban Toronto

Inga Saffron: These guys are Philadelphia's professional blight busters: Every neighborhood seems to have one...Residents plead with City Hall for help...yet somehow, the years go by...Who you gonna call? How about the "Blight busters"...isn't the formal name of the group of vigilante code enforcers who have become Philadelphia's go-to, blight-fighting consultants, but it might as well be...they have mastered the ins and outs of an obscure state law... -- Scioli Turco Inc. - Philadelphia Inquirer

Steven Snell: A Plea for Cities: A discussion of private and public space, revealing an argument for justice: Density matters...All the right density in the developer's bottom-line won't make for an interesting urban culture when those densely clustered together in starchitect/gold plated buildings aren't themselves interesting or, more commonly, are dissuaded from having or sharing interests. - PLANetizen

Kelsey Campbell-Dollaghan: Design In The Darkest, Coldest, Most Remote Places On Earth: Hugh Broughton Architects designed a mobile research station on the ice shelves of Antarctica: Halley VI's mobility is now being tested for the first time...a dangerous chasm was emerging near the station...the project will take two years. [images] - Fast Company / Co.Design

Diana Budds: Beyond "Contemporary": A Map Of Today's Architectural Movements: ...this chart attempts to map its

numerous schools: The work before and after the financial crisis of 2006-2008 is profoundly different. A new infographic by Alejandro Zaera-Polo, an architect and the embattled former dean of Princeton's School of Architecture, attempts to categorize exactly how. [images]- [Fast Company / Co.Design](#)

How an LA architect became the first black to win an architectural Gold Medal: Paul Revere Williams left an indelible mark...Eight of his projects have been included in the National Register of Historic Places. He accomplished all this as a black man in an all-white industry...[granddaughter] Karen E. Hudson, and many in the architecture industry, believe the award is long overdue in a field that's been repeatedly critiqued for its lack of diversity. -- Philip Freelon/Perkins+Will- [The Daily Breeze \(California\)](#)

This haunting image of an underground reservoir in London is the best photo of architecture in 2016: London's sewer system [in Finsbury Park] has won international acclaim...winner of the 2016 Arcaid Images Architectural Photography Awards...Matt Emmett, offers a rare look at London's underground waterworks...built by the East London Waterworks Company in 1868...- [Business Insider](#)

When Architecture Met Fashion in the Hands of Zaha Hadid: She was known as the Queen of the Curve for her architectural innovation, but [her] vision extended to the body as well...Here, we recall some of the lesser-known and more fashion-focused elements of her legacy. [images]- [AnOther Magazine \(UK\)](#)

Ada Louise Huxtable discusses the options for building at Ground Zero and speaking to the spirit of the location: "I don't want to see big buildings there." [video]- [TPT/Twin Cities PBS \(Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota\)](#)

Sam Lubell: Architects and Engineers Shove a Lightsaber Through the Death Star's Bad Design: ..."Death Star Owner's Technical Manual" lays bare the plans for the station...the drawings of the planet-killing not-a-moon may look like gobbledygook...but to a trained designer, they're fair game for criticism...when WIRED asked ...for their assessments, most were not kind. -- Cameron Sinclair, founder of Small Works; Jose Jimenez/BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; Nathan Bishop/KoningEizenberg; Russell Fortmeyer/Arup [images]- [Wired](#)



Zaha Hadid Architects: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut, Lebanon: ...melds local traditions with innovative geometries, creating an architectural manifestation of the Institute's ideals of opportunity, pluralism, creativity and tolerance. By Jason Dibbs [images]

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