

Today's News - Thursday, February 5, 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're off to a practically Internet-free world for the next few days, but we'll be back Tuesday, February 10.

- We lose the master of "the theology of the hammer" - but what a legacy he leaves.
- There's lots out there about EMPAC, so we took a different tack and asked the structural/MEP engineer to tell us just how they "ground" a 221,200-square-foot building on a 30-degree slope?
- Rybczynski rips into the two sides of architectural dogma: "self-indulgent, irrational, and trendy from one side; nostalgic, retrograde, and derivative from the other."
- Brussat at his anit-modernist prickliest: "In modernism's self-satisfied self-delusion there may be a ray of hope for a world under its siege...the Driehaus Prize."
- Arieff's What Will Save the Suburbs? Part 2: some suggestions offered are pretty out there; others actually inspire.
- New NYC hotels take the skyline - and some unlikely hotspots for a hotel boom.
- Post-occupancy carbon count on 3 architect-designed offices in the U.K.
- Tributes to Kaplicky by Jiricna, Sudjic, Finch, Crompton, and Denari.
- An eyeful of the 2008 International Design Awards (IDA) winners.
- Weekend diversions: Kwinter on Balmond's "Solid Void" show in Chicago: "Young computer-based designers ought to take a long, soul-searching look here." Jacobs calls it "a fascinating experiment which cuts engineering loose from its normal purpose."
- J. MAYER H. gets its first solo museum bow in San Francisco.
- Bayley and Woodman give Palladio exhibition (mostly) four thumb's-up...with some reservations.
- Page turners: Two tomes on I.M. Pei and David M. Schwarz present two very different architects.
- "The Women" is a "mesmerizing story of women who invest everything in that mysterious 'bank of feeling' named Frank Lloyd Wright."
- "The Rescue Man" may be a novel about an architectural historian, but its more like a ballad to Liverpool.
- We couldn't resist: an amusing take on NYC by way of LEGOs.
- For our British friends who've found themselves snowed under (as we have been for weeks): take heart... eating snow can be good for you (as long as it's still white).

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Obituary: Millard Fuller, 74, Who Founded Habitat for Humanity: ...spread what he called "the theology of the hammer" by building more than 300,000 homes worldwide... - New York Times

Loud on the Outside, Quiet on the Inside: Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) by Grimshaw and Davis Brody Bond Aedas: How do you "ground" a 221,200-square-foot building on a 30-degree slope? By Craig M. Schwitter, P.E./Buro Happold [images] - ArchNewsNow

That Dogma Won't Hunt: Why are architects so obsessed with schools and rules? You'd think that in a world of shoddy and mindless building design...any attempt to raise the architectural bar would be appreciated. Instead, the verbal rockets fly: self-indulgent, irrational, and trendy from one side; nostalgic, retrograde, and derivative from the other. By Witold Rybczynski - Slate

Saving the Suburbs, Part 2: Though a healthy contingent of commentators on "What Will Save the Suburbs?" advocated either burning suburbia down or simply letting nature take its course, the opinions offered ran the gamut from using them to relocate displaced Palestinians to turning them into self-sustaining communities. By Alison Arieff -- KRDB Architects; Ellen Dunham-Jones/June Williamson [images, links] - New York Times

Classicism's global humanism: In modernism's self-satisfied self-delusion there may be a ray of hope for a world under its siege...Driehaus Prize does honor truth, dignity, time and beauty. Its bestowal on an Egyptian classicist will foster respect for architecture's humanist tradition around the globe. By David Brussat -- Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil; Hassan Fathy - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Hotels On The Rise: Two striking new hotels aim to engage...with ambitious architectural statements on the street level -- not just in the bar and bathtub -- while industrial zones citywide are proving unlikely hotspots for a hotel boom. -- Polshek Partnership; Carlos Zapata/Antonio Citterio [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Sustainability in Practice: Post-occupancy data: Hattie Hartman examines the post-occupancy carbon count of three architect-designed offices: one rural, one urban and one in a business park. -- Archtype; Fletcher Priest Architects; BDP - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Tribute: Jan Kaplicky, 1937-2009: ...friends and colleagues reminisce -- Eva Jiricna; Deyan Sudjic; Paul Finch; Dennis Crompton/Archigram; Neil Denari - The Architect's Newspaper

2008 International Design Awards (IDA) winners -- PTW Architects/ARUP/CCDI; Correia/Ragazzi Arquitectos; Francine Houben; WXY Architecture; BGP Arquitectura; Rogers Marvel Architects; Jonathan Kirschenfeld Associates; etc. [images] - International Design Awards (IDA)

What Lies Beneath: "Cecil Balmond: Solid Void"...is about the art of making buildings stand up in entirely new ways...a form of scientific autobiography for the generation of designers...that is just beginning to emerge revolutionized and reborn. Young computer-based designers ought to take a long, soul-searching look here... By Sanford Kwinter - The Architect's Newspaper

Structuring the fourth dimension: Sam Jacob takes a geometric acid trip, courtesy of Cecil Balmond's installations..."Solid Void"...a fascinating experiment which cuts engineering loose from its normal purpose...at the Graham Foundation in Chicago until June 20 -- Arup [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

San Francisco Museum of Art (SFMOMA) Presents "Patterns of Speculation: J. MAYER H.," the first solo museum exhibition of work by the German architecture studio...February 6 through July 7, 2009 - Art Daily

Endlessly copied, but never bettered: The Royal Academy's exhibition on Palladio contains marvellous treasures and yet falls short of explaining his true genius...there are big problems with architecture exhibitions...even when the designer of the installation is as distinguished an architect as Eric Parry. By Stephen Bayley - Observer (UK)

Andrea Palladio: His Life and Legacy, at the Royal Academy: ...work transformed the architectural culture of the Western world...working your way through such a quantity of material -- and the attendant, highly scholarly footnotes -- is a rather daunting task. By Ellis Woodman - Telegraph (UK)

Book reviews: "I.M. Pei: Complete Works" by Philip Jodidio and Janet Adams Strong; "David M. Schwarz Architects 2002-2007" by Robert L. Miller...Pei was more corporate modernist than avant-garde...Schwarz, by contrast, has perpetrated architecture of Disneyland nostalgia... - Dallas Morning News

Book review: The Architect of Love: T. Coraghessan Boyle's mesmerizing novel "The Women"...a mesmerizing story of women who invest everything, at great risk, in that mysterious "bank of feeling" named Frank Lloyd Wright. - New York Times

Book review: "The Rescue Man" by Anthony Quinn...Liverpool has had a reputation for knocking itself down and starting all over again...turns that ongoing frenzy of construction and destruction into a quietly powerful metaphor for how we grow up...haunted not only by buildings that were demolished but also by buildings that were imagined but never built. - Guardian (UK)

I LEGO N.Y.: During the cold and dark Berlin winter days, I spend a lot of time with my boys in their room. And as I look at the toys scattered on the floor, my mind inevitably wanders back to New York. By Christoph Niemann [images]- New York Times

Snow, the unlikely superfood: Before the great thaw begins, save as much snow as you can – eating it can be good for you. - Telegraph (UK)

WORDS THAT BUILD: Faceting Architectural Communication: Tip #11: Effective communication evolves out of cross-reflective details. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



-- Zaha Hadid Architects: Port House, Antwerp, Belgium

-- Under construction: MAD Architects: The Absolute Towers, Mississauga, Canada

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