

## Today's News - Friday, July 24, 2009

- Angotti on the faltering WTC plans and why it might be time to go back to the drawing board: "Maybe the critics were right in the first place."
- A serious look at why street design matters, and some of the cities that are taking it seriously.
- Hot on the heels of two Stirling nods, Rogers takes another hit: his British Museum extension plan bites the dust ("official reasons for the refusal remain unclear").
- Prague's "Blob"/"Octopus"/"Eye": the "saga of the chosen library design refuses to die."
- Gorlin has "great hope for modern architecture" in the Bronx: "A masterpiece is still awaited, but at least there are many contenders."
- Bernstein on the impending demise of Yamasaki's Century Plaza Hotel in L.A.: not everyone thinks it's worth saving.
- Something amazing is rising from the wildfire ashes at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.
- A long shortlist for BD's Architect of the Year Awards 2009.
- Weekend diversions: Plan to spend some time at "Modell Bauhaus" in Berlin - "the world's biggest Bauhaus retrospective" (great slide show!).
- Hawthorne cheers the "architecture of gumption" presented in "Mix" in La Jolla: these "architects are making measurable headway against problems that desperately need solving."
- Campbell takes on the Wright and the High Line in one fell swoop (one miss, one hit).
- Ivy waxes poetic about the lost art of hand drawing as he wanders the Wright show: the "sheets of handwork remind us what we have lost in our transition to the electronic"; want more: an architecture fantasy camp for Frank Lloyd Wright fans.
- The tantalizing "Mannahatta/Manhattan" at the Museum of the City of New York challenges the viewer to see the contemporary city as "a place shaped by the relationship between nature and people."
- The new documentary "Snakebit" about Rural Studio and Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee "seems unexpectedly moving, even for architecture buffs."
- Page turners: King on Sudjic's latest tome "The Language of Things": a "well-tailored provocation that both explores why the best design work is timeless and decries how it can be debased for status or show."
- "A Paradise Built in Hell" finds the upside of natural or national disasters.
- Eileen Gray finally gets her due in "the most in-depth look at the designer to date."
- We couldn't resist: an amazing eyeful of MOS's "afterparty" at P.S. 1 in Wade Zimmerman's "brilliant pictures of this hairy beast"; and winners of Maserati/Architectural Digest's garage design competition (worth looking at all the entries - vroom vroom!).

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As World Trade Center Plans Falter, City Could Have a Sense of Deja Vu: Maybe it is time to go back to the drawing board...and start again by asking the question what's best for both New York and world peace, as many civic groups did after 9/11...Maybe the critics were right in the first place. By Tom Angotti [links]- Gotham Gazette (NYC)

Rethinking the Street Space: Why Street Design Matters: Streets aren't just for driving, and cities are starting to realize it...looking to makeover their public streets with progressive design manuals and toolkits that address "Livability." ...Our street spaces are the ultimate untapped urban resource, a public land bank that is waiting to be cashed in. By Amber Hawkes/Georgia Sheridan/Torti Gallas and Partners [images, links]- PLANetizen

Shock refusal for Rogers' British Museum extension: ...official reasons for the refusal remain unclear...Museum confirmed that it would wait until the official justification for the refusal was made clear before deciding on a way forward. -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Ugly blob or cultural treasure? The battle over Prague's proposed funky-looking library...the Blob, the Octopus, the Eye — by any name the saga of the chosen library design refuses to die...political forces...rallied to oppose the project could shift within the next year through...elections — potentially creating an opening for the resurrection of the so-called Blob. -- Jan Kaplicky/Future Systems [image, video]- GlobalPost

Modern Bronx: Amazing architecture in community service buildings: ...there is great hope for modern architecture in the Bronx. A masterpiece is still awaited, but at least there are many contenders... By Alexander Gorlin -- Rafael Viñoly; Arquitectonica; Dattner Architects; Pei Cobb Freed; Weisz + Yoes/WXY architecture; Karlsberger Architects; Perkins Eastman - NY Daily News

A Hotel's Past vs. a City's Future: The Century Plaza Hotel is a fixture in Los Angeles but it is also thought to be an impediment to pedestrian traffic...huge semicircular driveway "actually serves as a physical impediment" to people trying to walk through Century City...Replacing it with a pair of thin towers would free more than two acres for gardens. By Fred A. Bernstein -- Minoru Yamasaki (1966); Pei Cobb Freed & Partners [images]- New York Times

What Grew Amid the Ashes: When the Jesusita wildfire roared through Mission Canyon...it showed little respect for...the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden...Untouched, however, was...the kaleidoscopic wildflower meadow. This was the result not of divine intervention, but of a state-of-the-art irrigation system...Good thing. Herb Parker was set to begin work on a massive nature-based sculpture... [slide show]- Wall Street Journal

The shortlist for BD's Architect of the Year Awards 2009 announced. Five practices have been shortlisted in each of 12 categories -- Bennetts Associates; Grimshaw; Hawkins Brown; Van Heyningen & Haward; Stanton Williams; Studio Egret West; John McAslan; Niall McLaughlin; Rick Mather; Nicholas Hare; etc.- BD/Building Design (UK)

The House That Mies and Walter Built: "Modell Bauhaus"...the largest ever Bauhaus retrospective...starts this week at the Martin Gropius museum in Berlin...deserves at least a two to four hour visit. [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

The architecture of gumption: ...all the firms in "Mix: Nine San Diego Architects and Designers" ...practice a kind of architecture that is actively and productively critical of the status quo...an effective introduction to the appeal of a clear-eyed, fully engaged approach to architectural practice... By Christopher Hawthorne -- Teddy Cruz; Luce et Studio; Rinehart Herbst; Jonathan Segal; Sebastian Mariscal; Lloyd Russell; Public-

Los Angeles Times

One good fit and one bad in New York City: What is it that makes the Frank Lloyd Wright show at the Guggenheim Museum such a disappointment? The contents and the container...have nothing to do with each other...I'm not saying don't see the show. There can never be an unrewarding exhibition of the work of this magical genius...the High Line...getting everything right...Nothing has been sentimentalized; nothing looks "designed." By Robert Campbell -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; James Corner Field Operations [images]- Architectural Record

Drawing, ca. 2009: Yes, we primarily draw electronically now...And yet, and yet ... For the Wright aficionado, or the architect in love with drawings, the [Guggenheim has] produced a summer swimming pool of a show: You have to dive in and take a deep breath...sheets of handwork remind us what we have lost in our transition to the electronic...What has happened to drawing? By Robert Ivy- Architectural Record

Frank Lloyd Wright fans: Architecture fantasy camp in Oak Park, Illinois...Aug. 2-5 and Oct. 4-7- Michigan Live

With Virgin Eyes: "Mannahatta/Manhattan: A Natural History of New York City" at the Museum of the City of New York...should not be seen as a call to return Manhattan to its primeval state, but rather as a visualization tool that reveals "something new about a place we know so well"...challenges the viewer to see the contemporary city as "a place shaped by the relationship between nature and people." [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

A Star Turn for Sambo: Architectural documentaries are all the rage these days...Now comes another, "Snakebit" about Rural Studio and its inimitable founder Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee, that, like its predecessors, seems unexpectedly moving, even for architecture buffs. [images, video, links]- The Architect's Newspaper

Book review: In defense of inspired design: "The Language of Things: Understanding the World of Desirable Objects" by Deyan Sudjic...a well-tailored provocation that both explores why the best design work is timeless and decries how it can be debased for status or show. By John King- San Francisco Chronicle

Book review: Lost and Found: It's hard to see the upside of a natural—or national—disaster like Hurricane Katrina or 9/11. But might there actually be a benefit from instances of mass destruction? "A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster" by Rebecca Solnit...shows how in the wake of terrible happenings, people tend to find the very best in themselves.- VSL/Very Short List

Book review: Eileen Gray Finally Gets Her Due: "Eileen Gray: Her Life and Work" by Peter Adam...the most in-depth look at the designer to date...with the publication of Adam's expanded biography, [her] prickly personality need no longer obscure her multifaceted accomplishments as an architect and designer. [images, links]- Metropolis Magazine

The Afterparty pavilion: MOS Architects' pavilion for arts venue P.S. 1 in New York has now opened. Here's a gallery of photographer Wade Zimmerman's brilliant pictures of this hairy beast. [images]- Icon (UK)

"Design Driven" Maserati/Architectural Digest Competition Announces Winners...search for the finest architectural garages [image, links]- PR Web

Book Review: "Everything Must Move: 15 Years at Rice School of Architecture 1994-2009": There's a Texas flood of architectural ideas that gives ample evidence of an architecture school that unsettles pat assumptions. Who could ask for anything more? By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow



-- KK Letter: The Wanås Foundation, Knislinge, Sweden (Antony Gormley, Dan Graham, Jenny Holzer, Per Kirkeby, Maya Lin, Robert Wilson, etc.)  
-- Pappersbruket: Östanå Papermill, Broby, Sweden

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