

Today's News - Wednesday, November 25, 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE: We will be taking a break for Thanksgiving Day holiday, and will return Monday, November 30.

- Vancouver's mixed-use, "big-tent," "social experiment" still stirs controversy: is it "a naïve rainbow vision"? (time will tell)
- Atlantic Yards developer wins big court battle (i.e., eminent domain ruling in its favor), but that doesn't mean it's won the war.
- Litt calls the latest proposal for a medical mart a bait-and-switch that could cost Cleveland more than money - it "would lose a piece of its history, and of its soul. That would be a high price indeed."
- Gensler unveils massive expansion plans for southern Mecca (Foster and Hadid are working on the north side).
- Morrison waxes almost poetic about the lost bridges of flood-ravaged Cumbria: "there are some superbly imaginative engineers and architects" who could create wonderful structures and prove there's nothing that "can't be spanned by human ingenuity."
- Dickinson cheers the replacement of New Haven's "artless concrete ribbon" of a bridge with "an elegantly thin, sleek concrete and wire sculpture" that just might make the city "feel special."
- Hinshaw is more than disappointed in a "facelift gone awry" that's turned a Seattle parking garage from "a silk purse into a sow's ear."
- Palm Springs preservation committee is batting zero in an attempt to get owners of historic buildings (read mid-century Modern) to submit applications for the historic landmark designation.
- Lifson queries Zumthor re: his big plans for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; will it involve demolition? "Yes." (Govan pipes in, too)
- Alsop starts his teaching gig at Ryerson (this time, he won't be setting fire to students' models - maybe).
- Q&A with Soleri: Do you have hope for the future? "If you look at the progression of life you cannot be but super optimistic."
- Building's Sustainability Awards include a double winner.
- Weekend diversions:
- Davidson finds MCNY's Saarinen show a "touching and evocative exhibit" that "makes today's smiley-face propaganda machine seem dinky."
- Greg Lynn creates crystal palace for Design Miami: "It's like hanging 3 SUVs off a paper thin sheet" (and only on view next week).
- Goldberger's "Why Architecture Matters" is like "some masterful sommelier" at a wine tasting, helping us "discover what's special about certain architectural experiences and the language that most eloquently describes them."
- GSD's "Landscapes of Energy" investigates energy's spatial dimension to show "the realities of how the energy machine and the building machine work" (is the imagined green future no more than a "romantic notion"?).
- "Critical Cities: Ideas, Knowledge and Agitation from Emerging Urbanists" is an anthology by urban thinkers to open a debate about how we engage with our urban environment.
- Edinburgh College of Art launches "Vision," an interdisciplinary research magazine.

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Redevelopment Project Doubles as Social Experiment: ...1.1 million-square-foot mixed-use complex in Vancouver has been mired in controversy...some community groups…are reserving judgment about Woodward's big-tent approach to development..."We have committed to a naïve rainbow vision that all the different groups are going to get along..."Whether that works remains to be seen." -- Gregory Henriquez/Henriquez Partners Architects - New York Times

Down to the Wire: Ratner victorious in latest court case but must issue bonds by year's end: Atlantic Yards opponents may have lost another battle [but] knock-down, dragged-out legal strategy may have won the war. -- SHoP Architects; Ellerbe Becket - The Architect's Newspaper

MMPI plan for medical mart may be best for the company, but not the best for Cleveland...vision has jelled enough to show that Mall C...would become little more than a glorified doormat for the medical mart...in addition to losing a view, the city would lose a piece of its history, and of its soul. That would be a high price indeed. By Steven Litt - Cleveland Plain Dealer

Gensler unveils massive expansion plans for southern Mecca: ...proposed 1km² Darb Al-Khalil redevelopment...serious consideration has been given to the nature of public space. [images] - The Architects' Journal (UK)

We all have a bridge to bear: While the floods represent many personal losses, there's something symbolically tragic about Cumbria's collapsing bridges...Why do bridges exercise such a hold on our imaginations?...every bridge is a leap of daring...Each speaks of a belief that there is no river so wide...that it can't be spanned by human ingenuity... By Richard Morrison -- Calatrava; Virlogeux; Wilkinson Eyre; Arup/Foster; Brunel; etc. - The Times (UK)

After suffering with Q [Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge], New Haven deserves artful bridge: ...opted to build a transformational event, where an artless concrete ribbon, rudely supported with giant piers, is swept away in favor of an elegantly thin, sleek concrete and wire sculpture — distilled, refined and yet expressive...at least [it] may make us feel special. By Duo Dickinson -- Parsons Brinckerhoff - New Haven Register (Connecticut)

Op-Ed: Macy's garage: Making a silk purse into a sow's ear: ...parking garage was never exactly a silk purse. But it was an example of a form of "moderne" architecture, of which we in Seattle have precious few...But with the renovation...resembles a suburban shopping mall...paper-thin shallowness of this facelift gone awry. By Mark Hinshaw/LMN Architects - Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce

Drive for historic buildings in Palm Desert stalled — by owners: Palm Desert Cultural Preservation Committee...sent out a dozen letters asking owners of historic buildings to submit applications for the historic landmark designation, but so far, it's batting just about zero...members are puzzled by the community's apparent lack of interest in preservation. - The Desert Sun (Palm Springs, CA)

A Bolt of Zumthor: The Swiss architect talks to Edward Lifson about his big plans for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art..."It's a little bit of a mess now on this site, so we're trying to think, how could we get rid of this?" Your project will involve demolition of existing LACMA buildings? "Yes." -- Michael Govan; Rem Koolhaas; Renzo Piano - The Architect's Newspaper

Renegade architect schools Rye: Will Alsop, the so-called bad boy of architecture, has taken up a teaching position at Ryerson...While he understands arson isn't considered an appropriate teaching method at Ryerson, [he] recalls a time when it was effective. "If I didn't like someone's project I'd set fire to their model"...A lot of these young people can go on to be great architects if they're taught well...I could do that." - The Eyeopener (Ryerson University, Toronto)

Desert Dreamer: Interview with Paolo Soleri...who began construction on his experimental town Arcosanti in 1970....Do you have hope for the future? "If you look at the progression of life you cannot be but super optimistic." [videos] - Architectural Record

Sustainability Awards revealed: The newly crowned Sustainability Leader of the Year also wins a Sustainability Project of the Year -- Bennetts Associates; Feilden Clegg Bradley; Bill Dunster/RuralZed; Atelier Ten; Igloo Regeneration; etc. - Building (UK)

Joy Constructed: "Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future" champions the sinuous legacy of Saarinen...touching and evocative

exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York...makes today's smiley-face propaganda machine seem dinky compared to the vast infrastructure of sunniness that Saarinen helped erect... By Justin Davidson [images]- New York Magazine

Greg Lynn creates crystal palace for Design Miami: ...has designed an installation out of carbon and 1.5 million crystals for the ongoing Swarovski Crystal Palace project..."It's like hanging 3 SUVs off a paper thin sheet"...will go on show December 1-5 [image]- Independent (UK)

Book review: The Grand Composition: "Why Architecture Matters" by Paul Goldberger...like some masterful sommelier at an ample and sophisticated wine tasting, he helps the reader discover what's special about certain architectural experiences and the language that most eloquently describes them... By Carole Rifkind- The East Hampton Star (NY)

"Landscapes of Energy": ...journal investigates energy's spatial dimension...third in a "New Geographies" series [by] Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD)...intended to bring geographical scale to modern urban design...Show the realities of how the energy machine and the building machine work...."elevating to visibility the performative function of architecture," and then "celebrating it." [links]- Harvard Gazette

"Critical Cities: Ideas, Knowledge and Agitation from Emerging Urbanists" from This Is Not A Gateway presents an anthology by progressive urban thinkers from around the world...opens a debate about how we engage with our urban environment...introduction by Ricky Burdett- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Edinburgh College of Art launches research magazine: "Vision" ...envisages art as academia and research as art...in the interdisciplinary creative subjects of "art, design, architecture and landscape architecture"...in an accessible and engaging manner...- The Journal (Edinburgh)



-- Coop Himmelb(l)au: Mobile Performance Space, Pavilion 21 MINI Opera Space
-- Zaha Hadid Architects: Mobile Performance Space, JS Bach / Chamber Music Hall

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