

Today's News - Friday, February 26, 2010

EDITOR'S NOTE: Apologies for late arrival of today's news - we've been suffering power outages all morning (something to do with the 15 inches of white stuff we see outside our window!).

- Saffron wonders how the modern glass cube of KieranTimberlake's U.S. Embassy will go over with the U.K.'s "traditionalist camp"; in environmental terms, "the embassy will be everything America aspires to but rarely achieves."
- The embassy will change a swathe of land in Nine Elms area - designed by British architects.
- Farrelly remains skeptical that "old guys can change their spots" and actually make Barangaroo a "from-scratch creation of a genuine, pulsing city precinct" (especially "beneath this daisy chain of pocket-pissers").
- Woodman on H&deM's VitraHaus: "Flash and voguish it may be" (or "freakish landmark"?), it is still "a building that responds with real intelligence" to its setting and brief.
- Meanwhile, their Met Opera sets range "from a forest picnic of sorts to post-apocalyptic-looking ruins (hopefully not the remnants of some failed project)" - with pix to prove it.
- LMN wins big in Cleveland.
- Rothstein re: new African Burial Ground Visitor Center in Manhattan: it "makes the past seem like an excision, a resurrection of an alien time and place, a reminder of what lies deep underfoot."
- Walker is wowed by 21 billboards in L.A. given over to art (great pix).
- Weekend diversions:
- Filler offers an insightful (and thoroughly amusing) review of "Koolhaas Houselife."
- Ivy cheers "Sacred Spaces: the Architecture of Fay Jones," a new DVD that is "a cogent appreciation of the man's life and work, all neatly combined in one presentation."
- Yale serves up Saarinen: Lacayo says this first full career retrospective "tells you something about Saarinen's tricky place in the architectural canon" - It "showcases what made him both beloved and criticized." - And the gems from Yale's archive not included in previous venues.
- Don't leave Yale yet: the unusual "Compass and Rule" show includes a jolt: "the idea that architecture didn't exist before the 16th century" (and "there will be math").
- In NYC, Snohetta's ascendance is on full display; its work "supports the notion that more of the egalitarian and global architectural competitions...could allow architecture to transcend" the many challenges that "so often undermine its potential to uplift cities."
- Q&A with Candido at Cooper Union re: his "The Great White Whale is Black" retrospective, his "fascination with spatial relationships and the relationship between cities and their surroundings."
- "Lewis's Fifth Floor: A Department Story" captures the faded beauty of the "eerily evocative time-warp" still on display in London's long-closed department store (great pix).
- Grimshaw's sketchbooks are a big draw at the Edinburgh College of Art.
- In Pittsburgh, "Imagining Home: Selections from the Heinz Architectural Center" reveals ways in which the home has been envisioned over the last 200 years.
- Landscape architecture students create "METROMorphosis - Transforming the Urban World" at the Philadelphia International Flower Show to "show simple, tangible ways of bringing living ecosystems into our day-to-day urban living."
- Bruegmann gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Duany and Speck's "The Smart Growth Manual": "proponents and critics will find much to engage them in its pages."
- Schindhelm's "Dubai Speed" is "a unique insider's memoir of the grandiose attempt to use state power to reinvent a culture...he's wise to warn against gloating over the end of the city's glitzy heyday."
- Three books look at NYC "from wartime grit to modern soullessness."

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Phila. firm will design U.S. Embassy in London: ...it is unclear how KieranTimberlake's modern glass cube will go over with the traditionalist camp...For serious, urban-minded architects, designing an American embassy in these tense times is almost sure to lead to regret...That said...light, shimmering cube that is a vast improvement over the recently opened embassy in Berlin...In environmental terms, the embassy will be everything America aspires to but rarely achieves... By Inga Saffron -- Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Pei Cobb Freed; Richard Meier [images] - Philadelphia Inquirer

UK firms to design area around US embassy: ...6ha site within the Nine Elms area..."The big thing about the US embassy is that it will trigger regeneration. It will change a swathe of land in that area." -- Farrells; Feilden Clegg Bradley; AHMM; Flacq - BD/Building Design (UK)

Now for the hard part: public spaces of quality not quantity: If architecture were like Olympic snowboarding...what Lend Lease and Richard Rogers are attempting at Barangaroo would approach a perfect 10...if we accept the rhetoric...Barangaroo...still reads as the modernist dream...Until they can reverse this mindset, I'll remain sceptical as to whether these old guys can change their spots, even if they want to. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Rogers Stirk Harbour - Sydney Morning Herald

Herzog & de Meuron's VitraHaus: ...puts domestic forms to unsettling use...As an exercise in the kind of spectacle that Gehry's building pioneered, this is - for the foreseeable future - the last word...Flash and voguish it may be...nonetheless a building that responds with real intelligence both to its physical setting and to the requirements of a very particular brief. By Ellis Woodman [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)

Pritzkers Take the Stage: Herzog & de Meuron, like many of their starchitect brethren, have not had an easy time of late in New York...just got their big break, as they say in the theater: a debut at the Met...the set for a new production of Verdi's Atila...from a forest picnic of sorts to post-apocalyptic-looking ruins (hopefully not the remnants of some failed project). [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

LMN Architects chosen...to design medical mart and convention center: ...named conceptual designer of what Cleveland hopes will be the nation's first medical mart and a rebuilt convention center....decision marks a major milestone for the long-delayed project...means that Valerio Dewalt Train...originally hired...to conduct due diligence in earlier stages...will not get the big job. By Steven Litt - Cleveland Plain Dealer

A Burial Ground and Its Dead Are Given Life: African Burial Ground Visitor Center...[its] creation becomes, in the show, a consummation, a posthumous

triumph...gives back...a sense that we are all arising out of a more complex and painful past than we have often imagined. By Edward Rothstein -- Rodney Leon/AARRIS Architects; Amaze Design; Studio EIS [images]- [New York Times](#)

Los Angeles Swaps 21 Billboards With Art: At least five years in the making, How Many Billboards? Art In Stead was organized by the MAK Center...capitalized on the fact that ad sales for the billboards were down..."This could never have happened three years ago." By Alissa Walker [images]- [Fast Company](#)

House Life in a Koolhaas: ...[he] flouted received wisdom about architecture for the handicapped with his House in Bordeaux, which American building inspectors would deem a potential death trap...falling apart after little more than a decade...Guadalupe Acedo...is acceptingly aware...of this contemporary landmark's many flaws, and therein personifies the humanity and common sense that can elude even a creative genius. By Martin Filler [images, links]- [New York Review of Books](#)

Fay Jones Receives His Due in New DVD: "Sacred Spaces: the Architecture of Fay Jones"...a cogent appreciation of the man's life and work, all neatly combined in one presentation, with colorful walk-throughs of the most interesting buildings. By Robert Ivy- [Architectural Record](#)

Eero Dynamic: It's easier now to regard his expressive buildings as a principled attempt to reconcile the Modernist drive to purify and clarify with the abiding human desire for something that strikes other, warmer and no less essential chords...It tells you something about Saarinen's tricky place in the architectural canon that nearly half a century after his death, this is the first full career retrospective devoted entirely to his work. By Richard Lacayo- [Time Magazine](#)

All Eero: A two-venue exhibit at Yale explores Finnish architect Eero Saarinen's career: ...showcases what made him both beloved and criticized.- [New Haven Register \(Connecticut\)](#)

Saarinen gems stored in Yale archive: ...will be on display exclusively in New Haven, when "Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future" opens this Friday at Yale- [Yale Daily News](#)

Yale Center For British Art: A warning...There will be math. The unusual "Compass and Rule: Architecture as Mathematical Practice in England, 1500-1750" harks back to a time when architecture was emerging to take its place among the arts...An early jolt...is the idea that architecture didn't exist before the 16th century.- [Hartford Courant \(Connecticut\)](#)

Review: Tilting Ambition: Snohetta's ascendance is on full display at Scandinavia House: ...supports the notion that more of the egalitarian and global architectural competitions...could allow architecture to transcend the provincial narcissisms and internecine deadlocks that so often undermine its potential to uplift cities - even and especially in New York. Now that would be a good idea. By Thomas de Monchaux [images]- [The Architect's Newspaper](#)

Q&A: Tony Candido, Architect, Painter: Cooper Union has mounted "The Great White Whale is Black"...retrospective exhibition honouring five decades of Candido's work. The day the show opened he took a moment to speak...about his approach to painting, his fascination with spatial relationships and the relationship between cities and their surroundings.- [The Economist \(UK\)](#)

Lewis's fifth floor: Liverpool's forgotten design storey: ...reopened after the Blitz in 1953, was once a bustling shopping mecca, done out in the latest modern design...all that remains is an eerily evocative time-warp, still furnished with its original fixtures....artist and photographer Stephen King's "Lewis's Fifth Floor: A Department Story" seeks to capture its faded beauty [slide show]- [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

Architect's sketches will be a big draw: Edinburgh College of Art will be showing the sketchbooks of its alumnus, architect and President of the Royal Academy of Arts, Sir Nicholas Grimshaw, offering a rare opportunity to view initial and conceptual sketches by a leading architect.- [Edinburgh Evening News](#)

"Imagining Home: Selections from the Heinz Architectural Center"...presents more than 125 drawings, models, books, and games...that reveal ways in which the home has been envisioned over the last 200 years...opens February 27 -- estudio teddy cruz; Samuel Mockbee- [Carnegie Museum of Art](#)

Urban blossoms: At the 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show, Temple University Ambler Landscape Architecture and Horticulture students will add a vibrant green to the gray shades of the urban landscape..."METROMorphosis - Transforming the Urban World"...to show simple, tangible ways of bringing living ecosystems into our day-to-day urban living, and by extension help transform the world. Feb. 28 - March 7- [The Times Herald \(Pennsylvania\)](#)

Waste Land: The literature of Dubai's doomed quest to become a cultural mecca: "Dubai Speed," a unique insider's memoir of the grandiose...attempt to use state power to reinvent a culture. Michael Schindhelm's impressionistic account of Dubai's failed bid to buy an artistic identity by importing talent from around the world joins books...about Dubai as the instantaneous city...he's wise to warn against gloating over the end of the city's glitzy heyday... By Michael Z. Wise- [Foreign Policy magazine](#)

How Smart Is Smart Growth? "The Smart Growth Manual" by Andrés Duany and Jeff Speck...is a citizen's pocket guide to anti-sprawl planning practices and a primer on New Urbanist thought...In some aspects, [it] succeeds admirably...also provides good evidence as to why New Urbanist ideas have

excited such violent antipathy among many architects...reflects a curiously static view of history and urban change...proponents and critics will find much to engage them in its pages. By Robert Bruegmann- Architect Magazine

The City, From Wartime Grit to Modern Soullessness: "Over Here: New York City During World War II" By Lorraine B. Diehl..."On the Irish Waterfront: The Crusader, the Movie and the Soul of the Port of New York" by James T. Fisher..."Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places" by Sharon Zukin- New York Times



GRAFT: Hotel Q, Berlin, Germany

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