

Today's News - Friday, March 5, 2010

- We lose Raimund Abraham, "a favorite of Cooper Union Dean John Hejduk, Abraham helped make the school a hotbed of theory and design," in a smash-up with an L.A. bus.
- Weinstein finds "Design through Dialogue" a "helpful communications primer," but it "leaves some uncomfortable questions" unanswered.
- An exhaustive report on the Thames Gateway development that risks becoming a Docklands "writ large" (with no place for birds or bugs): "the local communities know what they need and they don't need another high-profile architect or urban visionary to tell them."
- An underdog Dallas neighborhood "becomes cool embracing what other parts of the city have fought" (don't call it a slum anymore).
- Dublin's new dockside theater may feel like "Libeskind-lite" (no starchitect hubris here), but it's still "populist and warm-hearted" and "it sure is likeable, like a chirpy little fella with big dreams."
- Saffron practically swoons over Maki's "gossamer bell jar" amidst the bricks of University of Pennsylvania campus.
- Aspen gives the nod to out-of-towner Oz instead of local Poss for affordable housing project (it's been a saga; now all they need is the money to build it).
- Niemeyer "still showing a flair for dramatic design" with his "glittering" new government complex in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.
- Architects, young and old, caught in the downswing a year ago: where are they now? (some good, some not so good news).
- Weekend diversions (and lots of 'em):
- Szenasy on "Modernism at Risk" at NYC's Center for Architecture, and the rise of design activism.
- The Guggenheim's "Contemplating the Void" is a "fun hotchpotch," but much of the "profusion of fantastical projects" wind up "reinforcing the dictatorial nature of Wright's design. But resistance is possible."
- Rothstein finds Yale's "Compass & Rule" charts "a period of radical transformation in architecture": the show's "argument is difficult and sometimes too allusively made, but the impact is considerable." - On the other hand, Genocchio found it "a visually unremarkable collection" that is "just too dry to appeal to a wide audience."
- Tapei gets its first eyeful of a British master with "Richard Rogers + Architects."
- Balmond shows off his thinking about geometry, pattern, and space in Tokyo (great pix!).
- Eliasson "makes magic" at an NYC gallery: "It's a doozy" (and pix to prove it).
- A terrific slide show of "Sculpture by the Sea" on a beach in Perth, Australia (some of the titles are better than the art).
- Lamster views "The Art of the Steal," a new documentary that alleges Barnes Foundation theft: it "frequently undermines its own argument," but "manages to elicit sympathy for some of the dedicated Barnesians fighting the good fight."
- Gruber finds "Grid/Street/Place" has much in common with "The Smart Growth Manual," but disappointment that includes only a few "places that evolved 'lot-by-lot'...rather than by means of a developer with a plan (and a bulldozer)."
- King considers authenticity and Zukin's "Naked City: it's "a provocative book and a conflicted one, and the conflict is what gives it life."
- "The British Constitution, Continuity and Change" by Britain's former Labor Minister takes on Prince Charles's "grotesque" and "unconstitutional" meddling" in urban issues + what really was in his missives re: Chelsea Barracks is (finally) revealed.
- Kamin gets it from the horses' mouths what we'll find in Mies 2.0, the forthcoming "Mies Building Art: A Biography and Critique."
- "Between Lines" puts architects' doodles on a pedestal.
- An eyeful of what's inside the "neatly packaged" new "Almanac of Architecture & Design."

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Obituary: Raimund Abraham, 77: Visionary Austrian architect dies in car crash in Los Angeles...a favorite of Cooper Union Dean John Hejduk, Abraham helped make the school a hotbed of theory and design... By William Menking- The Architect's Newspaper

Book Review: "Design through Dialogue: A Guide for Clients and Architects," by Karen A. Franck and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard: A helpful communications primer offers...but as useful as this book proves, it leaves some uncomfortable questions about communication unaddressed. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

The cockney Siberia: Thames Gateway development is the largest urban regeneration scheme ever attempted in Britain. If it fails, the area risks becoming a vast wilderness robbed of its rich natural landscape and cultural heritage..."What worries me is that the profitable bits will get done, but the infrastructure and the social equipment won't be provided..."my fear is that we'll end up with the Docklands writ large..." -- Michael Heseltine; Peter Hall; Terry Farrell- New Statesman (UK)

Oak Cliff Becomes Cool Embracing What Other Parts Of Dallas Have Fought: Builders, Bikes And Immigrants: ...North Dallas has been the city's Sinatra-land of mid-century aspiration, and Davis Street, for at least 30 years, has been what people in Sinatra-land would call a slum...might have a special edge because it seems more open to re-development...- Dallas Observer

Libeskind at Centre Stage: Dublin's dockside regeneration may have faltered, but its new Grand Canal Theatre heads the cast of the revival plans...Cost pressure is obvious throughout...For a work of 'starchitecture', there is very little hubris on display...a modest, well-scaled icon...Populist and warm-hearted, it is no masterpiece. It is too compromised for that. But it sure is likeable, a real character, like a chirpy little fella with big dreams. -- Martha Schwartz; McCauley Daye O'Connell- RIBA Journal (UK)

A gossamer update to a redbrick tradition: University of Pennsylvania has admitted another non-brick building into its ranks...Annenberg Public Policy Center...a gossamer bell jar...The contrast with its solid, earthbound neighbors is striking, and yet the magic of Maki's design is that they look as comfy together as old pals. By Inga Saffron -- Fumihiko Maki; Ballinger [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Out-of-town design firm gets nod, again: ...contract has become a thorny issue for the council, which has been under pressure to go with a more expensive bid from local firm...design work going into Burlingame Ranch is minuscule in cost and time compared to actually building out the project. -- OZ Architecture; Poss Architecture; Charles Cuniffe Architects- Aspen Daily News (Colorado)

Brazil unveils daring new Oscar Niemeyer design: ...glittering new government complex by legendary architect still showing a flair for dramatic design at the

age of 102... new complex, Belo Horizonte, the regional capital of Minas Gerais, becomes the city with the greatest number of buildings by Niemeyer - 14. [image]- AFP

Recession Stories - Where Are They Now? One year ago, [we] profiled design professionals...at AIA's Center for Architecture during a "Not Business As Usual" forum...see how they have fared in the past year. -- Angelina Pinto/Goshow Architects; Michael Murno; Sang Hwa Lee/Jeeyong An/Ginseng Chicken; Megan Bové/Esotico Designs; Rick Bell; Alec Heehs/Watermark Studio; Lauren Lucchesi/PLAN; Jennifer Graham/Charlton Hutton/M Moser; Kristen Mucci; Sarah Gluck/Robyne Kassen/Urban Movement Design- Architectural Record

Design Activists: Raise Your Flag High! Design activism is on the rise. The most recent and public expression...at New York's Center for Architecture. "Modernism at Risk: Modern Solutions for Saving Modern Landmarks" chronicles efforts taken to save, or try to save, Modern architecture's significant buildings. By Susan S. Szenasy -- Hannes Meyer/Hans Wittwer (1930); Paul Rudolph (1958); Diane Lewis [links]- Metropolis Magazine

A vision that's hard to top: "Contemplating the Void" is a free-for-all...a fun hotchpotch...It's funny, though, how such an imaginative building seems to limit rather than liberate the imagination...After half a century of wrestling with the architecture, the Guggenheim has commissioned a profusion of fantastical projects that winds up reinforcing the dictatorial nature of Wright's design. But resistance is possible... -- HWKN (Hollwichkushner); Alexander Gorlin; Hariri & Hariri; Saunders Architecture; Tod Williams Billie Tsien; Dominic Stevens; Zhang Huan; WORKac; Joris Laarman- Financial Times (UK)

When British Building Began With Compass and Ruler: Sometimes the shows at the Yale Center for British Art...are as fascinating as they are informative..."Compass and Rule," a visually unremarkable collection...is just too dry to appeal to a wide audience...obscured by a mountain of minutiae. By Benjamin Genocchio -- Inigo Jones; Christopher Wren [images]- New York Times

It Took Tools to Build a Revolution: "Compass & Rule: Architecture as Mathematical Practice in England, 1500-1750" at the Yale Center for British Art charts, with simple instruments, a period of radical transformation in architecture...exhibition's argument is difficult and sometimes too allusively made, but the impact is considerable. By Edward Rothstein -- Inigo Jones; Christopher Wren [images]- New York Times

Better by design: ...100 or so items currently on show at the Design Museum in London, and in the running to win the 2010 Brit Insurance Design Awards...Deyan Sudjic Antony Gormley - took a look at the ingenious and stylish creations. [audio slide show]- BBC News

Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill: A new show gathers together the treasures once housed in the wildest, most extraordinary house in 18th-century Britain...His Gothic, he hoped, was full of "gloomth" - not melancholia but a feeling of the sublime and the immensity of history... By Tom Dyckhoff [slide show]- The Times (UK)

"Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill": It was the most famous house in Georgian England, but for some it was a sham and an architectural failure. Amanda Vickery considers its eccentric creator...A new exhibition at the Victoria & Albert museum throws the spotlight on the peripheral observer and showcases the peculiarity of his taste...Wherever you stand on mock-Gothic, Strawberry Hill delivers unrivalled access to both ideas and design. - Guardian (UK)

"Richard Rogers + Architects: From the House to the City": landmark designs to be exhibited at Tapei Fine Arts Museum...March 6-May 7...said he is gratified to visit Taiwan again...a place that is full of vitality and vigor...impressed by cities' momentum for rapid change. -- Rogers Stirk Harbour- Focus Taiwan

"Element - Cecil Balmond" at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery presents Balmond's thinking about geometry, pattern and space...until 22 March. [images]- Dezeen

Eye Candy: Olafur Eliasson's Amazing New Art Installation: Using just a series of colored lights and basic principles of optics, Eliasson makes magic..."Multiple Shadow House." It's a doozy. On view (for free) at the Tonya Bonakdar Gallery [NYC] through March 20- Fast Company

The Sculpture by the Sea outdoor art exhibition at Cottesloe Beach in Perth, Australia [slide show]- Telegraph (UK)

Take That! "The Art of the Steal": New documentary alleges Barnes Foundation theft, but Mark Lamster acquits: ...frequently undermines its own argument...manages to elicit sympathy...for some of the dedicated Barnesians...fighting the good fight against forces whose power far eclipsed their own. Perhaps this is not the legacy they wanted, but they could do worse. Soon enough, they'll have a new museum. They might even like it. - The Architect's Newspaper

Metropolitan Urbanism? "Grid/Street/Place: Essential Elements of Sustainable Urban Districts" by Nathan Cherry (with Kurt Nagle)...has much in common with "The Smart Growth Manual"...My only disappointment is that contains only a few examples of places that developed "organically"...places that evolved "lot-by-lot" (or at the most, "block-by-block") rather than by means of a developer with a plan (and a bulldozer). By Frank Gruber- Huffington Post

Sharon Building stands still as times change: There are dozens of similar buildings downtown...They give our city tangible authenticity...That popular but problematic buzzword, authenticity, has been on my mind since I finished reading Sharon Zukin's new "Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Spaces." It's a provocative book and a conflicted one, and the conflict is what gives it life. By John King - San Francisco Chronicle

Prince of Wales criticised over 'grotesque' and 'unconstitutional' meddling: In her book, "The British Constitution, Continuity and Change – an Inside View" Joyce Quin said the Prince's notorious "black spider" memos to ministers – a reference to his scrawled handwriting – were inappropriate and had to stop...even hints at the demise of the Royals...- Telegraph (UK)

Charles's letter damned 'brutalist' housing: A letter written by the Prince of Wales to an Arab royal family reveals for the first time how much he interfered to thwart plans to build Britain's most expensive residential blocks...The prince said that "quite frankly my heart sank" when he saw the plans for Chelsea Barracks. - The Times (UK)

Get ready for Mies, Version 2.0: So what's different from the first version of "Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography"?...This time, it's "Mies Building Art: A Biography and Critique" by Franz Schulze and Edward Windhorst...How does the master of "less is more" speak to these times?...a sneak preview of the sneak preview... By Blair Kamin - Chicago Tribune

We should think highly of the so-called lowly doodle: "Between Lines: From Doodles to Composition" by Anupam Banerji and Michael Elmitt...Worried that computers are changing the design process, two architects show how some of the world's great designers have first put their ideas on paper. -- Alberto Sartoris; Oscar Niemeyer; Phyllis Lambert; A. J. Diamond; Arthur Erickson; Moshe Safdie; Douglas Cardinal; Raymond Moriyama; Roger Anger - The Record (Canada)

Well Built: Peek Inside the Neatly Packaged New "Almanac of Architecture & Design" 11th annual edition... -- DesignIntelligence; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture; HMC Architects; Fentress Architects; Gensler; AECOM; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Sasaki Associates; Design Workshop; GGLO; Goettsch Partners; CDH Partners; Communication Art; Anderson Mason Dale Architects [slide show essay] - Fast Company



-- Competition winner: Steven Holl Architects: Shan-Shui Hangzhou, Hangzhou, China
-- Anmahian Winton Architects: Community Rowing Boathouse, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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