

Today's News - Tuesday, May 11, 2010

- King x 2: the now-official shortlist for SFMOMA expansion will "almost certainly guarantee the new wing will be a distinct contrast with the institution's iconic home."
- And San Francisco should allow Saitowitz's vision for 555 Fulton: "when genuinely talented architects find ways to heighten our sense of place, we need to encourage such creativity."
- Lewis calls for a change in vocabulary (change TOD to "multi-modal-transportation-oriented development") and mind-sets to encourage more walking in cities - and offers the design criteria required to do so.
- A Beirut architect bemoans the loss of his city's heritage, being wiped out by regulations that benefit developers, not people: "Of course all cities change, but change does not have to be so aggressive and so inhuman."
- Building with mud in a concrete jungle of Karachi: it's so "refreshing" to see people living in a slum settlement being "self-sufficient in building for themselves such cost-effective as well as environment-friendly dwellings" - authorities should take heed (this perplexes us more than just a bit).
- Centre Pompidou-Metz is ready for its close-up - will it be the city's Bilbao moment? + Ban on his "Chinese hat" design: "I wanted to find something contextual, instead of designing a building which can exist anywhere in the world" (no comment re: SANAA's Louvre Lens: "I never take a look at the designs of others").
- Moving Towards a Green Economy Part 2: Rebuilding communities through brownfield rehabilitation.
- Technology may be freeing Dillberts from their cubicles, but companies are still spending billions to erect new green buildings (more transportation hubs required).
- Developer Hines's Green Office program proves it has real clout.
- Lack of private construction projects has more firms heading towards the government sector: "It's the only game in town with cash flow."
- Design plays a key role in "the world's most humane prison" in Norway (do they take reservations?!?).
- West 8 harvests plum job to develop 40-year master plan for Pennsylvania's famed Longwood Gardens (not mentioned is Weiss/Manfredi is on the team, too).
- Groves grooves on an artist's labyrinth built on a bedraggled corner lot next to a church (others take a dimmer view - there might be dancing - oh no!).
- Oren Safdie's tragicomic satire "The Bilbao Effect" set to take center stage at NYC's Center for Architecture tomorrow (starchitecture and suicide included).
- Call for entries: FUNERIA's 5th biennial international Ashes to Art competition.

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4 finalists bring contrasts to SFMOMA expansion: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has narrowed the list of architects for its \$250 million expansion to four firms that vary wildly in size and style - but which almost certainly guarantee the new wing will be a distinct contrast with the institution's iconic home. By John King -- Foster + Partners; David Adjaye; Snøhetta; Diller Scofidio + Renfro - San Francisco Chronicle

Panel should let architect express his vision: The toughest challenge in planning a city is to allow room for surprise...and let good architects define "context" in fresh ways...city's planning staff wants 555 Fulton to be something it's not...It's stage-set urbanity...when genuinely talented architects find ways to heighten our sense of place, we need to encourage such creativity. By John King -- Stanley Saitowitz/Natomas Architects [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

Terms, mind-sets must be changed to encourage and enable more walking in cities: We must plan and develop - or redevelop - metropolitan environments so walking becomes safe, comfortable, enjoyable and stimulating. This requires satisfying several design criteria... By Roger K. Lewis - Washington Post

'Ugly Beirut' struggles to survive peace: ...colonial architecture and charm earned it the name "Paris of the Middle East", but since the war those days are gone..."Of course all cities change, but change does not have to be so aggressive and so inhuman...The real problem is that the existing regulations are set to benefit real estate companies and the government, but not people" -- Assem Salam - BBC (UK)

Keeping Afghan traditional architecture alive: Building with mud in a concrete jungle of Karachi...It is refreshing to note that the people living in this slum settlement have been self-sufficient in building for themselves such cost-effective as well as environment-friendly dwellings. - Daily Times (Pakistan)

Metz gears up for its moment: Could the new Centre Pompidou-Metz do for this French town what the Guggenheim did for Bilbao? The gleaming white UFO has spurred the whole city into rejuvenation. -- Shigeru Ban; Jean de Gastines [image] - Telegraph (UK)

Japanese architect crowns French museum with 'Chinese hat': "I wanted to find something contextual, instead of designing a building which can exist anywhere in the world. I wanted to connect the art museum to the city" -- Shigeru Ban; Jean de Gastines; Renzo Piano/Richard Rogers; Frank Gehry; Sejima/Nishizawa/Sanaa - AFP

Moving Towards a Green Economy (Part 2): "Good Jobs, Green Jobs": Rebuilding Communities through Brownfield Rehabilitation - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Where You Will Work Next: Wireless and mobile technology may have untethered legions from their cubicles, but companies are still spending billions to erect new green buildings...more transportation hubs have to be built closer to places of work, the density of our office environments will likely increase. -- William McDonough; Richard Meier; SmithGroup; Cooper, Robertson & Partners; HOK [images] - Newsweek

Hines Demonstrates Its Clout in Green Office Program: ...has grown to include more than 400 tenants. Together these tenants occupy more than 19 million sq. ft....tenant guide encourages tenants to identify and implement no-cost and low-cost alternatives to operating in a standard indoor office environment. - National Real Estate Investor (NREI)

Lack of projects sends firms elsewhere: As private construction projects have ratcheted down...many builders, designers and architects have fled to the public and government project market, sending the number of bids received on such projects sky high...."It's the only game in town with cash flow." -- TBG Partners; HKS Architects; Ascension Group Architects; BOKA Powell- Fort Worth Business Press (Texas)

Norway Builds the World's Most Humane Prison: ...criminals lose their right to freedom - but not to jogging trails, flat-screen televisions and orange sorbet...Design plays a key role in Halden Fengsel 's rehabilitation efforts. Hans Henrik Hoiland- Time Magazine

Dutch firm hopes to help Longwood Gardens grow: ...to develop a comprehensive master plan to guide the famous [1,077-acre] public garden's growth over the next 40 years..."We have incredible stories to tell here, and the master plan is about how we can tell more of them" -- Adriaan Geuze/West 8; Lord Cultural Resources; Weiss/Manfredi- Philadelphia Inquirer

Venice labyrinth has some churchgoers balking at circles: Sculptor Robin Murez saw an overgrown corner lot next to Bethel Tabernacle Church as ripe for resurrection. After months of plotting and planting, the Oakwood Labyrinth opened - with many loving it and others taking a dimmer view. By Martha Groves [image]- Los Angeles Times

Deconstructing Architecture: "The Bilbao Effect" concerns a starchitect...who faces censure by peers following accusations that his redevelopment project, described by one character as "a toaster on steroids," caused a woman's suicide..."I wanted to explore when the artistic end of the profession violates the ethics of the profession." -- Oren Safdie- Wall Street Journal

In Oren Safdie's New Satire, Architecture Has Tragic Consequences: "The Bilbao Effect"...comments on what he calls "the Hollywoodization of architecture" and the tendency to build "statement" buildings, even if they don't meet the needs of the organizations they house...New York's Center for Architecture through June 5.- Architectural Record

Call for entries: FUNERIA's 5th biennial international Ashes to Art competition: recognizes the most original and superbly crafted contemporary funerary urns, vessels, and personal memorial art deadline: August 9 [pdf]- Funeria



Exhibition: "Feelings are facts": Olafur Eliasson & Ma Yansong, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), Beijing, China

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