

## Today's News - Friday, May 14, 2010

- Saffron has no beef with the architecture of two new Philly towers, but developers' deals to include public pocket parks "turn the words 'public open space' into a mockery."
- The SABER project proposes giving green buildings a smarter skin, using what "nature perfected long ago" (the ultimate in biomimicry?).
- A sneak-peek at what the Triennale di Milan's new New York home will look like (in the Museum of Arts and Design old space across from MoMA and the American Folk Art Museum, no less) - it's "a smart move."
- University at Albany sets its sights on a new (and very green) School of Business with a design that draws inspiration from the existing Edward Durell Stone campus.
- SOMs "self-effacing, trim, and unrumpled" Craig Hartman "has reinvented himself as an environmental warrior."
- Call for entries: Urban SOS Transformations open student ideas competition for a site redevelopment plan in one of seven cities; and 2010 Western Red Cedar Architectural Design Awards.
- Weekend diversions:
  - Take a bow x 2 in NYC: Oren Safdie's "The Bilbao Effect" is a "shrewd, clear-eyed up-to-the-minute exegesis on the hubris of a profession" (we saw it - that's putting it mildly!).
  - June Finfer's "The Glass House" has a "penetrating dramatic plot that entwines the epic conflict between artist and patron" (but not without a few light moments, as we recall).
  - Still in the Big Apple: Rothstein says "America's Mayor" offers "a sense of John V. Lindsay's ambitions"; it's "astonishing" to see just how much he attempted (with mixed results).
  - Davidson finds the Arch League's "The City We Imagined/The City We Made: New New York 2001-2010" chronicles "that period of convulsive construction" when "architecture mattered and the city's soul always seemed to be hanging in the balance."
  - "Why Design Now?" at the Cooper-Hewitt "doesn't hesitate to slight comely form in favor of worthy function."
  - Walker on shows in NYC and L.A. that "feature community-built structures made with the trendy superwood" (a.k.a. bamboo).
  - Lange finds "Marcel Wanders: Daydreams" in Philly "is like a tacky product launch" that makes her "question both its commercial motives and Wanders' talent" (ouch!).
  - Architecture students play "what if" in Winnipeg's Exchange District with a show that "combines a giddy sense of possibility with an earnest faith in the power of architecture to engage and inform."
  - San Francisco Airport Museum presents 10 projects at the center of the dramatic transformation of Shanghai's skyline over the past 20 years.
  - Page turners: New tomes by Sorkin and Zukin claim to be "about contemporary New York City - but that's putting things far too broadly" ("sentimental progressives" that they are, could use "a bracing dose of Marx").
  - Belmont Freeman reviews a number of recent books on Havana architecture and urbanism and finds "nostalgia is a dangerous business."
  - Owen's "Green Metropolis" will "at once stir the pot and leave it boiling" with a tone that "is often categorical, even harsh" (and a few "narrow-thinking swipes" at a few iconic places and people).
  - Makower recommends three reports and guidebooks on "making green pitches and come-ons" that should come in handy.

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Deals to build tall towers offer public tiny payback: ...as the final crop of condo towers from the Great Real Estate Boom comes in, it's increasingly apparent that developers got more than they gave...turn the words "public open space" into a mockery...unwelcoming pocket parks are the sorry end to a transaction made in good faith. By Inga Saffron -- Cope Linder Architects [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

Giving Green Buildings a Smarter Skin: A proposed new building membrane would monitor and use moisture and sunlight to control humidity, light and temperature without using electrical power or mechanical equipment...Nature perfected it long ago...Biologically Inspired Self-Activated Building Envelope Regulation (SABER) project... By Tom McKeag - GreenerBuildings.com

The Triennale di Milan in New York: Goodbye, Museum Mile. Hello, Museum Block! Being on 53rd Street, across from the Museum of Modern Art and the American Folk Art Museum, was a smart move for the Triennale. Let's hope some smart collaborations come out of that. By Paul Makovsky -- Michele De Lucchi; Pierluigi Cerri; CUH2a [images]- Metropolis Magazine

New Design Positions \$64 million School of Business as Hub for Commercialization, Entrepreneurship, and Community Connections: ...design draws much of its inspiration from the existing Edward Durell Stone-designed Academic Podium and residence halls that dominate the uptown campus -- Perkins+Will [slide show]- University at Albany, State University of New York/SUNY

Mr. Hartman's neighborhood: With his dramatic blueprints for two San Francisco communities - including his pragmatically futuristic approach to Treasure Island - starchitect Craig Hartman has reinvented himself as an environmental warrior and one of the world's most important master planners. -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) [links to images, info]- San Francisco Magazine

Call for entries: Urban SOS Transformations open student ideas competition for a site redevelopment plan that addresses specific issues in one of seven cities; cash prizes; deadline: July 31 - AECOM

Call for entries: 2010 Western Red Cedar Architectural Design Awards; deadline: July 30 - Western Red Cedar Lumber Association (WRCLA)

Starchitect on trial for creating monstrous 'toaster on steroids': Oren Safdie delivers 'shrewd, intelligent' examination of the WOW! factor... "The Bilbao Effect"...is a shrewd, clear-eyed up-to-the-minute exegesis on the hubris of a profession more sacrosanct in some ways than the medical; and more vulnerable...at NYC's Center for Architecture through June 5 - The Villager (NYC)

"The Glass House" by June Finfer, directed by Evan Bergman: The

design and building of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House and Philip Johnson's Glass House is the background for...penetrating dramatic plot that entwines the epic conflict between artist and patron....explores the classic struggle of ambition, passion and betrayal...at Clurman Theatre, NYC, through June 5- [Broadway World](#)

You Can Fight City Hall: "America's Mayor: John V. Lindsay and the Reinvention of New York" at the Museum of the City of New York...gives us a sense of the man's ambitions and the range of his enterprise...It is astonishing...just how much [he] attempted, some of which failed, some of which stuck...the TKTS theater booth, an expansion of the role of the city's parks, increased attention to both preservation and urban design. [slide show]- [New York Times](#)

What We Built (and Didn't): Bloomberg's surprisingly unchanged city. "The City We Imagined/The City We Made: New New York 2001-2010," a sweepingly particular new exhibit presented by the Architectural League in a storefront...chronicles that period of convulsive construction...Architecture mattered - architects themselves became celebrities - and the city's soul always seemed to be hanging in the balance. By Justin Davidson -- Moorhead & Moorhead (exhibit design)- [New York Magazine](#)

Thinking Green: Function Over Form: "Why Design Now?" the Cooper-Hewitt's National Design Triennial...doesn't hesitate to slight comely form in favor of worthy function...isn't about how to make the House Beautiful more beautiful; it's about how to keep the globe afloat and ensure that all its occupants have access to a healthy patch of it...Such concepts are already producing winds of change that might, if only science and design themselves can avoid complacency, gain transformative force in the decades ahead. [slide show]- [New York Times](#)

What's Strong, Sustainable, and Headed to a Museum Near You? Bamboo! Two exhibitions on either coast feature community-built structures made with the trendy superwood..."Promiscuous Production: Breeding is Bittersweet" and "Big Bambú" By Alissa Walker [images]- [Fast Company](#)

Saccharine Design: "Marcel Wanders: Daydreams" in Philly is like a tacky product launch, and Alexandra Lange isn't buying it: ...manages to diminish rather than increase his appeal...the museum let him dream up his own exhibition, and the results made me question both its commercial motives and Wanders' talent. [images]- [The Architect's Newspaper](#)

Students play 'what if' in the Winnipeg's Exchange: District's crowded past and imagined future come together in this intelligent, exploratory new exhibition "A Fictional Exchange" by students of architecture at the University of Manitoba...combines a giddy sense of possibility with an earnest faith in the power of architecture to engage and inform...at RAW Gallery through May 31 [images]- [Winnipeg Free Press \(Canada\)](#)

"Shanghai: High-Rise Architecture and the Remaking of China's Gateway to the World": Ten architectural projects, at the center of the dramatic transformation of Shanghai's skyline during the past two decades...at San Francisco Airport Museum -- Gensler; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); John Portman; Gresham, Smith and Partners [link to images]- [San Francisco International Airport \(SFO\)](#)

Discontents: Manhattan never was what we think it was: ...the bulk of Sharon Zukin's "Naked City" and all of Michael Sorkin's "Twenty Minutes in Manhattan," is confined to fine-grained observations of the streets and neighborhoods within roughly 20 blocks of their apartments...all this bellyaching about authenticity and lost soul...Best to pick a different place to try to render fixed and solid that which inexorably melts into air. By Benjamin Schwarz- [The Atlantic](#)

Havana: Nostalgia Is a Dangerous Business: Venice is cited by Cuban architects and planners...as the prime example of what they want Havana not to become...a city pickled in preservationist formaldehyde for the pleasure of tourists and the satisfaction of architectural historians...Scholarly literature on Cuban architecture is sparse... By Belmont Freeman- [Places Journal](#)

"Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less Are the Keys to Sustainability" by David Owen...will at once stir the pot and leave it boiling...makes a compelling case for the advantages of high-density living...the tone is often categorical, even harsh. He takes narrow-thinking swipes at Portland, Oregon...Curitiba, Brazil...Amory Lovins...William McDonough...Herbert Girardet... By Timothy Beatley- [Places Journal](#)

How to Win Green Friends and Influence People: ...three reports and guidebooks on ... making green pitches and come-ons...each provides useful insights and case studies - "From Greenwash to Great: A Practical Guide to Great Green Marketing (without the Greenwash)"; "Communicating Corporate Responsibility"; "Mapping the Future of Green Innovation"... By Joel Makower- [GreenBiz.com](#)



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

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