

Today's News - Thursday, June 24, 2010

- Gunts pays tribute to an architect who influenced Baltimore's skyline beyond just the buildings he designed.
- King on Berkeley Art Museum's pick of DS+R: the "choice signals that UC Berkeley remains serious about a cultural expansion that would bolster city efforts to position its downtown as a cultural destination" (it's also "an implicit act of one-upmanship" to SFMoMA, "a friendly rival across the bay").
- Hawthorne offers up an interesting method to "build a better shortlist" for Broad's Grand Ave. museum - and who he things should be on it.
- An eyeeful of what's in store for the next stretch of the High Line: the designers "saved the best for second" (we agree!).
- Russell tackles the New Domino: he finds much to admire, but also much to bemoan: he doesn't hold much hope that Viñoly's towers won't "get dumbed down" or park design refined in a "high-risk yet compromised Faustian real-estate bargain" + who wants - and doesn't want - what in the \$1.3 billion project.
- The Australian pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo is a "lame event" - as its architects "distance their firm...from the exhibition within the pavilion they designed."
- Rybczynski reviews Graves's Sentosa resort in Singapore: the architect (and master planner) sees it "as a blend of Coney Island and Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition, but this is definitely not a White City."
- Meier agrees to modifications of his Ara Pacis Museum in Rome (it's better than seeing it torn down).
- Behnisch has big plans for a sports complex inside a gigantic, mothballed power plant in Toronto.
- So much for the end of the Automobile Age: China plans a museum you can drive through - "so the museum will promote bad driving, smog, and smug rich people. It very well may be the most fitting tribute to cars ever made."
- Polshek Partnership makes a name change to Ennead (yes, there is a definition having to do with nine deities in Egyptian mythology).
- It's fitting that top NSW Architecture Awards prize goes to a sustainable "piece of public transport infrastructure" - but critics say while the rail line "may have won the plaudits of architects and aesthetes who decide the Sulman Award," don't "overlook the serious problems with the design of the line."
- Perfect for a sultry summer day: Davidson cheers the dawning of an "era of the skill-challenging, danger-embracing, starchitect-designed play zones" in NYC + Rockwell's Imagination Playground in Lower Manhattan is almost ready for its close-up (can we play, too?) + Harnik outlines 14 ways to build out innovative parks in crowded cities.
- Sorry to end on depressing notes: AIA's billing index tumbles again, "pointing to long, uneasy recovery."
- The TEDxOilSpill conference on Monday will explore new ideas for our energy future, and how we can mitigate the environmental catastrophe in the Gulf (an amazing lineup of speakers, and live video feed for those of us not in DC) + Why "the same set of human characteristics that precipitated" the BP oil spill "may well hinder us from stopping" climate change.

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Obituary: Mario L. Schack, noted architect, educator, design critic, 81: Award-winning designer influenced Baltimore's skyline with his work. By Edward Gunts -- RTKL; Marks, Cooke, Schack and Thomas (now Marks, Thomas Architects); MLS Associates - Baltimore Sun

Berkeley Art Museum names architect: ...Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive [BAMPFA] have named red-hot architectural firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro to design a visual arts center...would bolster city efforts to position its downtown as a cultural destination...selection also is an implicit act of one-upmanship to a friendly rival across the bay: The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art [SFMOMA]... By John King -- EHDD - San Francisco Chronicle

How to build a better shortlist: Eli Broad has kept a tight grip on the private architectural competition he has been overseeing for the new museum he hopes to build on Grand Avenue...imagine a very different group...one that might not only have produced a successful design for Broad but also given exposure to talented younger firms... By Christopher Hawthorne -- Michael Maltzan; wHY Architecture; Frohn & Rojas; Daly Genik; Ball-Nogues Studio; Sou Fujimoto; Minsuk Cho; Ben van BerkelUNStudio; Alejandro Aravena; Smiljan Radic; Toyo Ito; Peter Zumthor; Alvaro Siza; SANAA; Herzog & de Meuron; Steven Holl; Thomas Phifer; Mecanoo Architects; David Chipperfield - Los Angeles Times

High Line 2 Sneak Peek: Lounging Lawn, Flyovers, and the "Chelsea Thicket": The designers of New York's famed High Line park have saved the best for second. -- James Corner Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro [images, video] - Fast Company

Domino's \$1.3 Billion Makeover Hits Trouble: An impressive amount of low-cost housing is just one of the extraordinary public benefits the development promises. Yet the size of the project is very large - and controversial...The New Domino tries to do right by the community, yet it comes at some compromise to the design. By James S. Russell -- Beyer Blinder Belle; Rafael Vinoly; Quennell Rothschild & Partners [images] - Bloomberg News

2 Sides Clash at City Hall Over Domino Housing Plan: The plan now before the City Council has strong support for its low-cost housing feature, but critics say it is too big and too dense. - New York Times

Nation missing the Shanghai Expo express: Shanghai's pre-eminent English-speaking arts producer, Australian Barry Pless, says the the Australian pavilion at the World Expo is a "lame event"...His criticism follows the decision by architects Randall Wood and Roger Marsh to distance their firm...from the exhibition within the pavilion they designed. -- Wood Marsh Architecture;Think!OTS - The Australian

Singapore Rolls the Dice: The notoriously authoritarian country is building a casino: Michael Graves as master planner may come as a surprise...[he] characterizes the pedestrian landscape of the Sentosa resort, with its plazas and fountains, as a blend of Coney Island and Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition, but this is definitely not a White City. By Witold Rybczynski [slide show essay] - Slate

At The Ara Pacis Museum, Richard Meier Bends To Much-Needed Modifications: ...to modify the area, drastically reducing the height of the wall between an open-air plaza and the museum, which houses the 2,000-year-old altar, and a heavily trafficked road along the Tiber river. - ArtsJournal

Sports complex plan unveiled for mothballed Hearn station: ...a sports complex with three ice rinks inside the huge, mothballed Hearn Generating Station in the Toronto port lands...three times the size of the old London power plant that is now the Tate Modern...stopped producing power in 1983. -- Behnisch Architekten; ERA Architects [image] - National Post (Canada)

Why Walk Though a Museum, When You Can Drive? Just when you thought - or at least hoped - the Automobile Age was sputtering to its inglorious end, China went and planned itself a car museum...Great, so the museum will promote bad driving, smog, and smug rich people. It very well may be the most fitting tribute to cars ever made. -- Francesco Gatti [images] - Fast Company

What's in a Name? Polshek Partnership Will Find Out: ...will from now on call itself Ennead...a Greek term for a group of nine deities in Egyptian mythology, reflects the firm's reconfiguration as a collective of nine partners..."Certainly, my name is always going to be associated with this office. It will be whispered, not spoken out loud." -- James Polshek - New York Times

Sustainability a focus of NSW Architecture Awards: ... it's fitting the top public architecture prize should go to a piece of public transport infrastructure. -- Hassell; Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp; Cox Rayner Architects; Brian Hooper

[Architect/m3architecture; birrelli Architects; HBV Architects; Six Degrees/Sustainable Built Environments - The Australian](#)

[High praise does not compensate for poor rail decision, say critics: The swish stations along the Epping-Chatswood rail line may have won the plaudits of architects and aesthetes who decide the Sulman Award...But rail experts say that, in making future plans, governments should not overlook the serious problems with the design of the line... - Sydney Morning Herald](#)

[Playgrounds Gone Wild: The era of the skill-challenging, danger-embracing, starchitect-designed play zone has dawned, and the city's children are the better for it...the Parks Department has rediscovered the joys of risk...New York's playgrounds are getting less predictable, more imaginative, and more complex... By Justin Davidson -- KaBoom!; David Rockwell; Michael Van Valkenburgh - New York Magazine](#)

[Mess With the Imagination \(Playground\) of David Rockwell: ...a deployable playground-in-a-box that has been finding its way across the country. Now, he is just finishing a larger playground, sort of a showcase for the concept, at Burling Slip in Lower Manhattan. \[images, video\] - The Architect's Newspaper](#)

[Revitalizing Cities with Innovative Parks: ...14 ways to build out innovative parks in crowded cities...if the economic downturn ends soon, cities will reinvest in parks in a major way to fight sprawl, encourage smart growth, and create green infrastructure....require a "political not planning process. It has to be a political campaign." -- Peter Harnik/Center for City Park Excellence/Trust for Public Land - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects \(ASLA\)](#)

[Billings Headed Down Bumpy Road: Following strong spring, AIA billings index tumbles again, pointing to long, uneasy recovery - The Architect's Newspaper](#)

[TEDxOilSpill will explore new ideas for our energy future, and how we can mitigate the current crisis in the Gulf: ...will tackle the tough questions raised by the recent and ongoing environmental catastrophe...June 28 in Washington, DC \[will include Live Video Stream\] - TED \(Technology, Entertainment and Design\)](#)

[Oh, the Humanity: Why our reaction to the oil spill absolutely terrifies me: ...the recklessness that helped bring about the spill, and the political reaction that followed, seem to indicate a larger inability to prevent and cope with other large-scale ecological catastrophes - particularly climate change...the same set of human characteristics that precipitated the one calamity may well hinder us from stopping the other. - The New Republic](#)



[Exhibition: Jim McHugh: Let's Get Lost, Timothy Yarger Gallery, Beverly Hills, California](#)

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