

Today's News - Tuesday, May 17, 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're back! NOLA was fantabulous, the AIA convention was enlightening (and exhausting), but we're glad to be home - and have lots of catching up to do...

- ArcSpace brings us MIRDV's China Comic and Animation Museum in Hangzhou (strolls through thought bubbles included).
- Rybczynski cautions "landscape urbanism" advocates who would like to see the High Line model take off nationwide: it's "a tougher proposition than they think, and it probably won't be worth the effort."
- Rochon finds a sad irony in Toronto's "futile battle" for "enlightened streetscapes" because of shortsighted city bureaucracy in "an era when beautiful spaces are seen as expensive frippery" (too bad for Nathan Phillips Square and Fort York Pedestrian and Cycling Bridge).
- Hawthorne sees the future of L.A.'s Exposition Park (with its Gehry and Becket buildings) as a microcosm of issues the city and the region must contend with.
- King celebrates two reasons a new apartment building is a milestone for one of San Francisco's "most intriguing neighborhoods," first being "the handsome snap of the building itself."
- Arieff is intrigued by the Droog/DS+R collaborative project to imagine a "future suburbia" using Levittown as the construct - but "while life may imitate art, it's not necessarily meant to be displayed as such."
- Saltz blames the demise of the American Folk Art Museum on its design and "utter lack of imagination and hubristic mess of starchitectural vanity."
- Goldberger and Davidson vociferously disagree: "It would be a devastating loss if it were to disappear" + "blaming Williams and Tsien, or their lovely little building, for a nationwide epidemic of museum obesity amounts to clubbing an innocent bystander" (so, what will MoMA do with it now?).
- Seattle's Chihuly Museum finally moving forward - some compromises included (we're glad to hear).
- Sri Lankan architect claims too many buildings are not designed by qualified architects and do not meet mandated access for users with disabilities.
- Architect magazine's 3rd annual Top 50 list is not all the same old same old's (we're happy to see).
- Belmont Freeman offers a thoughtful look at Kevin Roche's legacy as a visionary.
- We couldn't resist: Architect Barbie just made her debut at AIA confab in New Orleans (could this signal women architects are finally shattering the glass ceiling?).
- Deadline reminder: 2011 Evergreen Awards to recognize outstanding building performance and design.

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[MVRDV: China Comic and Animation Museum, Hangzhou, China](#)

[Op-Ed: Bringing the High Line Back to Earth: ...a model for a new sort of town planning, dubbed "landscape urbanism" ...Advocates would like to see the High Line model take off nationwide...But that's a tougher proposition than they think, and it probably won't be worth the effort. By Witold Rybczynski- New York Times](#)

[Penny-wise, cityscape foolish: Two promising public projects face sad fates in an era when beautiful spaces are seen as expensive frippery...unless there's a radical shift within the city bureaucracy...the fight for enlightened streetscapes in Toronto will remain a futile battle...The irony is that poetic visions – the fancy ideas – are why people become emotionally attached to great cities. By Lisa Rochon- Toronto Star](#)

[Exposition Park's issues are L.A.'s issues: Concerns about development and preservation rise in the coming space shuttle's effect on a Frank Gehry \[1984\] building, the future of the Sports Arena and the arrival of the Expo Line...even Gehry acknowledges the building needs work...would make a fascinating late-career opportunity...How often are architects given the chance to revisit and reinvent a project whose shortcomings always nagged at them? By Christopher Hawthorne -- Welton Becket \(1959\); Zimmer Gunsul Frasca/ZGF \(1998\); HNTB \(2006\) \[images\]- Los Angeles Times](#)

[Octavia Court apartments a milestone for area: ...two reasons to celebrate...first is the handsome snap of the building itself, an oasis for developmentally disabled adults...\[and\] signals the start of the final phase of Octavia Boulevard's transformation from a shadowy path beneath a freeway to the centerpiece of Hayes Valley, one of the city's most intriguing neighborhoods. By John King -- Douglas Burnham/envelope Architecture + Design; Ellipsis A+D; Ignition Architecture \[image\]- San Francisco Chronicle](#)

[Suburbia: What a Concept: There is no more iconic suburb than Levittown...Open House, a collaborative project to imagine a "future suburbia"..."the emphasis was really on the inner service provider"... while life may imitate art, it's not necessarily meant to be displayed as such. By Allison Arieff -- Droog; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Mark Wasuiuta; L.E.FT; Fake Industries Architectural Agonism; Freecell; EFGH; etc. \[images, links\]- New York Times](#)

[Architecture Killed the American Folk Art Museum: Despite the many rave reviews...when it opened in December 2001, it was immediately clear to many that the building was not only ugly and confining, it was also all but useless for showing art...utter lack of imagination and hubristic mess of starchitectural vanity...This terrible building will be sold to MoMA...I can only imagine that MoMA will use \[it\] for office space...or tear it down and start again. By Jerry Saltz -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien- New York Magazine](#)

[The American Folk Art Museum: Don't Blame the Architects: ...it wasn't the architects' idea to put the museum on a too-small site down the block from MOMA...Williams and Tsien were given very little to work with, and produced what is, for all its troubles, a small masterpiece. It would be a devastating loss if it were to disappear. By Paul Goldberger -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien- New Yorker](#)

[Jerry Saltz Has It All Wrong About the American Folk Art Museum: Blaming the designers is like faulting Mercedes-Benz for making such lovely cars that minimum-wage workers go bankrupt buying them...blaming Williams and Tsien, or their lovely little building, for a nationwide epidemic of museum obesity amounts to clubbing an innocent bystander. By Justin Davidson -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien- New York Magazine](#)

[Glass Beats Green: Seattle's Chihuly Museum finally moving forward...next to the city's iconic Space Needle...As a compromise the area will also include space for local radio station KEXP, a new](#)

playground, and additional open spaces. -- Owen Richards Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Majority of buildings not user-friendly, says chartered architect: More than 60% of buildings in Sri Lanka mainly in the private sector including supermarkets, banks and toilets are not designed by professionally qualified architects, said Harsha Munasinghe...acting Dean and Head of Moratuwa University's Department of Architecture...at a programme organized by IDIRIYA, a non-profit organization focusing on disability rights...- The Sunday Times (Sri Lanka)

2011 ARCHITECT 50: 3rd annual ranking of American architecture firms judges them on three factors: profitability, sustainable ethos, and design quality. By looking at the whole picture, we're able to honor not the biggest, but the best. -- Perkins+Will; SmithGroup; William Rawn Associates; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Ann Beha Architects; Sasaki Associates; Ikon.5 Architects; DLR Group; ZGF Architects; FXFowle; etc.- Architect Magazine

Kevin Roche: Architecture as Environment: The legacy of one of the finest and most influential — and controversial — architectural firms of the 20th century is ripe for fresh examination and three recent media events...compel us to do so...Roche stands out as a visionary. By Belmont Freeman -- Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates; Eeva Liisa Pelkonen [images]- Places Journal

Designing Women: It took almost 10 years, but Architect Barbie has shattered the glass ceiling...like a lot of other professional women, she couldn't have done it without her friends...Although women have been professional architects since 1885...there is still gender disparity... -- Despina Stratigakos; Kelly Hayes McAlonie; Louise Blanchard Bethune- Buffalo News

Deadline reminder: Call for entries: 2011 Evergreen Awards to recognize outstanding building performance and design; deadline: May 31- Eco-Structure magazine

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