

## Today's News - Thursday, August 23, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: Just a reminder that we're taking Fridays and Mondays off for the rest of August. We'll be back (and not from Venice - sigh) Tuesday, August 28. Happy Weekend!

- Ouroussoff(!) is back (how could we not lead with this?!?) with his lengthy take on why Koolhaas is one of our most influential - and controversial - architects: "The attraction lies, in part, in his ability to keep us off balance."
- Capps talks to Thom about his hopes to "fill the gaps" in Washington, DC's Southwest nabe - resulting in a most interesting history lesson: "The last time DC brought in architects to save the city, we got Southwest" (it was not a good thing).
- DS+R's "Granite Web" plan for Aberdeen's Union Terrace Gardens bites the dust; funds will be diverted towards other improvements in the city (cheers and jeers ensue).
- Chan considers Gehry's Biomuseo in Panama and its high hopes to create the Bilbao effect: it "shows no trace of its ecological agenda" and "appears as if it were designed with its future line of gift shop souvenirs in mind" (ouch!).
- Does "the new wave of exciting, stunning construction taking shape" in Wales indicate "an architectural golden age"?
- Perhaps, but the chief executive of Design Commission for Wales argues that "despite some high-profile successes that architects are under unprecedented pressure...they reap the smallest proportion of fees, given the value they deliver."
- A most candid Q&A with the president of the Nigerian Institute of Architects: his members "are saddled with the problem of standards, arising from proliferation of architecture schools" and the "incursion of some foreign architects under a lot of guises."
- Mecanoo's challenge for a new entrance to a Dutch maritime museum: "to create something on the one hand iconic, but on the other side easily merged into the skyline of this very small village."
- Good news: a recent court case re: copyright protection sides with architects.
- Gearing up for Venice Biennale (alas, we won't be there!), some previews: instead of "exhibiting a handful of grandiose, starchitect-designed wonders, the U.S. Pavilion presents "124 projects by self-empowered citizens whom you've likely never heard of."
- Hadid's installation is "a blooming tribute to an obscure German engineer" (we'd hardly call Frei Otto "obscure," but the animation is cool).
- Hong Kong offers a "glimpse into population-sustaining urban planning" for large cities (who could resist a theme title with "ghostwriting" in it?)
- Spain's pavilion tackles "Mediterranean architecture facing major changes."
- Weekend diversions:
- Rawsthorn cheers "Tribute to Jean Prouvé" in Nancy, France: it "comes at a time when his ideals are in danger of being obscured by his improbable posthumous role as the darling of the design-art market. Would he have approved? Unlikely."
- Chicago's MCA "Skyscraper" show is an "intelligent and thought-provoking exhibition."
- Abrahams has mixed feelings about Cohen's "The Future of Architecture Since 1889": "one would still like to read the book that Cohen clearly wants to write about how architectural ideas are transferred, not just through grand projects, but through a process of evolution and filtering down into everyday delivery."
- Hamilton has mixed feelings about "The Battle for the Life and Beauty of the Earth," Alexander's "latest diatribe," beginning with "its wooden-sword title on, that seems a little boyish."
- Sternhell says "Architecture in Palestine during the British Mandate, 1917-1948" is a "detailed study" that "reveals complex ideas about buildings as symbols of nation building and challenges claims about the famous International style that turned Tel Aviv into the 'White City.'"

To subscribe to the free daily newsletter [click here](#)

Why is Rem Koolhaas the World's Most Controversial Architect? ...at 67 continues to shake up the cultural landscape with his provocative designs...has made him one of the most influential architects of his generation...The attraction lies, in part, in his ability to keep us off balance...most provocative — and in many ways least understood — contribution...is as an urban thinker...has always sought to locate the beauty in places that others might regard as so much urban debris... By Nicolai Ouroussoff — OMA/Office for Metropolitan Architecture [slide show] - Smithsonian magazine

"This Can't Be the Way to Build Cities": Can Bing Thom save Southwest from the legacy of urban renewal? ...credited with an approach...that has elevated "Vancouverism" to a term of art...looking to fill the gaps...There's only one problem. The last time Washington, DC, brought in architects to save the city, we got Southwest. By Kriston Capps — Wiencek + Associates; Elbert Peets; Louis Justement; Chloethiel Woodard Smith; I.M. Pei; Araldo Cossutta; Harry Weese; Morris Lapidus; Charles Goodman; Marcel Breuer; Vlastimil Koubek; Dan Kiley; Hideo Sasaki - Washington City Paper (Washington, DC)

Scrapped: Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Union Terrace Gardens binned: ...controversial £140 million [City Garden Project] revamp abandoned...Aberdeen City Council today voted in favour of an amendment to divert funds...towards other improvements in the city. -- Alan Dunlop; Keppie Design; Olin Studio - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Frank Gehry Goes South: Can the Starchitect Recreate the Bilbao Effect With Panama's New museum of Biodiversity? Biomuseo strives to tell compelling stories...building shows no trace of this ecological agenda...appears as if it were designed with its future line of gift shop souvenirs in mind...For the Bilbao effect to work...Gehry's "Bridge of Life" will need first and foremost to communicate a consumable image, not an idea. By Kelly Chan — Bruce Mau Design [image] - Artinfo

Are we witnessing an architectural golden age in Wales? Is architectural rivalry driving a wave of experimentation — or are we simply witnessing a revival of appreciation for fine buildings? ...the new wave of exciting, stunning construction taking shape... By Sion Morgan — HLM Architects; Kisho Kurokawa/Garbers & James; Kim Wilkie; Holder Mathias; Coombs Jones: Architects + Makers; Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW); BDP; BFLS; Featherstone Young [images] - WalesOnline (UK)

Carole-Anne Davies: Good architecture is precious - we must fight for it: ...chief executive of Design Commission for Wales argues that despite some high-profile successes that architects are under unprecedented pressure...A cheap scheme of poor build quality will quickly become an expensive burden...Now more than ever we must ensure a well-designed built environment that avoids repeating the negative and costly legacies of the poor design quality of the past. - WalesOnline (UK)

Proliferation Of Architecture Schools Is Affecting Standards: As architects in Nigeria make efforts to gain wide acceptance...they are saddled with the problem of standards, arising from proliferation of architecture schools..."Another challenge is the issue of incursion of some foreign architects under a lot of guises..." Q&A with Ibrahim Haruna, President, Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA) - Leadership (Abuja, Nigeria)

Texel Maritime Museum: A Dutch maritime museum is given a new lease of life, from the shimmering light of the entrance to the basement's murky depths...In modern-day Oudeschild there is now a new entrance to the Kaap Skil...The challenge..."to create something on the one hand iconic, but on the other side easily merged into the skyline of this very small village." -- Mecanoo Architects [images] - Icon magazine (UK)

Lack of Detail No Reason to Deny Copyright Protection to Architectural Works: In a recent legal case issued by Scholz Design Co., against builder Sard Custom Homes, it was confirmed that "Copyright protection of a pictorial work, whether depicting a house, or a flower, or a donkey, or an abstract design, does not depend on any degree of detail"...Good news for architects! - Archinect

Preview the Venice Architecture Biennale's U.S. Pavilion, An Exercise in Democratic Design: Called "Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good," it eschews the model of exhibiting a handful of grandiose, starchitect-designed wonders, and has instead opted for a more democratic presentation: 124 projects by self-empowered citizens whom you've likely never heard of... -- Cathy Lang Ho; Freecell; MAD; Interboro Partners [images] - Artinfo

See Zaha Hadid's Venice Biennale Installation, a Blooming Tribute to an Obscure German Engineer: ...paying homage to...Frei Otto, master of tensile structures...Arum Shell, a tensile steel structure that looks like a mass of the flower from which it gets its name. [image, video] - Artinfo

Hong Kong Offers Glimpse into Population-Sustaining Urban Planning: ...will serve as the key focus of Hong Kong's Venice Biennale pavilion. Titled 'inter cities/intra cities: ghostwriting the future'...will be as much about research and education as it will be about design, with an analysis of Kowloon East... -- Christopher Law/Oval Partnership, - DesignBuild Source (Australia)

Spain: Mediterranean architecture facing major changes: Says curator of Catalanian pavilion at Venice's Biennale...an exhibit on the Mediterranean. "The Mediterranean is a common space between Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, a space which unites and separates them at the same time" -- Jordi Badia/Baas studio; Felix Arranz; Bosch CapdeferroArquitectures; Francisco Cinfuentes; Nuria Salvado/David Tapias; Bancafort Reus Arquitectura; Meritxell Inaraja; JaimeFerrer Fores; Arquitectura; Sms Arquitectos; David Sebastian/Gerard Puig - ANSAmed (Italy)

Jean Prouvé: A Testimony to Ingenuity: A French town is offering a tribute to the designer known for his preference for function over aesthetics and for his support of mass production..."Tribute to Jean Prouvé" in Nancy...comes at a time when his ideals are in danger of being obscured by his improbable posthumous role as the darling of the design-art market. Would [he] have approved...Unlikely. By Alice Rawsthorn [images] - New York Times

"Skyscraper: Art and Architecture Against Gravity" builds meaning behind architectural giants: Skyscrapers symbolize civic unity and pride...But when those same buildings are surrounded by slums...they're emblems of economic disparity. "Skyscraper" doesn't shy away from these and other complexities...intelligent and thought-provoking exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art...filled with stark incongruities. - Chicago Tribune

"The Future of Architecture Since 1889": Jean-Louis Cohen...the best architectural historian writing today...as brilliant as this book is in places, one would still like to read the book that Cohen clearly wants to write about how architectural ideas are transferred, not just through grand projects, but through a process of evolution and filtering down into everyday delivery. By Tim Abrahams - Icon magazine (UK)

A Pattern of Abuse: William L. Hamilton reviews Christopher Alexander's latest diatribe: "The Battle for the Life and Beauty of the Earth: A Struggle between Two World Systems": Things are falling apart...And architects are largely responsible. They are killing the planet...does what he does so well...It's just the excited darkness of the tale, from its wooden-sword title on, that seems a little boyish. - The Architect's Newspaper

A Zionist vision constructed one building at a time: "Architecture in Palestine during the British Mandate, 1917-1948" by Ada Karmi-Melamede and Dan Price...detailed study of the architecture of the Mandate period reveals complex ideas about buildings as symbols of nation building and challenges claims about the famous International style that turned Tel Aviv into the 'White City.' By Ziva Sternhell - Ha'aretz (Israel)

Q&A with Nicole Migeon - Architect of "Warm Minimalism": Designing places of respite for creative clientele - ArchNewsNow



-- ARX Portugal Arquitectos & Stefano Riva: House in Jusó, Portugal  
-- [i]da Arquitectos: DJ House, Carcavelos, Portugal

Note: Pages will open in a new browser window.  
External news links are not endorsed by ArchNewsNow.com.  
Free registration may be required on some sites.  
Some pages may expire after a few days.

[Yesterday's News](#)

© 2012 ArchNewsNow.com