

Today's News - Friday, May 10, 2013

- Hope springs eternal! MoMA taps DS+R for expansion, and gives them breathing room to re-consider possible re-use of Williams & Tsien's AFAM: weighing in (so far): Pogrebin, Davidson ("the choice of architects is also a good sign"), and Rosenbaum ("statement suggests where DS+R probably stand on this - in solidarity with their professional colleagues").
- Bernstein's Q&A with KPF's Pedersen re: Hudson Yards: "Will it become a windswept no-man's-land of mega-buildings, or - as its designers hope - a new neighborhood worth hanging out in?"
- Merrick minces no words re: Libeskind's plans for Northern Ireland's infamous Maze Prison: "Why do clients tend to pick crassly obvious architects?" (the architect "says, rather glibly, that his design sends a message about the possibility of a future beyond conflict. But not beyond architectural cliché, alas") + The Maze projects has "now sparked a row in the architecture world" (some are not thrilled that it "appears rather similar to his other war-oriented constructions").
- Meanwhile, Libeskind (the go-to architect for design for Holocaust memorials) is tapped to design one for Columbus, Ohio, though some fear it "would open the state to legal challenges" - and that it would be a "nightmare to take care of."
- Wingall wonders where all the architects-as-political-heroes are: "if we don't go forward with that idea in mind, our profession will languish in obscurity - there has never been a better time for us to begin."
- Lubell laments the lack of diversity in architecture: the "problem is not with the Pritzker Prize, it's with architecture itself - the culture of architecture needs to change" if it's "to be a truly relevant profession."
- Weekend diversions:
- NYCxDESIGN launches 12 days of a veritable who's who and what's hot in design all over the city.
- "Better Homes" at SculptureCenter in Long Island City, which takes on the idea of "home" over the centuries, is "compelling but uneven - at times it crackles with feisty surprise; at others, it falters from overthinking and objects that feel like clip art."
- MoMA is awash in rAndom's "Rain Room" (having made its way across the Big Pond from the Barbican).
- Filler finds "Overdrive" and "Never Built: Los Angeles" two "enlightening but cautionary surveys" that "seek to bring the unfathomableness" of L.A. into focus.
- Moore muses that the "enjoyable, if slight" Design Museum show, "United Micro Kingdoms," has "a critical intelligence and a wit."
- Q&A with Meier re: his architectural approach to his retrospective in Italy, his first foray into South America, and how he plans to celebrate his golden anniversary."
- Herron offers a fascinating overview of Detroit in literature and film: Is its "spectacular - and spectacularly represented - failure indicative of some larger design fault inherent in the very nature of American ideas, or is it simply a local one-off, an exception without deeper meaning?"
- Demirdizen's "Handmade Urbanism" is a "hybrid between a guidebook and a handbook" with "a heavy focus on the role of partnerships in driving success with bottom-up projects."
- Ben-Joseph's "ReThinking a Lot" is "a manifesto that seeks to re-integrate the parking lot into community life and promote its stature to the realm of an asset."
- Kennicott is a bit cool on PBS's "10 Buildings That Changed America": "We learn a certain amount about how they changed architecture," but "the historical, social and economic impact of these 10 buildings isn't addressed."

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To Raze or Not? MoMA Rethinks Plan: ...would reconsider its decision to demolish its next-door neighbor, the former home of the American Folk Art Museum...selected Diller Scofidio & Renfro to handle the expansion and to help determine whether to keep any of the existing structure. By Robin Pogrebin -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects - New York Times

MoMA May Not Tear Down the American Folk Art Museum After All: Diller Scofidio + Renfro hope to figure out a way to save their friends' once-doomed little building while still satisfying MoMA's real-estate hunger, and MoMA answered: Knock yourself out...DS+R have a track record of finding elegant ways to integrate idiosyncratic buildings into a larger campus without tearing them down. By Justin Davidson -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien - New York Magazine

Diller Scofidio + Renfro May Keep American Folk Art Building in Designing MoMA's New Galleries: It now appears there's a chance that the fierce opponents...may actually have their way...statement suggests where DS+R probably stand on this—in solidarity with their professional colleagues. By Lee Rosenbaum -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects - ArtsJournal

Will Hudson Yards Be a Neighborhood? As "Design in the Heart of New York" at New York's Center for Architecture explores the 26-acre development...Q&A with Bill Pedersen...Will it become a windswept no-man's-land of mega-buildings, or—as its designers hope—a new Manhattan neighborhood worth hanging out in? By Fred A. Bernstein -- Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Rockwell Group; David Childs/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) - Architectural Record

Starchitect's Maze peace centre forgot the Irish: ...why should a peace centre's symbolic presence risk being neutered by a design that, at best, can be described as merely international. Daniel Libeskind says, rather glibly, that his design sends a message about the possibility of a future beyond conflict. But not beyond architectural cliché, alas. By Jay Merrick - Independent (UK)

Design row over Daniel Libeskind's Maze Prison peace-building centre in Northern Ireland: As the man behind Berlin's Jewish Museum and several other conflict-inspired buildings, he seemed a natural choice...proposals...appear rather similar to his other war-oriented constructions...now sparked a row in the architecture world... -- Rory Olcayto/The Architects' Journal; Piers Gough/CZWG [images] - Belfast Telegraph (Ireland)

Committee picks Daniel Libeskind design for Holocaust memorial despite lawsuit concerns: ...a religious symbol would open the state to legal challenges...Further...alleged that [his] design will not fit in with the Civil War-era Statehouse and will be a "nightmare to take care of." [image] - Columbus Dispatch (Ohio)

Where are the Architect Heroes? I wonder about the concept of architect as political hero. I believe that if we don't go forward with that idea in mind...our profession will languish in obscurity...We have much to contribute to the shaping of public policy that can improve the world. And I argue that there has never been a better time for us to begin. By Doug Wingall/HDR Architecture - ArchDaily

Editorial> Lack of Diversity Limits Architecture: Sam Lubell on architecture's struggle with homogeneity: ...the bigger problem is not with the Pritzker Prize, it's with architecture itself...it's very hard to find a less diverse profession...the culture of architecture needs to change. Not just because it's the right thing to do. But in order to be a truly relevant profession... -- Denise Scott Brown/Robert Venturi/Venturi Scott Brown; Zaha Hadid; Kazuyo Sejima - The Architect's Newspaper

NYCxDESIGN is New York City's inaugural citywide event to showcase and promote design of all disciplines...a collaboration among the City Council, Mayor's Office, City agencies and some of the City's most renowned design institutions, retailers, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, curators,

educators, editors and—of course—designers. May 10 through May 21- NYCxDESIGN

Bitter Homes and Gardens: "Better Homes" at SculptureCenter in Long Island City: ...takes up issues related to the idea of "home" as it has changed over the centuries...compelling but uneven...at times it crackles with feisty surprise; at others, it falters from overthinking and objects that feel like clip art. - Village Voice (NYC)

MoMA Takes a Shower With New "Rain Room" Installation: ...designers at rAndom international made what you thought was impossible possible...the opportunity to fully experience standing unprotected in the rain without ever getting wet. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

LA's Alternate Realities: "Overdrive: L.A. Constructs the Future, 1940–1990" and "Never Built: Los Angeles": ...two complementary exhibitions in Los Angeles seek to bring the unfathomableness into focus...this pair of enlightening but cautionary surveys reminds us of...Ada Louise Huxtable's ever-timely admonition that "Any city gets what it admires, will pay for, and, ultimately, deserves." By Martin Filler - New York Review of Books

"United Micro Kingdoms: A Design Fiction": An enjoyable, if slight, Design Museum exhibition imagines how technology might shape our lives in four fictional futures...has a critical intelligence and a wit...The strength of Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby's futurism is that they show neither heaven nor hell, but something messy and contested, and which casts light on the present. By Rowan Moore - Observer (UK)

Richard Meier Reflects on His Last 50 Years, With Retrospective Opening in Italy: ...his architectural approach to the exhibition, his first foray into South America, and how he plans to celebrate his golden anniversary. By Janelle Zara -- Fondazione Bisazza (Bisazza Foundation for Design and Contemporary Architecture)- Artinfo

Motor City Breakdown: Detroit in literature and film: Is the spectacular — and spectacularly represented — failure of Detroit indicative of some larger design fault inherent in the very nature of American ideas, or is it simply a local one-off, an exception without deeper meaning? This unresolved question keeps Detroit in the news and makes it a hard place to forget. By Jerry Herron [images]- Places Journal

"Handmade Urbanism: From Community Initiatives to Participatory Models" by Erhan Demirdizen: ...a hybrid between a guidebook and a handbook...a heavy focus on the role of partnerships in driving success with bottom-up projects...There is, of course, no silver bullet for easing the tension between the bottom-ups and the top-downs. But [this] is a helpful tool for illustrating how collaboration can enhance the work that everyone is doing. -- Urban Age - Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

Asphalt Jungle Examined: Eran Ben-Joseph's "ReThinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking" helps to raise the discourse on the ubiquitous parking lot...a manifesto for quality of lot design over quantity of spaces, one that seeks to re-integrate the parking lot into community life and promote its stature to the realm of an asset. By Sean Khorsandi- The Architect's Newspaper

Little of substance in PBS's "10 Buildings That Changed America": ...never glib enough to be untrustworthy but always overselling its points...The most egregious thing left inadequately addressed is...how these buildings changed America. We learn a certain amount about how they changed architecture...the historical, social and economic impact of these 10 buildings isn't addressed. [airs May 12] By Philip Kennicott- Washington Post



-- TEN Arquitectos: Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico
-- Exhibition: "Frank Gehry: At Work" - Leslie Feely Fine Art, New York City
-- and more

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