

Today's News - Wednesday, February 26, 2014

- We're saddened by the news of the passing of Plunkett (our heart goes out to the family, especially architect/daughter - and friend - Karen Plunkett Muenster).
- Kats offers a great take on Sochi's Olympic architecture and its uncertain future: "these products of hurried design and rapid construction might stand to outlive the Olympics precisely because their generic mediocrity also makes them multiuse" (they "are meant to be international in style, but they are not world-class architecture").
- Ford offers an in-depth, fascinating look at the past and current history of "the revolutionary dimensions of public spaces" (another great read).
- Urban planner Snell ponders how useful the "walkability" factor is if it's not enough to actually make people want to walk.
- A fascinating take on the decades-long saga of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Academy Museum, and the high hopes that the "shrine to the Oscars will be for film nothing less than what the Louvre is for painting."
- It looks like it's back to the drawing board for Studio Gang's "Solar Carve" tower along the High Line: it seems the "serrated edge" has hit "some unexpected kinks of its own" (oh, those pesky zoning rules).
- Wainwright cheers Zaha's Olympic Aquatics Centre opening to the public, especially now that "its lithe body" is no longer "trapped between two hulking seating stands" (and the view? "Not bad for £4.50 a go").
- When queried about migrant worker deaths in building the Qatar World Cup stadium, the Grande Dame of architecture says it is a serious problem - for the Qatari government: "I cannot do anything about it because I have no power to do anything about it. I think it's a problem anywhere in the world."
- Woodman reports on Rykwert's RIBA Royal Gold Medal lecture last night: "Every building diminishes or contributes to the common good," the Gold Medalist said; "At the end of a fearsomely erudite and far-ranging talk it was a statement of simple but powerful conviction," sayeth Ellis.
- Q&A with Pearson re: London's planned Garden Bridge: What did you think when you heard about the concept? "That it was a crazy, brilliant idea, and that I would be mad not to agree to help create a garden that sailed over the Thames!"
- The shortlist for The Contemporary Austin's Laguna Gloria Master Plan just got shorter (images will be forthcoming).
- One we couldn't resist (who could?!?): M Is for Meerkat: An illustrator's take on the alphabet "veers into the furry, the scaly, and the finned."

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[Obituary: James Plunkett, 81: His Wisconsin architecture philosophy: Keep it simple: ...worked for more than half a century at the architecture firm founded by his father..."He was one of the godfathers of architecture in Milwaukee for the last many decades"... -- Plunkett Raysich Architects - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)

[Sochi's Pop-Up Olympic Architecture Faces an Uncertain Future: The arenas...were not designed for any specific site — and thus, these products of hurried design and rapid construction might stand to outlive the Olympics, precisely because their generic mediocrity also makes them multiuse...aesthetic merit was a low priority...these buildings are meant to be international in style, but they are not world-class architecture. By Anna Kats - Artinfo](#)

[A Dictator's Guide to Urban Design: Ukraine's Independence Square, and the revolutionary dimensions of public spaces: ...the public square as an epicenter of democratic expression and protest, and the lack of one—or the deliberate manipulation of such a space—as a way for autocrats to squash dissent through urban design...Public squares can be cradles for democratic movements but...one cannot live in a cradle forever. By Matt Ford - The Atlantic](#)

[How Useful is Walkability: Are You Orientated to Walk? Opportunity to walk—place to go, distance to go and comfort in going—are not enough to make people walk...Perhaps walkability is too simplistic or abstract for most people to get behind...Through an analytical lens walkability doesn't get us very far in explicating our cities, to bettering them, to bettering ourselves. By Steven Snell - PLANetizen](#)

[The Battle for the Soul of the Academy Museum: As the \\$300 million shrine to the Oscars and all of film history readies to break ground...insiders and experts reveal the challenge of how to walk the line between serious scholarship and tourist-friendly appeal...after decades of false starts...the heady goal is to create a "world class" institution...that will be for film nothing less than what the Louvre is for painting. -- Renzo Piano \[images\]- Hollywood Reporter](#)

[New York City Zoning Board Burns Studio Gang's "Solar Carve" Tower Along the High Line: ...featured a serrated edge that maximizes daylight on the elevated park next door...But the legal path to realizing that faceted glass facade had some unexpected kinks of its own. \[images\]- The Architect's Newspaper](#)

["It's like swimming in a spaceship": Aquatics Centre opens to public: Schoolchildren enjoy their first splash in Zaha Hadid-designed pool after transformation from Olympics venue...its lithe body was trapped between two hulking great seating stands...the belle of the ball, she was a debutante in dental braces...Now liberated from its armbands...with London's skyline framed by the sweeping roof. Not bad for £4.50 a go. By Oliver Wainwright - Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Zaha Hadid defends Qatar World Cup role following migrant worker deaths: Architect of al-Wakrah stadium says construction worker deaths is a serious problem but is a matter for the Qatari government..."I cannot do anything about it because I have no power to do anything about it. I think it's a problem anywhere in the world." - Guardian \(UK\)](#)

[Joseph Rykwert RIBA Royal Gold Medal lecture: Architecture critic pays tribute to the past winners we never saw: "Every building diminishes or contributes to the common good," he said in conclusion...At the end of a fearsomely erudite and far-ranging talk it was a statement of simple but powerful conviction. By Ellis Woodman - BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Interview: Garden designer Dan Pearson on London's planned Garden Bridge: ...a link between the bohemian South Bank and lively Covent Garden...What did you think when you heard about the concept? "That it was a crazy, brilliant idea, and that I would be mad not to agree to help create a garden that sailed over the Thames!" -- Thomas Heatherwick \[images\]- Gizmodo](#)

[Prize of the Lagoon: The Contemporary Austin Announces Three Finalists for Laguna Gloria Master Plan: The museum declined to release details on the finalist firms' proposals, citing their sketchy condition at this stage of the process. -- Harvey L. Page \(1916\); Siglo Group; Gustafson Guthrie Nichol; Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture; Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture; Snøhetta - The Architect's Newspaper](#)

[M Is For Meerkat: A Beautiful Alphabet Inspired By Animals: An illustrator's take on "A is for Apple" veers into the furry, the scaly, and the finned. -- Marcus Reed \[images\]- Fast Company](#)

[ANN Feature: Informed by Learning: Interview with Joe Valerio and Randy Mattheis about education for the future at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools: "We wanted to dive deeply into the culture of the school...so one of the first things we did was to participate in its daily life." -- Valerio Dewalt Train Associates - ArchNewsNow](#)

-- Q&A with Michael Massaia: he explains how severe insomnia, photo realistic paintings, self-taught discipline and seeing what is right in front of him...made him into the very talented photographer he is.
-- Hotel Le Corbusier: Unite d'Habitation, Le Corbusier's first large scale project, is one of his most important. Hotel Le Corbusier is a 'must' for architecture aficionados. By Kirsten Kiser

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