

Today's News - Thursday, April 3, 2014

- Joachim ponders "what if you could redraw NYC's map - and build it from scratch? Some of this city of tomorrow is already taking shape. This next version of New York is dependent on us."
- Taki, on the other hand, says his NYC "is gone forever" and blames progress that "stinks" and Modernism that "is bleak and sterile - a panacea for the talentless and the phony."
- Meanwhile, the London skyline debate rages on: Olcayo explains why the AJ/Observer's Skyline campaign "is not anti-skyscrapers," but calls for a "thoughtful plan that ensures high-quality architecture but also gives something back to the townscape."
- Baillieu posits that the debate is "all out of proportion," with folks' "knickers well and truly twisted over towers"; the real problem is "the fact few Londoners can afford to live in them."
- Brussat says "it's hard to work up much sympathy for London - if my eyeballs will stop rolling for an instant, let me welcome London to reality, which has not been pretty for decades."
- Bakewell compares Italy's neglect of its heritage to London's skyline being "diminished by modern tower blocks" - a problem that "infects so many of today's cities. The urge to be the most modern threatens to render every 'downtown' identical. How reckless of us."
- Despite car bombs, Beirut is "buzzing" with new building - it "seems to be a city that endures when it comes to real estate."
- Case in point: Holl's Le Yacht Club Beirut, Lebanon's first private club, is "built to look like the wreckage of a mammoth futuristic ship."
- Rosenblum finds good and questionable design decisions in the new/old Waldorf Astoria Jerusalem, where "oriental splendor meets New York grandeur - poor Jerusalem deserves a bit of splendor."
- The Library of Birmingham has some researchers and academics fuming because "thousands of books can't be reached by librarians": it's "great to gawp at, but it is unfit for purpose" (until the right equipment arrives; delivery date TBD).
- Q&A with HOK's Monk re: the future of sustainable design: "it's not only about the bottom line."
- Eyefuls of the winner of Architectural League/Socrates Sculpture Park Folly 2014 competition (and some "notable entries").
- Call for entries: newly-launched Moriyama RAIC International Prize (with \$100,000 purse!) + Call for papers: 7th International Urban Design Conference: "Designing Productive Cities" in South Australia in September.

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What if we could rebuild New York City? New York has...become one of the world's most densely packed cities. But what if you could redraw the city's map – and build it from scratch? The new New York City would balance the relationship between the information networks that the metropolis depends on and Earth's finite resources...some of this city of tomorrow is already taking shape.

This next version of New York is dependent on us. By Mitchell Joachim/Terreform ONE- BBC (UK)

My New York is gone forever: "The Fountainhead" was a great movie but lousy architecture. Now all we have is the lousy architecture...Modernism...is bleak and sterile...a panacea for the talentless and the phony. Urban architecture that draws on...previous eras is beauty personified, whereas functionalism, as the gimmick is called nowadays, is the very stuff that has made architects and city planners turn their backs on what makes a city beautiful and livable. By Taki- The Spectator (UK)

The AJ/Observer's Skyline campaign is not anti-skyscrapers: We just want the design of tall buildings to emerge from a holistic, thoughtful plan that ensures high-quality architecture but also gives something back to the townscape that tall buildings by their nature, cannot help but dominate. By Rory Olcayo- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Is the tall tower debate all out of proportion? We have got our knickers well and truly twisted over towers. The latest campaign to save London's skyline is targeted at rich foreigners not poor planning or sloppy architecture...London's unique character is not under threat from 200 towers, but the fact few Londoners can afford to live in them. By Amanda Baillieu-BD/Building Design (UK)

A bit late to cry for London's skyline: It's hard to work up much sympathy for London and its citizens, who have suddenly learned that they may expect 236 more skyscrapers on their skyline...if my eyeballs will stop rolling for an instant, let me welcome London to reality, which has not been pretty for decades. By David Brussat- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Rome's cracks are showing – but London is no better: Italy neglects its heritage, but Britain is as bad in the way it allows London's skyline to be diminished by modern tower blocks: Such casual regard for what is precious and so easily lost infects so many of today's cities. The urge to be the most modern threatens to render every "downtown" identical. How reckless of us... By Joan Bakewell- Telegraph (UK)

Beirut buzzing as the city builds for the future: Targeted car bombings linked to the ongoing Syrian conflict have raised anxiety and hurt overall growth in the Lebanese capital in recent years. But this seems to be a city that endures when it comes to real estate. -- Foster & Partners; Steven Holl- CNN

At Le Yacht Club Beirut, the devil is in the details: The building – built to look like the wreckage of a mammoth futuristic ship – houses Lebanon's first private club... -- Steven Holl; Dada & Associates [images]- Daily Star (Lebanon)

In Waldorf Astoria Jerusalem, oriental splendor meets New York grandeur: Incorporating only the facade of the historic Palace Hotel and an aura of the past...[ts] historic grandeur is almost nonexistent...Still, it creates an appearance that integrates the fibers of the city's past – as if that past had been here all along...poor Jerusalem deserves a bit of splendor...The design is anything but minimal, smooth, or light, but rather rich, heavy and occasionally crowded. By Keshet Rosenblum -- Mimar Kemaleddin (1929); Feigin Architects; Amir Shoham; Sinan Kafadar [images]- Ha'aretz (Israel)

Library of Birmingham: Thousands of books can't be reached by librarians: Staff unable to access reference books on high shelves in the archives due to health and safety concerns: "The library is great to gawp at, but it is unfit for purpose"... "it is an absolutely farcical situation"... "we're still awaiting delivery of equipment to enable staff to retrieve items..." -- Mecanoo Architecten [images]- Birmingham Post (UK)

The Future Of Sustainable Design: Q&A with Julia Monk/HOK: ...the concept of sustainable design, the kinds of lessons she's learned over the years as it relates to design that incorporates environmental and social dimensions, where the sector is heading... "it's not only about the bottom line." - Forbes

Innovative Architectural Partners Win Third Folly Competition with Overturned Ship Pavilion on the Socrates Sculpture Park Waterfront in Long Island City, Queens: ...Austin+Mergold and their project "SuralArk" the winner of "Folly 2014" + Notable entries [images]- The Architectural League of New York

New architecture prize aims to raise stature of Canada: RAIC Foundation announces the launch of one of the largest architectural prizes in the world - the Moriyama RAIC International Prize...To be awarded every two years, the \$100,000 prize is open to any architect, firm, or collaboration in the world...three students of Canadian schools of architecture will each

receive scholarships of \$5,000. Submissions are due by August 1 -- Raymond Moriyama/Moriyama & Teshima Architects-Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)

Call for entries: Call for papers: 7th International Urban Design Conference: "Designing Productive Cities" in Adelaide, South Australia, September 1-3; deadline: May 30- Urban Design Australia Conference

ANN Feature: Drawing an Elegant Conclusion: Menil Drawing Institute by Johnston Marklee: Houston: In the somewhat arbitrary hierarchy of fine art media, where painting is king, drawing is often considered less valuable. The new MDI elevates the medium by providing a distinguished, respectful home. By Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA/LA [images]- ArchNewsNow

ANN Feature: Opening a New Chapter on Designing Public Libraries: Why Robert Dawson's photographic essay on the public library plays it safe by looking back when architects need to scan an emerging horizon. By Norman Weinstein-ArchNewsNow



-- MAD Architects: China Wood Sculpture Museum, Harbin, China: ...signals that even China's frozen northern periphery is beginning to be reshaped...behind the thunderbolt-hued building is China's leading experimental architect, Ma Yansong... By Kevin Holden Platt

-- Exhibition: Film and Architecture as the act of framing: Q&A with Morten Melgaard, who has been researching the relationship between architecture and film for several years.

-- Rafael Viñoly: Today he is a household name and ranks among the greatest living architects. Recently however, his star status has been a little burnt...

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