

Today's News - Friday, November 7, 2014

EDITOR'S NOTE: Monday is next week's "floating" no-newsletter day. We'll be back Tuesday, November 11.

- If architecture is being "subsumed as a profession, denigrated to a position beneath project management and contracting in the pecking order," Kelly suggests "ways architects can remind the public that architecture is essential to the quality of civic life."
- Edelson ponders whether the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art can "claim lineage to Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe's Chicago work. Right now, it's tough to say - as Mies said, "The devil is in the details.""
- Amaya shares her personal exploration of the "rapid urbanization" of "village cities" from Bogotá to Bombay (fascinating!).
- Despite some vociferous critics, plans for the £2 billion, SOM/BDP-designed redevelopment of London's Covent Garden are set to be approved (towers included).
- Kaufman reports on plans to give Minneapolis some much-needed green space, but "when is a free park not a free park? The saga is enough to make one's head spin."
- Brake traipses the High Line at the Rail Yards, and concludes it "would be a mistake" to polish up the new segment to resemble the other portions: "The public deserves to see this piece as it was. It was the power of the remnant landscape that became the reason for the preservation of the elevated line itself" (Corner may agree).
- Nelson Byrd Woltz offers a long-range plan for Houston's Memorial Park to make it more resilient, but "explaining to Houstonians that their park is not what they always thought it was and that restoring it to an essentially pre-historic ecology may be the most sustainable solution has proved challenging."
- Crosbie cheers the new Visual & Performing Arts Center at Western Connecticut State University: it is "a playfully provocative and engaging building that reflects the unconventionality of the artists who work and study there...who gain creative energy from the architecture."
- A look at Svigals + Partners' design for the Sandy Hook Elementary School: "The trick was to make it more secure while balancing those things that make a school wonderful."
- Eyefuls (not just a list this time) of the 2014 National Architecture Awards winners (great presentations).
- Grima and Herda announce the title for the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial (an homage to Tigerman's 1977 conference), and Iwan Baan signs on as first participant creating new work.
- Weekend diversions:
  - A good reason to head to Hobart's buzzing arts hub: the Australian Design Biennale + A good reason to head to L.A.: 3rd Annual DIEM: Design Intersects Everything Made in the West Hollywood Design District.
  - Heathcote and Jones weigh in on the field of 888,246 ceramic poppies populating the Tower of London's moat: it's a "blend of spectacle and 'edutainment' - memory as spectacle" + "There is a fake nobility to it. What a lie" - WWI was "not noble. A meaningful mass memorial to this horror would not be dignified or pretty. The moat should be filled with barbed wire and bones. That would mean something."
  - Flint traces Corbu's steps for a "dreamy" research project to write "Modern Man: The Life of Le Corbusier, Architect of Tomorrow": it was "a window into how Europe is - or isn't - celebrating one of the great figures of the 20th century."
  - "Mario Botta: Architecture and Memory" reveals a design process that "relies on patience and slowness, a refreshing counterpoint to the rapid-fire modular design of today."
  - Ferro brings us eyefuls of "architectural fantasies that will make your brain hurt" from "Imagine Architecture" ("blatantly apocalyptic" - what fun!).

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**Why the role of architects is on trial: If architecture has been subsumed as a profession, denigrated to a position beneath project management and contracting in the pecking order, then the role of the architect is on trial...ways architects can remind the public that architecture is essential to the quality of civic life.** By Christopher Kelly/Architecture Workshop-ArchitectureNZ (Architecture New Zealand)

**Will George Lucas's Space-Age Museum Join Chicago's Architectural Pantheon? ...both the architects and the museum claim lineage to Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe's Chicago work. Do their claims hold up? Right now, it's tough to say...as Mies said, "The devil is in the details."** By Zachary Edelson -- MAD Architects; Studio Gang- Metropolis Magazine

**From Bogotá to Bombay: how the world's 'village cities' facilitate change: Rapid urbanisation and the sharing economy are a catalyst for constant adaptation in developing 'village cities'. Lauren Amaya witnesses the effects of growth on architecture in South America and South Asia. [images]- Australian Design Review**

**New Covent Garden set to be approved despite objections: £2 billion scheme criticised by mayor, neighbouring developer and English Heritage: It will include a new, consolidated market with around 3,000 homes plus offices, community and leisure uses on the surplus land. -- SOM and BDP [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)**

**Minneapolis Park Will Green a Brown Part of Downtown, But at What Cost? When is a free park not a free park? The saga of Downtown East Commons...is enough to make one's head spin...envisioned as a two-block, 4.2-acre "front yard" for the new stadium and a planned mixed-use complex..."they were going to give us a public park paid for by private funds, but now it's a private park paid for by public funds."** By Rachel Kaufman- Next City (formerly Next American City)

**Crit> High Line Segment Three: There is currently a master plan to finish the temporary segment to the level of the other portions. That would be a mistake. The public deserves to see this piece...as it was. It was the power of the remnant landscape that became the reason for the preservation of the elevated line itself..."The strategy was budgetary, but maybe it is finished."** Corner said. By Alan G. Brake -- James Corner Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

**Land Without Fences: Nelson Byrd Woltz presents initial ideas for redesign of Houston's Memorial Park: ...a long-range plan to make it more resilient as well as better functioning...Explaining to Houstonians that their park is not what they always thought it was and that restoring it to an essentially pre-historic ecology may be the most sustainable solution has proved challenging...** By Aaron Seward [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

**A Building With An Artist's Attitude: Visual & Performing Arts Center on the campus of Western Connecticut State University, a playfully provocative and engaging building that questions the conventional...reflects the unconventionality of the artists who work and study there...who gain creative energy from the architecture.** By Michael J. Crosbie -- Amenta Emma Architects; Holzman Moss Bottino Architecture- Hartford Courant (Connecticut)

**Redesigning Sandy Hook After Newtown's Tragedy: There are some comforting features in the design of the new Sandy Hook Elementary School...Many of these design touches are not just wonderful, though: They mask enhanced security measures that give the school added protection..."The trick was to make it more secure while balancing those things that make a school wonderful."** -- Svigals + Partners [images]- Bloomberg/BusinessWeek

**'Intelligent architecture': 2014 National Architecture Awards. The jury commented on the "recurring theme of ... generous public realms [that] positively impact civic life." 36 projects were recognized by the Australian Institute of Architects/AIA... [links to images, info]- ArchitectureAU (Australia)**

Chicago Architecture Biennial releases title of 2015 inaugural edition – “The State of the Art of Architecture”...Iwan Baan announced as first participant creating new work...Selected by Co-Artistic Directors Joseph Grima and Sarah Herda, the title...takes its name from a 1977 conference organized by architect Stanley Tigerman... - Chicago Architecture Biennial

Australian Design Biennale at MONA: The Biennale brings together Australian designers, artists, politicians, activists, writers and creative directors from around Australia. Hobart's buzzing arts hub, the Museum of Old and New Art...theme of 'crossing the line'...the concept of diverging from standard practice. November 13 - 16 - Australian Design Review

3rd Annual DIEM: Design Intersects Everything Made: Six Talks on Design in the West Hollywood Design District curated by Mallery Roberts Morgan with Frances Anderton, November 14 - West Hollywood Design District

Tower of London poppies take UK into new age of war commemoration: Some memorials of bloodbath upstaged by the fluid language of installation art...This sea of flowers and the refurbished Imperial War Museum...seem to imply a fundamental shift in commemoration from the solid classical monuments of the 20th century to a very 21st-century blend of spectacle and “edutainment”...an aestheticisation of a brutal war into a field of flowers, memory as spectacle. By Edwin Heathcote - Financial Times (UK)

The Tower of London poppies are fake, trite and inward-looking – a Ukip-style memorial: Four million people will flock to see the 888,246 ceramic poppies ["Blood Swept Lands And Seas Of Red"] deposited in the Tower's moat to mark Remembrance Day...There is a fake nobility to it...What a lie. The first world war was not noble. War is not noble. A meaningful mass memorial to this horror would not be dignified or pretty...The moat should be filled with barbed wire and bones. That would mean something. By Jonathan Jones - Guardian (UK)

In the footsteps of Le Corbusier: In writing...“Modern Man: The Life of Le Corbusier, Architect of Tomorrow”...I had the enviable task of going to see where my subject had grown up in Switzerland, and the projects he had executed throughout France...As research projects go, it was admittedly pretty dreamy. It was also a window into how Europe is - or isn't - celebrating one of the great figures of the 20th century. By Anthony Flint [images] - Boston Globe

A Monograph Celebrates the Architecture of Mario Botta: “Mario Botta: Architecture and Memory” focuses on the many public projects the architect has completed throughout his 50-year career...[his] design process relies on patience and slowness, a refreshing counterpoint to the rapid-fire modular design of today. [images] - New York Times T Magazine

11 Architectural Fantasies That Will Make Your Brain Hurt: These buildings bend, twist, flip, and float in all kinds of impossible ways: "Imagine Architecture" probes the way architecture and the urban realm have influenced visual artists...Much of the works are surreal, if not blatantly apocalyptic... By Shaunacy Ferro [images] - Fast Company / Co. Design

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