

## Today's News - Wednesday, March 11, 2015

- One of the saddest/gladdest new days: Frei Otto gets the 2015 Pritzker Architecture Prize - but he died yesterday; at least he knew he was this year's Laureate: "You have here a happy man."
- Jones makes the case for why Nouvel's Louvre Abu Dhabi is worth celebrating, despite accusations of migrant worker exploitation: "I suspect this audacious new museum will be admired as a world destination and artistic treasure house. And so it should be," because it's "a turning point in cultural history."
- Greenfield parses Gehry's Facebook "Zee Town" and wonders if company towns are ever a good idea: "Its most worrisome aspect is how clearly it reflects the tech industry's continuing withdrawal from the public realm" (with some fascinating history thrown in for good measure).
- Meanwhile, Gehry has been tapped to transform a "fugly" Sunset Strip shopping center into a mixed-use development (no images yet).
- In San Francisco, David Baker converts a derelict motel into affordable and sustainable housing (and stylish!) for the formerly homeless.
- Holl says that designing the new wing for Mumbai's Bhau Daji Lad Museum is "a huge responsibility" (and sides with residents in controversy re: possible loss of a playground).
- A fascinating look at how Baghdad could have been a mega-city designed by "a coterie of architectural heavyweights" (with great pix).
- Move over Central Park and Hyde Park - Sydney is set to get its own almost 500-acre "super park."
- Silverstein digs into how Tel Aviv's "Mountain of Crap" is being reborn as Ariel Sharon Park.
- Goodyear reports on a new report that actually quantifies the positive impact parklets have on a community: "Are those two parking spaces better used by 150 unique users? Or by two cars?"
- Gunther minces no words about what he thinks of the Metropolitan Museum's plaza redesign: it "undermines the institution's civic grandeur."
- King cheers three public art installations in San Francisco: "Each work pushes different buttons" - what they "have in common is a shared determination not to be innocuous."
- Capps makes the case for why London "should be at the forefront" in "planning for the dead. After all, there is barely room enough for the living" (and calls out "one of the all-time great reads about life's eternal bummer" - a great read!).
- Eyefuls of the 2015 Civic Trust Awards winners (all 91).
- Call for entries: speakers for VERGE 2015 conference on technology and sustainability in San Jose + Proposals for ABX 2015 in Boston re: emerging A/E/C trends.

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**Frei Otto Receives the 2015 Pritzker Architecture Prize: Visionary architect, 89, dies in his native Germany on March 9, 2015...**an architect, visionary, utopian, ecologist, pioneer of lightweight materials, protector of natural resources and a generous collaborator with architects, engineers, and biologists, among others..."You have here a happy man." [links to selected works, bio, citation, etc.] - The Hyatt Foundation

**Why the Louvre Abu Dhabi is worth celebrating, despite its dark side:** The accusations of migrant worker exploitation have marred Jean Nouvel's architectural masterpiece...Nothing excuses the inhuman working conditions...But I suspect that when it opens, this audacious new museum will be admired as a world destination and artistic treasure house. And so it should be...a turning point in cultural history. By Jonathan Jones - Guardian (UK)

**Is Facebook's 'Zee Town' more than just a Mark Zuckerberg vanity project?** ...creating a 200-acre, 10,000-strong private municipality for his staff...there doesn't seem to be anything in principle that says a town designed by a single author cannot work...But...here the circumstances are a little muddier...Its most worrisome aspect is how clearly it reflects the tech industry's continuing withdrawal from the public realm. By Adam Greenfield -- Frank Gehry - Guardian (UK)

**Fugly Sunset Strip Shopping Center to Be Reborn as a Major Frank Gehry Project:** That unattractive strip mall...at the so-called "gateway to the Sunset Strip" — will be razed in favor of a mixed-use development...initial plans for the development slated to be released this spring. - LA Weekly

**In San Francisco, Affordable Housing with Imagination:** David Baker Architects converts a derelict motel into affordable and sustainable housing for people who were formerly homeless in the city's needy Bayview neighbourhood. -- Interstice Architects; Rebar Group. [images] - Azure magazine (Canada)

**Designing city landmark a huge responsibility, says Steven Holl:** ...Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum's new wing...design draws little inspiration from Mumbai's vibrant culture. However, he is certain that will change...mired in controversy with a political party claiming it will deprive locals of a playground. "I'm on the residents' side," said Holl... - Times of India

**Baghdad Could Have Been a Mega-City by Frank Lloyd Wright:** ...in the 1950s, King Faisal II enlisted a coterie of architectural heavyweights - Wright, Walter Gropius/The Architects Collaborative, Le Corbusier, Josep Lluís Sert, and Alvar and Aino Aalto - to reimagine Baghdad as a bustling, cosmopolitan city. By Katherine Wisniewski [images] - Curbed

**Western Sydney Bungarabee Super Park plans unveiled:** ...200 hectare "super park"...will compare with London's Hyde Park and New York's Central Park. -- JMD Design [images] - Architecture & Design (Australia)

**The "Mountain of Crap" Becomes a Park:** ...the nickname for Hiriya landfill, and Freshkills share more than just evocative names...urban landfills that have become parks -- Ariel Sharon Park, outside of Tel

Aviv, Israel and Freshkills Park, in Staten Island, New York. Both were the wastelands of their respective cities. By Yoshi Silverstein -- Latz + Partner; Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects [images] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Why Some Parklets Work Better Than Others: A detailed new report out of Philadelphia finds the type of businesses closest to a parklet play a key role in their success...hopes to use the data to increase the positive impact such projects have on the community..."Are those two parking spaces better used by 150 unique users? Or by two cars?" By Sarah Goodyear - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Comment> The Met Plaza redesign undermines the institution's civic grandeur: ...when the Metropolitan Museum of Art first announced the redesign of the...plaza along its grand McKim, Mead & White Beaux-Arts facade, there was little opposition...David H. Koch might well wish that for now at least his name not be its site label after all. By Paul Gunther -- OLIN; Kevin Roche; Hervé Descottes/L'Observatoire International; WET Design [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

They left their art in San Francisco: the city's public displays: The scales and styles are as different as can be. Each work pushes different buttons. What the three pieces have in common is a shared determination not to be innocuous. Instead, they prod us to look at where we are with sharper, smarter eyes. By John King -- Topher Delaney/Delaney + Chin; Brian Goggin/Dorka Keehn [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

Now More Than Ever, London Needs a 'Death Pyramid': Why the city should revive a 19th-century plan for an uptown necropolis, population 5 million: "Necropolis: London and Its Dead" by Catharine Arnold, one of the all-time great reads about life's eternal bummer...London should be at the forefront of cities in regard to planning for the dead. After all, in London, there is barely room enough for the living. By Kriston Capps -- Stephen Geary (1839); Thomas Wilson (1820s); George Frederick Carden (1832) [images] - CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

2015 Civic Trust Awards Winners Revealed: 91 national and international projects were rewarded with a Civic Trust Award or Commendation...8 Special Awards were presented... -- Proctor and Matthews Architects; Pringle Richards Sharratt; Rick Mather Architects; Mecanoo; Reiach and Hall Architects; O'Donnell + Tuomey; FORME UK; Paul Cummins Ceramics; etc [images] - Civic Trust Awards (UK)

Call for entries: Call for speakers: VERGE 2015. Join the leaders at the convergence of technology and sustainability; October 26-29, San Jose, CA; deadline for proposals: March 31 - GreenBiz / VERGE

Call for entries: Call for Proposals: ABX 2015: emerging A/E/C trends, building and design techniques, sustainability, high-performance building, resiliency, etc.; November 17-19, Boston; deadline: March 31 - Boston Society of Architects/BSA/AIA



Travel Guide: Taiwan: Taipei City, Taichung City, Kaohsiung: The cities impress; not because of their beauty, but because of their vitality. The architectural qualities do not reveal themselves at first glance - you have to know where to look. By Ulf Meyer -- C.Y. Lee; Toyo Ito; Richard Rogers; Uheiji Nagano (1919); Chen Chi-Kwan/I.M. Pei (1963); Wang Ta-hung; Yang Cho-Cheng; Norihiko Dan; Jay W. Chiu/Chuang Hsueh-neng; Kuo Ying-chao/Bio Architecture Formosana; Er-Pan Kao; LIAO Weili/Ambi Studio; Justus Dahinden; Kris Yao/Artech; OMA/Artech/Projekt; Kerry Hill/TIA Architects [images]

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