

Today's News - Thursday, March 12, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is this week's "floating" no-newsletter day - we'll be back Monday, March 16. (Happy Friday the 13th tomorrow!)

- Wainwright weighs in on Pritzker laureate Frei Otto: "He was the hero of groundbreaking lightweight architecture. But why didn't Otto achieve the socially-driven dream he always hoped for?"
- Hadid and Foster pay tribute to Otto.
- Orange County may be sued over plans for Rudolph's government center "renovation"; charges could include "destruction of an historic building in violation of the New York Preservation Act of 1980."
- Davies wonders why there's "nary a whisper of protest" as a mid-century Melbourne landmark "of State Significance for architectural, social and historical reasons" faces demolition, while a threatened (rather mediocre) parking garage raises preservationists' hackles.
- A long look at Buffalo's "least loved buildings" that are (mostly) mid-century modern "monstrosities" - with some monstrously notable names attached.
- Chipperfield rises to the top of (an unnamed) shortlist to redesign the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Modern and Contemporary Art Wing (and more).
- Kats gives us the back-story of why Gehry is stepping into the already controversial Sunset Strip project (ye old developer vs. community activists): "We knew there was only one choice for the preeminent architect of our time, and he happens to be local," sayeth the developer.
- RSHP has towering plans in Bogotá, Colombia.
- Miami goes into High Line mode and taps Corner to design a 10-mile Underline beneath the city's elevated Metrorail.
- Weekend diversions:
- DesignGuide amasses an astounding collection of Building + Design Movies (some wonderful, some curious surprises!).
- Rafson riffs on 3 new films that redefine the role of women in architecture, "with their merits and shortcomings - although we've come a long way, we're still a bit uncomfortable with a woman in power."
- Director McGuckian talks to DoCoMoMo's O'Toole about "The Price of Desire" that tells the story of Eileen Gray's life "through the eyes of Le Corbusier" (premieres in Dublin next week).
- "World Fair" uses "sparkling, rare, color film footage" that mines memories of the 1939 World's Fair, the "modernist, techno-utopia" that was an escape, if only for a day, from war and Depression-era poverty "into the 'absolutely, shockingly beautiful' dreamworld of the event."
- "Beautiful Users" at the Cooper Hewitt "provocatively addresses the roots and legacy of Dreyfuss's Joe and Josephine in architecture and design."
- "Jan Kaplický Drawings" at the Architectural Association in London: "his concepts serve as a record of their time, and as art works in their own right."
- Conti says the Heinz Architectural Center's "Sketch to Structure" is "a must-visit": "I have always been suspect of some of the fanciful squiggles that some architects display. But I've become convinced that these sorts of abstractions are actually useful" (lots of pix, too).
- Carboni picks his five faves at Perth's Sculpture by the Sea (with pix of everything!).
- Gruber revisits Davis's "City of Quartz" 25 years later, and finds it "still stings with insights. Yet, in hindsight he missed the biggest story of its time."
- "Midcentury Houses Today" explores the transformation of 16 surviving homes by mid-century modern masters in the "unassuming" village of New Canaan, CT.

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Frei Otto: the titan of tent architecture: He was the hero of groundbreaking lightweight architecture, inspiring everything from the Millennium Dome to pleasure-domes in Kazakhstan and service stations all over the world. But why didn't Otto achieve the socially-driven dream he always hoped for? By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

Zaha Hadid and Norman Foster lead tributes to "great architect, inventor and gentleman" Frei Otto: ...his "extraordinary structures altered the nature of architectural form in the 20th century"... "The more our own design research evolves, the more we learn to appreciate his pioneering works"... [images]- Dezeen

Orange County may be sued over government center renovation: Plan abuses public funds and the public interest: ...some issues that could form the substance a suit: Destruction of an historic building - current renovation includes removing significant aspects of a building designed by...Paul Rudolph, in violation of the New York Preservation Act of 1980... -- Clark Patterson Lee; Gene Kaufman [image]- The Chronicle (Orange County, NY)

Who cares if Dallas Brooks Hall gets demolished? There was nary a whisper of protest...when the Andrews government approved demolition...Does anyone care? Melbourne landmark...is a well-known civic building and is listed...as a building of State Significance for architectural, social and historical reasons...Total Car Park's claims for heritage protection are much weaker. By Alan Davies -- Godfrey and Spowers [images]- Crikey (Australia)

Unloved, maybe, but standing tall: Every city has buildings that are not beloved, and the Buffalo region is no exception. Some of the least loved buildings were controversial when they were being built, while others just have not worn well. -- Leroy H. Welch (1971); Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay and Associates; I.M. Pei; Ulrich Franzen; Marcel Breuer; Pfohl, Roberts & Biggie; Paul Rudolph; Harrison and Abramovitz; Lathrop Douglass; Donald W. Love Architect and Associates; DiDonato and Associates; Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects [images]- Buffalo News

David Chipperfield Named as Architect to Redesign Metropolitan Museum of Art's Modern and Contemporary Art Wing and Adjacent Areas: Work on the wing will coincide with the Met's programming in the Marcel Breuer-designed building that formerly housed the Whitney Museum of American Art. - Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC)

Frank Gehry Steps in on Contested Sunset Strip Project: Earlier renderings for 8150 Sunset by Hart Howerton have been the subject of

heated local debate...Gehry's involvement is the latest development in an ongoing confrontation between the developer and community activists..."we knew there was only one choice for the preeminent architect of our time, and he happens to be local"... By Anna Kats - Artinfo

RSHIP reveals Bogota towers: Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners has unveiled its proposed 200m-tall towers scheme in Bogotá, Colombia...major mixed-use project, named Atrio... [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

High Line designer James Corner Field Operations tapped to design Miami's "Underline" linear park: ...plans to turn a 10-mile stretch of underutilized land beneath its elevated Metrorail into a park and bike path.- The Architect's Newspaper

DG presents a collection of Building + Design Movies (100s!)- DesignGuide

3 New Films Showcase 7 Architects Redefining the Role of Women in Architecture: "Gray Matters"; "Making Space: 5 Women Changing the Face of Architecture"; "Zaha Hadid: Who Dares Wins"...with their merits and shortcomings, are a welcome addition to the genre...although we've come a long way, we're still a bit uncomfortable with a woman in power. By Sarah Rafson -- Eileen Gray, Annabelle Selldorf, Marianne McKenna, Odile Decq, Farshid Moussavi, Kathryn Gustafson and Zaha Hadid.- ArchDaily

'The film is the story of a modernist': ...film director Mary McGuckian talks to DoCoMoMo's Shane O'Toole about "The Price of Desire"...spans 50 years of Eileen Gray's life and is told through the eyes of Le Corbusier...premieres at Jameson Dublin International Film Festival, March 19-29.- The Architects' Journal (UK)

"World Fair": A modernist, techno-utopia landed in New York in 1939, rocketing kids from the Depression into 'The World of Tomorrow'...Using sparkling, rare, colour film footage...director Amanda Murray mines the memories of several people who attended...With war raging abroad and Depression-era poverty ubiquitous at home, they escaped into the 'absolutely, shockingly beautiful' dreamworld of the event, if only for a day. [video]- Aeon Magazine (UK)

Standardize The Species? Designers Are Fighting To Redefine Your Body At The Cooper Hewitt Museum: Joe and Josephine are perfectly average...Conceived by Henry Dreyfuss...have been the standard upon which the proportions of everything from building interiors to dinnerware have been based...There is now another way to encounter the couple..."Beautiful Users" provocatively addresses the roots and legacy of Joe and Josephine in architecture and design. By Jonathon Keats - Forbes

Jan Kaplicky's Futuristic Visions: A new book and an exhibit at the Architectural Association in London bring together the fantastic drawings by the Prague-born architect and founder of London firm Future Systems..."Jan Kaplicky Drawings"...his concepts serve as a record of their time, and as art works in their own right. [images]- Azure magazine (Canada)

Heinz Architectural Center's "Sketch to Structure" highlights 1st steps of architectural thought: I have always been suspect of some of the fanciful squiggles that some architects display, claiming they show their first ideas for a building...But I've become convinced...that these sorts of abstractions are actually useful...a must-visit. By John Conti -- Tasso Katselas; Joseph R. Gasparella; Lorcan O'Herlihy; Edwin Lutyens; Frank Furness [images]- Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Art Gallery of Western Australia director Stefano Carboni nominates his top five Sculpture by the Sea entries: ...says Perth's own Sculpture by the Sea is no slouch on the arts stage. 70 diverse artworks will be at Cottesloe Beach until March 23. -- Haruyuki Uchida; Paul Stanwick-Wright; Ron Robertson-Swann; Graham Hay; Ken Unsworth [images]- PerthNow (Australia)

How a Great Book About L.A. Missed the Big Story: Mike Davis' "City of Quartz" 25 Years Later: ...seemed to predict the multiple disasters that hit L.A. and the region in the early '90s. It's hard enough to explain history when it's history; it's even harder to explain it when it hasn't yet occurred....the book still stings with insights. Yet, in hindsight...[he] missed the biggest story of its time, which was the massive immigration that was changing the region. By Frank Gruber - Huffington Post

Aging Gracefully: How Midcentury Modern Classics Adapted: ...unassuming village an hour north of Manhattan became an epicenter of modernist architecture...surviving homes have continued to evolve, a transformation explored in "Midcentury Houses Today" that looks at 16 of New Canaan's 91 remaining homes from this influential era. -- Walter Gropius; Eliot Noyes; Landis Gores; Philip Johnson; John Johansen; Victor Christ-Janer; John Black Lee- ABC News (US)

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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