

Today's News - Tuesday, August 25, 2015

- Yours truly went swimming with the fishies on WXY's SeaGlass Carousel last week - Dunlap was right: it's like no carousel you've ever ridden (with our own pix to prove it - ooh's and aaah's will ensue).
- Two pieces of news make us very sad: Edinburgh-based Malcolm Fraser Architects has closed its doors; and Nervi's Palazzo del Lavoro in Turin was being renovated, but it's gone up in flames - "most likely the result of arson."
- Some interesting takes on New Orleans on the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina: Mock explains how "a complicated culture of 'experiments' continues to shape the city," and that with climate-change planning, "we're all living in laboratories now" - but we need to "keep our eyes on 'who is being experimented on, and who's doing the experiment.'"
- Burnley digs into data that show "a murkier picture of economic progress emerging" in New Orleans, but there's also "a potential anecdote to guide the city to a more equitable future: the 'clusters theory.'"
- MacCash looks into how Make It Right's "story of the collection of angular, brightly painted homes has become a piece of New Orleans lore - an icon of inventive recovery"; Pitt feels "fantastic" about it, and is taking its lessons elsewhere.
- Beware! Barbarians (and naked boobies!) at the gate! NYC's mayor looks into abandoning Snøhetta's currently-under-construction Times Square plaza; police commish: "I'd prefer to just dig the whole damn thing up and put it back the way it was."
- Kimmelman weighs in on the "harebrained scheme": "What the city needs is serious thinking from the mayor about planning and public space. What it's getting is zero vision." - Davidson's Times Square take: tearing up the plaza might "clear out the undesirables" and "return the bow tie to its old denizens: cars," but "solving a current problem by reverting to an old one is, at best, a cop-out." - Goodyear sees no good in the offering: "Rather than coming up with modern-day strategies for managing these spaces, city leaders seem to be considering a return to the old status quo of just making them inhospitable to human life" (we're stunned by the number of comments in all the articles that support reverting to the old car-clogged Crossroads of the World!).
- Chaban, on a brighter note, cheers NYC's efforts to "beautify part of the nearly 200 miles of scaffolding covering city sidewalks - a ubiquitous New York eyesore."
- Kamin cheers Chicago's "fiercely competitive, frequently wise-cracking mayor" for "publicly promoting architecture - good design is a key instrument in the mayoral toolbox."
- Perhaps the powers-that-be in NYC (and every city) should take a look at the Project for Public Spaces' new database of "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" projects that prove "expensive and labor-intensive initiatives are not the only, or even the most effective, ways to bring energy and life into a community's public space."
- Meanwhile, FR-EE is "tapped to design a major new urban intervention along one of Mexico City's oldest roads" (it's much more than a "Mexican High Line").
- Newman minces no words about two "giant eggs" being laid in Los Angeles, made even more disappointing because their architects "are among the most gifted museum designers in the world."
- Moser revisits the (rather amusing) history of The Donald's first effort to sue a critic: "Kamin got off easy compared to his predecessor," Paul Gapp.
- Betsy x 2: an interesting take on the "potentials and pitfalls of crowdsourced architecture."
- He has high hopes for the 2016 Venice Biennale: "After the cynicism, realism, or constructive criticism (depending on your take)" of Koolhaas's 2014 effort, "Aravena promises a Biennale that will argue for architecture that improves the quality of living for all" (what a concept!).
- Volner gives Stern, "architecture's king of tradition," the New Yorker treatment: he "sees himself as a vessel for the best and oldest principles of American urbanism, maintaining and recapitulating them in a field too often swept up by novelty" (a great profile).
- How new findings in neuroscience offer insight into why a building like Palladio's Villa Rotunda "holds such power and why it won't abate."

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ANN Feature: Swimming with the Fishies: SeaGlass Carousel: David Dunlap was right: the new carousel in Lower Manhattan's Battery Park is like no other you've ever ridden...ooh's and aaah's will ensue. By Kristen Richards -- WXY architecture + urban design [images]- ArchNewsNow.com

Malcolm Fraser Architects goes into liquidation: Award-winning, Edinburgh-based practice has ceased trading...the firm, which was set up in 1993, had been unable to make its 'beautiful and important' output profitable. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Fire Consumes Pier Luigi Nervi's Palazzo del Lavoro (Palace of Labour) in Turin: The unoccupied exhibition hall, originally built for Italia'61, had been undergoing renovations...fire started on the second floor and is most likely the result of arson. - ArchDaily

New Orleans, the Reluctant 'City Laboratory': Ten years after Katrina, a complicated culture of "experiments" continues to shape the city...it's difficult to argue that New Orleans didn't benefit from becoming the world's learning lab...Discomfort with the term has not totally subsided...Given the way cities now approach climate-change planning alone, we can no longer avoid the fact that we're all living in laboratories now...we still had to keep our eyes on "who is being experimented on, and who's doing the experiment." By Brentlin Mock- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

New Orleans' New Normal Is Leaving Many Residents Farther Behind: New Brookings Institution data confirm there's a murkier picture of economic progress emerging...authors of "Opportunity Clusters: Identifying pathways to good jobs in metro New Orleans" also posit a potential anecdote to guide the city to a more equitable future: the "clusters theory" of economic development...congregating like-minded businesses into close proximity to one another. By Malcolm Burnley- Next City (formerly Next American City)

Brad Pitt: 'I feel fantastic' about Make It Right: The origin story of the collection of angular, brightly painted homes...has become a piece of New Orleans lore...an icon of inventive recovery. But getting to this point has been a complicated process...taken the lessons learned in the Lower 9th Ward and used them in other affordable housing developments in Missouri, Montana and New Jersey, with more sites on the way. By Doug MacCash -- Shigeru Ban; Thom Mayne; Frank Gehry- The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)

NYC Mayor de Blasio: Times Square Pedestrian Plaza Could Be Removed: ...said returning vehicles to the plazas could address complaints about topless women, costumed characters...Police Commissioner...signaled he would support the idea of adding back traffic lanes...where a paved pedestrian expanse is under construction. "I'd prefer to just dig the whole damn thing up and put it back the way it was"... - Wall Street Journal

Fixing Times Square: Try Again, Mayor de Blasio: The idea of ripping up the pedestrian spaces and forcing people to dodge traffic again runs headlong into a policy to improve safety...Never mind the prudish grandstanding...entertaining a harebrained scheme...What the city needs is serious thinking from the mayor about planning and public space. What it's getting is zero vision. By Michael Kimmelman- New York Times

De Blasio's Proposal to Destroy Pedestrian Times Square Is the Opposite of Progressive: His plan - one of several being considered by a new Times Square livability task force - would clear out the undesirables by also evicting everyone who happens to be lounging or strolling or snapping photos. Instead, it would return the bow tie to its old denizens: cars...solving a current problem by reverting to an old one is, at best, a cop-out. By Justin Davidson- New York Magazine

A National Model for Better Streets Is Suddenly at Risk: In challenging the Times Square pedestrian plaza, New York City leaders are showing a profound misunderstanding about the impact of public space...Rather than coming up with modern-day strategies for managing these spaces, they seem to be considering a return to the old status quo of just making them inhospitable to human life... By Sarah Goodyear- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

The Sidewalk Shed, a Ubiquitous New York Eyesore, Gets a Makeover: A High Line project and a design competition look to beautify part of the nearly 200 miles of scaffolding covering city sidewalks. By Matt A.V. Chaban -- Zaha Hadid [images]- New York Times

Mayor Emanuel burnishes Chicago's architectural stature and maybe his own: In a turn few would have predicted - and some might criticize as frivolous...the fiercely competitive, frequently wise-cracking mayor is publicly promoting architecture...a magnet that lures tourists by the boatload...touched, too, on the highly anticipated...Chicago Architecture Biennial...good design is a key instrument in the mayoral toolbox. By Blair Kamin- Chicago Tribune

New database of outstanding "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" projects around the globe: ...proof that expensive and labor-intensive initiatives are not the only, or even the most effective, ways to bring energy and life into a community's public space. - Project for Public Spaces

The Complete Street: FR-EE Envisages the "Mexican High Line": Ever since...the phenomenally successful High Line...cities around the globe have sought their own urban splint of greenery and public amenity...many of the biggest names in the profession have chimed in...FR-EE has been tapped to design a major new urban intervention along one of Mexico City's oldest roads. -- James Corner Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; MVRDV; Heatherwick Studio; Fernando Romero Enterprise; FRENTE arquitectura; RVDG arquitectura + urbanismo [images]- Architizer

Motion Picture Academy Lays Giant Egg on Fairfax Avenue: The intersection...is under an evil spell. Otherwise, I can't account for the two most questionable museum proposals to descend on the area...even more surprising is that two architects responsible for two separate proposals -- Renzo Piano and Peter Zumthor -- are among the most gifted museum designers in the world. By Morris Newman- California Planning & Development Report

That Time Donald Trump Tried to Sue a Chicago Tribune Architecture Critic Into Oblivion: The Donald wanted to build the tallest building in the world. Paul Gapp called it "one of the silliest things anyone could inflict on New York or any other city"...Blair Kamin got off easy compared to his predecessor... By Whet Moser- Chicago Magazine

The Potentials and Pitfalls of Crowdsourced Architecture: Can architecture be crowdsourced? If the strategy has success, it will add a dimension to the discipline and to our public space and infrastructure. On a more fundamental level, crowdsourcing raises questions about architecture's traditional model...still working in the margins. By Aaron Betsky -- Zones Urbaines Sensibles (ZUS); BIG- Bjarke Ingels Group; Arcbazar; Hemnet [images]- Architect Magazine

Alejandro Aravena's Promise for the 2016 Venice Biennale: ...the Chilean architect's potential to bring about substantive change through the 15th Venice Biennale...After the cynicism, realism, or constructive criticism (depending on your take), of Elements of Architecture...led by Rem Koolhaas...Aravena promises a Biennale that will argue for architecture that improves the quality of living for all. By Aaron Betsky -- Elemental [images]- Architect Magazine

Architecture's King of Tradition: Robert A. M. Stern sees himself as a vessel for the best and oldest principles of American urbanism, maintaining and recapitulating them in a field too often swept up by novelty. By Ian Volner- New Yorker

Why Brain Architecture Matters for Built Architecture: The way we subconsciously view the world by seeking out patterns and shapes we recognize affects the way we design: We know Palladio's Villa Rotunda as iconic...But only recently have we gained insight into why it holds such power and why it won't abate...New findings in neuroscience give us a clue...when we look at buildings that suggest a face, we feel a kinship, maybe a little love... By Ann Sussman [images]- Metropolis Magazine

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