

Today's News - Thursday, September 3, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Judging by the out-of-office replies to the newsletter for the past two days, much of the ANN world has taken off to celebrate the last days of summer and Labor Day on Monday. So we're doing the same - we'll be back Tuesday, September 8.

- Giovanni gives (mostly) thumbs-up to DS+R's Broad Museum: it's "a strong architectural presence - yet it manages to be discreet. The reticence, however, should not be confused for meekness."
- Amelar, on the other hand, has a different take: the Broad's perforated veil is "a radical exercise in contrasts" - it "seems oddly introverted, its skin less than convincing as an inviting, permeable screen - it seems more barrier than filter."
- Betsky tackles the Times Square controversy (and leaves us confused): tear out the pedestrian plazas and "force visitors to crowd onto sidewalks again. Have them dodge cars. That would make Times Square a better public space, if a much less pleasant one," but "if you want New York to be a better tourist trap," leave the plazas and "regulate those shocking painted ladies. Just don't pretend that you are thereby preserving public space."
- Florida parses new research into gentrification: it isn't caused only by rich people who decide to move into neighborhoods, public investments like transit, schools, and parks are "the real underlying drivers."
- Libeskind guest-edits CNN Style to ponder individuality in architecture, and the current battle "against commoditization and a 'design by committee' approach that devalues the architect's role" (with pithy quotes from some notable individuals).
- Wainwright looks at "why Russia has the world's most beautiful bus stops: Architects may have felt creatively stifled," but bus stops "were opportunities to flex their creative muscles - and boy did they let rip" - and he's totally wow'd by Herwig's photos (so are we!).
- MacCash cheers "a post-Katrina gift to New Orleans": the artist retreat behind the Joan Mitchell Center is an "elegant" structure that "houses the sort of spacious studios most artists only dream of."
- The design team for the Los Angeles Convention Center expansion won the job with a proposal "focused on the theme of authenticity and communicating the culture of Los Angeles."
- The Worldwide Network of Port Cities issues a new guide for cities planning to work on their ports, with guidelines "meant as sources of inspiration."
- The Henning Larsen Foundation names three winners in its film competition intended to "revitalize the use of architecture in film" (and they're online).
- Eye-fuls of architectural photographer Wayne Thom's truly amazing treasure trove of photos, soon to be publicly accessible for the first time ever, that "shows when LA's skyline became modern."
- The first house Gaudí designed will open as a museum in 2016: it is "an essential work for understanding his unique architectural language and the development of Modernism in Barcelona."
- Two we couldn't resist: Eye-fuls of "19 of the world's coolest playgrounds designed by top architects."
- Eye-fuls of an astounding palace built of pebbles by a French postman who spent 33 years gathering stones in a wheelbarrow on his 18-mile route, and "one of the most magnificent amateur architectural structures to date."
- Weekend diversions:
 - Jones has a field day dissing Banksy's Dismaland: the artist "has created something truly depressing - as an actual experience it is thin, threadbare and, to be honest, quite boring" (and "brings together a lot of bad art by the seaside") - ouch!
 - Webb cheers the "innovative proposals" in "Shelter: Rethinking How We Live In Los Angeles," an "exemplary exhibition" in the A+D Museum's "handsome" new digs (though he bemoans "the absence of succinct labels").
 - Riefe gets some of the "Shelter" architects to riff on Gehry getting in on the LA River plan: "Hearing Gehry speak to reinventing hydrology practices while also mentioning a desire to maintain and preserve the concrete sides of the river is anything but progressive and, in and of itself, is a farcical statement."
 - Farago finds MoMA's "Endless House" to be "a diverting if diffuse exhibition whose very loose thesis is that the single-family home was as essential to the development of modern architecture as the tower block or the planned city."
 - At Yale, "City of 7 Billion: A Constructed World" considers "the impact of population growth and resource consumption by examining the entire world as a single urban entity."
 - "Out of the Loop: Chicago 2015" is "a narrative of Chicago as perhaps rarely seen."

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Inside Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Broad Museum: DS+R used a minimum of means to achieve...a strong architectural presence...yet it manages to be discreet. The reticence, however, should not be confused for meekness: the design successfully stands up to the lyrical complexity of Disney Hall by rivaling its intensity. By Joseph Giovanni [images]- Architect Magazine

L.A. Screenplay: An art museum lifts its perforated veil, revealing the repository for its vast holdings...a radical exercise in contrasts: Broad Museum seems oddly introverted, its skin less than convincing as an inviting, permeable screen. Veils can be contradictory - open and closed, revealing yet enveloping - and here, it seems more barrier than filter. By Sarah Amelar -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro [images]- Architectural Record

Times Square and the Reality of Public Spaces: Mayor Bill de Blasio's recent suggestion that he might take out the pedestrian plazas...may seem reactionary and ill-advised, but it does point to a basic problem with public space: we are never quite sure what it is or what it is for...force visitors to crowd onto sidewalks again...Have them dodge cars...That would make Times Square a better public space, if a much less pleasant one...if you want New York to be a better tourist trap...leave the nicely designed lounging spaces...and regulate those shocking painted ladies. Just don't pretend that you are thereby preserving public space. By Aaron Betsky- Architect Magazine

The Role of Public Investment in Gentrification: Neighborhoods don't transform only because rich people suddenly decide to move there: ...a comprehensive review of gentrification research...helps us better understand the real underlying drivers..."transit-induced gentrification"...public schools...parks and reclaimed open space...the revitalization of our cities and the very structure of urban areas have long been shaped by massive public investments. By Richard Florida- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Individuality in architecture: Will we ever see buildings like these again? ...can individuality in architecture stand up to increasing pressure from developers to deliver universally popular designs? CNN Style guest editor Daniel Libeskind warns that his profession is currently battling against commoditization and a "design by committee" approach that devalues the architect's role. -- Jürgen Mayer H.; David Rockwell/Rockwell Group; Sam Jacob/FAT- CNN

Soviet superpower: why Russia has the world's most beautiful bus stops: Architects may have felt creatively stifled...but there was one place where their imaginations were encouraged to run riot...Photographer Christopher Herwig went on a 30,000km odyssey to capture their strange beauty ["Soviet Bus Stops"]...they were opportunities for local sculptors, architects and builders to flex their creative muscles -- and boy did they let rip. By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

The Joan Mitchell Center, \$12.5 million artist retreat, a post-Katrina gift to New Orleans: The face of the center is the 1790s mansion...But the centerpiece of the new institution is mostly hidden from the street...The elegant structure...houses the sort of spacious studios most artists only dream of. By Doug MacCash -- Jonathan Tate; Lee Ledbetter and Associates [images]- The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)

Design Selected for Los Angeles Convention Center Expansion: ...proposed design will expand it from 870,000 to 1.28 million total square feet...winning proposal is focused on the theme of authenticity and communicating the culture of Los Angeles. By Murrye Bernard -- Populous; HMC Architects; Chu+Gooding Architects; OLIN [images] - Contract magazine

Plan the city with the port: guide of good practices: ...guidelines are meant as sources of inspiration to address four major topics: spatial organisation; economic development strategies; environmental challenges, project management and governance. - AIVP - Le Réseau Mondial des Villes Portuaires / Worldwide Network of Port Cities

Henning Larsen Foundation film competition revitalizes the use of architecture in film: ...three winners announced...Cole Phoenix Skaggs, architecture student at Cornell University won first place...Sam Renseiw is the runner-up...a nom-de-plume for Danish architect Thomas Wiesner...Third place goes to Barbara Bohr - Henning Larsen Foundation

Trove of Architectural Photos Shows When LA's Skyline Became Modern: At the dawn of the 1960s, Los Angeles lacked a true city skyline...And then a flurry of new high-rise construction in the 1960s, '70s, and 80s transformed the cityscape...Perhaps no one captured the rise of this new...skyline better than architectural photographer Wayne Thom...[his] archive of 250,000 images...acquired by the USC Libraries...will soon be publicly accessible...for the first time ever. -- John C. Portman, Jr.; Albert C. Martin & Associates (now AC Martin Partners) [images] - Southland / Gizmodo (Los Angeles)

First house designed by Gaudí to open as a museum in 2016: Casa Vicens, a Unesco World Heritage building, is currently undergoing renovation..."an essential work for understanding his unique architectural language and the development of Modernism in Barcelona" - The Art Newspaper (UK)

19 of the world's coolest playgrounds designed by top architects -- Snøhetta; Robert Cirjak/Wibit Sports; Tezuka Architects; Tom Otterness; Rafael Rivera; MLRP; Basurama; Olek/Márcia Maria Benevento; T.C.L./Taylor Cullity Lethlean; Bob Cassilly; MONSTRUM; Tres Birds Workshop; JMD Design; Höweler + Yoon Architecture [images] - Business Insider

Labour of love! French postman spends 33 years building impressive Palace from pebbles: Ferdinand Cheval collected stones in a wheelbarrow during his 18-mile post route...Le Palais idéal still stands in Hauterives in France, 100 years after it was finished in 1912...adorned in fanciful statues resembling ostriches, elephants and bears...one of the most magnificent amateur architectural structures to date. [images] - Daily Mail (UK)

In Dismaland, Banksy has created something truly depressing: The artist's 'Bemusement Park' claims to be making you think, but as an actual experience it is thin, threadbare and, to be honest, quite boring...looks much better in photos than it feels to be here...This is somewhere to come to say you went...As a news story, a media sensation, it works wonderfully - but up close...It's not an experience, just a pasteboard substitute...brings together a lot of bad art by the seaside. By Jonathan Jones [images] - Guardian (UK)

Strategies for Shelter in L.A.: A+D Museum is now located in a handsome, spacious loft...an appropriate location to celebrate the art of architecture...Six L.A. architects have contributed innovative proposals to "Shelter: Rethinking How We Live In Los Angeles," an exemplary exhibition co-curated by Sam Lubell and Danielle Rago. By Michael Webb -- Bureau Spectacular; LA-Más; Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects; MAD Architects; PAR; wHY Architecture - FORM magazine

City of water: architects challenged to reboot Los Angeles: Frank Gehry's plans for the city's river remain under wraps, but in the meantime, the A+D Museum has asked designers to present their visions for the city: "Shelter: Rethinking How We Live in Los Angeles"..."Hearing Gehry speak to reinventing hydrology practices while also mentioning a desire to maintain and preserve the concrete sides of the river is anything but progressive and, in and of itself, is a farcical statement." By Jordan Riefe - Guardian (UK)

"Endless House" Expands the Definition of Home: ...a diverting if diffuse exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, whose very loose thesis is that the single-family home was as essential to the development of modern architecture as the tower block or the planned city. By Jason Farago -- Frederick Kiesler; Elizabeth Diller/Ricardo Scofidio; Rem Koolhaas - New York Times

Yale architecture exhibition takes on global problem: Envisioning the "City of 7 Billion: A Constructed World" considers the impact of population growth and resource consumption by examining the entire world as a single urban entity...explores humanity as a geological force...models the phenomenon of global development. -- Joyce Hsiang/Plan B Architecture and Urbanism; Bimal Mendis - Bloomberg News

Narratives of the Vernacular: Emphasizing the Designs of Chicago's Neighborhoods: "Out of the Loop: Chicago 2015," a publication that arose out of this year's Vernacular Architecture Forum conference, is many things: a compendium of original research and architectural fieldwork, a tour guidebook, an academic reference, and a narrative of Chicago as perhaps rarely seen. - Newcity Design (Chicago)

ANN Feature: New Name and New Directions: Boddewyn Gaynor Architects, DPC: Q&A with the firm's principals about the changes they've made, and how they affect the firm's operations and future plans. [images] - ArchNewsNow.com



The Broad: Diller Scofidio + Renfro: Dubbed "the veil and the vault," the museum's design merges the two key programs of the building: public exhibition space and the storage that will support the Broad Art Foundation's extensive lending activities. By Kirsten Kiser -- Gensler [images]

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