

Today's News - Friday, September 18, 2015

- Iovine finds a "welcome to Oz" moment in DS+R's Broad museum: "Though too eccentric to be an enduring touchstone work of architecture, the building deserves to be celebrated for a bravado and smart urbanism that future Angelenos can cherish."
- Wainwright finds the Broad to be "the latest addition to what has become something of an architectural fancy dress parade along Grand Avenue - a motley group now joined by an abrasive white rock that threatens to grate them all to pieces."
- Russell x 2: The Broad is "a pleasurable place to view extraordinary art," it "is not in the same class" as museums "made when great collectors and great architects clicked."
- He explores another "burgeoning arts district" in the "sprawling, mongrel-like metropolis" that is Los Angeles beyond the "line-up of cultural crown jewels on South Grand Avenue."
- Kamin parses the revised design for the Lucas Museum in Chicago: "At least Jabba the Hut is on a diet. But that hardly means the improved plan should get the green light. Is this stretch of Chicago's lakefront about to become an intergalactic architectural petting zoo, more notable for futuristic structures than the prized public space they occupy?"
- Keegan considers the revised Lucas Museum "comic book landscape urbanism - it won't wow us any more when it's built than it does now. Ma has the talent to pull off this difficult project and really make something unique - the question has to be, what's holding him back?"
- Gluck minces no words about what she thinks of the façade on L.A.'s Petersen Automotive Museum: "We're getting a Vegas-esque distillation of every bad architectural trend. Obnoxious, loud, and, ultimately, sure to be inexplicably embraced by the public" ("I pray the interior redesign helps me get over my misgivings").
- Mecanoo x 2: the Dutch take over from Foster + Partners to renovate the New York Public Library (we anxiously await details/images, but glad to hear Beyer Blinder Belle is on board as well) + Eyefuls of the firm's plan for £350m Manchester University engineering campus, "said to be one of the largest single construction projects ever undertaken by a university in the UK."
- Eyefuls of the U.S. Tall Wood Building Prize Competition winners: SHoP Architects and Lever Architecture get some big bucks to "to support tall wood demonstration projects in New York and Portland, OR."
- Weekend diversions:
- Lange offers a terrific round-up of must-see shows that hope to "immerse viewers in the world of a designer," from Minneapolis, London, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver, and Pittsburgh.
- "Pioneros: Building Cuba's Socialist Childhood" at Parsons explores "the material world of childhood in Cuba from the 1960s to the 1980s" from the curator's "grandparents, who, in an era of limited resources, 'kept almost everything.'"
- "Listen to this Building" at the Miami Center for Architecture and Design "helps the blind and those with sight 'see' downtown Miami architecture" with hopes "to effect social policy changes in making Miami more accessible to people who are blind."
- Wainwright finds "Palladian Design: The Good, the Bad and the Unexpected" at RIBA London "a compelling exhibition. Some of the most entertaining exhibits come from more recent forays into Palladian pastiche."
- Stocks seems to agree: "Palladian Design" is a "cunningly curated little show is a reminder that the architect's influence is very much alive and kicking - the Paduan's influence still has plenty of puff in it."
- Hume and Bozickovic each cheer "Shaping Canadian Modernity: Toronto's City Hall and Square Competition and Its Legacy" at Ryerson University: "we're right to celebrate how Toronto got it right, for once" + "A parochial, prudish city took an unusually bold leap."
- "Poetry and Dream" at the Tate Modern puts "avant-garde architects Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin in the spotlight."
- Wiener says Rybczynski's "Mysteries of the Mall and Other Essays" is "clear-headed and thoughtful, knowledgeable but unpretentious," showing "an even-handed curiosity and delight," though "as a reflection of our culture - the collection unfortunately falls short" ("show dogs" included).
- Hawthorne says Goldberger's "Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry" is "generally astute, terrifically readable and disappointingly restrained."
- Bozickovic finds Goldberger's "Building Art" chronicles "how Gehry became the most famous architect of his time," and "implies some answers but never really delivers them."
- Gendall thinks Goldberger's tome presents Gehry as "someone not only committed to the art of architectural form, but also a practitioner with a deeply held conviction about architecture's responsibility to social concerns."
- Medina has a great Q&A with Goldberger re: "Gehry's peculiar psyche, his triumphs and disappointments, and giving reporters the finger."

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The Architecture of The Broad: A Building of Bravado: ...comes to life through a quirky and challenging design: ...a resounding success...Details throughout are exquisitely executed...circular glass elevator rising through the very center is a thing of beauty...Arrival at the third-floor gallery is a "welcome to Oz" moment...Though too eccentric to be an enduring touchstone work of architecture, the building deserves to be celebrated for a bravado and smart urbanism that future Angelenos can cherish. By Julie V. Iovine -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro- Wall Street Journal

The Broad: supersized cheese grater hits LA: ...a dazzling, white temple reminiscent of a Bond villain's lair - and very LA: ...the latest addition to what has become something of an architectural fancy dress parade along Grand Avenue...a motley group...now joined by an abrasive white rock that threatens to grate them all to pieces. By Oliver Wainwright -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Frank Gehry; Coop Himmelf(l)au; Rafael Moneo; Arata Isozaki- Guardian (UK)

Open doors: Los Angeles gets a brand-new contemporary-art museum: Expectations for the Broad...have been growing...Some of America's greatest museums have been made when great collectors and great architects clicked...Though it is a pleasurable place to view extraordinary art, the Broad is not in the same class. By James S. Russell -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro- The Economist (UK)

Scrubbing up well: A burgeoning arts district is helping California's biggest city reinvent itself: Many Angelenos have never been completely persuaded that their sprawling, mongrel-like metropolis could ever have a proper downtown, even though it has...a line-up of cultural crown jewels on South Grand Avenue, on what is called Bunker Hill...But the sceptics should take heart. Another part of the city-centre that has been ignored for decades is now coming to the fore... By James S. Russell -- Annabelle Selldorf/Selldorf Architects; Michael Maltzan/HNTB- The Economist (UK)

Lucas museum design: At least Jabba is on a diet: Give George Lucas his due: The new, slimmed-down design of his once-bloated lakefront museum is better than the first try...But that hardly means the improved plan...should get the green light...clutter remains the essential issue...Is this stretch of Chicago's lakefront about to become an intergalactic architectural petting zoo, more notable for futuristic structures than the prized public space they occupy? By Blair Kamin -- Ma Yansong/MAD Architects; SCAPE landscape architects; Studio Gang [images]- Chicago Tribune

New Lucas museum plans: A comic book landscape urbanism: Its total size has been decreased...but size wasn't really the problem with the earlier scheme...There is a nice amount of parkland...but its design is pedestrian...won't wow us any more when it's built than it does now - and it already seems a little tired...Ma has the talent to pull off this difficult project and really make something unique...the question has to be, what's holding him back? By Edward Keegan -- Ma Yansong/MAD Architects [images]- Crain's Chicago Business

The New Look of the Petersen Automotive Museum is Really Really Bad: I realize I'm treating the building purely as a visual phenomenon rather than as an experience and I pray the interior redesign helps me get over my misgivings...we're getting a Vegas-esque distillation of every bad architectural trend. Corrugated aluminum? Check. Steel cladding? Check...Obnoxious,

loud, and, ultimately, sure to be inexplicably embraced by the public. By Marissa Gluck -- Welton Becket (1962); Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) [images]- Curbed Los Angeles

Mecanoo replaces Foster + Partners on New York Public Library renovation: ...to lead the renovation of its iconic main building on Fifth Avenue and a smaller branch nearby...Last year, library leaders abandoned a controversial \$300 million renovation plan.... -- Beyer Blinder Belle- Dezeen

Mecanoo unveils £350m Manchester University engineering campus: ...working with Penoyre & Prasad and Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture on the project which is said to be one of the largest single construction projects ever undertaken by a university in the UK. [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

U.S. Tall Wood Building Prize Competition Winners Revealed: USDA and Softwood Lumber Board award \$3 million to support tall wood demonstration projects in New York and Portland, Oregon: Framework and 475 West 18th...to embark on the exploratory phase of their projects...have also obtained early support from their respective authorities having jurisdiction to proceed. -- SHoP Architects; Lever Architecture [images]- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Experiencing Architecture Through 'Hippie Modernism' and Retrospectives: Several exhibitions...will try to immerse viewers in the world of a designer. "Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia" (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis); "The World of Charles and Ray Eames" (Barbican, London); "Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957" (Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston); "Making Place: The Architecture of David Adjaye" (Art Institute of Chicago); "Frank Gehry" (Los Angeles County Museum of Art/LACMA); "Case Work: Sculptures and Drawings by Allied Works Architecture" (Denver Art Museum); "HACLab Pittsburgh: Imagining the Modern" (Carnegie Museum); Chicago Architecture Biennial. By Alexandra Lange- New York Times

"Pioneros: Building Cuba's Socialist Childhood": ...an exhibition of the material world of childhood in Cuba from the 1960s to the 1980s...have been gathered as part of the project Cuba Material...by curator María A. Cabrera Arús...features more than 200 objects - toys, clothing, books, furniture, appliances...and other childhood ephemera - culled primarily from the collection of Cabrera Arús' grandparents, who, in an era of limited resources, "kept almost everything"...at the Parsons Sheila C. Johnson Design Center through October 1 - Parsons The New School for Design

"Listen to this Building" helps the blind and those with sight 'see' downtown Miami architecture: Miami Center for Architecture and Design...EXILE Books and Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, have created a first-of-its-kind architecture show designed for people who are blind or visually impaired...aims to help those with sight become conscious of the limitations of what someone who is blind...to create a more empathic community and to effect social policy changes in making Miami more accessible to people who are blind. - Miami Herald

Why Palladio is the world's favourite 16th-century architect: The Italian's stately ideas have shaped buildings for 400 years. "Palladian Design: The Good, the Bad and the Unexpected" traces how Palladian design took over the world...at RIBA London...a compelling exhibition...Some of the most entertaining exhibits come from more recent forays into Palladian pastiche... By Oliver Wainwright -- Charles Hind; Raymond Erith and Quinlan Terry; Cullearn & Phillips - Guardian (UK)

Polyvilla: Palladian paradigms: 'Palladian Design: The Good, the Bad and the Unexpected': ...this cunningly curated little show at the RIBA is a reminder that the 16th-century Italian architect's influence is very much alive and kicking...the sheer range of contemporary responses strongly suggests that the prominent Paduan's influence still has plenty of puff in it. By Christopher Stocks -- Caruso St John; Erik Gunnar Asplund; Inigo Jones; Aldo Rossi; Oswald Mathias Ungers; tephen Taylor architects [images]- Wallpaper*

City Hall deserves the big birthday fuss: Viljo Revell's creation turns 50, and we're right to celebrate how Toronto got it right, for once...it remains our most powerful civic symbol, the only structure in town that comes close to expressing Toronto's aspirations, if not its reality..."Civic Symbol: Creating Toronto's New City Hall"...Christopher Armstrong's brilliant and informative account of how the process brought out the best and worst in Torontonians. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

City Hall's Well that Ends Well: Fifty years ago, a parochial, prudish city took an unusually bold leap -- and Toronto's curvaceous, modern City Hall opened its doors. But it took a happy historical accident for the design to get off the ground...The hall and square, with their exuberant architecture...just barely came to pass. Toronto surprised itself, with the sort of bold leadership that doesn't exist in the city today..."Shaping Canadian Modernity"...looks back to the design competition of 1957... By Alex Bozikovic -- Viljo Revell/John B. Parkin Associates; Kenzo Tange; B.V. Doshi; I.M. Pei; John Andrews; David Horne; Halldor Gunnlogsson/Jorn Nielsen; Perkins & Will; William Hayward [images]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Avant-Garde Architects Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin in the Spotlight: ...copper plate etchings of dystopian and fantastical worlds...in "Poetry and Dream" at the Tate Modern in London...and a reprint of "Brodsky & Utkin," a collected volume of their etchings...can be seen as a form of criticism of Soviet architecture in the 1970s and 1980s... - The Moscow Times (Russia)

How to Make Architecture Human: Witold Rybczynski's "Mysteries of the Mall and Other Essays" skewers the avant garde, but overlooks prisons and urban shrinkage: ...clear-headed and thoughtful, knowledgeable but unpretentious...an even-handed curiosity and delight...favors humility, subtlety, and functionality...his tastes trend toward staid, quietly elegant buildings...has little patience for the avant-garde, celebrity architects, vanity competitions, or spectacle..."Libeskind, Nouvel, and Koolhaas"...are akin to "show dogs"...As a reflection of our culture...the collection unfortunately falls short. By Anna Wiener- The New Republic

"Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry" vividly renders Gehry yet misses the full picture: here are some important sources we don't get to hear from in...Paul Goldberger's blandly titled, generally astute, terrifically readable and disappointingly restrained new biography...long on satisfying detail...short on the sort of direct critical judgment that might shed useful light on why certain Gehry buildings...are masterpieces...while others...are indulgent and deeply flawed. By Christopher Hawthorne- Los Angeles Times

Paul Goldberger's "Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry" chronicles how Gehry became the most famous architect of his time: ...implies some answers but never really delivers them... the Mirvis Gehry project in Toronto...finds him back in the city of his idealized youth...he'll leave a mark on the city that is 92 storeys high. It's easy now to imagine what Frankie Goldberg might have felt about this. It'll take another book to unpack what Frank Gehry has to say. By Alex Bozikovic- Globe and Mail (Canada)

Goldberg to gold-standard: Frank Gehry in focus with new show and biography: In "Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry," Paul Goldberger sympathetically presents Gehry's story...the Gehry that emerges...is someone not only committed to the art of architectural form, but also a practitioner with a deeply held conviction about architecture's responsibility to social concerns. By John Gendall- Wallpaper*

Q&A: Paul Goldberger on Frank Gehry's Life and Work: The architecture critic on Gehry's peculiar psyche, his triumphs and disappointments, and giving reporters the finger: "Building Art: The Life and Work of Frank Gehry" acknowledges the architect's celebrity status but doesn't acquiesce in it. By Samuel Medina- Metropolis Magazine

Architecture's New Scientific Foundations, Part 3: Adaptive vs. Random Complexity, Part 2. Nourishing environments are complex yet highly organized, but cannot be minimalistic. By Nikos A. Salingaros - ArchNewsNow.com

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