

Today's News - Wednesday, October 5, 2016

- A sad, sad day: We lose Bing Thom much, much too soon.
- McKay pens a fascinating take on "new pseudo-realistic" renderings that he finds "disturbing. We live in a strange time where how real something looks is judged by how unreal it is."
- Wainwright visits Norway's memorial to the Utøya massacre that has transformed the island "into a place that tells the story with stark, stirring power" - but "the overall message is one of optimism."
- Filler gives two thumbs-up to a supportive housing project in the "gritty" South Bronx by the "architectural Robin Hood" Gorlin: the "pragmatic gem proves that America's ever-widening gap between rich and poor is neither inevitable nor unbridgeable when it comes to architecture."
- Lange x 2: she visits two DS+R projects on the East and West Coasts "to gauge whether the firm's signature moves signify the future, the present, or the soon-to-be-past."
- With only a few minor quibbles she is quite taken with the new African American museum on the National Mall: "This museum, on that spot, would be important even if it were an empty shell. Luckily, it is far more than that."
- Kennicott offers a most thoughtful take on the museum's day two: "Throughout the emotional celebrations, I felt presentiments of wariness - for several reasons."
- Bevan, meanwhile, has a conversation with the globetrotting Adjaye re: why London "remains his creative hub," and how working on the African American museum "was almost therapy."
- Betsky x 2: he cheers BIG's Via 57 West: "I love when buildings manage to do what this structure accomplishes."
- As LACMA and two other Pereira buildings in L.A. face iffy futures, he "ponders the fate of stripped-down Modernist architecture not yet deemed classic."
- U.K.'s Simpson is tapped to design the University of Notre Dame's new School of Architecture, a "neo-classical brick structure with a plaza and a tower" (what else?).
- The Mayor of London gives the go-ahead for three new Thames crossings.
- Not included is Heatherwick's "uniquely lovely" Garden Bridge, so Lumley "pleas for fresh private funding."
- NYC tries out a new online planning platform that lets residents shape their neighborhood on their smartphones, and other cities are signing up to do the same.
- Zellner plans to launch the "tuition and salary free" Free School of Architecture next summer - it "will not be accredited, will not offer professional degrees" (and won't be/do a whole lot of other things).
- Wainwright cheers Mendes da Rocha winning the RIBA Royal Gold Medal "for his 'raw, primal' concrete structures."
- Meanwhile, back at Notre Dame, Spanish architect Nuere is awarded the €50,000 Rafael Manzano Architecture Prize for New Traditional Architecture.
- We won't know until tomorrow who will take home this year's Stirling Prize, but in the meantime, check out AJ's Stirling Prize documentary and which project the AJ's alternative judging panel chose.

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Obituary: Bing Thom, 75, remembered for 'building beyond buildings': As news of [his] unexpected death rippled across Vancouver, Canada and the globe, a long-time colleague remembered him as an extraordinary figure in the world of architecture - for his career accomplishments, his views on buildings' roles in communities and his down-to-earth personality. - Vancouver Courier

The Ethics of Rendering: Acceptable Lies When Anything is Possible: These new pseudo-realistic images are called "visualizations." This is disturbing, since it implies that we've all agreed to outsource our imaginations...and evaluating worth is reduced to a thumbs-up or down evaluation of those images...We live in a strange time where how real something looks is judged by how unreal it is...When buildings are designed to look like their own visualizations, the less-than-virtuous circle is complete. By Graham McKay - Common Edge

'We had to tell this dark story' ... how Utøya is remembering the massacre: Some children wanted the cafe where their friends were murdered to be torn down. But grieving parents needed it to remain. The architects of Utøya's memorial building [Hegnhuset] in Norway explain how they told a story of loss - and survival...the site of the 22 July massacre...has been transformed into a place that tells the story with stark, stirring power...the overall message is one of optimism. By Oliver Wainwright -- Blakstad Haffner Arkitekter; 3RW [images] - Guardian (UK)

A Higher Form of High-Rise: The finest apartment building completed recently in New York City...is in the gritty Morrisania section of the South Bronx...Boston Road Supportive Housing...strikingly fresh, deceptively simple...the notable contrast in design quality between Violy's magic beanstalk and Gorlin's pragmatic gem proves that America's ever-widening gap between rich and poor is neither inevitable nor unbridgeable when it comes to architecture. By Martin Filler -- Alexander Gorlin Architects [images] - New York Review of Books

Diller Scofidio + Renfro, on the edge: Is architecture's most cutting-edge firm on the precipice of innovation or ubiquity? Alexandra Lange visits two DS+R-designed buildings...to gauge whether the firm's signature moves signify the future, the present, or the soon-to-be-past...Vagelos Education Center...perfect for its site, location, and context...What troubled me at Columbia...is that...they still haven't overcome everyday drag...My favorite...is the one that seems (mostly) free of conflict between ambition, symbolism and function...the Berkeley Museum of Art / Pacific Film Archive. -- Gensler; EHDD - Curbed

Inside the new National Museum of African American History and Culture: The NMAAHC works like a power player who only speaks in a whisper. You have to lean in...This museum, on that spot, would be important even if it were an empty shell. Luckily, it is far more than that...the architecture - No columns! No stone! Color! - is a breakthrough on multiple fronts. By Alexandra Lange -- David Adjaye; Phil Freelon; Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroupJJR; Gustafson Guthrie Nichol; Davis Brody Bond; Ralph Appelbaum Associates [images] - Curbed

On Day Two, a new establishment museum begins its work: Throughout the emotional celebrations, I felt presentiments of wariness...I am wary for several reasons...spectacle of power, thick with politicians celebrating a symbolic milestone while failing to act on real crises that add to the danger and disadvantage of being African American, only adds to the wariness we should feel...the symbolic power of the new museum is extraordinary, necessary... By Philip Kennicott -- David Adjaye; Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroupJJR - Washington Post

David Adjaye: 'America saved me but London is my backbone': As his landmark museum opens in Washington DC, globetrotting British architect...explains why his home city remains his creative hub: Did working on the museum tell him more about his own heritage? "It was almost therapy." By Robert Bevan -- Adjaye Associates - Evening Standard (UK)

Via 57 West and the Complexity of Compact Living: ...a pleasant escape in the atypical form of the latest multifamily project by BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group: I love when buildings manage to do what this structure accomplishes, which is to take the existing landscape, both natural and human-made, and condense and reshape it into a single form...reveals its inner nature and makes it clear that this is not just a piece of sculpture... By Aaron Betsky [images] - Architect Magazine

Which William Pereira Buildings Are Worth Preserving? As three Los Angeles Pereira buildings face uncertain futures, Betsky ponders the fate of stripped-down Modernist architecture not yet deemed classic: I find it heartening to see the reappraisal of Brutalism [and] movements to save...even lesser examples...Now at least two of [his] other designs, the 1963 Metropolitan Water District headquarters and his 1971 addition to the Los Angeles Times headquarters, are under threat of demolition. By Aaron Betsky -- Peter Zumthor [images]- Architect Magazine

University of Notre Dame unveils design for new School of Architecture: ...school will move into a new neo-classical brick structure with a plaza and a tower...designed by British architect John Simpson...Walsh Family Hall of Architecture will be the second element of a planned arts quadrangle... [image]- South Bend Tribune (Indiana)

Sadiq Khan approves three new Thames crossings in East London: Mayor of London gives go-ahead to Silvertown Tunnel, DLR extension and pedestrian-cycle bridge...new schemes would boost economic growth and support housing...- BD/Building Design (UK)

Joanna Lumley makes plea for 'uniquely lovely' Garden Bridge: Celebrity backer defends controversial project and pleads for fresh private funding: ...explained how she believed the Thomas Heatherwick-designed structure would be positive for the capital...bridge's aim was "primarily" as a "useful extra crossing of the Thames for people on foot or in wheelchairs." - BD/Building Design (UK)

Armchair Planning Association: A new online planning platform lets residents shape a neighborhood from the comfort of their smartphones: With the help of coUrbanize...the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development is testing its new toolkit of neighborhood planning ideas in Brownsville, Brooklyn...cities farther afield (Atlanta, San Antonio) are signing up.- The Architect's Newspaper

Peter Zellner to launch Free School of Architecture: ...will launch in the summer of 2017 as a "tuition and salary free" school..."While the idea for FSA is still gestating, I can describe what it won't be. [It] will not be accredited, will not offer professional degrees...will not provide course credit or reciprocity with traditional institutions and will not have a permanent home." - The Architect's Newspaper

Brazilian architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha wins RIBA Royal Gold Medal: Celebrated for his 'raw, primal' concrete structures...A figure far removed from the usual cast of international "starchitects", the 87 year old has spent the past six decades building a body of work...that stands out for its force of expression and bold structural power, married with finely crafted detail. By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

Spanish architect Enrique Nuere awarded the 2016 Rafael Manzano Architecture Prize for New Traditional Architecture, presented by the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture in partnership with the Richard H. Driehaus Charitable Lead Trust...will be presented with €50,000 and a commemorative medal at a ceremony on Oct. 19...in Madrid.- University of Notre Dame School of Architecture (Indiana)

The AJ's Stirling Prize documentary is out! Watch "The RIBA Stirling Prize at 21" to find out which project the AJ's alternative judging panel chose...will the AJ's winner be the same as the RIBA jury's? We'll have to wait until tomorrow night...to find out. By Laura Mark [video]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

ANN feature: Call for Entries: Green Skyline - Country Garden - Forest City Landmark Architecture International Design Competition: Seeking a green skyline for a new and sustainable smart city in Malaysia. Registration deadline: October 15- ArchNewsNow.com



BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group: Urban Rigger, Copenhagen, Denmark: ...a low-cost, modular housing system that can be altered, replicated and floated. If BIG have their way, Copenhagen's harbor will soon be dense with floating shipping containers hosting young academics...an original, joyful, and genuinely functional project. By Benjamin Wells [images]

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