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THE EAST
ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER
12 07.06.2011

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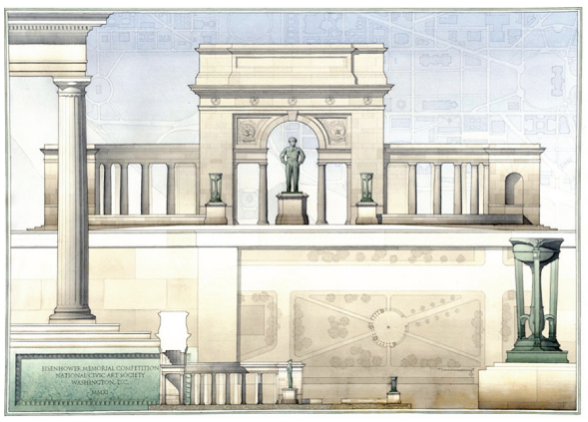
NO WHITNEY CLONE, MAINTENANCE BUILDING WILL HAVE A PRESENCE ON THE HIGH LINE

COURTESY RPBW/BBB

SUPER SHED

Designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW) with Beyer Blinder Belle (BBB) as architect of record, the new High Line Maintenance and Operations (M&O) building is no incidental shed for storing lawnmowers. It is a substantial 21,000-square-foot, four-story structure with a complex program that mixes public and private, backstage functions and an open-air gallery. "If I had only two words for the building: it would be frugal and robust," said Mark Carroll, senior architect **continued on page 7**



COURTESY NCAS

OPPOSITION TO GEHRY'S EISENHOWER MEMORIAL SPAWNS COMPETITION FOR SOMETHING CLASSICAL

NEW OR DÉJÀ VU

While the planning for President Dwight D. Eisenhower's memorial in Washington, D.C. began in the last century, the Eisenhower Memorial Commission is seeking a distinctly 21st-century space for the 34th president. But the contemporary approach is drawing the ire of groups pushing for a more traditional design. In 2009 following a national competition, Frank Gehry was selected to design the four-acre plaza, Eisenhower Square, south of the National Mall between the National Air and Space Museum and the Lyndon B. Johnson Department of Education Building.

Gehry's design, markedly absent his vocabulary of twisting forms, calls for a colonnade of unadorned limestone pillars supporting 80-foot tall woven stainless steel screens depicting scenes from Eisenhower's life. A continuous mesh band is set 90 feet from the Education Building, and two 100-foot-wide screens frame the opposite corners. **continued on page 4**

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CESARE QUERCI/COURTESY MAXXI

MAXXI'S OWN YOUNG ARCHITECTS PROGRAM WINNERS

WHEN IN ROME

As announced in March, the Museum of Modern Art and PS1 of New York have joined forces with MAXXI in Rome to launch YAP MAXXI, the first Italian edition of the 12-year-old Young Architects Program. On June 23, an exhibition of the five finalists and the winning project opened simultaneously at MoMA and MAXXI, documenting all five MoMA PS1 finalists and the five MAXXI finalists.

In Rome, the winning project, *WHATAMI* designed **continued on page 9**

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AKRIDGE

D.C. ZONING ALLOWS FOR RAIL YARD DECKING

CROSSING UNION LINES

"Nothing like this has ever happened in D.C." is how architect Shalom Baranes described the recent rezoning of the rail yards behind Union Station in the nation's capitol. Baranes has been retained by the developer Akridge to design a mixed-use development across fourteen-acres of platform. Both the developer and the architect have remained relatively mum during the zoning process, preferring to wait until the ink had dried on official documents. The D.C. Zoning Commission unanimously passed the order in April and published it on June 9. The developer has set the bar pretty high for Baranes by calling the project Burnham Place after Daniel Burnham, the hundred year-old station's architect.

An initial reaction might be to compare the project to New York's massive Hudson Yards proposal. But it's **continued on page 3**

ASYMPTOTE/COURTESY OMI

IN UPSTATE NEW YORK, OMI'S SCULPTURE PARK PLAYS MIND GAMES.
SEE PAGE 4

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CREATIVE CLASS ON THE MOVE

Any worthy report bolsters and expands upon an anecdotal truth. Architects gravitate to New York City in large numbers—even larger numbers than expected—making design the fastest growing creative industry in New York, according to the Center for an Urban Future (CUF), "a think tank dedicated to independent, fact-based research about critical issues affecting New York's future."

But we knew that. Now what? The recommendations of the report are concise and within reach—and in need of immediate and vocal endorsement by the entire design community.

On a small scale, the city already supports the fashion industry, helping to facilitate the move of the fall fashion shows to Lincoln Center, launching an incubator in the Garment District, and arranging a fellowship program and workshops for fashion entrepreneurs. That kind of backing needs to be more substantial to have any real meaning—the incubator is for 12 companies. But first, the city needs to understand that design is much more than fashion. It is that broad and diverse definition of the profession—encompassing everything from game design to building design—that has the potential, if treated as a single entity, to have tangible impact on the economy.

Too much political capital has already been spent on grousing and counter-grousing about the disappointments of the Javits Center as economic driver. The CUF report rightly says the show's the thing, not the convention center itself, and suggests the city ought to better promote the design-related trade shows already here, namely ICFF. (It also roots for the resurrection of Brooklyn Design, shut down this year when state funding was withheld.)

Other cities do it better. At the Milan furniture fair every year, banners stream across the streets, almost every shop, restaurant and hotel is stacked with event guides and maps. The city makes an enormous investment in high quality design installations spread across many neighborhoods. There is always a major attraction demanding vast international media coverage. One year, the big event was at a palazzo where Yoko Ono artfully suspended knives, Robert Wilson staged a one-person drama in a life-size Cornell box, and Peter Greenaway sat naked in a bathtub—thought provoking at all kinds of levels.

London has also pulled way ahead of New York as a design destination, and in just a few short years. Can you imagine a New York City Design Council working with the NYCEDC to hatch plans for a design event? That's what happened in London when British Design Council and the London Development Corporation launched the London Design Festival in 2003. In order to foster the festival as a citywide event, marketing tool kits provided by the city go out to all participating design organizations, non-profits, museums, shops and many others. With a stroke—at the cost of a few banners, stickers, a website and a map with flags—the design festival is a branded event for the city that now attracts 350,000 visitors to events across the city for nine days every year.

The CUF report recommends begetting a New York Design Festival, but that could be expensive, something to save for flusher times. But right now there are things that can be done, again, following the example of others. In Korea, for instance, Seoul has built up a vendor list to promote designers and architects with strong track records for jobs within government and accessible to city, BIDs and development corporations. This is not the same as the Department of Design and Construction's Design Excellence procurement program. It is simply a trusted resource list shared by all city departments—parks, planning, transportation, schools, health, etc.—on all matters of design from structures to signage to graphics for brochures. That may sound like a pipe dream given the local credo of balkanized power bases, but it would be an excellent starting place, and it is an achievable goal.

And what about a mayoral advisory group on urban design policy and priorities. Again it already exists in London, and Mayor Daley in Chicago relied on an informal design policy group that has helped put Chicago way ahead on the sustainable design front. The report, available for a good read at www.nycfuture.com, is loaded with other smart ideas, from matchmaking designers to tech start-ups in entrepreneurial partnerships to creating affordable housing for the design industries and promoting the export of architecture and design services in the same way we export cars and beef.

Bloomberg may be in his last lap, but the next administration will be looking around for do-able initiatives that provide a big bang for the smallest buck. Now is the time for architects and designers to put their shoulder to the grind to frame and promote those plans. Let's make sure that the new mayor feels that ignoring such farsighted plans would be a scandalous loss for the city.

JULIE V. IOVINE

BILLINGS FALLS TO WORST NUMBERS SINCE FEBRUARY 2010

LOW BLOW

Let's be frank: the news is grim. The latest Architecture Billings Index (ABI) dropped even further, from 47.6 in April to 47.2 in May. AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker didn't try to sugarcoat the latest numbers, saying, "In a word, it doesn't look good. We've now had two pretty significantly bad months after two really slow months. It's going to be a rocky recovery." If there's any comfort in numbers, then the industry can take solace in that it's not alone. Baker found the dip to be part of a national trend that's not unique to design firms. With a government in retreat from propping up the economy and lenders acting skittish, the readings reflect the big picture.

Last month the ABI took its lowest dive since the February 2010 low of 44.8. Anything below 50 is considered negative territory. But after three months of holding steady around 50, the dip left some wondering if April's shift was just a blip or a harbinger. While continuously concerned about the credit crunch, Baker took a glass-half-full point of view at the time, saying that some short-term effects such as the storms in the South or floods in the Midwest could have affected the number. "But now we're in more systemic issues, like the stimulus package," said Baker. "And we're looking at commodity issues as well; when costs are going up, that makes it harder to pencil out."

Unfortunately, a breakdown of the numbers makes the bleak picture bleaker. For starters, the South dipped further down from 48.3 in April to 47.5 in May. The Midwest stumbled from a positive 51.1 to a negative of 45.9. The Northeast also took a dive with last month's 51.2 falling to 47.6. The West remained negative, with April's 47.7 shifting to 49.3 in May. The sector breakdown saw multi-family residential stay steady at 53.6 from 53.9, while commercial/industrial fell further from 49.9 to 46.5, institutional fell further from 45.9 to 44.9, and mixed practice slipped from 49.8 to 45.2. Project inquiries stayed positive at 52.6, but not as good as April's 55.

Baker said that with a recession as deep as this one, 3 to 4 percent growth would be normal, but with numbers showing 2 to 3 percent growth, firms had better prepare for the long haul. "I was hoping last month it was a one month aberration. But I don't think we'll see steady numbers—the trajectory has changed," he said. "When we do see improvement, it will be a bit more modest, but I don't think it will be as bad as the past four years." **TOM STOELKER**

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LETTERS

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD FOR SEMINARY

In his piece "Not Too Close: New Renderings General Theological Seminary " [*AN* 11_06.22.2011] Tom Stoelker cites a supposed "one lone voice" against the plan, architect and Chelsea resident David Holowka. This is ridiculous and untrue. There are very few residents who live on the blocks surrounding the GTS that support this plan. Did Mr. Stoelker canvas any of them (us) before writing his article? He never talked to me. And, by the way, the Landmark Preservation Commission apparently also does not support this plan as they sent the architects back to the drawing board on June 21, when they turned the proposed plan down.

NICK FRITSCH
CHELSEA
NEW YORK, NY

PLANNING SUCCESS FOR NORTHWEST

Regarding Katherine Fung's article on interstate highways within cities ["Go Down, Moses," *AN* 11_06.22.2011], I was surprised that there was no mention of Portland Oregon. Many years ago Portland removed the interstate highway along its river front and made a beautiful park in that space, yet another proposed Robert Moses project was the catalyst for that decision. Now every effort is being made to banish automobiles from the city center. As a result, walking in downtown Portland is one of the great urban experiences in this country. A follow up article seems to be in order here. Nice work.

GARY MARTIN
PORTLAND, OR

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CESARE QUERCI/COURTESY MAXXI

WHEN IN ROME continued from front page by stARTT, a collective of young Roman architects founded in 2008 by Simone Capra and Claudio Castaldo, temporarily transforms the square in front of Zaha Hadid's museum that opened in 2009. A green public space, it will host summer events devoted to a gamut of contemporary arts while encouraging the public to linger in a space that has yet to be landscaped or designed, according to MAXXI senior curator Pippo Ciorra. The jury for the first Italian edition of the Young Architects Program included, in addition to Ciorra (who also served on the New York jury), Pio Baldi, Margherita Guccione, Anna Mattirolo, Barry Bergdoll, Maristella Casciato, and Mario Nannia.

The awarded project, *WHATAMI* is based on a 1767 puzzle—considered the first puzzle invented and based on a map of the world—designed by the Englishman John Spilsbury with pieces divided geographically by coasts and mountain ranges. By way of an update, stARTT's project composes a tectonic puzzle with stray grass islands flowing over MAXXI's concrete outdoor pavement. The architects declare their intention to blend Hadid's "hard, hygienic, and monochrome" piazza with their own "softer, racy, and colorful" living space. It is a game paying homage to the geographical maps of Alighiero Boetti, to whom the square is dedicated.

This archipelago of artificial hillocks comprise eight green islands built on hay bales and earth covered by some 7,000 square feet of lawn. The largest island is fixed at the center with seven smaller islands on wheels around it that can be moved by the public as desired. The mobile landscape is illuminated at night by eighteen 5-foot-tall red fiberglass flowers—by day they provide shade. A small pool—a water feature also required at the PS1 installation—completes the installation. Also, as in Queens this year, the key theme is recycling: the hills will be dismantled with the materials, and all light elements, donated to the district for reuse.

As well as emphasizing the public status of the MAXXI space, the objective is to promote an upcoming generation of innovative designers sensitive to environmental issues. The acronym for stARTT is Study of Architecture and Territorial Transformations, and the firm is dedicated to focusing on man-made changes in the environment at different scales of intervention and varying degrees of complexity, whether involving landscape, territory, city, urban design, public works, or private architecture. Their work exemplifies the latest trend among young Italian firms in mingling research and practice, where pieces of landscape easily become objects of furniture and architecture can make a meaningful impact on the urban environment. **DARIA RICCHI AND ANTONINO CARDILLO**

AT DEADLINE

PIANO FORTE

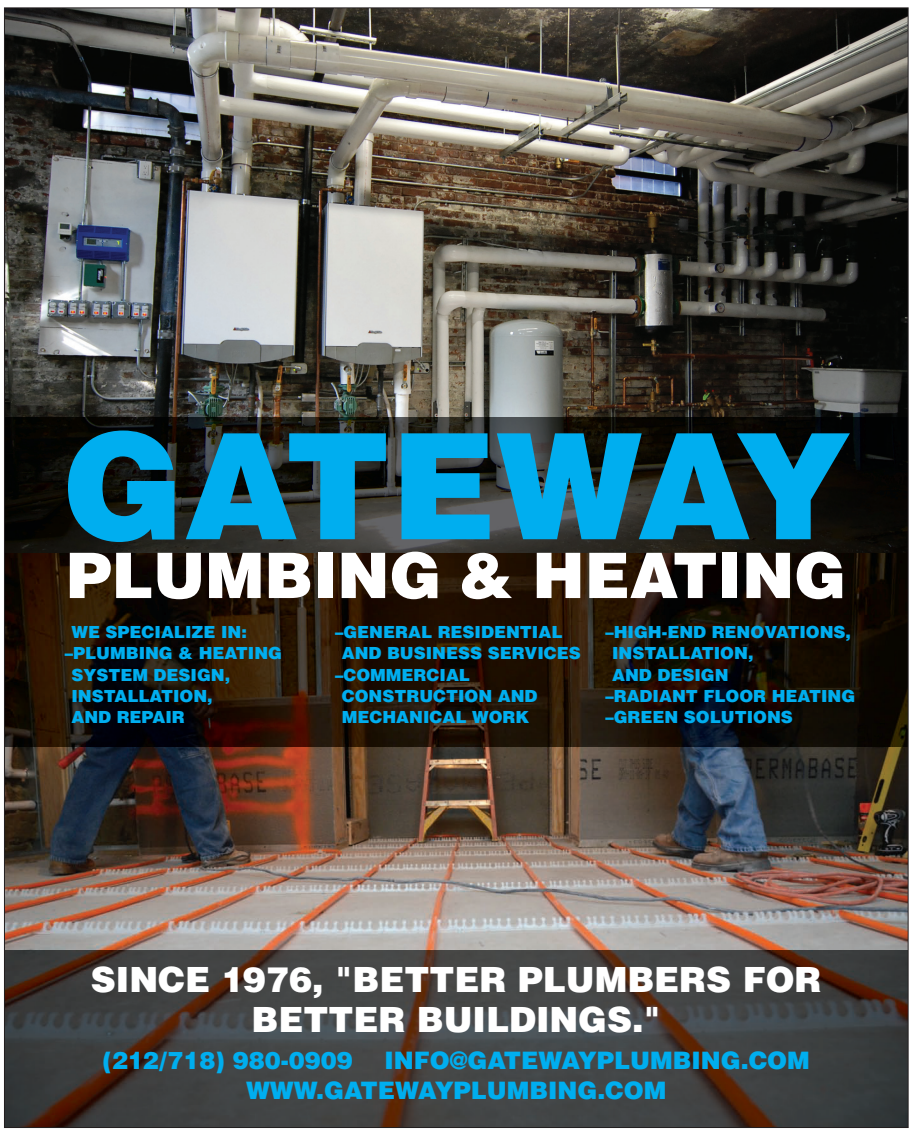
Frank Gehry is looking to sell his archive, Richard Meier opens his Queens storage room for models to visitors by appointment, and now Renzo Piano is giving back, too. On June 10, his eponymous foundation launched a new awards competition to encourage young Italian architects, a rare breed these days. To that end, the competition was open to designers under 40 with an office in Italy presenting a constructed work. The jury, composed mostly of architectural magazine editors, whittled 69 entries down to three winners who demonstrated "innovative and poetic space research." The purse for the prize was 10,000 euros each. And the winners are Iotti+Pavarani architects, ARCó and carlorattiassociati.

CRANES HANG IN BALANCE

With a deadline looming, crane operators in New York had yet to finalize a contract, threatening to halt work at some of New York's biggest construction sites. *Crain's New York* broke the crane story and reported that $10 billion in construction projects might be effected, including work at the Barclays Center at Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn and World Trade Center Tower 4 (although both sides have agreed to continue work at the rest of the World Trade Center site with or without a contract). The developers and contractors are seeking to eliminate so-called "no work" positions of mechanics and oilers. Union reps are offended by "no work" characterization for what they say is well-trained and highly skilled labor. A deal must be reached by June 30.

JUMPSTARTING KIMMEL

On June 23, the Philadelphia city council gave the Kimmel Center the green light to revamp the Viñoly-designed arts complex. The building was celebrated upon its completion in 2001 but has soured in the court of public opinion over the years, in part due to a vast interior plaza which remained empty for much of the time. A new masterplan drawn up by KieranTimberlake hopes to animate the space by breaking through the Locust Street facade and situating a Wolfgang Puck café-restaurant in the void. Viñoly offered no comment on the renovations.

PROPS FOR SKYSCRAPER PROGENITOR

The Cities Service Building at 70 Pine Street in Manhattan, once the world's tallest, finally made the grade at Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 21. It could be argued that the subtle Deco lines of the 66-story building played second fiddle to the Gothic grandeur of the Woolworth Building, and now New York by Gehry threatens to upstage the 1932 masterpiece by Clinton & Russell, Holton & George. The commission decided to step in and give the building some well-earned respect by landmarking the exterior and its marble-clad lobby.