

**Laura Hartman designs materially-engaging, finely-detailed buildings that acknowledge, interpret, and transform the traditions in which they are rooted, assembling many voices in innovative and adaptable responses to site and circumstance.**

Hartman co-founded Fernau & Hartman Architects with Richard Fernau in 1981. For her, design is a continuous process that extends from concept through punch-list. Her hand guides all phases of the firm's projects, from initial planning and programming through detailing and construction, working at many scales, from furniture design to master planning. In a firm known for material explorations and detailing, Hartman has had particular responsibility for these aspects of the design effort.

Across thirty-five years, her work—drawing on Bernard Maybeck's marriage of conventional and emerging materials, William Wurster's explorations of the outdoor room, MLTW's modern dialogue with the vernacular, and Joseph Esherick's sensitivity to ecology and to light—has helped the Bay Area tradition evolve. The reach of her work extends from its roots on the Pacific Coast to Colorado and Montana, the Hudson and Potomac Rivers, Buzzard's Bay and Martha's Vineyard. As Martin Filler wrote in *Harper's Bazaar*, "There's no confusion...about the importance Fernau & Hartman Architects has had in gently redirecting the priorities of American architecture."

### Wide-Ranging Design Vision

Hartman finds points of departure for these projects in the specifics of site and the needs of clients. She engages immediate and distant landscape, exploring gradations of living between indoors and out. And she combines remarkable sensitivity to historical and vernacular buildings, deep understanding of human scale, and extraordinary attention to materials and detailing. Sustainability has always been fundamental to Hartman's practice since her first published work—the Maoli House—was recognized in the Progressive Architecture/SERI Passive Solar Competition in 1982.

### Enduring Relationships

Hartman's deep interest in all aspects of collaboration—within the firm, with clients, with materials, and with the land—is exemplary. She conceives of design as an ongoing process that synthesizes desires and demands while giving form to the many voices involved in making a building. The results are evident not only in her houses, but also in her institutional work, such as current Bay Area projects for CuriOdyssey at Coyote Point and San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park. Whether designing collective housing for the Cheesecake Consortium or joining old and new timbers in a repurposed barn at UC Santa Cruz, her work weaves disparate motives and points of view into enduring relationships, both physical and social. Her on-going engagement with Cheesecake (since 1990) and UC Santa Cruz (since 1985) exemplifies Hartman's ability to nurture lasting relationships with clients.

### Dialogue between Art and Architecture

A key feature of Hartman's work is the constant dialogue of art and architecture, allowing her artistic hand to temper the rigors of construction. Each informs the other. Her buildings' rich palettes reflect her teaching of color theory at UC Berkeley, and her collage work is a laboratory for exploration of form, material, and meaning. A major retrospective of twenty years of this work opened at 871 Fine Arts Gallery in San Francisco in fall 2017.

### International Influence

Hartman's work has been published extensively—in, for example, ten separate issues of *Global Architecture Houses*. In her office, she has nurtured many talents who have gone on to start award-winning firms or to teach in schools of architecture. An accomplished educator, she taught visual art and architecture at UC Berkeley from 1981-1992 and subsequently at other schools in the U.S. and Canada. She has spoken on design at over 50 architecture schools and AIA chapters across 23 states and served on over 30 design awards juries in 16 states.

From the particulars of people and place, of materials and construction, Laura Hartman has produced buildings that, as Beth Dunlop writes in *Improvisations on the Land: Houses of Fernau + Hartman* (2015), have "a sense of spontaneity and joy that eludes much of the self-conscious architecture that surrounds us today."