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Susan Herrington

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Susan Herrington : Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy FionaWell written and very interesting account of a pioneer in her field

Cornelia Hahn Oberlander is one of the most important landscape architects of the twentieth century, yet despite her lasting influence, few outside the field know her name. Her work has been instrumental in the development of the late-twentieth-century design ethic, and her early years working with architectural luminaries such as Louis Kahn and Dan Kiley prepared her to bring a truly modern and audaciously abstract sensibility to the landscape design tradition. In *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape*, Susan Herrington draws upon archival research, site analyses, and numerous interviews with Oberlander and her collaborators to offer the first biography of this adventurous and influential landscape architect. Born in 1921, Oberlander fled Nazi Germany at the age of eighteen with her family, going on to become one of the few women to graduate from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design in the late 1940s. For six decades she has practiced socially responsible and ecologically sensitive planning for public landscapes, including the 1970s design of the Robson Square landscape and its adjoining Provincial Law Courts, one of Vancouver's most famous spaces. Herrington places Oberlander within a larger social and aesthetic context, chronicling both her personal and professional trajectory and her work in New York, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Seattle, Berlin, Toronto, and Montreal. Oberlander is a progenitor of some of the most significant currents informing landscape architecture today, particularly in the area of ecological focus. In her thorough biography, Herrington draws much-deserved attention to one of the truly important figures in landscape architecture.

This is a wonderful book about a remarkable woman. Susan Herrington deftly embeds the life and career of Cornelia Oberlander into the trajectory of modern landscape architecture, giving her her rightful place among leading modern designers. One can't fail to be impressed by Oberlander's ability to respond to the issues and needs of her times and simultaneously be an innovator and trendsetter. By force of personality, honed skill, and knowledge, Oberlander continues to evolve in her seventh decade of practice. She fused the best of a Weimar upbringing, a Harvard Bauhaus education, and collaborations with great architects to create designs that imaginatively wedded social service and environmental responsibility. Oberlander is a trailblazer for women and for landscape architecture, always addressing the distinct cultures and landscapes of Canada, where she is now a national treasure. (Kenneth Helphand, University of Oregon, author of *Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime*) The story of Oberlander and landscape architecture from the 1940s to the 2000s has not been told as richly as it is here. This book will inspire students, engage professionals, and challenge historians to consider biographical narratives in a more critical manner as contributions to design and practice history. (Thasa Way, University of Washington, author of *Unbounded Practice*) Herrington gives the reader wonderful insight into the life and mindset of this remarkable woman. (Chicago Botanic Garden)... Herrington lends a unique approach to the telling of the story by weaving Oberlander's biography within the trajectory of modern landscape architecture.... Herrington's book not only offers a deeper understanding of this transformative figure, but demonstrates how larger movements are rooted in everyday practice and thus shaped by forces not beyond our control. About the Author Susan Herrington is Professor of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of British Columbia and the author most recently of *On Landscapes*.