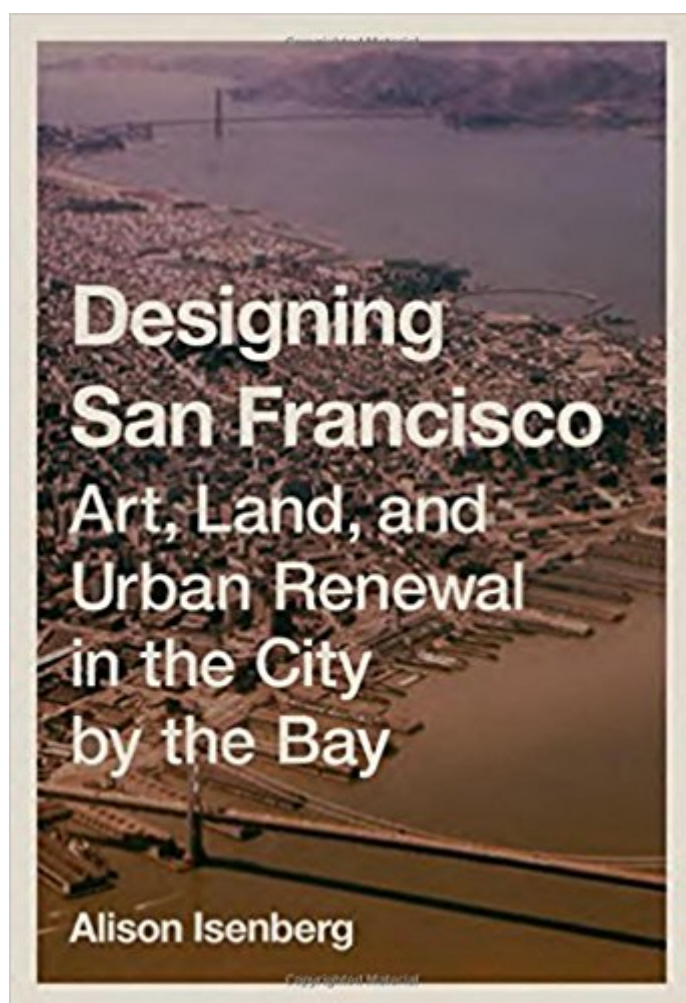


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# Designing San Francisco: Art, Land, And Urban Renewal In The City By The Bay



## Synopsis

A major new urban history of the design and development of postwar San Francisco. Designing San Francisco is the untold story of the formative postwar decades when U.S. cities took their modern shape amid clashing visions of the future. In this pathbreaking and richly illustrated book, Alison Isenberg shifts the focus from architects and city planners—those most often hailed in histories of urban development and design—to the unsung artists, activists, and others who played pivotal roles in rebuilding San Francisco between the 1940s and the 1970s. Previous accounts of midcentury urban renewal have focused on the opposing terms set down by Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs—put simply, development versus preservation—and have followed New York City models. Now Isenberg turns our attention west to colorful, pioneering, and contentious San Francisco, where unexpectedly fierce battles were waged over iconic private and public projects like Ghirardelli Square, Golden Gateway, and the Transamerica Pyramid. When large-scale redevelopment came to low-rise San Francisco in the 1950s, the resulting rivalries and conflicts sparked the proliferation of numerous allied arts fields and their professionals, including architectural model makers, real estate publicists, graphic designers, photographers, property managers, builders, sculptors, public-interest lawyers, alternative press writers, and preservationists. Isenberg explores how these centrally engaged arts professionals brought new ideas to city, regional, and national planning and shaped novel projects across urban, suburban, and rural borders. San Francisco's rebuilding galvanized far-reaching critiques of the inequitable competition for scarce urban land, and propelled debates over responsible public land stewardship. Isenberg challenges many truisms of this renewal era—especially the presumed male domination of postwar urban design, showing how women collaborated in city building long before feminism's impact in the 1970s. An evocative portrait of one of the world's great cities, Designing San Francisco provides a new paradigm for understanding past and present struggles to define the urban future.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Alison Isenberg's *Designing San Francisco* explores a series of controversies from the 1940s through the 1970s, decades when activists, artists, environmentalists, and preservationists challenged establishment approaches to land use, public sculpture, and urban redevelopment in the Bay Area. Her fascinating book is essential reading for anyone interested in the politics of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design."--Dolores Hayden, Yale University, author of *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*"*Designing San Francisco* makes a major contribution to the history and practice of urban planning and architecture. Probing deeply into how urban plans are worked out on the ground by a broad cast of city builders, Isenberg offers the first serious and persuasive alternative to the longstanding binary opposition between the partisans of Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses."--Mary P. Ryan, author of *Mysteries of Sex: Tracing Women and Men through American History*"*Masterful and compelling.*"--Julia L. Foulkes, author of *To the City: Urban Photographs of the New Deal*

Alison Isenberg is professor of history at Princeton University, where she codirects the Princeton-Mellon Initiative in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities. She is the author of *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*.

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