



## LOVE EVERY LEAF: THE LIFE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT CORNELIA HAHN OBERLANDER

by | par Kathy Stinson

Tundra Books. Toronto, ON, 2008

87 pages. ISBN 978-0-88776-804-0

This is a book the CSLA should place on the desks of school career counselors to inspire new devotees to the profession... | Voilà un livre qui devrait se retrouver sur les bureaux des conseillers en orientation pour inspirer les nouvelles vocations...

## LOVE EVERY LEAF

READ BY | LU PAR SHIONA SOMMERVILLE

It is fitting that Cornelia Hahn Oberlander should choose Stinson, a celebrated children's author, to pen her biography. Written for teens, Stinson's book reveals a remarkable woman and introduces the profession of landscape architecture to a young audience. On both counts, more books like this are much in need.

*Love Every Leaf* traces the life of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander from her childhood play in her mother's garden, her terrifying flee from Nazi Germany, her schooling at Smith College and Harvard, her nascent career, to her recent work. Oberlander, who is a member of the Order of Canada and recognised "Grand Dame" of the Canadian landscape architectural community, has a long and varied career that is well represented in these pages. Stinson intersperses descriptions and photographs of Oberlander's renowned projects with her design philosophy. Projects include Oberlander's rooftop gardens on the Vancouver Public Library and the Canadian Embassy in Berlin, the extensive grounds of the Legislative Building in Yellowknife, and the National Gallery of Canada. All of her projects demonstrate a keen curiosity in artistry paired with a practical knowledge of drainage, material choice, and a site's ecology. The book focuses, however, on the wondrous play spaces Oberlander has designed for children. Stinson's book describes a commitment to enhancing the quality of play in the lives of children. Indeed, Stinson suggests, this was an enduring passion for Oberlander.

### PLAYFUL PLOYS FOR YOUNG READERS

Stinson's writing style and Oberlander's design acumen are well matched: both women captivate the imagination of children. Stinson endears in her choice of words and playful ploys to attract the attention of her young readers. (In her introduction to Oberlander's Expo '67 playground, Stinson offers that 1967 was also the birth year of hockey player Curtis Joseph and actress Julia Roberts.) Oberlander, in her many designs for playgrounds, challenges children to create their own playthings of wooden blocks and scraps of metal, and to explore the landscapes of turf mounds, water and rocks. A chapter devoted to Jim Everett Park in Vancouver explains the many design and technical challenges Oberlander overcame in transforming a former derelict site, and depicts how the park is used by children of all ages, as well as the young at heart.

If this book is not the definite volume on Oberlander's life and work, it makes up for its omissions in its sense of fun and in its outreach to a future generation of landscape architects. This is a book that the CSLA should place on the desks of high school career counsellors to inspire and embolden new devotees of the profession.

Other books by the author: *Red is Best* and *Big or Little*.