



Marta Gutman, Ph.D.
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University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D., 2000

Columbia University, M.Arch., 1981

Brown University, A.B. with honors in art, 1975

Marta Gutman, an architectural and urban historian, is dean of the Spitzer School of Architecture at the City College of New York | CUNY, the city's premier public school of architecture. Expert in the history of public architecture for children and in repurposing architecture as a strategy for city-building, she studies ordinary places in American cities. Through this work, she tackles power and culture in all walks of life, emphasizes the activism of women especially on behalf of children, and ties local stories to national and international histories. Gutman's commitment to social justice has been manifest since she started her career as an architect designing housing for the New York City Housing Authority and shelters for battered women, abused children, and homeless New Yorkers.

Part of a multigenerational CUNY family, Gutman accepted the invitation to lead the Spitzer School of Architecture in 2021. She believes that Spitzer students are the future of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and urban sustainability in New York City, and that the graduates of a public school of architecture as diverse as Spitzer are changing design, design education, and the professions in the great city that the school serves.

In her writing, research, and teaching, Gutman shows that the built environment is more than a background for social practices: it instantiates the democratic experiment in the United States while it simultaneously ingrains social inequalities, racial exclusions, and material failures in every manner and scale of inhabitation and construction. In *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014), Gutman recovered a lost landscape of everyday buildings that women repurposed for children. Named a *Times Higher Ed* book of the year (2014), *A City for Children* received the Kenneth Jackson prize from the Urban History Association (2015), the Spiro Kostof prize from the Society of Architectural Historians (2017), and several other prizes. Her award-winning research on the WPA swimming pools in New York City showed them to be stages for expanding urban citizenship during the New Deal, especially for marginalized children and youth. *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children* (Rutgers Univ. Press, 2008) is the first book in English to dissect the material worlds of children using interdisciplinary and international perspectives.

Gutman coordinated history-theory curricula at the Spitzer School of Architecture from 2006 to 2020. Winner of the Provost's Outstanding Teaching Award (2013-14), she led the Spitzer School's development of a new BA program in Urban Studies and the Built Environment, and she reworked the four-semester required survey of architecture into a bona-fide survey of world architecture. The penultimate assignment, [House Histories](#), invites students to write a term paper about a family home. In her teaching at Spitzer and the Graduate Center, she follows a social constructionist perspective, honed from studying Henri Lefebvre, and engages timely topics that have included "Children and the City," "Gender and Architecture," "Street Scenes: New York in Film," "Film, Architecture, and Cities in Modernity," and, in conjunction with the Graduate Center, "Architecture and Urbanism in the United States since 1945," "Social Matters: Modern Architecture and the Welfare State," and "Race, Space, and Architecture in the United States." In spring 2024, she and Interim Associate Dean Michael Miller, Ed.D., will pilot the new course "How to Succeed in Architecture School."

While serving as dean, Gutman also continues to advise doctoral students in architectural, art, urban, and social history and is active in scholarly organizations, mostly recently leading the Society for American City and Regional Planning History (2019 to present). She coedited *Buildings & Landscapes* for six years (2009-2015) and is one of the four historians who founded [Platform](#) in 2019. Her research, published and reviewed in scholarly publications, has been praised widely, including in the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Danish Humanities Council, and other organizations.

As Distinguished CUNY Research Fellow at the Graduate Center's Advanced Research Collaborative in 2018, Gutman explored historical inequalities in public education and the schools that children learn in, elucidating the consequences for children and their childhoods.

Her chapter “Intermediate School 201: Race, Space, and Modern Architecture in Harlem,” in *Educating Harlem: A Century of Schooling and Resistance in a Black Community*, eds. Ansley Erickson and Ernest Morrell (Columbia Univ. Press, 2019), received the 2021 Catherine W. Bishir Prize from the Vernacular Architecture Forum.

Gutman’s current book project, *Just Space: Modern Architecture, Public Education, and Racial Inequality in New York City* (Univ. of Texas Press, forthcoming), places architecture at the center of the struggle for racial justice in urban public education, exposing the architectural side of the battle for school desegregation. The book directs attention to the physical tools that the state used to segregate schools, and to parents, teachers, students, architects, and other activists who challenged inequality and reconfigured outcomes to make just space for children.