

SAMAHA & HART

Get Inspired and Learn from Client



Samaha and Hart are duo interior designers from San Francisco, United States. They are willing to tell us their experiences for ArtMAX starting from taking all offered projects until the time when finally, they could be selective on choosing the projects.



Bassel Samaha has over 20 years of experience in architectural practice since graduating from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where he was awarded the Thesis Prize for Design. Prior to opening Samaha+Hart in 2006, he worked on numerous projects of various scales, from residential to civic. At Fougerson Architecture Bassel managed the office and served as the Project Architect on two San Francisco Public Libraries, as well as a major housing project for seniors. As an Associate with C. David Robinson Architects, Bassel was the Project Architect on the Charles M. Schulz Museum, among other civic and institutional projects. Bassel began his career as a Designer with the San Francisco office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill for nearly five years, working on a series of high rise and institutional projects.

Heather Hart has 15 years of experience in architectural practice. Prior to co-founding Samaha+Hart, Heather was a Studio Leader at Andrew Skurman Architects where she worked on numerous high quality residential projects and served as the Project Architect for the major public spaces of a 5-star resort in Southern California. Earlier in her career, Heather worked at Mark Cavagnero Associates Architects, as well as at the San Francisco office of HOK. With MCAA, Heather worked on a variety of cultural and commercial projects. While at HOK, she worked on multiple office towers throughout the bay area and was part the design team for the Asian Art Museum. Heather has a Bachelors of Arts in Architecture from the University of California, Berkeley and is a licensed architect in the State of California.





Tam Valley House
A new house on a
very steep hill



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How do you seek inspiration for your design? What or who influence your design style? Why ?

In San Francisco we are very fortunate to have a great number of talented architects and designers. We get inspiration every day from the work of these friends and colleagues. We also get inspired and learn from our clients. We are constantly surprised by what they teach us if you listen.

Do you choose your client? In what aspect you chose your client?

When we started the office a little over seven years ago we really did not have the luxury of "choosing our clients". We took almost every project we could get because we were eager to build and grow the office. Seven years later we have found that we can be a little more selective and





that clients seek us out who have seen our work and know what they want. We're just looking for a good fit because it's a relationship that may last many years from when we first meet to the day they move in to the project.

What (previous) project you like most?

Our Noe Valley project was one of our first projects and has been published more than any other so we have a soft spot for that one in particular. But usually the project that we are working on at any given time is usually our favorite because we are focused on it and investing all of our time on.

Is there any project that you working on? Can you share a little about it?

We are currently working on a series of residential projects but the most exciting would be our Tam Valley project, which is a new house on a very steep hill. We're hoping it will begin construction in 2015.

What is your 'dream project'?

We have recently completed two restaurants but we are hoping to continue to work on more commercial and civic projects. A museum or retail boutique would be very exciting.

What do you think the most important part of a home?

If we had to pick one room, we would say the Kitchen. It has evolved from a room you never saw to the social center of the house.

What's the most common mistake that interior designers did in designing? How it is supposed to be done?

Maybe not listening to their client's needs and program to focus instead on a design idea/concept that they are intrigued by but that doesn't necessarily relate to that project.

Interior design is growing rapidly in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta. The numbers of new interior designers are also increasing. It means that the competition is getting hard. Is there anything that you can share with our readers, especially to new / young interior designers?

Don't get into the profession if you think you will make a lot of money. It is a difficult profession from a financial perspective, in other words, there are easier ways to make money. But, I would never discourage anyone who said to me that they want to be designer/architect because they love that profession and that doing anything else would make them unhappy and frustrated. That is who should be in design school.

