



The Staircase: Studies of Hazards, Falls, and Safer Design

John Templer

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John Templer has written the first theoretical, historical, and scientific analysis of one of the most basic and universal building elements: the stair. Together, these two volumes present a detailed study of stairs and ramps -- the art and science of their design, their history, and their hazards.

For the designer and the art and architectural historian, the first volume treats the fascinating history of stairs and their immense influence on the art and science of architecture. It is illustrated with more than 100 photographs from around the world and reviews the literature on stairs (as well as ladders and railings and ramps) from Vitruvius to Venturi. Templer considers the whole play of meanings in the idea of the stair -- as art object, as structural idea, as legal prescription, or as poetic fancy -- making it clear that the stair is simultaneously an aesthetic, architectonic, ergonomic, and cultural element. The second volume shows the dangers stairs present. Drawing on twenty years of human factors research on stairs, Templer sets out what is known about slips, trips, and falls and how best to design stairs to avoid their inherent dangers. He discusses the physiological and behavioral relationship between humans and stairs and walkways, the question of gait and slippery surfaces, and the various types of falls and the injuries that result. Perhaps most importantly, Templer proposes the idea of the soft stair, which could substantially reduce the annual epidemic of stair-related deaths and injuries.

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