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# Ritual House: Drawing on Nature's Rhythms for Architecture and Urban Design

*Ralph Knowles*

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**Ritual House: Drawing on Nature's Rhythms for Architecture and Urban Design** Ralph Knowles
The houses we dwell in, the cities surrounding our houses, even the clothes we wear—these are all shelters we erect against the elements. They are also the embodiment of intuitive rituals, individual and cultural responses to nature’s rhythms. Life in the 21st century has separated us from those traditions—now, Ritual House reawakens us to our lost natural heritage. Celebrated architect Ralph Knowles, Distinguished Emeritus at USC’s School of Architecture, has carefully crafted a book for architects, designers, planners—anyone who yearns to reconnect to the natural world through the built environment. He shows us how to re-examine a shadow, a wall, a window, a landscape, as they respond to the natural cycles of heat, light, wind, and rain. Analyzing methods of sheltering that range from a Berber tent to a Spanish courtyard to the cityscape of contemporary Los Angeles, Knowles shows us the future: by coining the concept of solar access zoning, he introduces a radical

yet increasingly viable solution for tomorrow’s mega-cities. Understanding how the elements affect our lives is more vital than ever. High-energy enclosed building systems have cut us off from nature, but we can re-connect to our landscapes and to humanity through buildings that honor ecological balance, personal choice, and creativity. By engaging nature in our designs, we can create shelters that are unique to their climate, their region, and their relationship to the sun. Ritual House will take its rightful place among those classic works that become touchstones for the culture.

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