



The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design

By Galen Cranz

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"Engaged in fascinating and useful multidisciplinary research, Cranz is an avatar for body-friendly design. . . . Read [*The Chair*] and cheer."--Elizabeth Zimmer, *Village Voice*

Perhaps no other object of our daily environment has had the enduring cultural significance of the ever-present chair, unconsciously yet forcefully shaping the physical and social dimensions of our lives. With over ninety illustrations, this book traces the history of the chair as we know it from its crudest beginnings up through the modern office variety. Drawing on anecdotes, literary references, and famous designs, Galen Cranz documents our ongoing love affair with the chair and how its evolution has been governed not by a quest for comfort or practicality, but by the designation of status. Relating much of the modern era's rampant back pain to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle spent in traditional seating, Cranz goes beyond traditional ergonomic theory to formulate new design principles that challenge the way we think and live. A farsighted and innovative approach to our most intimate habitat, this book offers guidelines that will assist readers in choosing a chair-and designing a lifestyle-that truly suits our bodies. Praise for *The Chair*: "[A] concise, multidisciplinary gem."? *Publishers Weekly* "Cranz is no sedentary historian. *The Chair* is a call to action."? Jonathan Levi, *Los Angeles Times* "Galen Cranz has written a provocative book. Pull up a comfortable chair-if you can find one-and read it."? Witold Rybczynski 90 illustrations

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Review

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About the Author

Galen Cranz is professor of architecture at the University of California at Berkeley.

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