



Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body

Iain Borden

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Skateboarders are an increasingly common feature of the urban environment - recent estimates total 40 million world-wide. We are all aware of their often extraordinary talent and manoeuvres on the city streets. This book is the first detailed study of the urban phenomenon of skateboarding. It looks at skateboarding history from the surf-beaches of California in the 1950s, through the purpose-built skateparks of the 1970s, to the street-skating of the present day and shows how skateboarders experience and understand the city through their sport. Dismissive of authority and convention, skateboarders suggest that the city is not just a place for working and shopping but a true pleasure-ground, a place where the human body, emotions and energy can be expressed to the full.

The huge skateboarding subculture that revolves around graphically-designed clothes and boards, music, slang and moves provides a rich resource for exploring issues of gender, race, class, sexuality and the family. As the author demonstrates, street-style skateboarding, especially characteristic of recent decades, conducts a performative critique of architecture, the city and capitalism. Anyone interested in the history and sociology of sport, urban geography or architecture will find this book riveting.

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