



Gone are many of the regional differences that traditionally linked house form to climate and culture. The New England “saltbox” and French Louisiana plantation house were originally designed for quite different climates. Both can now be found across the country, sealed and air-conditioned for comfort.

Gone too are many rituals that originally arose from living in these traditional dwellings. No longer do we habitually gather around the fireplace for comfort on a cold winter’s evening, sharing stories or the day’s events. Nor, at the end of a hot summer day, do we move to the porch to catch the first cool evening breeze, greeting our neighbors as they pass. We need to look for ways to reintroduce opportunities for ritual into our dwellings.

Ritual

We all have rituals, small ones and large ones, personal and communal. From the way we make coffee every morning to the way we celebrate the coming of spring, our rituals are often a celebration of nature’s rhythms—a joyous response to the recurring changes around us. Ritual imparts special meaning to alternations of time and season, setting up rhythms in our own lives that attach us to the places we occupy. Our first responses to change may involve only a search for comfort, but, through repetition, simple actions can eventually be expanded in detail to express our feelings, our delight in a place. It is, in due course, this emergent connection between nature’s rhythms and our adaptive actions that can free our thoughts, our creative imaginations.

RITUALS OF DAY AND SEASON

Rituals expand the pulse of our life in a place. Taking morning coffee on Vienna’s Graben, friends may meet every morning during warmer months, something they are accustomed to doing along



Vienna, Austria: Morning coffee on the Graben; Feeding pigeons in the Stadtpark.



Bratislava, Slovakia:
Sledding in winter;
Drawing flowers in spring.

