It is not a matter of course for a whole book to be dedicated to one single form of access, a system whose qualities are questioned by many, as will become apparent. The disadvantages of access galleries, as described by different authors, led to the rejection of this form of access in many areas over a long period of time. These are phases in the history of housing in which it was barely used and there are phases in which access galleries became popular thanks to the ideologically motivated promotion. If we want to examine and promote access galleries today, we have to differentiate between and explain their qualities objectively. They do not by any means have as many disadvantages as housing theorists claim, while at the same time they are not the instrument that can solve all the accumulated problems in social housing either, as some want us to believe. On the contrary, if a construction element is forced upon a social housing project it can only lead to disappointment. The following segment of the book and the entire publication should therefore be understood as a differentiated, balanced view of the pros and cons of access galleries in relation to social housing (mix towers/strates).

Places of Social Interaction

Behind the focus on access galleries lies the search for ways of designing multi-storey buildings as socially attractive structures. Access galleries seem to have the greatest potential with a view to community use among all the hallway systems that provide access to the individual residential units. All other systems, from multi-hallways to one or two hallways, will never have the quality of social life that an open access gallery offers a residential complex. It can even be observed that stairwells and hallways lead to unit doors zones that become 'dead zones' within a housing block. Therefore this book offers a close examination of the various access gallery systems beyond mere aesthetic aspects; it also assesses their performance as places of social interaction and features historical examples of 20th century residential construction projects.

This student dormitory project features a special interpretation of hallway access. It is neither a classical central hallway nor a typical access gallery. Instead it is more of an interpretation of student living as experienced in the combination of the access and community areas.

Lone homes and a lack of social bonds are major problems for students in the eyes of the architects. This student dormitory is meant to counter that and offer a framework for studies by providing rooms in which students can develop community and social networks.

The building itself consists of a simple cube built on skills. Two diagonally offset staircases and elevators provide access to the upper levels from the ground floor. The student apartments are arranged in two floors facing outside with interior hallways. The community kitchens and recreation rooms are arranged facing a compact interior court/yard. The anti-escape walkway is a sequence of open hallways, steps and terraces that spiral upwards along the outside façade from the ground floor to the roof to complement the programmatic interior areas of the dormitory and create more informal contact zones.