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## LE REGARD OBLIQUE

*Photographs by Luciano Romano*

*Texts by Michel Serres, Giulio Paolini and Luciano Romano*

This book of photographs by Luciano Romano is devoted to stairways—an iconic architectural subject that is also a perfect metaphor for the human effort to transform nature and build a world in our own image, to strive for all that is transcendent and absolute and to defy the law of gravity by using heavy, opaque stone as a means to admire the luminous sky. A stairway is a threshold leading to the next stage, a thing of rigour and progress. Designed as a functional link between different floors, it mediates between different levels of consciousness, while its alternation of light and shadow reflects the transition between matter and soul. This process of transfiguration is explored in thirty-six photographs that capture and disorientate the eye with a constantly surprising interplay of geometrical depictions of the visible world and dreamlike visions. The senses lose their bearings and reality loses its sway, revealing forms caught in hypnotic movement—banisters that scroll towards dazzling light or plunge into the darkness of a bottomless abyss, physical spaces reminiscent of mental and emotional states.

Michel Serres' words are as fascinating as the images, taking the reader on the vertiginous ascents and descents of a path where geometry and art meet music and writing.

**Michel Serres**, a philosopher, epistemologist and professor of Philosophy and History of Science at the Sorbonne, also taught at Stanford University. Member of the Académie française, he is one of today's most important intellectuals in France.

**Giulio Paolini**, a well-known member of the Arte Povera movement, has exhibited in galleries and museums across the world and has been invited to participate in Documenta in Kassel and the Venice Biennale on several occasions. His works have been accompanied by his writings and artist's books. He has also designed sets for several stage productions.

Focusing on the representation of space, the works of **Luciano Romano** can be found in many public and private institutions, such as the MAXXI photography collection in Rome and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in New York. Among the winners of the Atlante Italiano 003 prize, given by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the Triennale di Milano, he was shortlisted for the BMW-Paris Photo Prize (2007). He has held exhibitions at the X Venice Architecture Biennale, the MADRE Museum in Naples, the MAXXI in Rome and at the Moscow Photobiennale 2014.