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# PERSPECTIVE

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# Radiant Design

ippolito fleitz group turns the unpleasant moment of the medical exam into a new experience thanks to a design-conscious, invigorating interior

TEXT: CECILE MAURY PHOTOGRAPHY: ZOOEY BRAUN

A visit to the doctor is seldom an uplifting experience. The sick have had to suffer surroundings that are, for the most part, ruled by function. However, a new radiology practice in Germany has turned that truism on its head with a design intended to put patients at their ease.

When a new health centre opened in Schorndorf, a town in south-west Germany, in 2006 the interior design of its nursing home unit was entrusted to a design firm from nearby Stuttgart, the ippolito fleitz group. So successful were the practice's efforts that the doctors of Wittlinger Hahn Stern Radiologie asked it back to design a new practice in the building's basement.

Organising the 600 sq-m space containing a considerable amount of equipment was not without its challenges. "A radiology practice is characterised by a high patient turnover, long waiting times due to the complicated diagnostic procedures involved, and the apprehensive mood of its patients," explains Peter Ippolitos, managing partner of the designers. The project thus required a high degree of technical integration combined with a lucid functional layout. "The challenge lay in fusing all of these factors into a holistic and compelling whole," he adds.





**above** Bringing the archetypal image of X-rays to mind, the backlit walls endow the practice with a very unique atmosphere **opposite page, clockwise from top left** The separate waiting room dedicated to private patients follows the design directions of the main waiting area • The bright yellow tone of the corridor gives an energising feel to the area separating the waiting room from the treatment rooms • The main reception counter is divided into two stations, visually and acoustically separated by an upholstered wall element

Consideration for the patients was at the heart of the project. The intention was to banish the apprehension usually induced by medical facilities and replace it with a sense of security. That focus on the user is manifested in the space management of the practice. It revolves around the waiting area, making a focal point of a space that is too often neglected. The distance between the treatment rooms and the waiting area is cut, the use of the loudspeaker systems is reduced, and communication is more direct.

As identity architects, ippolito fleitz group knew how to endow their project with individuality thanks to some original elements. Structured around four symmetrical columns, the waiting room features upholstered acoustic walls and seats that seem to have been cast in a single piece, and a light blue ceiling merging into the wall via a cavetto. A shell limestone floor, wooden surfaces, and light beige leather complement the design and

further increase the feeling of protection conjured up by this softly enclosing, womb-like space which could not be more different from the standard, cold, and austere amenities.

The seating arrangement of the waiting area, a feature that might seem trivial, addresses the fundamental issue of privacy in the medical environment. "Through their choice of where they sit, patients decide how much public exposure they desire," Ippolito points out. "The more extrovert seating positions are those on the seating rings around the columns, which give you a panorama of the entire room. The two long rows along the side walls afford more seclusion, away from the action."

The attention paid to privacy is also visible at the reception counter, located away from the waiting area and in an enclosed room that ensures privacy in the case of prolonged or more sensitive admission procedures. Adjacent to the main

waiting area, a separate room is available for private patients. It is designed on the same principles, the only differences being its position against the building's outside wall and the daylight filtering through the only window of the facility.

The design features intended to reassure visitors are not just confined to increasing comfort. They break with codes traditionally associated with the medical world — those supposedly soothing pastel blue or green tones — to produce an uplifting effect that speaks to the individual. Freestanding walls of the waiting room hold backlit sources of luminosity that display black and white images of X-ray-like clouds. The corridor leading to the various treatment rooms comes alive in a powerful, friendly, and energetic orange. More evidence of the company's iconoclastic, ground-breaking approach, and clear proof that you can take your medicine in comfortable surroundings.







above Curved shapes are combined with soft colours and materials to create a truly relaxing environment

## 仁心仁術

ippolito fleitz group 運用無限心思設計出一間環境令人鼓舞的醫療中心，即使去看醫生，感覺也許會輕鬆一點

攝影：CECILIE MAURY 攝影：ZOEVEY BRAUN

沒有人喜歡看醫生。面對一個如此目標為本的冰冷環境，人人都會覺得自己像實驗室的老鼠。不過德國最近新開的一所放射治療中心，卻希望透過輕鬆的室內設計提昇病人的心情，一改醫院的悲慘形象。

故事可追溯到2006年德國西南部小鎮 Schorndorf，來自耶鎮斯圖加特的 ippolito fleitz group 為一間健康中心設計了新的護理部。Wittlinger Hahn 胸骨放射醫院的醫生看見效果十分理想，於是找這間設計公司為他們構思總部地庫的放射治療中心。

六百平方米的地方放了許多醫療器材，設計上有一定難度。設計公司的主管兼合夥人 Peter Ippolito 解釋環境的特性：「放射治療部的病人數量一般比較高，而且涉及複雜的診症程序，病人輪候時間頗長，所以他們一定憂心忡忡。」所以一切技術設施要結合得相當好，空間分配要實用而清晰。Peter 續道：「最大挑戰是將所有元素合成一個有說服力的整體。」

設計的出發點是照顧病人的感受，目的是消除他們對醫療空間的恐懼，換上一種安全感。治療部的空間管理方式體現出以人為本的想法，中心點是一直被忽略的候診區，一旁有治療室環繞四面，無須走過長長通道，也省卻用擴音器讀出病人號碼，互動方式更加直截了當。

ippolito fleitz group 的設計師本身也是建築師，懂得用原創的建構技巧去塑造治療部的設計風格。候診區四角勻稱地分佈四條柱子，牆身鋪滿隔聲墊，座位也有同樣的墊子，彷如

互相連繫與延伸，淺藍色天花板與牆壁之間以凹圓牆飾連接。介殼灰岩地板、木面與淺米色皮革的搭配很有寧神的作用，空間結構呈柔和的密封狀態，流露出猶如嬰孩置身母體內的全與保護，比起一般冷冰冰又嚴峻的醫院環境，感覺窩心很多。

即使瑣細如候診區的座位安排，也貫徹保護病人私隱的宗旨。Peter 指出：「無論病人是完全不想被打擾，抑或介意附近多點人氣，都有最佳位置供他們自由選擇。」圍繞柱子的環形座位適合外向一點的病人，可以看到候診區四面八方的情況；貼著兩邊牆的兩排長椅就比较隱蔽，那邊可以靜一點。」

接待處的位置安排也提供很高的私隱。接待處跟候診區相隔一段距離，是一間密室，登記程序時或需要秘密進行的話，這是個好地方。主候診區旁有一間專為自費病人而設的小房，設計原則跟其他房間大致相同，最大分別是它位於建築物牆外，天然光線透過那裡唯一的窗戶照進室內。

種種設計考慮，都是為消除病人的不安情緒，所帶來的輕鬆氣氛是世上其他醫療場所少見的，整個意念絕對是破格。粉彩藍和粉彩綠，彷彿滲透一種愉悅去安撫病人的心。候診區一道道獨立牆面有背光裝飾，投射出來的黑白圖案是一朵朵像X光片畫面的雲。通往各個治療室的橙色走廊感覺活潑開朗，猶如散發著巨大的能量。一切都證明設計師勇於突破常規的精神，令這裡變成一個不單是照顧病人身體的地方，更體貼地同時照顧他們的心情。E