

A photograph of a bar interior. The background features a wall of shelves filled with various bottles of alcohol. Below the shelves is a white tiled wall with the word 'INSTITUTE' in large, black, block letters. A bar counter with a sink and faucet is visible. In the foreground, there are two high stools with dark seats and metal frames. The lighting is warm and focused on the bar area.

# BEHIND BARS

*Design for cafés & bars*

**FRAME**

# 40

A black and white photograph of a futuristic interior. The floor is a checkered pattern of light and dark squares. The walls are highly reflective, showing distorted reflections of the ceiling and floor. The ceiling is covered in a dense array of small, bright lights, creating a starry effect. The overall atmosphere is dark and mysterious.

*Ippolito Fleitz Group and i\_d buero*

*F-012*

*Stuttgart, Germany*

**‘Black is sexy’**

*Peter Ippolito*

T-012

*A busy traffic artery in Stuttgart, Theodor-Heuss-Straße, has developed into a 'party mile'. It was named after a beloved West German politician who lived in Stuttgart and was the Federal Republic of Germany's first president. T-012, a recently opened club on 'Theo' refers to both the street and its fun-loving namesake.*

Text by Cornelius Mampold  
Photography by Zowey Braun

About five years ago, Stuttgart's retail trade began moving away from Theodor-Heuss-Straße, and smart restaurateurs grabbed up the empty locations. Eleven discotheques were already up and running superbly when Peter Ippolito and Gunter Heitz were asked to design another club for the entertainment strip. The initiators of the project naturally wanted number 12 to distinguish itself from the rest. A lease on rooms in a former music school in a sober post-war building, along with a clearly defined budget, produced a spatial and financial framework for the design. The look of a club meant to target crowds of discriminating revellers was left entirely to Ippolito Heitz and LJO buero, a 'visual communication' team of graphic designers. The project would be their first collaboration.

The interdisciplinary approach – two groups that complemented each other well – resulted in an open relationship of confidence between designers and client. 'We tried to create a distinctive, easily describable atmosphere,' says Peter Ippolito, who is used to working with communication agencies. Opting for black and white spaces, mirrored surfaces, and illustrations on walls and ceilings, they crafted a unique setting and a club with a prominent position on Theodor-Heuss-Straße. 'Black is sexy,' stresses Ippolito. The name of the establishment, which indicates the house number, evokes associations with legendary discos that chose the same strategy, the most prominent being Studio 54 in New York City. Injecting the club with a personal identity also included the use of witty quotations attributed to Heuss – quips appreciated by those familiar with the politician and journalist. Inscribed on the façade during construction, his quotes now appear on staircases interconnecting the three floors of the club.

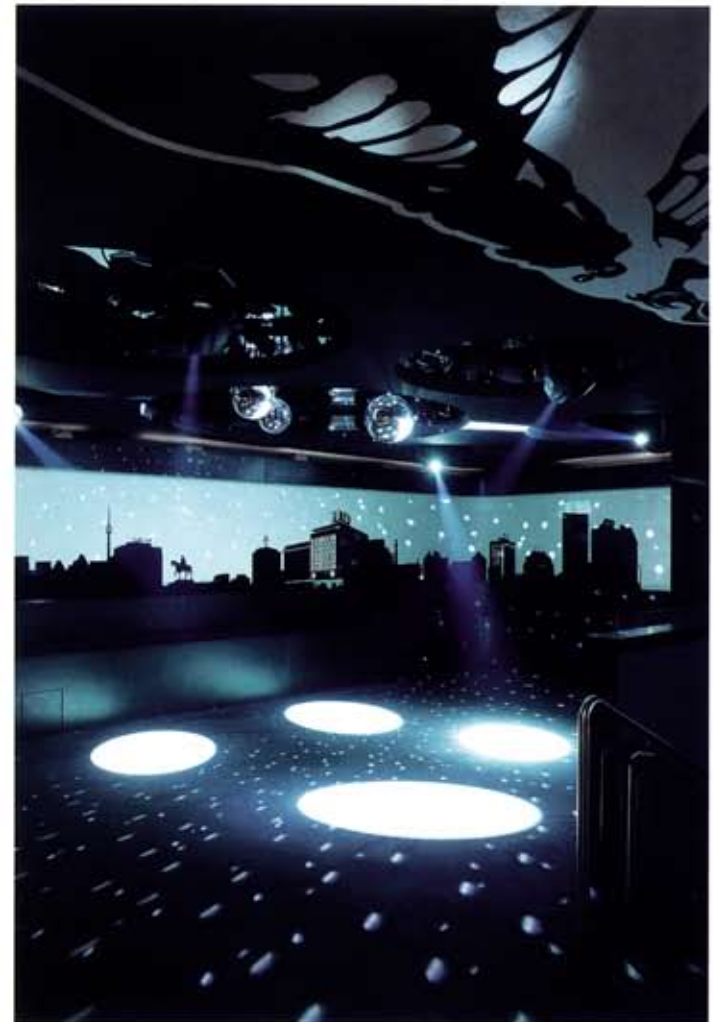
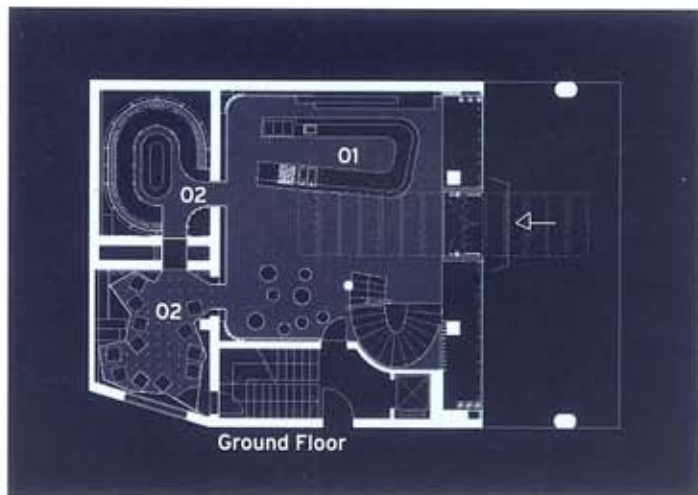
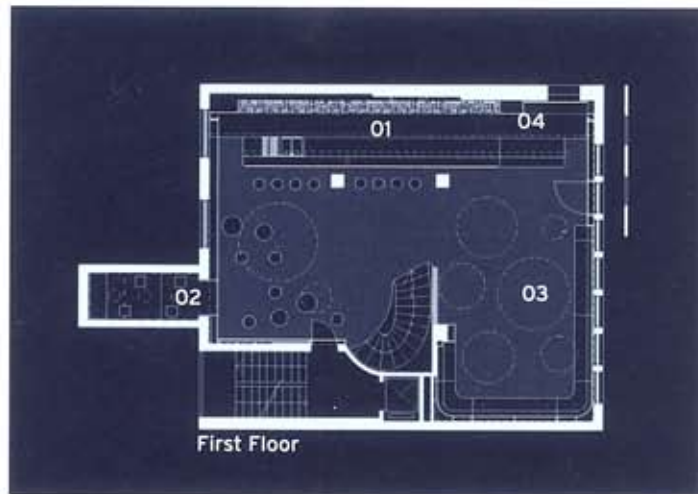
PREVIOUS PAGE: ONE OF THE LOUNGES ON THE GROUND FLOOR APPEARS ENDLESS WITH ITS MIRRORRED WALLS AND WHITE CUBES.  
OPPOSITE: THE SECOND GROUND FLOOR LOUNGE IS A BLACK LEATHER CLAD SPACE WITH AN ILLUMINATED TABLE UNDER A MIRRORRED CEILING.



Passers-by view the ground floor through large windows laminated with a printed polarizing film that reflects by day and is translucent at night. A ribbon of light composed of shiny white Plexiglas boxes beneath the arcade canopy follows a sine curve that alters the intensity of the light. The ribbon leads to a space paved in black asphalt, where it remains the main source of light but is joined by another shining object running parallel to its trajectory: a white, U-shaped, Corian bar counter. Overhead, hexagonal mirrors reflect black walls and black floor. Another black wall – a wooden surface decorated with white graphics: helicopters, people, houses, electricity masts and streetlamps – resembles a hoarding. Basement and first-storey dance floors also have bars: small below, large above. Above the first-floor bar, the image of a woman with flowing black hair gazes down at people ascending the stairs. Here, decorative mirrors fill round recesses and glitter with mirror balls and floor-mounted disco lights. The black counter starts at the exterior wall and penetrates deep into the room. Behind it, the ceiling slopes towards the floor, becoming a wall with shelving of chrome-plated steel, where bright spirit bottles seductively tempt people to imbibe. Along the façade and around the dance floor is a virtual panorama of Theodor-Heuss-Straße and its nightlife. The rooms were 'not ideal for a club', since legally required emergency exits left little room for seating. Purpose-designed booths at the rear provided a partial solution. At street level, ground-floor storage spaces were transformed into a polygonal hall of mirrors, where guests sit on white cubes. An oval lounge features a black leatherette banquette. All upholstered furniture was designed by Ippolito Fleitz and covered in leatherette. The small bar in the basement shares the space with a dance floor and the toilets. Motifs on walls and ceiling display carnivorous plants and insects, which are known to be nocturnally active in the damp, dark climes they love best.



OPPOSITE PAGE: EVENING STROLLERS, SWEEPED INTO THE CLUB BY PERSPEX LIGHT-WAVES, LAND UP AT THE CORIAN BAR COUNTER.  
ABOVE: THE WOODEN WALLS ARE COVERED WITH GROOVY DESIGNS. THE ENTRANCE TO THE 'CUBE' LOUNGE IS AT THE BACK.





### Ippolito Fleitz Group

Peter Ippolito and Gunter Fleitz studied architecture in Stuttgart and have worked together since 1999. Initially, they and two other partners formed zipfespaceworks, but in 2002 the duo founded Ippolito Fleitz Group, a multidisciplinary design studio with an international clientele and projects far and wide, including China. Among their collaborators – some full-time, some freelance – are interior architects, product designers, graphic artists and landscape architects. Together they design and produce an enormous range of creative work. They design restaurants, shops, offices, gardens, furniture and trade stands. Another facet of the business is the development of corporate identities, including all print products involved. They call themselves simply 'identity architects', a title that underlines their aim to think outside the disciplinary box to reach solutions. In approaching each project, they select the designers and artists required to develop this particular idea into a wholly integrated concept. Regularly do they work with other communications agencies, as they did when designing T-O12. Well armed with internalized working methods, the Ippolito Fleitz Group leaves hidebound, hierarchical thinking aside in order to adapt to joint ventures with a wide variety of partners.

### Information

**Client:** T-O12  
**Total floor area (m<sup>2</sup>):** 340  
**Duration of construction:** 4 months  
**Opening:** December 2006

### Designers

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