

EAT OUT!

RESTAURANT
DESIGN
AND FOOD
EXPERIENCES



IPPOLITO FLEITZ GROUP

WGV Cafeteria, 2008,
Stuttgart / Germany

Client: Württembergischen Gemeinde-Versicherung a.G.
Architect: Zooey Braun

The company dining hall didn't just come about because there were no alternatives or because employers were trying to keep employees in the building (and working) over the lunch hour. Neither do they always turn a profit for the company. But if the "cafeteria" were to become a pleasant "café" with decent food and a visually stimulating environment, it could inspire fruitful lunch conversations and give worker bees a bigger buzz for the rest of the day. The design of the staff cafeteria at the WGV insurance group headquarters by local architects Ippolito Fleitz achieves just this. The cafeteria is split into two areas: a dining room proper and a self-service area, where a propeller-shaped standing table with three protruding tabletop surfaces lit by three minimalist, halo-shaped lights creates a dynamic first impression of the cafeteria. A large black chain curtain partially obscures an unattractive view behind it while defining the space. (The vending machines that typically dominate this type of environment with their heterogeneous display windows are hidden behind stainless steel panels.) In the dining room, various seating scenarios accommodate different types of social or work meetings: a suspended standing counter in the corridor at the entrance; a "restaurant car" with eight compartments containing elevated booths that run the length of the facade; and the centerpiece of the cafeteria, seven round tables that are laid out on overlapping circular areas. Over each table, a dome-shaped suspended ceiling is illuminated indirectly using reflecting panels. A bronze-colored partition made of curving wood lamellae makes another set of tables feel more intimate.

