

FRAME

THE NEXT SPACE

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Three proposals for on-the-go hospitality

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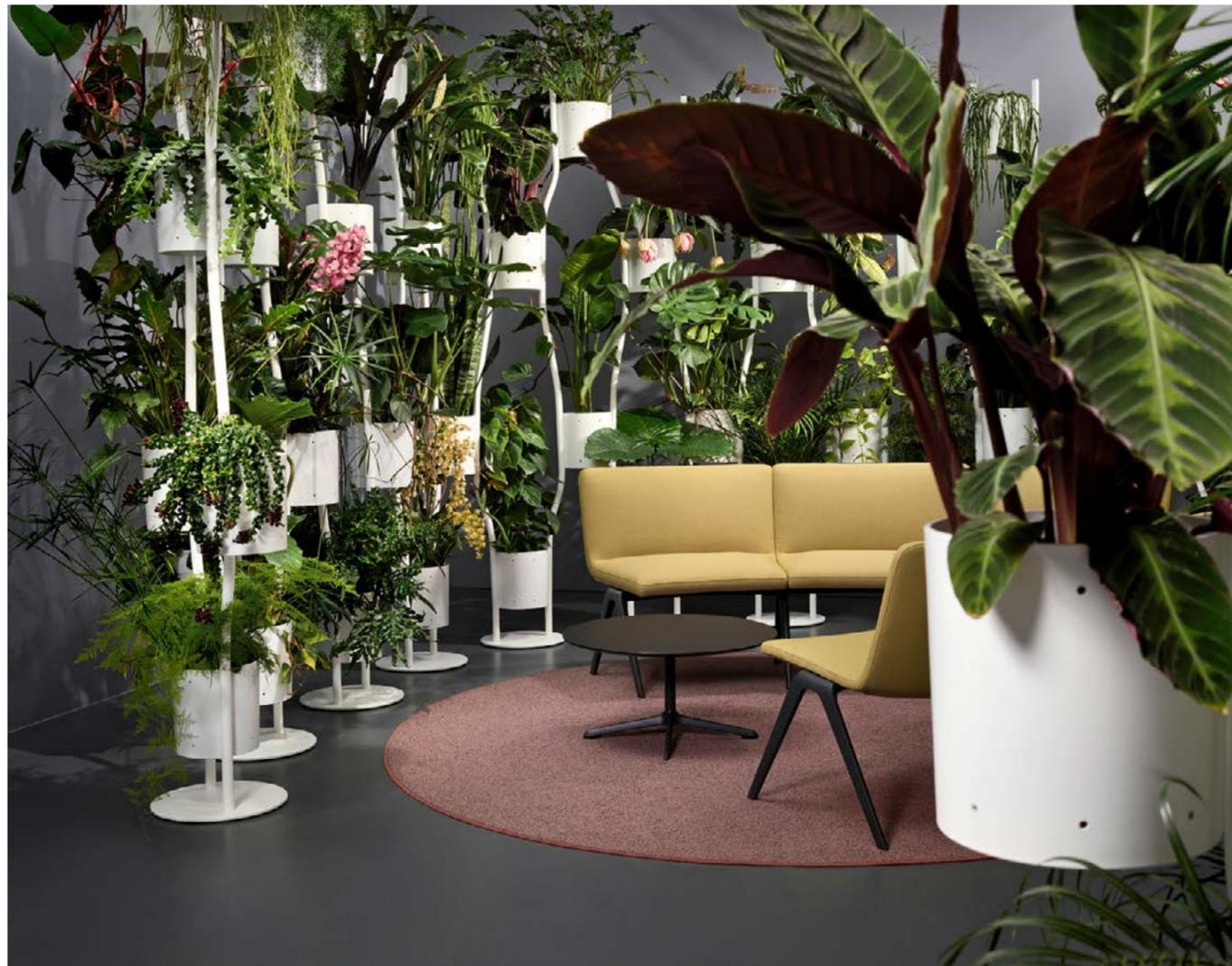


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room for growth

Ippolito Fleitz Group's plantable partition for Brunner brings greenery into the workspace *and* addresses the drawbacks of the open-plan office.

Words Shonquis Moreno



Part of Para Vert's modularity comes from its neutrality: the system comes in only white and lava.

Mapping out 'neighbourhoods', establishing complex colour schemes, varying material palettes and lighting scenarios, turning entire floors into landscapes, radically contrasting the look and content of abutting zones: Designers have been looking for increasingly creative ways to move away from the open-plan office, which seems to have swallowed up the office worker, in favour of workspaces that support wellness and productivity. To that end, contract furniture manufacturer Brunner has introduced a new plantable room divider designed by interiors firm Ippolito Fleitz Group (IFG). Para Vert can be used in a plethora of contract environments - hotels, restaurants, lounges - but feels particularly valuable and easy to apply in an office setting.

The sleek, plantable partition serves as a modular design element. It features pole mesh that functions much like a screen, while offering flexibility in the clever division of too-large, too-open interiors. With the Para Vert system, it is possible to create anything along the spectrum from work clusters and meeting environments to green corners, phone 'booths', private workstations, heads-down alcoves or inspirational areas. It can help to define and organize interiors by exploiting natural elements that also help to dampen sound and provide privacy.

Based in Stuttgart, Berlin and Shanghai, IFG is well known for creating not just more human, liveable workspaces, but

strikingly handsome, original and even stimulating offices. It's no surprise that the studio has received more than 300 international awards for interior design, product design and branding work. In this case, the IFG team worked with Brunner, a second-generation, family-owned, design-through-manufacturing German brand, to ready the partition for production. 'We have been observing, and even furthering, a radical process of change in business models, in the organization of workplaces and in the agility of staff to respond to business and personal goals,' says Tilla Goldberg, IFG's head of product design. 'Para Vert is our response to all these things.'

Para Vert's integrated plantable containers allow designers or end-users to elegantly add greenery to a space, dividing not with walls but with living foliage. The system's semi-permeable surfaces both allow light to pour through and obscure sightlines enough to establish semi-private zones. This means that, because the neutral colour of the structure allows it to recuse itself in favour of the verdure, employees find themselves in a bright forest clearing instead of among the hard, synthetic surfaces of a soul-sucking cubicle or conference room.

Restrained, perhaps, in its use of colour (the system comes in only white and lava), IFG nonetheless imagined a clever modularity that actually benefits from the neutrality of the palette: Para Vert is ►►



Plants can amplify a sense of wellbeing, ramp up concentration levels and spark creativity



Para Vert's semi-permeable surfaces both allow light to pour through and obscure sightlines enough to establish semi-private zones.

available in three sets according to the module size desired (S, M or L) and can be installed in a variety of configurations: an L, S, U, V, Y or Z shape.

Aside from protective spacers that diminish the likelihood of surface scratching, the system features grids of holes that perforate the connecting elements, which are used to form bolt connections. When the structure is assembled, round plastic containers can then be attached to curved metal poles at a 90°, 135° or 180° angle. The poles range from 190 cm to 250 cm in height and rest on unobtrusive disc bases that ensure their stability. Depending on each of the variables chosen, it's possible to range between ten and 26 containers across three or four layers and then place plant pots measuring up to Ø 21.5 x 20.5 cm (W x H) inside them, or draft them into service as a network of storage

containers, or do a combination of both. Place planters up to only a certain height or all the way up from floor to ceiling, place them along only one side or place them all around.

In the design industry, it is widely agreed that plants and the responsibility of caring for them, can elevate morale, amplify a sense of wellbeing, ramp up concentration levels, spark creativity and cultivate better relationships in the workplace. All one has to do is look at them. The benefits of greenery are manifold: plants filter out and absorb toxins, produce oxygen, increase humidity, lower heating costs and decrease both noise and stress levels. And thank goodness. These days, humans need all the help we can get – and so do the plants. ●

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