

# GROHE MAGAZINE



LUXURY BATHROOMS, KITCHENS,  
ARCHITECTURE & WATER STORIES  
WINTER EDITION 2016



Pure Freude  
an Wasser



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## DEAR READERS,

Welcome to our all new edition of GROHE magazine. As the World Architecture Festival – of which GROHE is the founder partner – takes place in Berlin this year, we turn our editorial eye to the German capital. The city has changed a lot since reunification, all the while getting bigger and bigger: this decade alone has seen around 40,000 new Berliners moved to the city each year.

How do the city's developers and planners react to this influx? We look at different architectural projects that are changing the face of Berlin by reinventing and reusing the city's empty space: from large new developments like the bold HumboldtHafenEins by KSP Jürgen Engel Architekten, to Spreefeld Berlin, a communal housing project built as a cooperative effort. Berlin's architectural landscape is as vibrant as the city itself, and it welcomes builder-owners like Desiré Feuerle, who has turned an old communications bunker into an art gallery (p. 10).

Of course, Berlin wouldn't be itself without its offering of extracurricular activities. To learn more about where to shop, eat and drink we speak to entrepreneur Anita Tillmann. She came to the city over twenty years ago to realise her dreams, and can now claim to have founded one of the largest international fashion trade shows for contemporary fashion in the world. Her tips will also come in handy for any readers visiting WAF (p. 20).

While it goes without saying that water is the defining element for all of us at GROHE, it also plays a big part in many other people's lives. One of them is Kai-Uwe Bergmann, partner at architecture firm BIG, who is contributing to



Michael Rauterkus,  
Chief Executive Officer of GROHE AG

the protection of lower Manhattan from future floods with the Big U project (p. 58). Another is Jane Withers, a curator whose current exhibition »Soak, Steam, Dream« takes a new look at old bathhouses (p. 46). While freediver Hanli Prinsloo aims to conserve our oceans through her I AM WATER Trust (p. 64).

**»It goes without saying that water is the defining element for all of us at GROHE.«**

Using water to bring enjoyment whilst minimising consumption is always on our minds at GROHE, which is why we are excited to present the Sensia Arena this autumn. This shower toilet not only improves hygiene and ensures the most comfortable, most personal toilet experience yet, it also helps to save water. Torsten Meier, GROHE's Vice President of Research and Development, tells us how this was achieved, and reveals the technology that went into the most advanced shower toilet in the world (p. 38).

We hope you enjoy reading these and all our other entertaining stories, and discover more about what moves us as a company.

Sincerely,  
Michael Rauterkus

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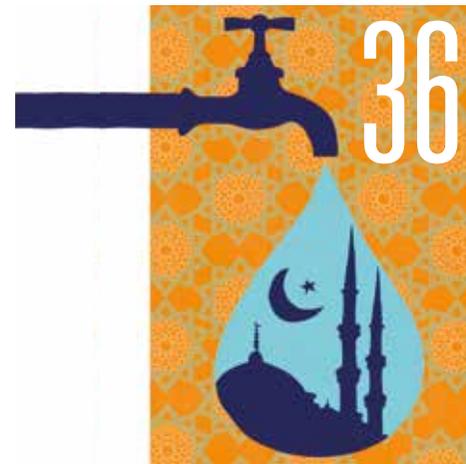
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bbe-group.de  
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mothertongue.com

The GROHE magazine is translated into 10 languages  
and appears in 60 countries with a total annual print  
run of more than 1 million.

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# SPACE INVADERS

GROHE is the founder partner of the World Architecture Festival, which this year is taking place in Berlin. Before the architecture scene convenes at Arena this November, we take a closer look at what makes the architectural landscape of the German capital so unique.

**TEXT: LUISE RELLENSMANN**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY: SCHNEPP · RENOÜ**



HumboldtHafenEins by KSP Jürgen Engel Architekten is one of the first new buildings in Europacity, an urban quarter developed from scratch.



If you ask Florian Köhl of fatkoehl architekten what makes Berlin unique, he'll answer very simply: »Free spaces have always been one of Berlin's strengths.« No major city can boast as much empty land as Berlin. The reunification of the German capital presented great opportunities, as large swathes of the inner city were undeveloped, abandoned or littered with WWII constructions that were often too costly to tear down. As the city embraces its new financial clout, it's begun to take a fresh look at its empty space and in turn create some of the most impressive architecture in the world.

## BUILDING THE NEW BERLIN

Berlin's largest new development is the Europacity, an urban quarter developed from scratch between the central station and the government district. The area was

formerly the no man's land between East and West Berlin. The Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development calls it a »sustainable urban design project«. It consists of a typical Berlin mixed-use structure, combining residential buildings with retail and office spaces. Bike paths will connect the numerous developments within this new urban quarter.

One of the first tenants in Europacity is Germany's leading auditing and consultancy organisations PwC. Their offices are located in the upper floors behind the meandering facade of a seven-to-eight storey building, designed by KSP Jürgen Engel Architekten. The architecture firm employs 250 people worldwide and has offices in Berlin, Frankfurt, Beijing and Hanoi.

With HumboldtHafenEins, KSP have designed an urban complex with courtyards that open up towards the water, providing all office spaces with a view of the



A multifunctional venue for trade fairs, The CityCube in Wilmerdorf gives a sense of air and lightness despite its impressive size of 23,000 square metres.



Mirroring the industrial character of its neighbourhood, Lokdepot by ROBERTNEUN Architekten, is one of Berlin's most exciting new apartment buildings.

Humboldthafen harbour basin. The basin itself was designed by landscape architect Peter Joseph Lenné in the mid-19th century. Arcades with shops, cafés and a restaurant along the water promenade invite urban strollers and passers-by to linger a little longer.

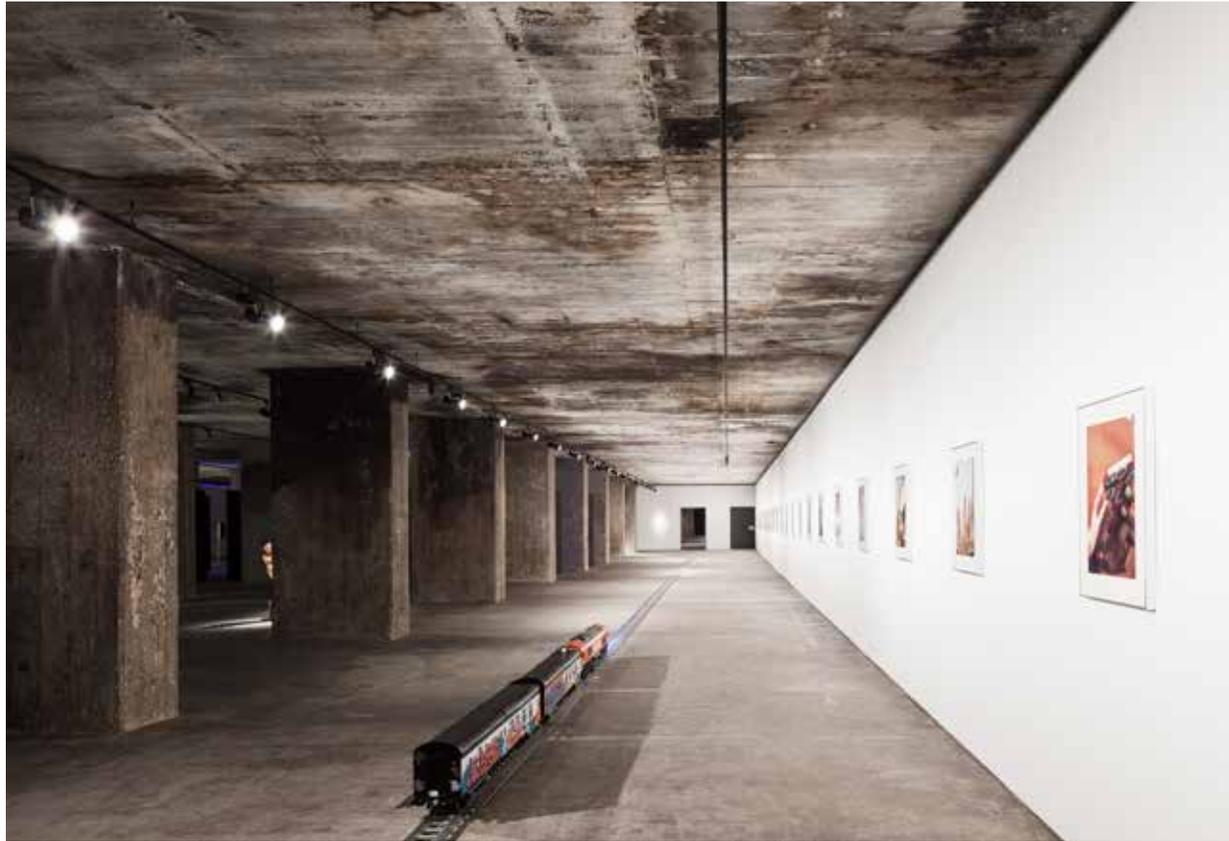
In Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf another recent addition is contributing to the growing economic strength of the city. The CityCube was built by Code Unique from Dresden. The chairman of the management board of Messe Berlin describes it as »a milestone on the long way to developing Berlin as a trade fair location«.

The building is a multifunctional venue for trade fairs, conferences and events. The great bulk of the CityCube is cantilevered above the plinth and gives a sense of air and lightness despite its impressive 23,000 square metres. The building is now the largest of its kind in Berlin. Hosting up to 11,000 visitors at a time, the CityCube has replaced the ICC as Berlin's go-to event and conference space.

## TRACK SIDE

Berlin's housing shortage is a matter of urgency for many architects. The Lokdepot, a new residential development by ROBERTNEUN Architekten between the districts of Schöneberg and Kreuzberg, aims to address this. The row of red houses was converted from depot buildings in an unused railyard, and offer a unique location next to Gleisdreieck Park. A former wasteland redesigned by landscape architects Atelier Loidl, Gleisdreieck Park is to Berlin what the High Line is to New York City.

ROBERTNEUN is an architecture firm that established itself by designing bars and clubs for Berlin's nightlife scene. The architects responded to the area's industrial heritage by using red steel and exposed concrete, mirroring the industrial character of brick sheds along the railways.



Collector Desiré Feuerle chose an old communications bunker to host his Asian design objects and contemporary artworks.

Am Lokdepot is an award-winning project, but its realisation was a long-winded process. The architects had to fight to have the land designated for residential use, as it had originally been earmarked for a discount street-mall. »In the context of the nearby park and the burgeoning housing question, programming according to the official zoning plan didn't seem appropriate. So we developed different urban models with a mixed use, including living and working and the integration of public space as a continuation of the adjacent park landscape,«explains Nils Buschmann, founding member of Robertneun.

## ART AND STALACTITES

In April 2016, art collector and art advisor Desiré Feuerle opened The Feuerle Collection in Kreuzberg. He converted a former WWII telecommunications bunker north of the Landwehrkanal into a new home for his Imperial Chinese furniture, Khmer sculptures and contemporary artworks, thus bringing one of the largest collections of Asian art in

Europe to Berlin. »To me, all these pieces of furniture are sculptures,« explains Feuerle. He started his career with an art gallery in Cologne, where he cultivated the concept of juxtaposing ancient and contemporary works of art.

The Feuerle Collection is already the second bunker in the German capital that has been converted into a gallery. By commissioning British architect John Pawson to convert the construction, with its row of square concrete blocks protruding from the roof, Feuerle continues a Berlin tradition of remaking its history rather than erasing it.

»It's difficult to think of places more charged with atmosphere than these monumental concrete structures,« says Pawson, who is known for his minimalistic interventions. He describes his work on the building as a slow and considered design process aimed at focusing attention on the art. Instead of whitewashing the walls he preserved the patina, stains and stalactites caused by water damage. His subtle refinements intensify the quality of the space and underline the objective of the collection to provide a sensual experience for art lovers.



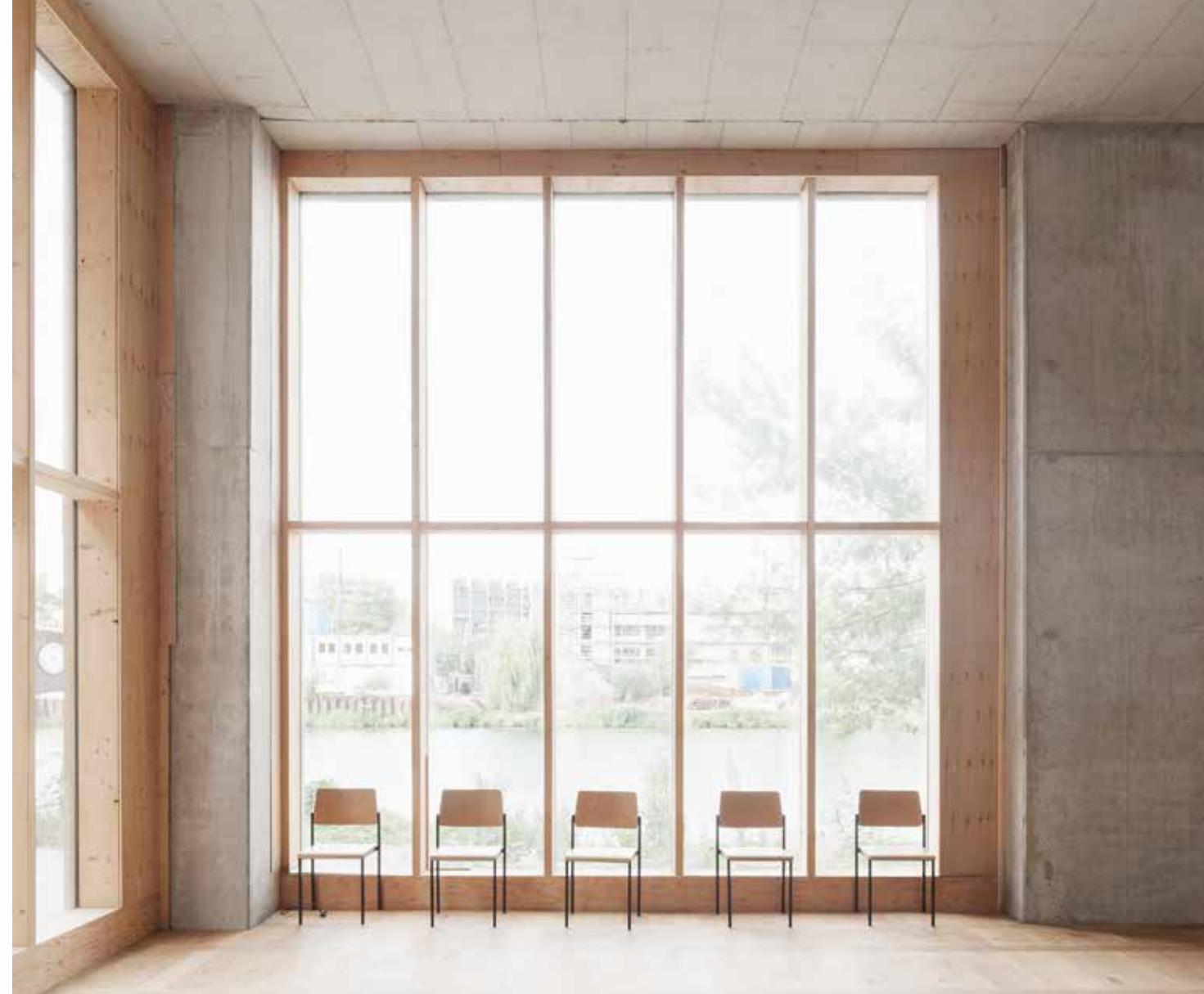
## DEVELOPING TOGETHER

During the Gründerzeit era, the years of rapid industrial expansion in Germany, the typical Berlin tenement (Mietshaus) provided a model for socially mixed living. In the 1970s, squatters saved the run-down Wilhelminian houses from demolition and replacement by radical urban redevelopments. Back then, the typical Berlin apartment had high ceilings, floorboards and three bedrooms. In recent years, a new model of housing has established itself, particularly on former inner-city wasteland: building cooperatives. They allow for affordable and cross-generational housing spaces that support different forms of living and working together.

One of the most ambitious projects of this kind is Spreefeld Berlin. The project houses approximately 100 people and was carefully developed in a discursive process involving three architectural offices and the fellow members of the cooperative. Its residents are a wide range of users with different financial capacities – people who otherwise couldn't afford to live so centrally.

Instead of fencing the housing project in, it was important for the future residents and Berlin-based architecture firm fatkoeHL architekten to provide public access to the river banks. »We didn't fell a single tree,« recalls architect Florian Köhl. The ground floor of all three buildings is designated as mixed use, containing shops, workshops, studios and a kindergarden. Community terraces along the edges of the buildings, like hanging gardens, compensate for the space given to the public on ground floor level. Köhl continues, »With our project we want to set an example that liberates new energies by creating new open spaces.«

Berlin may not be the richest place in terms of heavy industries and big money, but it has space. And although that space is getting scarcer in the city centre, wastelands, gaps, and abandoned buildings are still spread out all over Berlin. These spaces are constantly being pioneered and reimagined by the creative community and offer huge potential for future developments and architectural experiments. It won't be long before the abandoned spaces of today are the prize winners of tomorrow's World Architecture Festival.



A sense of community is integral to Berlin's many building cooperatives. Spreefeld Berlin even has a communal yoga centre.

### World Architecture Festival 2016

First held in 2008 as a »festival dedicated to celebrating and sharing architectural excellence from across the globe«, the World Architecture Festival annually attracts the most important figures in the industry to discuss the future of building design. This year's event will be hosted at Arena Berlin from 16 to 18 November. Judges at the festival's current competition include David Chipperfield, last year's winner Ole Scheeren and Kai-Uwe Bergmann.

[worldarchitecturefestival.com](http://worldarchitecturefestival.com)

# THE INSIDE VIEW

Fashion guru Anita Tillmann tells us about the most stylish spots in Berlin.

**INTERVIEW: DELPHINE SAINT-JEAN**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTOPH MACK**

Anita Tillmann realised she wanted to live in Berlin on the very first day she arrived here. Now a resident of the city for almost 20 years, she has seen the city grow into its reunified identity, and witnessed her own career grow with it: in 2003 she founded one of the largest international fashion trade shows for contemporary fashion in the world, PREMIUM Berlin, which now showcases 1,000 brands and 1,800 collections twice a year. As her own star has risen, she's watched friends she made when she first arrived also enjoy vast success, creating a close-knit community of tastemakers who are proud to support each others' endeavours, whether they are fashion brands, restaurants or art galleries. We met Anita at The Store – her favourite shop in the city – to tell us about the best places to experience Berlin's vibrancy and multi-faceted culture.

## GROHE

What do you think is unique about Berlin?

### Anita Tillmann

**Berlin is unique because it's a melting pot – it's a mix of amazing people from fashion, culture, art and film. It's very international, and I think it's also getting younger than ever. I love this energy and spirit! Also, the start-up scene here is really buzzing. This rapid growth is changing the vibe of Berlin by creating new business models. Now there's money coming to Berlin from young people who**

**like to spend, and not on traditional status symbols, but on going out, fashion and the creative scene.**

**G** What is the Berlin fashion scene like?

**AT** **When we established PREMIUM in 2003, there was no fashion scene here at all, or at least very little. We were very ambitious, saying we wanted to turn Berlin into a real fashion capital. Twelve years later, we are not the capital of Europe for fashion, but Berlin is now definitely the capital of fashion in Germany and Europe's biggest market places in terms of fashion trade shows. There are many talented designers here: Marina Hoermanseder, Nobi Talai, William Fan, Tim Labenda, Michael Sontag ... the list goes on! I'm proud to be a board member of the Fashion Council Germany, which supports young designers and fashion made in Germany. It's nice to be a part of Germany's future design stars and to see who's up and coming in fashion.**

**G** What's the street style of Berlin like?

**AT** **I was born in Düsseldorf and have lived in Hamburg, places where they still have uniforms that show you belong to a certain kind of crowd. Once I came to Berlin, I suddenly felt free, and could use fashion in the way it should be – just to express my personality and mood. Berlin is very casual, very cool. I changed my attitude to high heels completely when I moved**



Anita Tillmann inside The Store – her favourite place to shop for fashion in Berlin.

here. Before you would've never seen me without heels, but here no one expects you to wear them and anyway, the streets in Berlin just ruin expensive shoes – you can only wear a pair once before they're ruined. My personal style? Classic, with a fashion twist. I'm 44 next week and I think the style I have now is here to stay. Once you're this age you don't change or experiment that often. I know what I can wear and what I better should not.

### »Berlin is now definitely the capital of fashion in Germany.«

**G** Where are your favourite places to shop in Berlin?

**AT** One of my favourite stores in the world is The Store in Berlin. I really like the way they select the collections and the brands they offer. Andreas Murkudis' concept store in Potsdamer Straße is also fabulous, and so is The Corner. Everything you need and what makes me happy you can find in KaDeWe and Galeries

Lafayette. But there are also stores like VooStore or SOTO, which are really cool and straightforward, and always have the best collaborations in first. That's where Jay Z goes when he comes to Germany.

**G** Berlin is well known for its nightlife. Where do you recommend going out in Berlin?

**AT** The possibilities to go out in Berlin are endless – you can do whatever you want! It's very interesting to see how different it is to go out in the East and the West. In the West, it's more chic. People dress differently and it's the complete opposite feeling from going out in the East, which I prefer for its music and edgy vibe. I don't go out that much any more though: You know you're getting old when you go to a restaurant and you feel like you've just had a night out!

**G** So which restaurants are your favourites?

**AT** I love Markthalle Neun and the street food scene that is building up in Berlin – delicious! Boris and Stefan from Grill Royale are friends of mine, and that's my absolute favourite place to eat. If you like vegetarian, you should try Cookies Cream, which is owned by another friend, Cookie – it's by far the best vegetarian

## Anita Tillmann recommends



### BOROS COLLECTION

This private collection of contemporary art contains groups of works by international artists dating from 1990 to the present. Different facets of the collection have been on public display since 2008 in a converted bunker, situated in Berlin-Mitte. Tours must be booked in advance.

[sammlung-boros.de](http://sammlung-boros.de)



### THE STORE

Operating at the crossroads of art, culture, lifestyle and fashion, The Store offers a new kind of retail, creative and social experience. What sets it apart are its unique collaborations with some of the world's finest artists, fashion designers, craftsmen, chefs and creatives from all walks of life.

[thestores.com](http://thestores.com)



### GRILL ROYAL

Opened in 2007 the Grill Royal has since become the place to be for Berlin's chicest and visiting Hollywood stars alike. While it is the certainly the spot to see and be seen, the Grill's organic beef from local farmers and its extensive wine menu make every visit a culinary highpoint too.

[grillroyal.com](http://grillroyal.com)

food in the city. I've known all of them since I moved to the city: We were in our early twenties and all just starting out, hanging out and going out to parties or to the Love Parade together. We just grew together in the city. There's also a new Japanese place in Kantstraße called 893 Ryotei. The owner of Kuchi, The Duc Ngo, just opened it. It's amazing, everybody loves it!

**G** What do most people not know about Berlin?

**AT** I think people don't realise that Berlin has more water than Venice, and that you can do everything by boat, whether on the canal, the Spree or by going to a lake – we have 15 lakes in and around Berlin. I have two kids and we really make the most of it.

**G** What's your favourite memory of Berlin?

**AT** When I first came to Berlin, I came in the afternoon and watched the sunset around the Siegestäule golden victory statue, and I just had this strong feeling: »I'm going to stay here.« And that's what I did, I moved straight from Hamburg to Berlin – with no job and no flat. Because of that memory, the so-called Goldene Else is my favourite monument in the city.



See Anita Tillmann present her Berlin favourites on [www.youtube.com/grohe](http://www.youtube.com/grohe)

# THE MINIMAL PALACE

Borrowing from Berlin's past, the Plattenpalast is a lesson in size, style and recycling.

TEXT: AN PAENHUYSEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTIAN ROSE

In 2001 the artist Tacita Dean let her camera slide over the reflective bronze-coloured windows of the Palast der Republik in Berlin, mirroring the setting sun. A few years later, from 2006 to 2009, the 1976 building that was once the seat of parliament in the German Democratic Republic was demolished to be replaced by a reconstruction of a Baroque Hohenzollern palace. A few of these legendary window panes, glowing orange in the sun like fire, found a new setting in a small experimental garden house called Plattenpalast. »It's hard to find good examples of the reuse of the Palast's high-end glass,« architect Carsten Wiewiorra explains. »The window panes have been turned into hotel tables and the like. We wanted to reuse them in a nice way.« In collaboration with the research lab IEMB (Institut für Erhaltung und Modernisierung von Bauwerken) at the TU Berlin, Wiewiorra created the Plattenpalast, a recycled house that sits in a courtyard in Berlin-Mitte.

The Plattenpalast's name not only references the Palast der Republik, its building material is largely taken from a Plattenbau, those indistinguishable slab buildings of the GDR. The Plattenpalast is made out of the prefabricated



concrete panels from a Plattenbau in Marzahn that was demolished in 2004. »Back then, recycling construction materials was not in vogue,« Wiewiorra says, »it's only recently that a change of attitude is taking place.« With the Plattenpalast, Wiewiorra wanted to make a case for the afterlife of construction waste and as such it became the first genuine recycled house in Berlin. Construction of this kind of house costs about 30 percent less than a conventional house. But for Wiewiorra, the main idea behind the Plattenpalast was to make people conscious of the waste of materials, and more so: that it makes no sense to demolish these buildings in the first place.

**»It's about quality living  
in a small space.«**

Wiewiorra finished the Plattenpalast in 2009, and since then it has gained a lot of attention. This might have to do with the GDR nostalgia that set in in the 2010s, replacing the disdain for everything Soviet that characterised



The Plattenpalast's minimalistic interior is enhanced with faucets from GROHE's Eurosmart Cosmopolitan and Allure lines.

the 1990s. But there is also a new interest in minimal living. Especially in Berlin, where the lack of affordable housing is palpable. For Wiewiorra, his Plattenpalast has a distinct social component: »It's about quality living in a small space.« This also shows in the buildings interior design – although it's only 36 square metres, it still manages to give the impression of being airy. Functionality is another concern, and this is where GROHE comes into play. The compact kitchens are fitted with GROHE's Eurosmart Cosmopolitan faucets, which combine modern aesthetics and excellent ergonomics. The same goes for the GROHE Euphoria shower system and GROHE Allure faucets that are installed in the bathroom of the Plattenpalast.

For most Berliners the idea of minimal living might need some getting used to, as it is very different from the lofty, high-ceiling apartments of the city's 19th century tenements. But minimal living is a lifestyle that is on the rise, especially for the globetrotters who live and work in different cities.

**»Back then, recycling construction materials was not in vogue. It's only recently that a change of attitude is taking place.«**

Wiewiorra sees the Plattenpalast as a kind of »living experiment«. From the start, the idea was to make the space public. More than 40 art projects were organised, and this September, during Berlin Art Week, Jaromir Hladik will curate a show about the transition from living to art. In 2015, the Plattenpalast also started a project called »Living in Minimal Space«, inviting architects, educators, environmentalists and artists to try out the minimal lifestyle. Of course, Wiewiorra himself spent some time there. »Minimal living can be a refreshing undertaking,« he says, »because you own less to worry about and you always have an overview.«





# INSTANT SPARKLE

GROHE's new Blue Home allows everyone to access cold, filtered and carbonated water from their own kitchen faucet, whenever they like. But did you know that there's a lot more to sparkling water than just an elegant way to quench your thirst?

PHOTOGRAPHY: PAVEL BECKER  
ART DIRECTION: NORA LUTHER



### Farmer's Omelette

- 2 potatoes
- 1 small apple
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- 30ml sparkling water
- 100g chanterelles (small)
- 1 chilli pepper
- 15g chives
- salt and pepper

Peel potatoes, cut into thin slices. Dice apple. Heat oil in pan, fry potato slices for ten minutes while stirring. Add apple and chanterelles. Fry for five more minutes. In the meantime: mix eggs and sparkling water from the GROHE Blue Home faucet. Add chopped chives and chilli pepper. Season with salt and pepper. Pour batter into pan and fry until firm.

### Lemon-y Shrimp Tempura

- 10 large shrimps
- corn starch for dusting
- 1 egg
- 200ml sparkling water (cold)
- 250ml flour
- 1 dash of lemon juice
- zest of ½ a lemon
- vegetable oil for frying

Sift the flour into a large bowl. Whisk egg into the cold sparkling water. Slowly pour the egg and sparkling water from the GROHE Blue Home faucet into the flour. Add lemon juice and zest before mixing. Dust corn starch on top of shrimps. Coat the shrimps in batter. Fry the shrimps until golden brown, then place on paper towel to drain excess oil.

Few things are as refreshing as a sparkling cold drink. Carbon dioxide has revived the spirits of everyone from ancient Greeks dipping in sacred springs at Delphi to pagan and Christian worshippers across Europe and fizzy drink addicts queuing at the local shop. When the 18th-century inventor Joseph Priestley developed the first way of carbonating water to make a nice, refreshing drink and published his findings in a paper called »Impregnating Water with Fixed Air«, he called it his »happiest« discovery.

Not many people realise you can bring the light, airy quality of fizzy water to your cooking by simply substituting still water for sparkling. »It's a great option for anything that calls for effervescence,« says Jenny McCoy, pastry chef instructor at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York. »If you're making something that calls for water and you substitute it with sparkling water, so long as it's something you're going to mix and cook quickly, you're going to see it pop.«

In particular, adding sparkling water makes dishes fluffier, crispier, lighter and airier. Omelettes made with sparkling water seem to float on the fork; tempura batters infused with a few bubbles make fried foods feel calorie-free; and while waffles, donuts and crepes are pretty hard to

improve on, a splash of sparkling water in your milk and eggs will make them taste like miracles. Smoothies and other thick beverages can also benefit from sparkling water the same way cocktails or other mixed drinks do – particularly in summery drinks that incorporate ingredients like melons, berries or mint. A splash of fresh, cold, bubbly water will cut the sweetness without making it bitter. You can also substitute sparkling water in recipes that call for beer or champagne. Basically, sparkling water adds an edge without the edge – you could call it the invigorating lightness of bubbles.

Scientifically, this is the simple result of the added carbon dioxide in sparkling water. Bubbles lower the water's pH level, making it more acidic and giving it that crisp, unique tartness. There's also a slight bit of sodium in sparkling water, so foods you prepare with it require less salt – a boon for your health and your vegetables, which retain more of their nutrients (and lush colour) if you boil them in sparkling water instead of in regular, still tap water.

There are some tricks to cooking with such an ebullient element, of course. By dispensing sparkling water with products like GROHE Blue Home, which filters and carbonates water straight from your kitchen faucet,



Lemon-y Shrimp Tempura

## Sunset Smoothie

6 strawberries  
 5 mint leaves  
 600g watermelon (chilled)  
 1 lime (juice)  
 4 ice cubes  
 200ml sparkling water

Halve strawberries and pick mint leaves. Cut chilled watermelon into pieces. Add strawberry, watermelon, lime juice, ice cubes, and mint leaves to blender. Blend until smooth for approx. 2–3min. Add sparkling water before stirring. Enjoy while cold.

**»Basically, sparkling water adds an edge without the edge – you could call it the invigorating lightness of bubbles.«**

is one of the best ways to harness its benefits. Having to run out and purchase plastic bottles of sparkling water is time-consuming, physically demanding and obviously not very environmentally friendly. But more important for your cooking is the fact that once you crack open a bottle the clock starts ticking – the fizz starts to go flat. The same thing happens when you use sparkling water in cooking and baking, so time is of the essence. If you use fresh, sparkling water your food sparkles for longer than if you open a bottle of water, leave it sitting on the counter while you wash a pan, and come back to incorporate it into your recipe. »When you're using sparkling water, you want to use it on dishes that you plan on cooking and eating immediately,« McCoy says. »Just like a glass of sparkling water, it's going to start to go flat if you leave it out on the counter.«

While some people use sparkling water to make bread, pastry expert McCoy prefers to use it in things like fritter batters, donut batters, cake batters and crepes. »I think it gives your baking powder a little more oomph,« she says. Like tempura batter, these are dishes you whisk together and fry in fat or oil immediately to make the most of the carbonation, which only has a 15-minute lifespan once the pressure is released. For the more creative chefs among us, McCoy suggests using sparkling water

in gelatins or gelées. If you time it right and don't mix it too much, you'll be able to see the bubbles suspended in your finished dessert.

It's also important that the water you cook with is cold. Cold water contains more oxygen than warm water, which has a flatter taste and fewer bubbles, and even tiny increases in temperature limit a liquid's ability to hold gas. Have you ever accidentally taken a big swig of soda, expecting to have your thirst quenched, only to realise in horror that the drink you've just guzzled was warm? Using carbonated water from the faucet allows you to control the temperature of the sparkling water it produces, giving you an optimal ingredient for your dishes. In other words: effervescence on demand.

With all this talk of sparkles it's important not to forget the benefits of cooking with still, filtered mineral water too. Free from the heavy irons and organic matter that are present in regular tap water, GROHE's Blue Home still water is perfect for vegetables, soups and drinks. Consuming water with a regular chemical make-up helps metabolise the food and helps keep you healthy.

**Win a GROHE Blue Home for your very own home. See more on [magazine.grohe.com/blue-competition](https://magazine.grohe.com/blue-competition)**

*Pure Freude  
an Wasser*



# UNBOTTLED WATER

STILL, MEDIUM OR SPARKLING



## REFRESH WITH **GROHE BLUE HOME**

A beautiful and intelligent system that transforms simple water into pure thirst-quenching pleasure. How do you like your water? Still, medium or sparkling, it's all a matter of taste. GROHE Blue Home has a simple and intuitive mechanism that lets you carbonate your drinking water at the touch of a button. Deliciously cool filtered water. [www.grohe.com](http://www.grohe.com)



# THE DESERT BLOOM

GROHE's Green Mosque and Turn Water Into Food initiatives are winning awards and enabling water conservation in the Middle East.

**TEXT: CONOR CREIGHTON**  
**ILLUSTRATION: JOANNA GNIADY**

The Middle East faces some of the toughest water challenges in the world. Much of its unique landscape is desert, and water conservation is a top priority among governments in the region. The challenge to conserve water in this part of the world was taken on by GROHE with the Green Mosque Initiative.

The Green Mosque Initiative is simple and well-conceived. Lina Varytimidou, Director of PR and Communications for GROHE in the Middle East, explained that before the initiative water was being wasted at an alarming rate in the mosques. »Muslims have to pray five times a day, washing hands and feet. So if you think about water usage, each worshipper can use as much as ten to fifteen litres before entering the area of prayer.«

Varytimidou's team offered to donate faucets to mosques and replace their existing less-efficient models. »The mosques could look at the water bills before and after to show the water and money savings,« Varytimidou says. When they did they were suitably impressed. The new GROHE faucets reduced water consumption by up to 30 percent in many cases. The project has now been successfully rolled out in five different mosques across the UAE, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and has seen GROHE partner with many different ministries and foundations in the region.

The success of the Green Mosques Initiative was acknowledged with a SABRE Best in Show award in 2014

and a shortlisting for the award in 2016. Buoyed by the impact they were making in mosques, GROHE launched its Turn Water Into Food initiative in 2015. By committing to a donation of one food pack for every ten litres of water saved, they were able to help poorer families provide for the Iftar meal during the holy month of Ramadan.

»I think it's a fascinating region for the way things operate in comparison to Europe and the States,« says Lina Varytimidou. »I have the opportunity to develop activities that are market specific, human and educational where cultural relevance is a focal point.«

In July this year, the Turn Water Into Food initiative won an IPRA Golden World Award for corporate responsibility. Encouraged by this, the initiative is set to grow beyond the holy month of Ramadan and continue the entire year.

GROHE have also been involved in bringing water to areas where it is scarce. When they found out about a group of Bedouins in Jordan who had lost access to a vital supply when an EcoPark was established, they »took a pledge to resolve the issue«. The project included installing pumps, piping, water meters and fixtures that would allow the Bedouins easy access to water for drinking, bathing and irrigation.

These activities are certain to lessen the impact of water scarcity in the region in the coming years.

# STRAIGHT FLUSH

With hygiene, sustainability and comfort on his mind, GROHE's Torsten Meier has helped develop the Sensia Arena. The new shower toilet that's determined to overthrow our bathroom traditions.

INTERVIEW: HENNY BOHM  
PHOTOGRAPHY: ALBRECHT FUCHS



As GROHE's Vice President for Research and Development, Torsten Meier has been working with a team of Japanese and German engineers to develop the Sensia Arena, a shower toilet that increases hygiene, saves water and ensures the most comfortable, most personal toilet experience yet. GROHE Magazine met Mr Meier in the GROHE Store at the Düsseldorf headquarters to find out all about the invention that will revolutionise our bathrooms.

## GROHE

Why are shower toilets found in almost every household in Japan?

### Torsten Meier

**It's just cleaner. When you have dirty hands, you don't use paper to clean them – you want to use water. But when it comes to our bottoms we tend not to do that; it is something the Japanese really have learnt, and this is where they are very advanced compared to us Europeans.**

**G** When talking about shower toilets another important aspect is sustainability. What are the benefits of using the Sensia Arena over a regular toilet with toilet paper?

**TM** There are different aspects. One is how can we save water? Current toilets use up to nine or ten litres of water. Today we can adjust the volume with a big and a small flush. In the end it's up to the consumer how much water volume he or she wants to use. Today you often need to flush twice to get the bowl clean. The Sensia Arena's ceramic has a special surface treatment and cleans much better; this is our tribute to sustainability – allowing the consumer to save water wherever possible! On the other hand, a certain amount of water volume is needed to flush the toilet paper through the sump and pipes to avoid clogging. You see, shower toilets will help us to massively reduce water consumption because there is no need to use toilet paper. Even if you chose to use it, it's definitely less paper than you use today. Less paper means less water!

**G** When working with a team of Japanese and German engineers, what were the challenges adapting Japanese technologies for a larger market?

**TM** Our Japanese colleagues have vast experience with the Japanese market. The question is how do we incorporate this technology from Japan into our worldwide consumer base? How can we encourage them to switch from standard toilets to one that really provides a new and exciting experience



that hasn't been encountered by the majority of Westerners? Consumers will only be convinced if they can trust in the design and technology. Our Japanese colleagues have already worked with a lot of features. The challenge for us was how can we bring these features to a higher level? So we looked at other products and asked many questions. But mainly: What do you want from a toilet? When you flush a toilet, you want to make sure everything is gone, that it's perfectly clean. This is the aspect we then concentrated on.

**G** One of the features that helps to keep the toilet clean is AquaCeramics. How does it work?

**TM** AquaCeramics is the first hydrophilic surface we've seen in a GROHE toilet. Previously, the best technology was hydrophobic – a water-repellant surface – so the water runs off very fast. But if you think about it, when dirt hits the surface and the surface is dry, it will stick. So what we're trying to achieve with the hydrophilic technology is to cover the entire surface with water. So when the dirt hits, it's not able to stick. We looked at some of the stickiest substances you can think of. We applied them to the surface to test the cleaning ability of the AquaCeramics.

**G** You told me an anecdote earlier about using peanut butter in your testing lab.



**TM Absolutely. I set my colleagues a challenge as we found that peanut butter is one of the most difficult substances to shift.**

**G How long did it take you to get rid of all the peanut butter in the testing process?**

**TM It took us almost three years to crack the challenge. The whole team felt an enormous excitement when we finally solved it.**

**G So this feature was one of the most difficult to develop but it's also the one you're most proud of?**

**TM Yes. The thing is, AquaCeramics is baked into the surface. The surface is not like an organic coating that wears away. We've done extensive operational tests and can now claim that the toilet will stay clean for 100 years.**

**G That's a bold statement.**

**TM I wouldn't say bold. The glazing is just so hard and strong that it won't wear off. Not in 100 years at least.**

**G Which other features make the Sensia Arena cleaner compared to other toilets?**

**TM Triple vortex is a flushing technology that we developed. We circulate the water at a very high velocity around the upper part of the bowl, and with this high velocity we are able to flush away all kinds of fluid and really efficiently remove the dirt. We also invented HyperClean, which is a special coating that uses silver ions.**

**G Let's talk about the comfort aspects of the Sensia Arena shower toilet.**

**TM We use customisation everywhere, whether it's in our cars or in our homes. So what we've done is to offer different spray types and different precisions of the spray itself: an oscillating spray, a wider spray and a finer spray. We're all different and we all have different preferences, so this is about the toilet adapting to meet your personal comfort needs.**

**G There's a control panel next to the toilet but there's also an app.**

**TM Yes, from the app you can change the spray type and flush the toilet. You can also adjust the temperature. You customise it your way and the toilet will recognise you when you use it.**

**G For you as an engineer, what's the most challenging thing about working with water?**

**TM Water is the next fuel in terms of sustainability. When I was an engineer at school, everybody told you to be on the watch as oil consumption was too high and oil reserves would go down to the point where one day we would run out of it altogether. I used to live in India, and from what I saw there I believe that in today's world the biggest threat is that we will run out of water. Useable drinking water will become more and more scarce. We need to be aware of our water consumption. So what we're trying to do is find new ways to save water. For example, we flush toilets with drinking water, which is a real waste, so when we were developing the Arena Sensia we were really trying to reduce this waste. We also have to stop putting unnecessary rubbish into the water like we do with toilet paper today. Somehow we have to make sure that it doesn't end up in the toilet. So water usage is one improvement, but the other is really ensuring that we don't pollute the water.**

**G Do you have a personal relation to water? Of course I'm sure you use water every day to clean but do you do any water sports?**

**TM I like swimming. I wish I had the time to go every morning. I do triathlons, so I try to go swimming at least once or twice a week.**

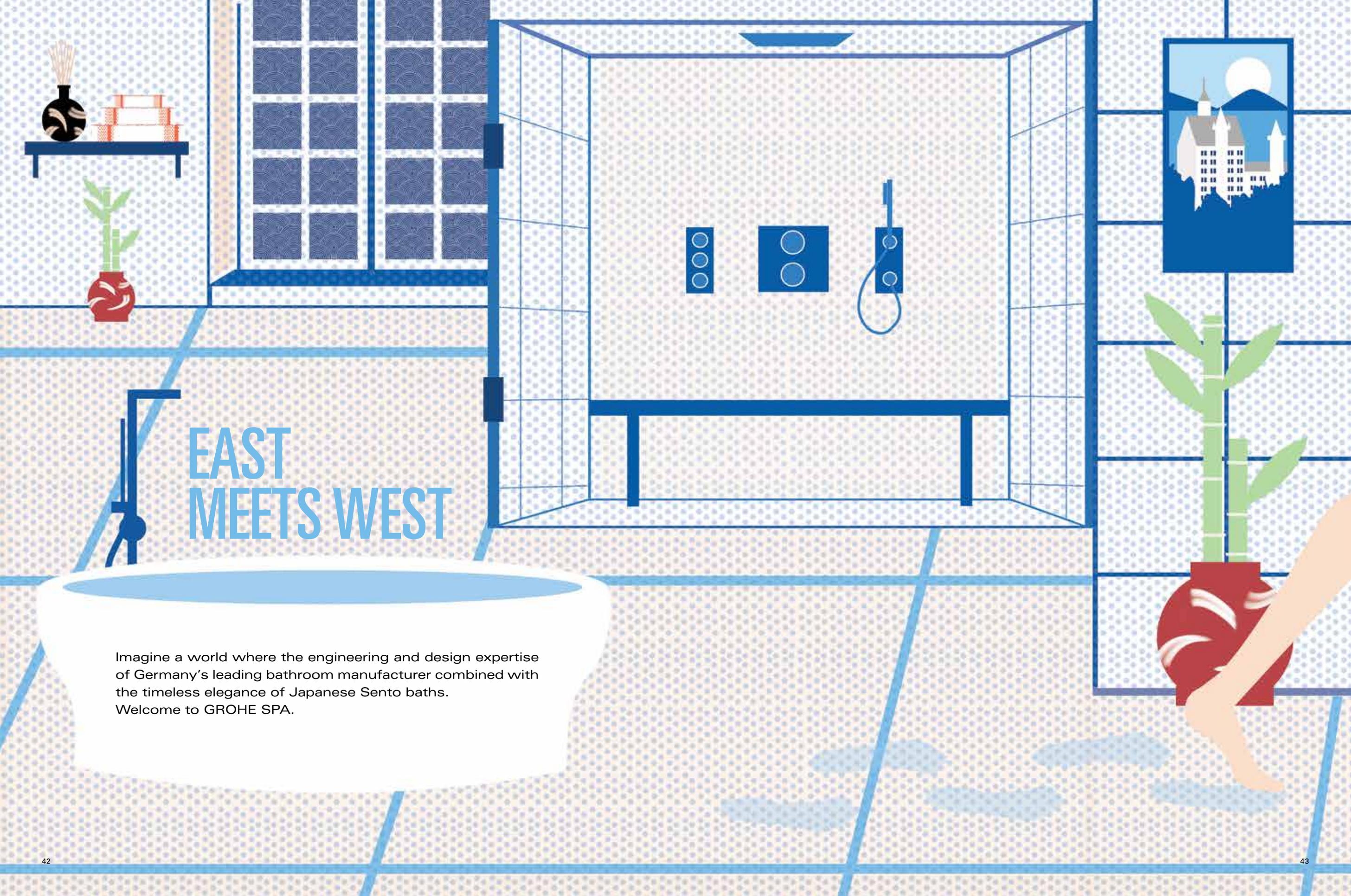
**G A triathlon is a very challenging sport. Have you learned anything from doing triathlons that has influenced your work?**

**TM If you take a challenge, you finish it.**

**To find out more about the special offers available for Sensia Arena please visit [www.arena.grohe.com](http://www.arena.grohe.com)**



The Sensia Arena features AquaCeramics – a hydrophilic glazing that took Torsten Meier and his team over three years to develop.



# EAST MEETS WEST

Imagine a world where the engineering and design expertise of Germany's leading bathroom manufacturer combined with the timeless elegance of Japanese Sento baths. Welcome to GROHE SPA.

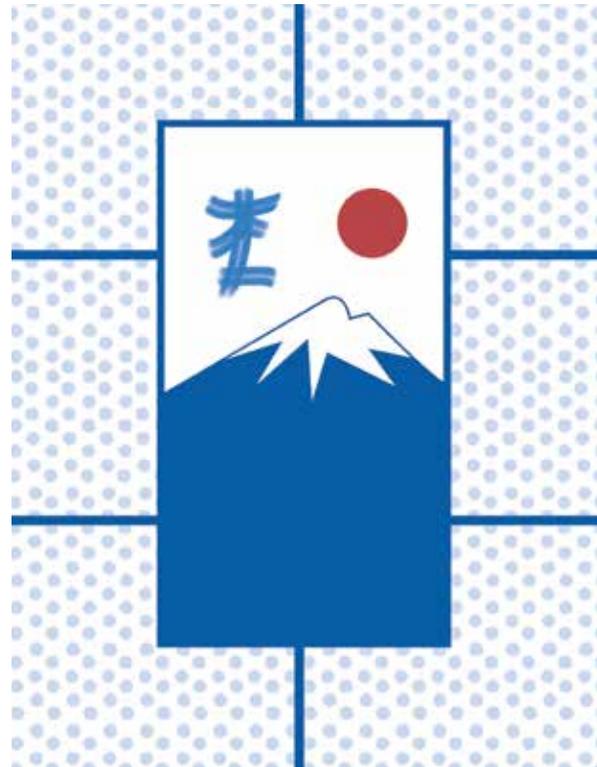
TEXT: SARAH FAKRAY  
ILLUSTRATION: ANA JAKS

In Japan, communal baths were originally conceived as a place for ritual, and went by the rather instructional name Sento (steam bath). At first it was only priests who were allowed to use the sento, but as word spread of the benefits of bathing in hot, mineral-rich water, the sick, the elderly, the nobility and finally the peasantry all got the chance to get their toes wet too.

Early baths were accessed by a tiny door, and visibility inside was so poor that newcomers would clear their throats so the rest of the bathers would know where they were. Back then everyone bathed nude, there was no gender segregation and it was very common to have both female (Yuna) and male (Sansuke) back-scrubbers employed by the bathhouses to help customers clean themselves.

In contemporary Japan, the public bath has declined in popularity as private baths became the norm, but the importance of bathing rituals hasn't gone away. People still want to enjoy the ritualistic, holistic experience of the ancient public baths but in their own homes. GROHE have taken inspiration from the modern predilection for spa-quality comfort under your own roof by creating the GROHE SPA collection.

The GROHE SPA is a fully customisable experience that turns the bathroom from a functional, utilitarian space into an emotional retreat, where every process and every



act takes on the feel and sensuality of an ancient ritual. In Japan, bathing was and still is considered a solemn, important and very careful undertaking. What would those early Buddhist priests make of the typical pre-work bathroom dash that is so common in the West? The GROHE SPA doesn't promise the gift of more time, but it certainly creates a more enlightening bathroom experience, a place where careful design and brilliant engineering ensure you're more mindful than manic.

**»The GROHE SPA is a fully customisable experience that turns the bathroom from a functional, utilitarian space into an emotional retreat, where every process takes on the feel and sensuality of an ancient ritual.«**



#### Essence

With its slim architectural shapes, GROHE's Essence line is the ideal addition to spa-like bathrooms that take their cues from Japanese Sento culture. Offering pure elegance without compromise, the floor-mounted bath tap is a perfect match for a free-standing bathtub. Finished in lustrous GROHE StarLight chrome, its spout can be set to swivel in a range of up to 360°. This functionality provides full operating control at all times, with the possibility to lock the spout in a specific position. Even its spray angle can be adjusted conveniently with the integrated AquaGuide.

For the Japanese, the simplicity of the bathing house design is crucial for calming the mind. The walls were bare, and apart from a usual picture of Mount Fuji, were typically kept empty.

GROHE SPA has responded to the Japanese understanding of clean design with the minimalist Essence faucets range. The range embodies beauty and simplicity by playing with the cylindrical form in exciting and beautiful new ways. The faucets combine beautifully with architectural washbasins and elegant freestanding baths, allowing for a creative approach to bathroom design. It's a real meeting of engineering nous, Zen wisdom and timeless elegance.

In ancient Japan they mixed hot and cold water in a bucket before bathing. Imagine what they'd make of the AquaSymphony, the star of the shower portfolio. It features powerful waterfall effects, therapeutic lights and the latest in massage, jet and rain spray technology. The GROHE SPA App and F-digital Deluxe allow the user to create their own perfect ambience by Bluetoothing their favourite songs, or maybe even a compilation of chanting monks, from a digital device straight to the shower room.

Japanese public baths were a place where a simple farm worker could go and come out feeling like an emperor. The same should be true of all bathroom experiences. After all it's no coincidence that in the West they lovingly refer to their toilets as thrones. And what better throne than GROHE's Sensia Arena, a toilet that flushes from your phone, has individualised shower settings, and thanks to its hydrophilic surface will stay clean for over 100 years.



It is true: So many of our day-to-day activities are performed at such breakneck speeds that we fail to notice the sensual and simple beauty of the life we're living. And we tend to forget that our senses are pleasure receptors. But remedy is here: GROHE SPA offers the most advanced and individualised water experience available, marrying precision German engineering and calming Japanese style. It is a refreshing reminder to stop, listen, wash and enjoy.



#### F-digital Deluxe

This multi-sensory shower is designed to stimulate all senses and to transform any bathroom into an indulgent space for physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Like all products in the F-Series, which represents the freedom of design, the modules of F-digital Deluxe can be installed to personal preferences or be added to an existing system. Its intuitive GROHE F-digital Deluxe App lets users design their own personal combination of fascinating light effects, musical favourites and steam intensity for a unique spa sanctuary. All this with just a single movement of the hand – thanks to wireless Bluetooth® connectivity for Apple and Android mobile devices. Yet another detail that highlights the unique flexibility that is an integral element of the GROHE SPA philosophy.

#### Grohtherm F

The perfect companion for an F-digital Deluxe shower system, the Grohtherm F allows for the freedom to design a bespoke spa shower for everyone. Whether it's one, two or multiple shower outlets, the modular range lets the user create a range of exciting experiences when combined with GROHE's award-winning shower head designs. And that's not all: featuring GROHE TurboStat technology, the shower thermostat responds within a fraction of a second to any changes in the incoming water supply.



# PUBLIC BATHING

Jane Withers' latest exhibition in London takes a new look at old bathhouses.

TEXT: JENI FULTON  
PORTRAIT: A. J. LEVY

Jane Withers is a design consultant and curator whose work often focuses on environmental issues. From urban swimming to ocean plastic pollution and »water footprints«, her multifaceted work delves into the social and environmental questions surrounding water. GROHE caught up with the London-based curator in the run up to her exhibition »Soak, Steam, Dream«, where she unites architects and designers to reimagine the bathhouse as a social space.

## GROHE

In your work you address important global environmental challenges such as water sustainability and pollution via a design-led approach. Subjects such as large-scale ocean plastic pollution and urban river contamination are turned into exhibitions. How can this approach not just address but also change how people relate to water?

### Jane Withers

Design is a very good medium for looking at environmental challenges and introducing imaginative perspectives. For example, the »Urban Plunge« exhibition looked at swimming in urban rivers and about water in relation to the human body. Urban rivers are some of the only large-scale public spaces we have left in cities. We should make them liveable again. This raised the subject of water quality and all the other issues around it in a less obvious way than just banging on about urban rivers being hazardously filthy.

**G** In your exhibition »Project Ocean«, where you partnered with Selfridges department store in London, you addressed ocean plastic waste, one of the major 21st century concerns. How can commercial partners contribute to the debate when it's often consumerism itself that is contributing to pollution?

**JW** With the Project Ocean exhibition on marine plastic pollution, we wanted to see how we could communicate this in a way that would inspire people to rethink their disposable plastic use. We all suffer eco-fatigue at some point. However, marine scientists say that plastic pollution is an issue where the individual can make a difference. Selfridges described it as »retail activism«. They stopped selling single-use plastic water bottles and encouraged visitors to think about their water use. We need to re-evaluate plastic and how we use it. Studio Swine did this wonderful project with captured sea plastic from plastic gyres and reworked it as a precious material. It's a very interesting way of visualising ideas across cultures.

**G** The Zoological Society of London's #oneless campaign, which has grown out of your Project Ocean, encourages people and organisations to give up plastic water bottles.

**JW** #oneless came about through Project Ocean; it has a symbolic focus that's easy for people to grasp. If you say, »Why not reconsider using a plastic water bottle?«, it's a good entry point. Very



soon you're thinking about the plastic bag, the disposable coffee cup, and ultimately your plastic use. We want London to give up the plastic water bottle and reduce plastic pollution in rivers and the ocean. This is also why I'm looking forward to be testing the new GROHE Blue Home in my house. The ability to get filtered and sparkling water straight from the tap is a great way to reduce the usage of plastic bottles.

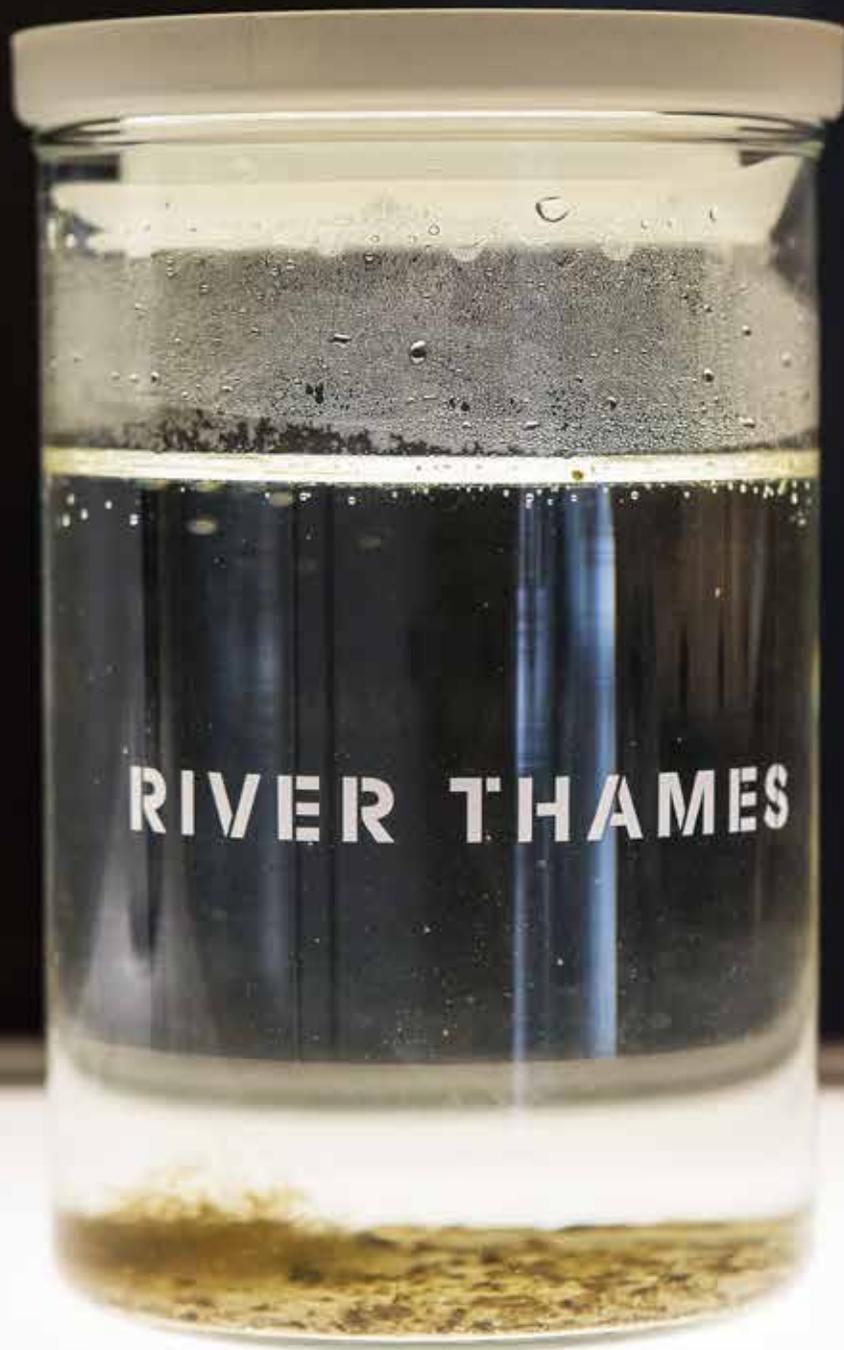
**G** »Soak, Steam, Dream«, your upcoming exhibition in London, looks at modern bathing culture and examines ideas from contemporary designers and architects. Why the focus on bathing?

**JW** The exhibition shows there is a revival of interest in the bathhouse. For example Peter Zumthor's Therme Vals reinterprets ancient bathing cultures from a contemporary perspective. Other architects and designers are bringing back the idea of the

bathhouse as a space for social, cultural and even political exchange. The idea of »taking the waters« is also experiencing some form of resurgence. We have this concept of wellness and the spa, but that's a more private, privileged experience.

**G** Where do you locate the contemporary resurgence in this interest? Is it to do with communal experiences and communitarianism?

**JW** I think it's a way of building community. In Barking, one of the poorer London boroughs, there was the Barking bathhouse, a temporary project by Something & Son that was very much trying to return to the idea of the local public bathhouse as a community space, making the whole experience more affordable. There is also a very interesting project in Gothenburg by raumlaborberlin architects, which is sowing the seeds of regeneration in the disused dock area of the city.



Water sample from the Thames as featured in Urban Plunge.



With her exhibition Urban Plunge, curator Jane Withers raised the subject of water quality in urban rivers.



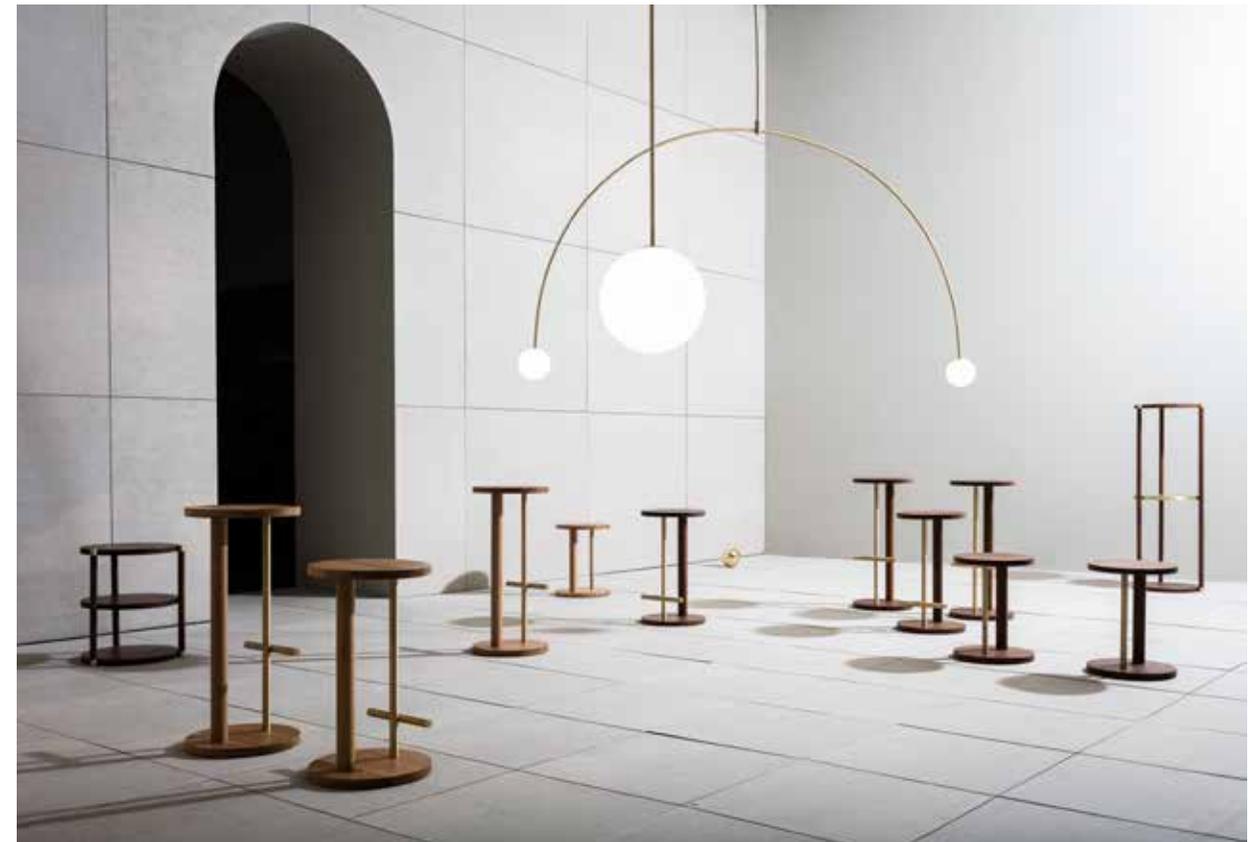
Bathing culture projects like this Gothenburg sauna by raumlabor architects are on view at »Soak, Steam, Dream: reinventing Bathing Culture« in London until 28 January 2017. Learn more at [janewithers.com](http://janewithers.com).



# 5 FROM MILAN

SALONE DEL MOBILE in Milan brings together the best and brightest of the international design community to set the latest furniture trends in motion. Michael Seum, GROHE's Vice President for Design, walks us through his five standout themes after visiting the fair.

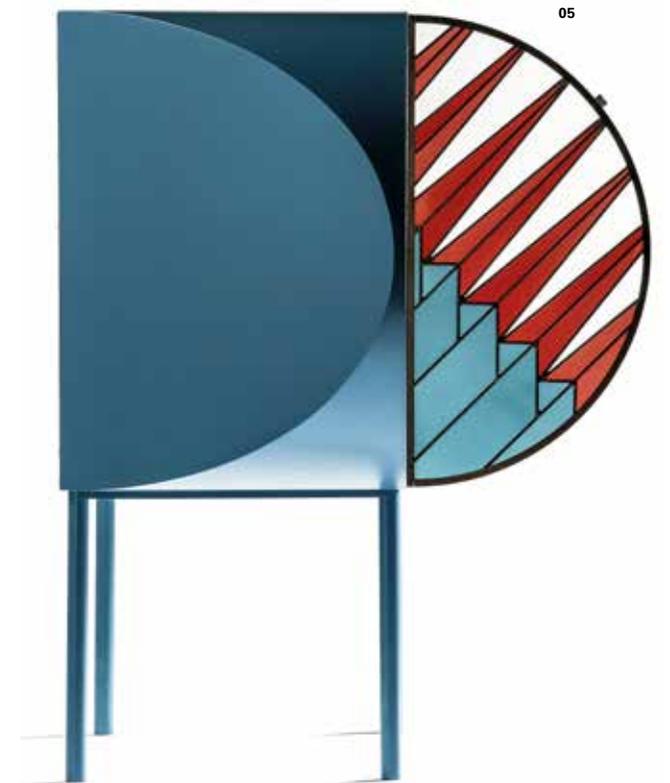
Since its foundation in 1961, SALONE DEL MOBILE has set the benchmark for innovative home furnishing design and is now the biggest international fair of its kind. With its main site located in Milan's glassy Fieramilano Rho exhibition ground, the 55th edition of the Salone launched a multitude of exciting new directions in design and technological developments. To determine this year's definite must-see Milan trends, we traversed the venue's 1 km walkway and scoured the wares of more than 1,300 exhibitors – from the Classic, Design and xLux sections of the main Salone to the young talent showcased in satellite locations all over the city.



04

## Shape lightweight

Slim metal rods and semi-circular shapes gave this season's pieces the resemblance of an Alexander Calder mobile. **ODD MATTER STUDIOS's** Node lamp (01), based on circuit diagrams, can be turned on by closing the electric circuit, and a similarly tubular profile can be found in **DRIADE's** Mingx armchair (02). **HERMAN MILLER's** The Double Dream of Spring (04) communicates an airy, minimalist take on metaphysical art, while elsewhere, graphics create subtle 3D illusions from flat panels, seen on the Chloé screen by **GALLOTTI&RADICE** (03) and **SPAZIO PONTACCIO's** stunning Credenza stained glass furniture series (05).



05



01

### Nomadic furniture

Playful, portable designs for compact living spaces were wheeled out across Milan. **POLTRONA FRAU's** Ren coffee table (01) and the understated Norm towel ladder by **MENU** (02) can be transported by carry handles, conjuring ideas beyond their stated purpose. Grid by **THOMAS SCHNUR** (03) provides hanging options for anything that can hook or be hooked, and the laser-cut cover plate on **COTTO's** Cov cabinet by **STUDIO 248** (04) slides to hide items on exposed shelves.



02



01



02



03

### Architectural designs

With a nod to modern cityscapes of skyscrapers and bridges, architectural furniture in bold black turned up everywhere, from **CASSINA's** adjustable modular bookcase (01) to **POLTRONA FRAU's** Lloyd storage unit (02) and the fantastically simple Happy Endings stool by **MAGIS** (03). Taking its cues from smart buildings, the Smartslab Table by **KRAM/WEISSHAAR** (04) features a hidden electric circuit and is topped with ceramic panels that keep plates warm and wine bottles cool.



03



04



04

## Organic Wood Craftsmanship

The Salone revealed a trend for organic curved wood structures that combine traditional materials with advanced production and processing techniques. The delicate walnut canaletto wood that encases **GIORGETTI's** Hug chair (01) gives the appearance of holding the padded seat and backrest together. American walnut borders a Ceramilux sink in **ANTONIOLUPI's** Armonia console (02), which features a slender frame that seemingly grows straight out of the wall.



01

## Metal Finishes

Warm metal finishes in brass, gold, copper and bronze gave new life to furnishings, summoning 60s glamour, sleek minimalism and modern industrial. The iconic **KNOLL** Platner collection celebrated its 50th anniversary with 18k gold revamps of those traditional steel rod bases, realised to glorious effect in this Platner coffee table (03). **TOM DIXON's** Cog Stack pendant light (04) is part of a range of surprising cog-inspired accessories, and the hooks on **POLTRONA FRAU's** Ren free-standing mirror coat rack (05) will only warrant being adorned by the most stylish of coats.

02



04



03

05



NEW



# GROHE SMARTCONTROL – 3D SHOWERING

DRÜCKEN, DREHEN, DUSCHEN  
PUSH, TURN, SHOWER

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**Rainshower® SmartControl – Choose the spray, control the volume, save the settings. All with one control.** Activate the spray pattern directly with the push button and turn it to find your individual shower volume. A truly innovative all-in-one solution which makes showering a pleasure.



Thermostat technology powered by GROHE TurboStat®



Pure Freude an Wasser



# KEEPING MANHATTAN DRY

How the Big U is developing architectural strategies to prepare for future flooding in New York.

TEXT: LAUREN OYLER  
PHOTOGRAPHY: DANIEL TRESE

On 29 October 2012, the place where Kai-Uwe Bergmann is standing was covered in water. The day Hurricane Sandy hit Lower Manhattan, the East River surged over the waterfront and from this spot in Battery Park flowed into the streets and subways of the city. The damage was devastating, and costly.

A partner and the director of communications at BIG architects, Bergmann is part of a team working on the 335 million dollar Big U project, an eight-mile stretch of resilient, protective solutions that will both help the city withstand disasters like Sandy and give back to the communities that live there. He spoke with GROHE about the challenges and rewards of working on the Big U, as well as the benefits of social infrastructure and BIG's ›pragmatic utopian‹ approach to design.

## GROHE

What is the Big U, and why was it an interesting project to take on?

### Kai-Uwe Bergmann

The Big U is a part of Rebuild by Design, a competition enacted by the federal government that earmarked a billion dollars to invest in proactive, resilient

solutions. What was interesting about it was that there was no site given other than it had to be within the areas affected by Sandy. No brief – you had to solve your own problem. One hundred and forty teams submitted their proposals, and they selected six of those projects to disperse the billion dollars.

**G** Why did you choose the Lower Manhattan area as your worksite?

**KB** We were one of the only teams that looked at Lower Manhattan. Others looked at flooding that was similar to what happened in Lower Manhattan, but they were just thinking of flooding as it happens anywhere, so their projects were kind of site-less. I think the solution we came up with for Manhattan is applicable to other cities, but not all. A place like Miami, which also needs to contend with sea-level rise, is built on limestone. It's so porous that everything sort of moves through it – the water is coming from the ground up. Here it's a little different because the bedrock is granite. We were very interested in the topography of Lower Manhattan. The areas that flooded were areas that had been filled in by man over the last 400 years. Canal Street was a canal, and it flooded. Water Street

used to be the coastline and it flooded. It was really fascinating to see Mother Nature sort of take back her space.

**»Canal Street was a canal, and it flooded. Water Street used to be the coastline and it flooded. It was really fascinating to see Mother Nature sort of take back her space.«**

**G** How did you get from this theoretical place to what you ended up with?

**KB** It's very tailored to the different neighbourhoods. The infrastructure part of it – with the aim to prevent future floodings – is the massive, Robert Moses approach to infrastructure. Moses, a very controversial city planner in the mid-1900s, did a lot of good for the city, but he didn't have the neighbourhood sensitivity of someone like the activist and journalist Jane Jacobs. When Robert Moses wanted to plough a freeway or expressway through Greenwich Village, Jacobs came and said, »You can't destroy this neighborhood, it's so vital to the quality of New

York«. Our approach is a Moses infrastructure with a Jane Jacobs sensitivity. We call it social infrastructure: you make a grand investment in something like roads, bridges, tunnels, but they don't only function as they're intended. This is a resilient infrastructure to keep you dry, but 99.9 percent of the time, when it's not raining or flooding, it's there to enjoy as a park. But also there are parts of the park that will go underwater.

**G** How do you design a space to go underwater?

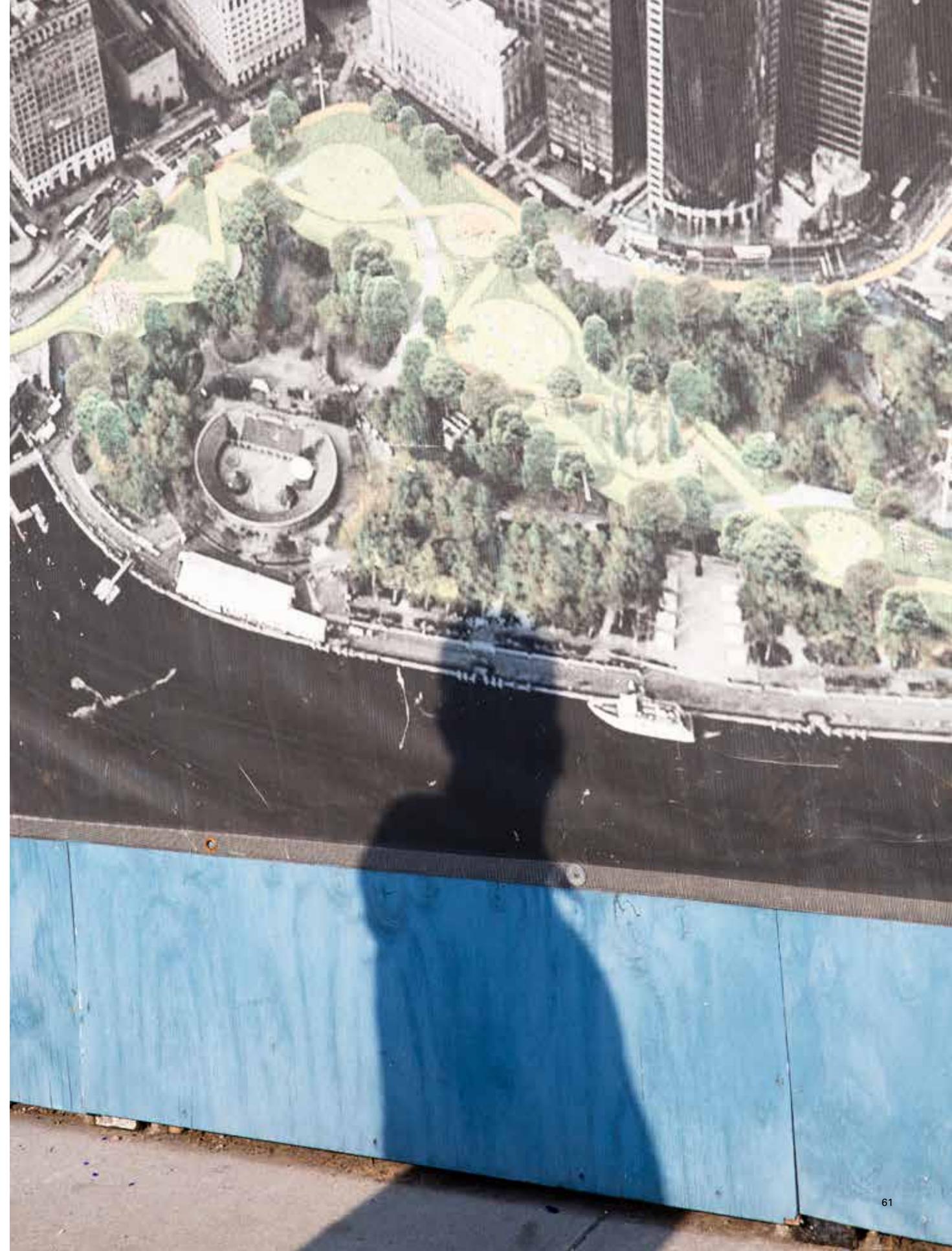
**KB** You think about the natural forces of tides, the ebb and flow, the force. There are ways of modelling with fluid dynamics. When a wall of water comes at you, what you're trying to do is dissipate the impact. There's a crush zone that takes the brunt of the force. The beauty of this competition is you have multiple ideas. So Scape Architecture came up with crushed oyster shells, placing them so that when the water is moving towards Manhattan, the oyster fields would already start to take that force away out in the water, not even close to shore. It's really about a whole slew of solutions that work together to offer you the best protection.

**G** Did you encounter any resistance from the affected communities?

**KB** We spent four months speaking to a hundred different community groups. Almost every day, there were



Kai-Uwe Bergmann is one of the brains behind the Big U, which aims to help New York withstand disastrous floods.





BIG's designs are always based on informed decisions to keep the project within the realm of probability.

two or three meetings where we just asked people what they needed. The main concern was gentrification – that if you increase the quality of a space it will make rents go up. This area is significantly rent controlled; it was extremely important to be sensitive to the number of units, the size of units – that three- and four-bedroom units stay three- and four-bedroom units. We were also speaking to a lot of recent immigrants, so we had to have translations in Mandarin and Spanish in order to get everyone's viewpoints. If you're only approaching it from your background, your language, your history, it's a very limited approach.

**»Our approach is a Moses infrastructure with a Jane Jacobs sensitivity.«**

**G** When the sea level isn't dangerously high, how does the water play into the design and enjoyment of the space?

**KB** There are different places where you will be able to engage with the water. When you get down to the Battery, we have an educational component: a reverse aquarium where you can actually walk into a room and have different floods of the past

centuries lined out on a façade – like when your parents measured you against a doorway – that would actually go into the water. You would have the ability to see what a 15-foot wall of water would be like. We also hope that there will be the potential to swim in the East River in the future.

**G** You refer to BIG's design philosophy as »pragmatic utopian architecture«. How do you balance those two ideas?

**KB** In order to make something buildable, you need to move into a realm of probability. It's really about meeting with contractors, meeting with people, and then designing within the realm of probability. Our approach is to bring in as much information as possible so we can make informed decisions.

**G** You also said that when you build a space, you want the residents to be able to appropriate it. How do you see people appropriating the Big U project?

**KB** It's a project that will see its final gestation when people are using it. I think what we're looking for is to create a framework similar to that of Central Park, where the inhabitants and tourists use the space as they see fit.

Watch a making-of from the shoot with architect Kai-Uwe Bergmann on [www.youtube.com/grohe](http://www.youtube.com/grohe)

# INTO DEEP

The South African freediver Hanli Prinsloo is on a personal mission to reintroduce people to the joy and importance of the oceans.

TEXT: SARAH FAKRAY

»It's a state of complete and utter presence,« says Hanli Prinsloo, recalling her best deep ocean freediving moments, »being very aware of your surroundings and of your person, but nothing else.« The 37-year-old has broken 11 South African freediving records. A single deep breath is sufficient to propel her body up to 63 metres below sea level, with no assistance except for a simple mono-fin on her feet. When floating on the surface of the water, she can hold her breath for a staggering six minutes. Now settled in Cape Town, she has swapped competitive freediving for more dynamic wild dives, but still feels the need to »go back to that sensation of eyes closed, dropping down, falling into this ocean embrace – it's almost a longing for that state.«

Prinsloo grew up on a landlocked South African farm and would dream of the ocean as she reread her favourite Gerald Durrell stories of childhood rock pool discoveries in Corfu. She and her sister Marieke didn't need the sea for their Durrellesque existence among nature, however. They would dive together into the nearby river, communicating in their own underwater language of dolphin-like clicks and squeals, their only instruction to come home before sunset. The girls'

father, a horse breeder and horse whisperer, taught them about the human relationship with animals and how it can be built on mutual respect and understanding rather than dominion.

Later came acting, sociopolitical film-making across Central African conflict zones, and the training of top athletes in mental strength techniques. Prinsloo's autobiographical film, »White as Blood« (2009), is an attempt to reconcile her homecoming to South Africa – where her Afrikaner grandfather had worked as a separation intellectual – after seven years living in Sweden. »I really wanted to be involved in positive change for Africa, and that's why film-making took centre stage at that time. I think what is a constant, and what I'll never want to stop doing, is storytelling.«

It is often personal stories that drive Prinsloo's approach as a motivational speaker. She is currently working with UBS as a speaker for its Global Philanthropy Forum, running workshops around passion, leadership and risk. Despite this, she doesn't consider herself a risk-taker in the traditional sense. »I would never do BASE jumping – the stats are terrible! People laugh and say, but you



Freediver Hanli Prinsloo often swims with underwater animals and aims to protect them through her I AM WATER Trust.

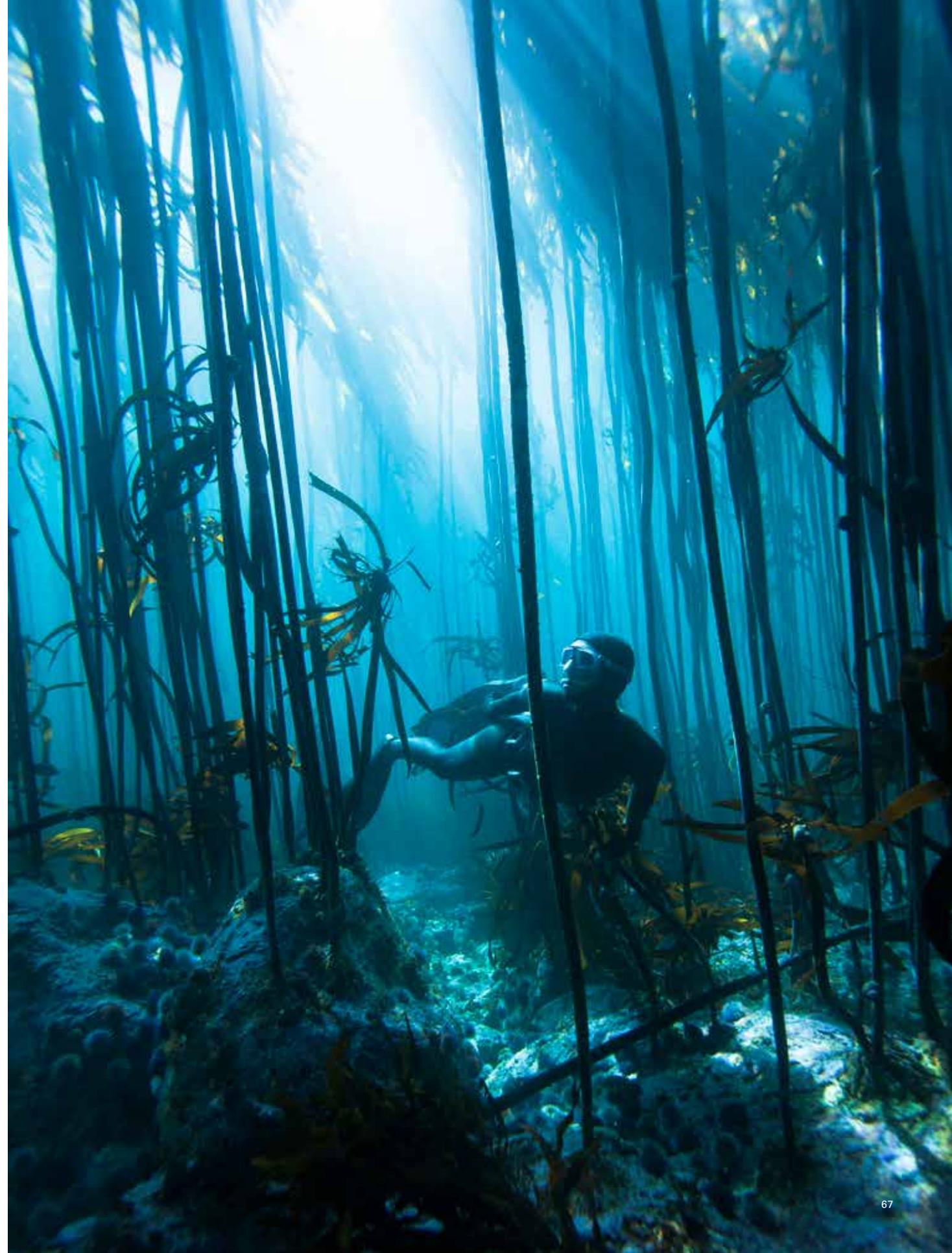
swim with big sharks. Sharks are quite predictable. It's the unexpected that frightens me.»

In 2010, Prinsloo founded the I AM WATER Ocean Conservation Trust, which aims to reconnect young people and adults with nature and wilderness. »Our youth ocean workshops are about getting kids to experience the ocean and fall in love with it. It's easy to put on a documentary and tell them, »These are the facts, and this is beautiful.« But it's only when you have that life-changing experience that it really changes your behaviour.«

Ocean conservation is now a full-time commitment for Prinsloo. »We get more oxygen from the ocean than we do from forests, so we can't pretend it's just something that environmentalists should worry about.« The trust's key issues include the usual suspects: over-fishing, pollution and climate change, which lead to ocean acidification, habitat destruction and species loss. »I've been to dinner parties where people are eating lots of drastically incorrect sushi dishes, looking me earnestly and saying, »But how can we help?« Well, you could not eat what you are eating right now. If we were to translate those fish into land language, then that is a tiger that you are eating. There are only so many left. My big wish is that we could

become more forward-thinking as a species. If we only respond when there's a state of emergency, we sacrifice so much that can't be won back.«

I AM WATER's latest project is a high-end travel agency that takes clients on extraordinary freediving experiences with whales, dolphins or sharks. It then uses this revenue to fund its youth programmes. Prinsloo's partner, the world record-breaking swimmer Peter Marshall, works with her full time. Last year the couple went to Cabo Pulmo in Mexico, the location of some of the ocean's oldest and most precious coral reefs – they are around 20,000 years old. The 27.5 square mile Cabo Pulmo has been a protected marine area since 1995 and, quite remarkably, these protections were initiated by a small group of local fishermen in response to declining fish stocks. Prinsloo and Marshall will be returning in November to take a group freediving. »This is one of the few places in the world where you can still dive in huge schools of fish. It's unbelievable. When you're floating on the surface it looks like you're above a soccer field of fish, each one the size of a loaf of bread. That there are still these places where conservation is working, what Sylvia Earle calls her »hope spots«, really keeps us going and doing what we do.«





**»When you're floating on the surface it looks like you're above a soccer field of fish, each one the size of a loaf of bread.«**



When seeking transcendental moments with marine life, Hanli Prinsloo prefers to use as little equipment as possible.

**»We get more oxygen from the ocean than we do from forests, so we can't pretend it's just something that environmentalists should worry about.«**

These open-to-all dives fit with Prinsloo's belief that her body is nothing special; that all able-bodied people can dive deep while holding their breath. It was when she learned about our physiological propensity for diving that she first decided to immerse herself in competitive freediving »I was just so fascinated by what the human body can do underwater. We have this incredible mammalian dive response that's there in whales, dolphins and seals. For a while it was believed to be inherent to the water peoples of the world, whether Ama divers or the Polynesian divers. But it exists in all of us. As soon as your face touches the water, your heart rate slows down. It's called bradycardia, and it's useful for conserving oxygen.« She goes on to list vasoconstriction,

which is the narrowing of the blood vessels in the arms and legs to flush blood back to the body's core when you are exerting yourself underwater. And then there is also spleen contraction, which works to replenish red blood cells. »It's true that there are other parts of the body that do that too, so technically you can live without a spleen – but not if you want to be a good diver. The first research was done on diving pigs in Denmark,« she adds.

While Prinsloo enjoys every aspect of ocean adventuring, and is a keen surfer and scuba diver, when she's seeking a transcendental moment with marine life she prefers to use as little equipment as possible. She leaves us with one of her highlights: »In Sri Lanka I dived with a huge pod of sperm whales while they rested at the surface before diving down to hunt giant squid. Usually when they hunt they leave any young with a »babysitter« whale. In this particular pod there was one very young whale, and for some bizarre reason, after I'd been »scanned« by many large females, I was deemed worthy to be the babysitter. The baby sperm whale stayed and played with me for a long time, and it just blows my mind that that actually happened.«

Photos: p. 66-70 Peter Marshall

Photo: Marvin Zijl



# MAKING PERFECT ESSENCE

GROHE's Michael Seum on Essence and its updated range of colours, that gives more creative freedom to designers and architects.

INTERVIEW: WILLIAM WARD  
PHOTOGRAPHY: FLORIAN BECKERS

The Essence range of classically elegant faucets has always been a hallmark of pure and modern design. They were redesigned last year and have recently been upgraded with a wider choice of deluxe colours and state-of-the-art finishes. The resulting line of faucets offers a whole new set of options for the design community, giving them the chance to create their own individual look and feel. We spoke to Michael Seum, Vice President of Design at GROHE, about renewing a classic.

## GROHE

What's the enduring appeal of Essence?

### Michael Seum

**First let me make it clear that we have remained absolutely faithful to the original product philosophy of minimalist shape and purity of design. For many years, the Essence range has given architects and interior designers a classic design with simple and understated geometry. It is these cherished ideals that enables Essence to complement almost any bathroom style.**

**G** So what does Essence Colours bring that is new?

**MS** Our interactions with design thought leaders across the world showed us that there was a growing need for more individuality and personalisation in

**bathroom design. That's why we have expanded our range to include 8 new options. With these new options we have created an incredibly rich toolbox for the creative mind. This approach has had an immediate impact and has been extremely well received by the global design community. For example our Hard Graphite in both polished and brushed finishes beautifully complement a huge range of interiors. With marble and pure white bathrooms, light wood tones and concrete and dark matte tiles, we find this finish is so versatile it will enable interior designers to create their dream bathroom whatever the style.**

**G** What about the design itself?

**MS** The new Essence design that we launched has the same traditional delicate transitions and understated geometry of the classic Essence range, but with a slightly softened and more humanised approach. This becomes especially apparent in the faucet lever: We have included a very slight taper on the handle, which gives the user a sensual experience of precision control. So there is now more choice in the Essence range, but we made sure that we retained the same instantly recognisable iconic look and feel of classic simplicity. There is a strong undercurrent of consistency!



**»These new options are an incredibly rich toolbox for the creative mind.«**

**G** You mentioned the reaction of the design community. How has Essence been received?

**MS** In one word: »EXCITEMENT«. In the last few months I've been globetrotting with samples of Essence, and in all honesty I was very pleasantly surprised at the huge positivity and enthusiasm of designers across the world. In Europe for example, one interior design team immediately embraced the idea of working with our new colours and finishes, giving them much more freedom to coordinate them with their overall vision. A recent conversation in Tokyo with a prominent designer evoked a similar response. It's been exciting to see the overwhelming enthusiasm for Essence.

**»As designers, we must make an emotional difference to people's lives.«**

**G** You say that Essence was prompted by changing needs in design. What are they?

**MS** Before starting any new design – and certainly before we put pen to paper in the studio – we look at what's going on around us. Not only in terms of trends, but also in the more fundamental, global changes that take place. We consult with leading analysts, social commentators and futurologists. And obviously we use my own experiences and observations. On this occasion everyone seemed to agree that for billions of people, the digital revolution has dramatically changed how they live their lives. Everything is going at hyperspeed. So sometimes people want a moment of escape. Especially in the bathroom, the traditional oasis of individual serenity and relaxation. They crave an environment that is a break from the predictable uniformity of the digital age.

**G** How is the Essence a response to that?

**MS** For one, there are the slightly softened and humanised transitions and geometry of the Essence range. Another is the extensive choice of colours and finishes. People want the familiarity of iconic classic design, but they also want to be pampered with an individualistic look and feel. This level of personalisation really elevates the Essence line to a bespoke experience. It also gives interior designers and consumers the opportunity to bring new and luxurious

emotional connections to bathroom designs. I believe that this act of establishing connections is the true role of product designers like us. Ultimately, as designers, we must make an emotional difference to people's lives.

**G** And what are the main benefits for architects and interior designers?

**MS** There are three main benefits. Firstly, Essence gives designers more options than ever to express their creativity – and from what I've already seen the results are truly exciting. Secondly, this classic design will easily translate into almost any bathroom style – so architects and designers now have a short-cut to specification whatever project they are working on. The third benefit is cost efficiency. The Essence series has always represented affordable classic design, and Essence can still be part of proposals that require an element of cost competitiveness.

**G** Finally, what else have you planned for this versatile series?

**MS** Well, we are interacting with and listening to designers more and more, and they are flooding us with ideas on where we can take Essence. And we will, of course, take action on this creative thinking. But for now, we just want to open the floodgates of the options we have developed. I am genuinely excited to be part of what will be a true celebration of creativity in the next few years. And I would like to thank everyone in advance for their contribution.

## Michael Seum

Industrial designer Michael Seum is GROHE's Vice President of Design, taking over from Paul Flowers in June 2015. Born in America, he is an award-winning designer with an international design career spanning large corporations, acclaimed design studios and entrepreneurial brands such as Procter & Gamble, Whirlpool (USA and Italy), PepsiCo Sports and Nutrition, Minimal, and WiMo labs. At GROHE, Michael is responsible for delivering meaningful, insight-driven solutions that capture the spirit and imagination of GROHE consumers throughout the world.

# ESSENTIALLY NEW – DISCOVER THE EXCITING NEW COLOURS IN THE ESSENCE RANGE

Inspired by worldwide colour trends emerging at international design shows, GROHE now offers 10 colour finishes, presented for the first time in the complete Essence line.

## HARD GRAPHITE

Contrast or camouflage: A perfect partner for elegant pairings with pure white or blending with tone-on-tone environments. It works well with mid-tone environments such as concrete or light wood.



Also available in brushed



### SUPERSTEEL

Contemporary design. Achieve an overall deluxe look with this matte finish that not only matches with steel but is the ideal companion for light marble, concrete and mid-tone woods.

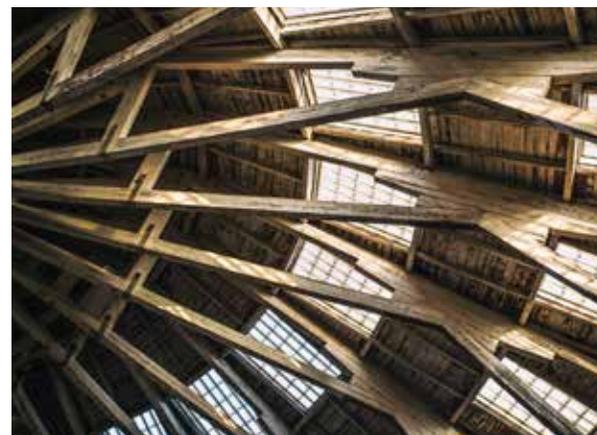


### COOL SUNRISE

Make a statement with Cool Sunrise. In high gloss it evokes sophistication and classic luxury, in brushed it brings a modern yet vintage charm to life. Coordinate with dark, light or white interiors.



Also available in brushed



### WARM SUNSET

A pleasant touch of luxury for individualists. The Warm Sunset finishes accentuate original, atmospheric bathroom designs and add an air of brilliance. Match with dark stone, marble or concrete.



Also available in brushed



### NICKEL

The natural feel. Use our Nickel finishes where high quality combines with organic elements to deliver clear-headed purity and natural warmth. Harmonises with stone, light concrete or marble.



Also available in brushed



Photos: p.76 Koushik C, Caroline Grondin, Exction XL by Giovanni Barbieri at Petra Stone, ISO Republic, p.77 Felix M. Dowell, Minotti cucine euclide collector, Unsplash, EMP Museum

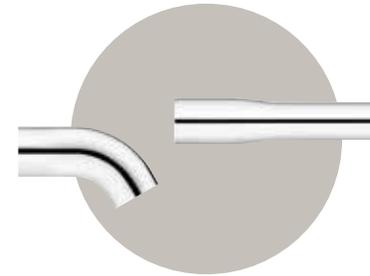
# MEET THE FAMILY

The updated Essence line now comes in 10 colours, giving you more options than ever to express your creativity.



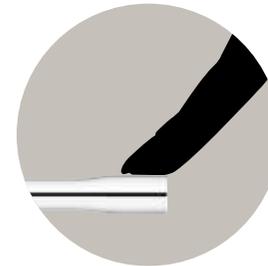
# IT'S IN THE DETAILS

A detail can make the difference. Like the Essence's tactile control lever with its slight taper, that gives the user a sensual experience of precision control.



## SENSE OF BELONGING

First things first: The new lever suggests an air of symmetry as its changing diameter uses the same curvatures as the water delivery column. By sharing the same profile they create a sense of belonging.



## NATURAL ENGAGEMENT

But it is only when you touch the lever that you start to experience the feeling of control. This is achieved through the handle's slightly wider head, which accentuates the natural hold area. Your nimble fingers will never have felt so much control and precision.



## SMOOTH SENSATION

Even better: When you move the control lever to release the water flow, you'll notice a totally smooth sensation. Mechanical in its accuracy, organic in its tactility. Who knew opening and closing a faucet could bring so much pleasure?



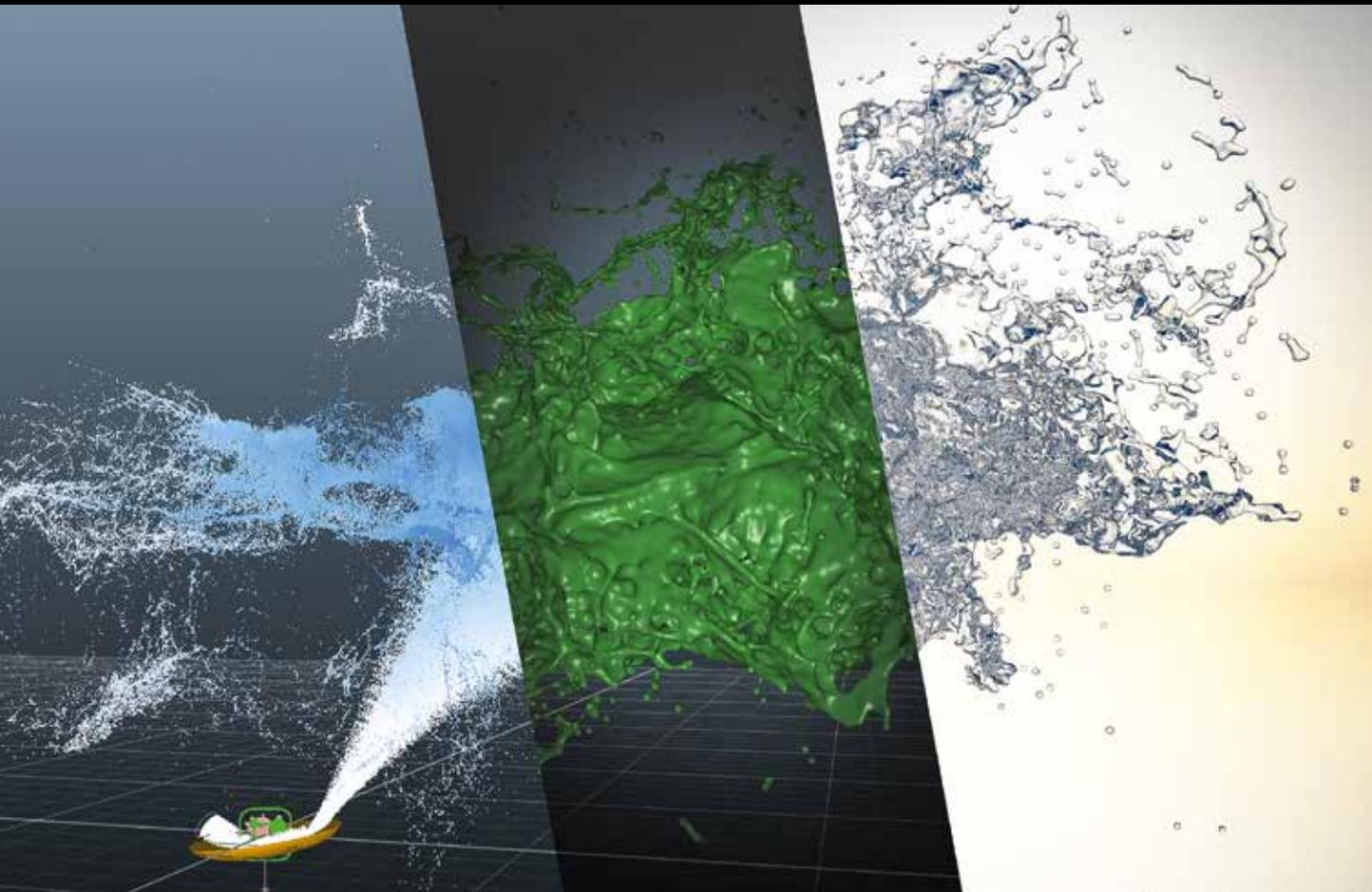
## THE LAST 1% IS THE HARDEST

Details such as the Essence's tactile control help make a good product an outstanding product. They represent the final 1% of the design, which is understandably the most elusive 1%. That's because everyone has the same 99% and the same core features. But that last 1% is the real differentiator between our designs and those of our competitors. Long live the details, especially the final one.

# THE MATHEMATICS OF WATER

It falls from the sky, it flows through our pipes and we – hopefully – drink eight glass of it a day. Water is one of the most abundant substances on our planet. And one of the hardest to animate digitally.

TEXT: CONOR CREIGHTON  
IMAGES: LUMIERE STUDIOS



They say that the human hand is the most difficult thing to draw accurately, and after that it's water. Lumiere Studios have built a niche reputation in the CG world as the guys who can make fluids look realistic while doing very unrealistic things. Their work is all over your television and computer screens. Whether it's mouth wash, face cream, a soft drink or simply water in moving or still images, Lumiere are the go-to guys for bringing liquids to life.

The studio was founded by Duncan Burch and Gavin Lester out of a love for trying to replicate real life through computer animations. Ultimately they have turned to water: »It's just so highly complex. It can appear to be calm and flat with little detail and then at other times, such as a large crashing wave, have incredibly high levels of detail.«

They aim to create water simulations that are so convincing they are indistinguishable from real life. »The human eye is very good at spotting when something looks real or not,« Lumiere say. But it's not only nature they are competing with: the challenge in making computer generated imagery is that the technology improves so rapidly that the viewers spot when something appears dated.

To make water look realistic on screen, the designers have to be aware of the scientific and mathematical

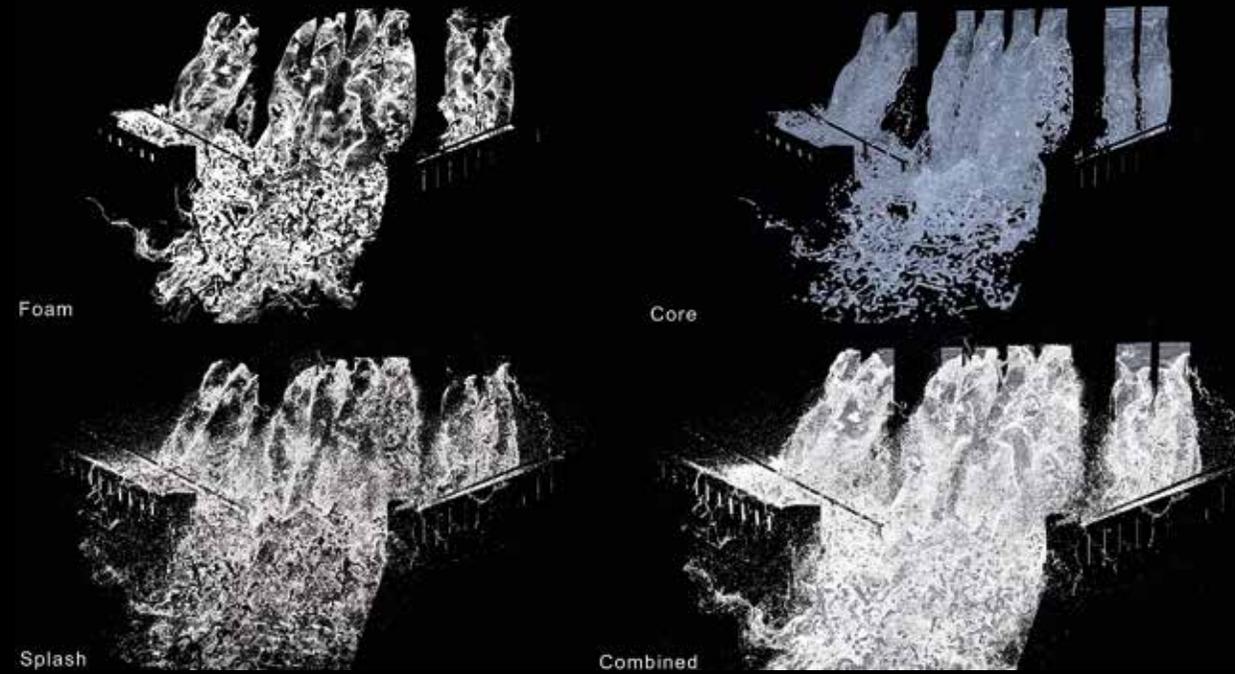
**»Water is so highly complex, it can appear to be calm and flat with little detail and then at other times, such as a large crashing wave, have incredibly high levels of detail.«**

laws that govern the flow of water. It's much more than just artistry. A tiny drop of water can contain millions of particles. And while most simulation software is written by scientists, artists still need a very strong understanding of how gravity, surface tension, water flow, friction – the forces of nature really work together.

Lumiere borrowed their name from the French word for light. »For anything to be realised in CG or in real life, requires light,« they say. But for them, things only get really interesting when water comes into play: »We love the way light interacts with water, bending light, creating reflections and causing patterns. Even though water is very chaotic in its nature, it is also driven by a mathematical law that defines the beauty in its movement.«

Water is one of the most difficult matters to animate. Lumiere Studios in London are experts when it comes to making it look realistic.





To make water look natural on screen the designers have to be aware of the scientific and mathematical laws that determine its flow.

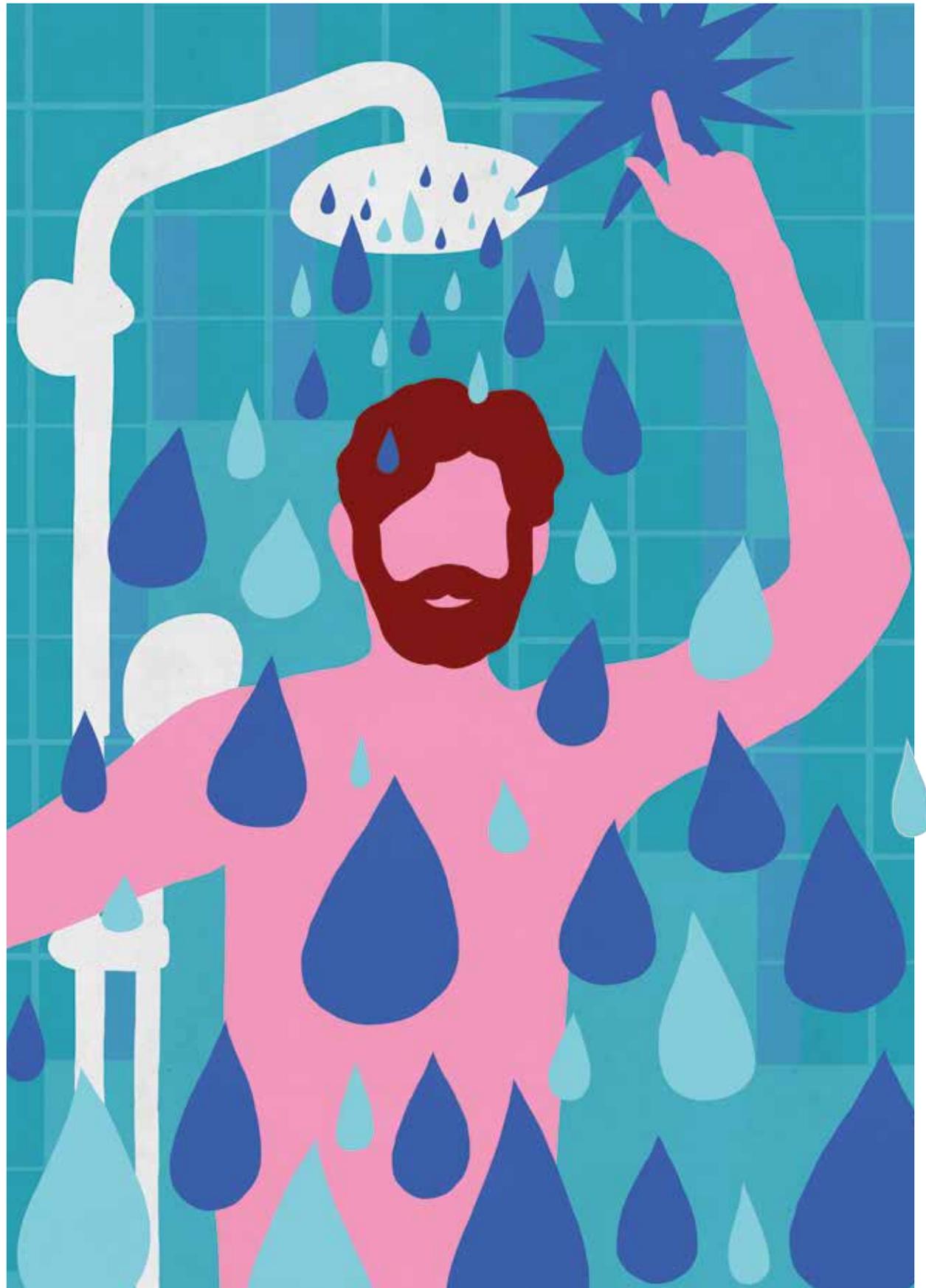


CGI specialists need a strong understanding of how gravity, surface tension, water flow and friction work together.



Lumiere Studios say they love working with water because of the beauty in its movement.





# THOUGHT SHOWER

From ancient times to the present day, mankind has found underwater inspiration engaging in shower-thinking.



**ESSAY: LAUREN OYLER**  
**ILLUSTRATION: JOANNA GNIADY**

One of the first things I notice at the beginning of a trip is the quality of the shower in my accommodation. Will it stay at the perfect temperature? Does the shower spray feel pathetic or painful? Is there a space where my toiletries can sit without my elbows knocking them onto the slippery floor in a potentially toe-smashing crash? In a perfect world, all showers would be made by GROHE, but when they're not it's not going to ruin my vacation. But it will ruin my daily shower, which is more than just a chance to wash away the dirt of a new city; it's a fleeting moment of time when my mind gets to rest from the world's constant stimulation and, more often than could be simply coincidence, stumble upon a really good idea.

The shower has always been a great place for thinking: In the first century BC, the Roman writer Vitruvius told a story in which the ancient Greek mathematician and inventor Archimedes came up with a way to determine if a goldsmith was cheating his clients while he was relaxing at the public baths. (According to this popular legend, Archimedes then leapt from his tub and ran nude throughout the streets of Syracuse, shouting what would become a celebratory catchphrase in science and

beyond: »Eureka!«) Archimedes knew, as we all do now, that if you're stuck for a good idea, just add water.

Connectivity is inescapable. Even when we go to bed our sleep is at the mercy of an alarm clock app, and every morning when I wake up – more newborn kitten than really me – the first thing I find myself doing is reaching for the mail icon on the screen. The shower is one of the few places where you can escape the constant buzzing and beeping of your mobile phone. It is a literal step away from the demands of reality, into a temperature-controlled oasis of calm and positivity. At the very worst you'll step out of the shower feeling a little less groggy. At best, you might come out of your steamy bathroom with a conclusion for your novel, a cost-cutting solution for a big project, or even just an ingenious idea for making your co-worker stop emailing after 10pm on a Friday night.

While it's a popular refrain that good thoughts come to those who shower, there's scientific evidence that supports the phenomenon too. Relaxing in the shower, where you're free of responsibilities and can enjoy a

light massage – preferably under a GROHE Power&Soul shower head – releases the neurotransmitter dopamine, which is connected to the feeling of reward and aids creative thinking. There’s also the fact that being in the shower forces you to take a break from whatever you’ve been mulling over or working on. This creates an ›incubation period‹, during which solutions to problems you might be actively trying to figure out during the day can develop subconsciously, and the answer feels like it simply appeared in your head from out of nowhere. Part of this effect is due to what’s called ›fixation forgetting‹. When you’re thinking about the same problem or idea all day, your brain gets stuck in a rut, and taking a break to let your thoughts roam free and develop new patterns helps you work things out subconsciously.

**»Beethoven frequently stood at his washbasin pouring water over his hands as he sang scales or hummed to himself. He did this so often that the landlord would complain that water was spilling through the floor.«**

The writer Maya Angelou’s daily routine always involved a midday shower after a morning spent writing – she knew the power of a good incubation period. Beethoven was also known for compulsive bathing. According to Anton Schindler’s biography of the composer, »Beethoven as I Knew Him«, the servants would laugh at how Beethoven frequently stood at his washbasin pouring water over his hands as he sang scales or hummed to himself. He did this so often that the landlord would complain that water was spilling through the floor.

Luckily for us, the development of indoor plumbing around the mid-19th century made it possible to enjoy a modern shower without having to physically pour the water, which was usually cold and dirty, over your own body. But dwelling on drainage systems would almost certainly take the romance out of the shower-thinking experience, the benefits of which elegantly combine to form a creative underwater environment. You’re lulled into a relaxed state, which is biologically beneficial as well as pleasant, but the fact that you’re standing

up keeps you from falling asleep. But most of all, the shower offers you a literal and figurative opportunity to start afresh: you towel off feeling like a cleaner, newer, stronger person ready to face the challenges of the modern world.

But what if genius strikes in the shower? There’s a waterproof notepad called »Aqua Notes«, designed to prevent all the great thoughts you have in the shower from going down the drain, but this introduces a pressure to your every day shower experience. Having random revelations when we least expect them makes us feel special; adding a notepad creates an expectation, and these ideas should remain a little bit magical. After all, the reason shower-thinking is so effective is that it allows you to forget your responsibilities for a few minutes each day. The only thing you’ve got to remember in the shower is to rinse the shampoo out of your hair. If every time you turned the nozzle you did so with the weighty expectation of inspiration, it would take all the relaxation out of showering. And relaxation is the key to big ideas. To paraphrase Archimedes, give me a hose long enough and a shower head with which to control it, and I shall move the world.



For more information on GROHE’s Power&Soul shower head visit [grohe.com](http://grohe.com).

NEW



AQUATUNES



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GROHE | MASTERS OF TECHNOLOGY

**Two leading brands, one innovation: Aquatunes.** Premium bathroom design meets expert audio engineering. Transform your shower experience by streaming your favourite music into the bathroom with the new waterproof Aquatunes Bluetooth speaker from GROHE and Philips. Simply mount Aquatunes on your shower rail, connect to a smartphone or MP3 player via Bluetooth, and you are all set for over 8 hours of outstanding musical enjoyment.  
[grohe.com/aquatunes](http://grohe.com/aquatunes)

Pure Freude an Wasser



# BEAUTIFUL BY DESIGN

Today's cultural institutions demand that as much attention is paid to the building as to what they contain.

**TEXT: JOSIA LAMBERTO-EGAN**

The unveiling of the Guggenheim museum in 1959 was the beehive-shaped dynamite that forever exploded the notion that a good museum was just an aseptic shell built for the quiet contemplation of art. The structure became a definitive New York landmark, Frank Lloyd Wright became the first ›starchitect‹, and from that point on, public museums – or buildings for cultural institutions in general – were seen as opportunities for both cities and architects to make their names with a singular, signature building.

A second critical moment arrived in 1977, when the Centre Pompidou opened in Paris, and revealed galleries sharing space with a cinema, a bar, a library, a restaurant and shops: the multi-use museum was born. Immediately popular, the museum as social entertainment centre is now the rule rather than the exception.

The 21st century has seen designers going further with the concept of ›architecture for the complete experience‹. The pendant lights in the café, the Pantone colour of the walls, the style of the faucets – once left to decorators, these interior touches are increasingly part of the architectural vision. The visit is carefully manipulated: Boston's ICA museum (2006) has a room sloped precisely so that anyone who looks down at a handheld device must also face a disorienting, vertiginous view of the harbour.

This holistic approach means architects face scrutiny for choices both small and large, and for their answers to nebulous questions: How much respect does a renovation owe the original structure? Should a design complement the character of a neighbourhood – or redefine it? Should visitors be looking at the building or the paintings? And ultimately, what's the optimal balance between displaying art, creating an experience and striving to be a cultural landmark?

Here are four designs, in four cities, with four distinct approaches to these aesthetic concerns.

A floating pavilion is just one of the many transformation of the Rijksmuseum by Spanish architects Cruz y Ortiz.





The newly created atrium gives the Rijksmuseum a spectacular entrance which also doubles as a concert space.

## THE RIJKSMUSEUM: REVERENCE AND REDISCOVERY

Is there a more perilous task for an architect than overhauling a national monument? After winning the contract to redesign Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, Spanish firm Cruz y Ortiz found themselves with an entire nation of clients to please – to say nothing of doing justice to Dutch luminaries like Rembrandt and Vermeer.

When the museum reopened in 2013 to widespread acclaim, the architects modestly deferred some credit; their success, they said, came in recognising and rediscovering the brilliance of the original architect, Pierre Cuypers.

Cuypers' 1885 design, a blend of Gothic and Renaissance styles, was a cultural centrepiece, a paean to 800 years of Dutch art, craft and history. During the 1900s, however, ill-advised remodels covered the ornamental interiors in several layers of mismatched design. Meanwhile, numerous additions, lowered ceilings and half-storeys reduced the layout to a maze of dark, winding galleries. The result was a museum without a harmony of style, lacking a clear sense of organisation and space.

To address it, Cruz y Ortiz launched a transformation that was part architecture, part archaeology. In ten years, they stripped away a century's worth of decorative sediment, revealing the building as Cuypers had intended. Using the original blueprints as reference, an army of Dutch artisans restored carved trim, terrazzo floors and stained glass, and repainted dozens of frescoes. Feeling the whitewashed galleries were too harsh for the subtle



Photos: p. 92–96, 100–103 Duccio Malagamba, p. 97 Tim Griffith, p. 98–99 Egor Rogalev



shadows of the Dutch masters' paintings, the renovators redecorated the walls in shades of grey specified in the 19th century plans.

The architects also found a way to enact one of Cuyper's unrealised ideas: utilising the open avenue through the building itself as a grand entrance for the museum. Previous efforts to do so had all entailed closing the thoroughfare, which Cruz y Ortiz were determined to keep open as a vaulted bicycle path.

The dilemma was resolved with a bold, modern stroke. The architects emptied two inner courtyards, which had been cluttered with rooms during the 1960s, and lowered them a storey, allowing them to connect beneath the bicycle causeway. The entire arcade was then covered with an enormous glass ceiling and a suspended ›chandelier‹ of rectilinear baffles. This vast atrium gives the museum not only the spectacular entrance hall it deserves, but also a café and the free concert space that is now the social heart of the entire complex.

Other modern innovations include a pavilion for Asian art, ›floating‹ in a fountain alongside the main building. Display cases, plinths, lighting and fixtures within the museum have been painstakingly redesigned and updated. Faucets from GROHE's Concetto line ›were the perfect choice for this renovation‹, says GROHE Vice President of Design, Michael Seum. ›Uncompromisingly cosmopolitan with refined detailing, they accentuate the new zeitgeist of the museum.‹

GROHE's famously hardwearing faucets will see plenty of use; the reborn Rijksmuseum set a record in 2014 with 2.4 million guests and is now the most popular museum in the Netherlands.



#### Concetto

The Rijksmuseum's bathrooms are enhanced by faucets from GROHE's Concetto line. Their cylindrical forms create an individual aesthetic, while chamfered edges provide refined detailing.

## MARIINSKY II: FUNCTION OVER FLAMBOYANCE

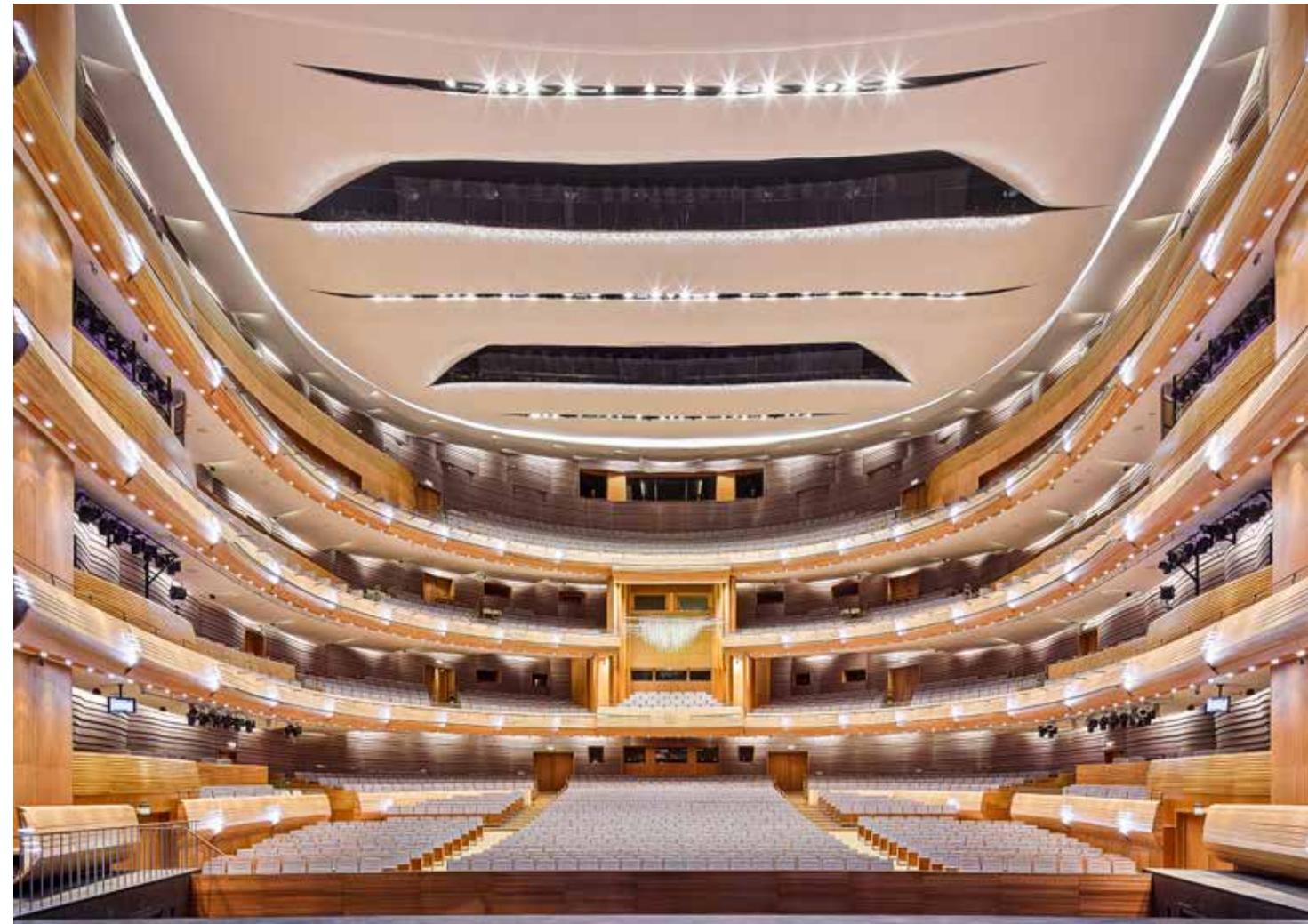
It started as a tower of glass balloons, transitioned to a massive golden cage, and wound up as a fairly unobtrusive box of glass and stone.

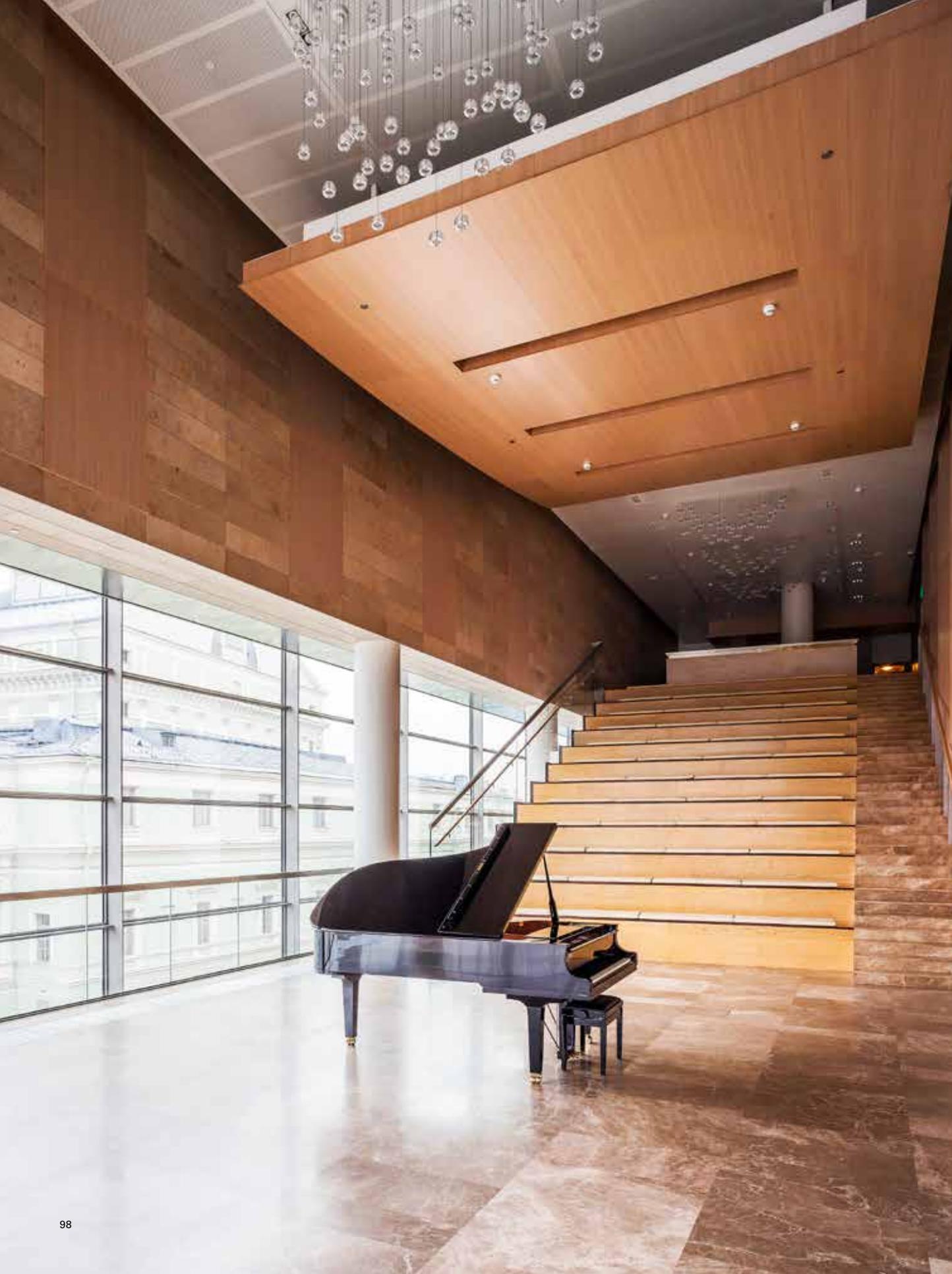
The controversial evolution of the Mariinsky II, Russia's glittering new national theatre and opera house, is a case study in the tension between architecture as an artistic landmark and architecture as a practical vessel for other art.

The building was commissioned in 2003 as a modern accompaniment to the 1860 Mariinsky Theatre, which faces the original directly across a St. Petersburg canal. When theatre director Valery Gergiev initially proposed a

design resembling a huge mountain of inflated glass bags by American architect Eric Owen Moss, the protests were immediate. St. Petersburg, the critics said, was famous for its classical architecture and modest skyline – it was no place for a radical building.

Unwilling to dismiss the grand idea of a city-defining structure, a committee then called on French architect Dominique Perrault, who designed a flamboyant golden lattice enclosing more than a city block. Perrault intended the structure as a tribute to the golden domes of the city's church towers, and referred to it as a ›garment of light‹. Less charitable St. Petersburg locals christened it ›the golden potato‹.





Whether the potato would have complemented the character of the city was never determined – construction foundered amid engineering flaws and budget overruns. And so, like a half-shot film whose director has walked off set, the Mariinsky was handed to Canadian firm Diamond Schmitt Architects, a rather prosaic choice whose appeal Gergiev summed up in one telling word: »practicality«.

Four years later, Diamond Schmitt unveiled the new imperial opera house, a (comparatively) modest, modern building full of nods to St. Petersburg's traditional architecture: a tall limestone masonry base, vertical windows and a glazed classical portico. The interior is distinguished by a dramatic suspended stairway and a curving wall of backlit onyx, which glows a warm yellow at night.

Of course, there are those who judge the design too visually generic. Diamond shrugs at such criticism. »The Mariinsky is a beacon of excellence and innovation,« he says. »Every element, including the public amenities, had to delight our visitors.« That focus on an innovative experience covers areas as peripheral as the public faucets (which use GROHE's EcoJoy green technology) and the ballerinas' showers (the luxurious Rainshower

Cosmopolitan line), and as central as the auditorium itself, where the balconies have been engineered so that both sound and sight lines are optimal from any seat in the house. Gergiev calls the acoustics »platinum« for their clarity.

State-of-the-art rotating stages allow multiple shows to be set and performed in a single night. And backstage, three full rehearsal areas, automated loading docks, and offices for the theatre's 2500 employees enable the Mariinsky to deliver a greater number and variety of ballets, operas and orchestras per season than any other theatre of its size.

It's a building defined by its dedication to the audience and the performers, and by its service to the art it was built to showcase.



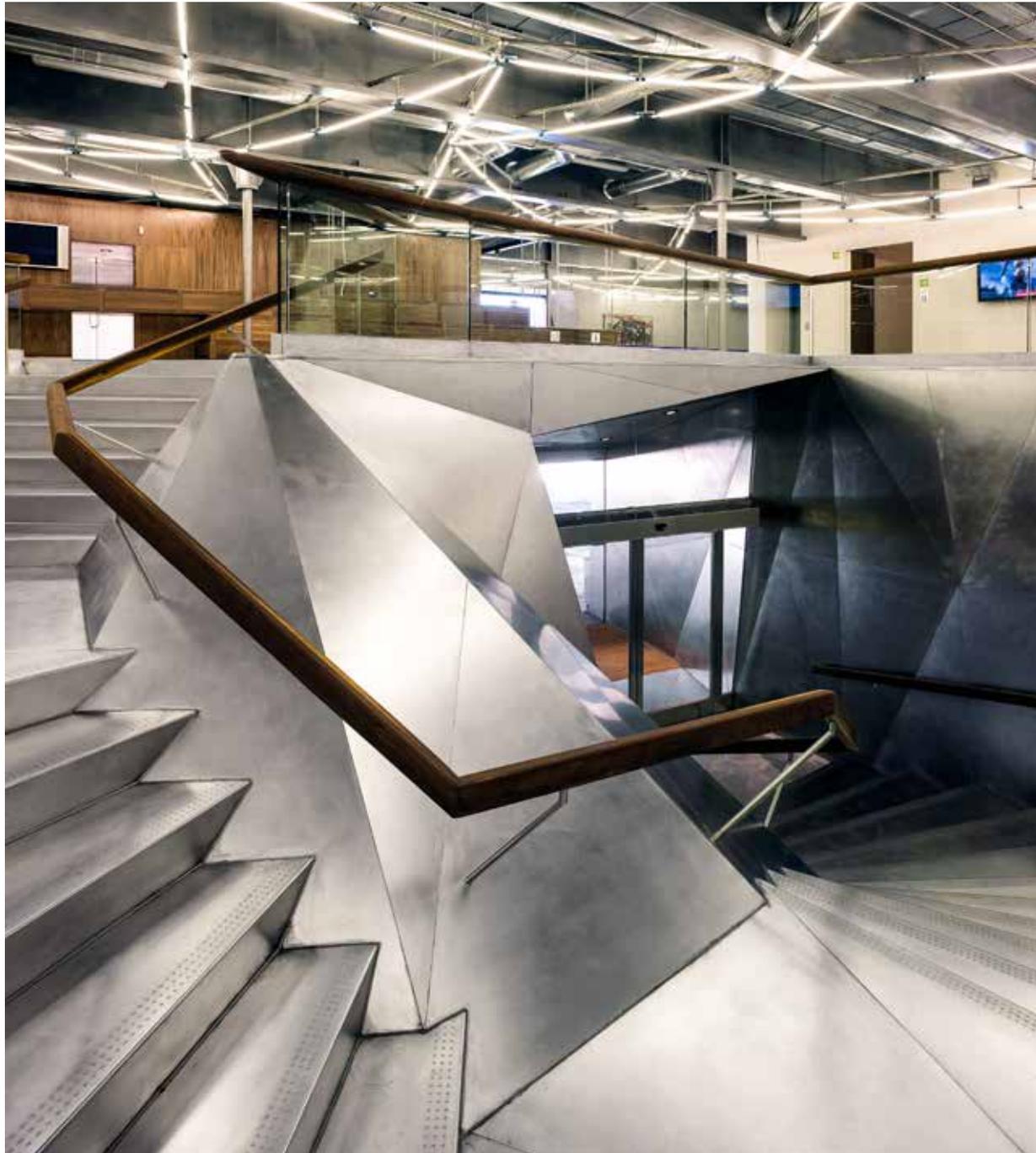
#### **Rainshower Cosmopolitan**

Rainshower Cosmopolitan head showers are used for the ballet dancers' showers, providing them with GROHE DreamSpray technology for an unbeatable shower experience.



The Mariinsky's tall limestone masonry base, vertical windows and a glazed classical portico are a nod to St. Petersburg's traditional style of architecture.

# CAIXAFORUM: SLASH-AND-BUILD REDESIGN



It looks a bit like a cargo ship that has floated into central Madrid, drifting impossibly on nothing but air, and gently nosed its way past its earthbound neighbours.

This is the CaixaForum, the latest addition to the famous family of art museums along the Paseo del Prado. And if the Prado Museum is the noble patriarch, the Thyssen the dutiful son, and the Reina Sofia the elegant mother, then the Caixa is the irreverent youngster with a punk haircut and a flair for the dramatic. The new museum, a massive, mostly windowless block of heavy steel and antique brick, gets everyone's attention with one bold magic trick: it levitates.

The ingenious foundation (or lack thereof) isn't just architectural showboating, it's a clever solution to the obstacles faced by Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron in converting a bland 19th century power station into a

contemporary art museum worthy of Madrid's Golden Triangle. The industrial building, while not without a certain stolid appeal, was simply too nondescript to be a cultural landmark. Worse, it was hidden by its neighbours and hemmed in by narrow alleys that precluded foot traffic.

»The first idea was to free the building,« said Herzog in 2009. So the architects sliced out the granite foundation »to create a new space between the street and the building«. That surgical cut left behind an irregular steel-ceilinged grotto, which shades the plaza, houses the new entrance, and enables visitors to approach easily on foot.

Using a similar subtractive approach, the old interiors were gutted, and replaced with two airy, angular galleries, holding rotating exhibitions of contemporary works.



The Caixa's architecture is all about contrasts: its exterior steel walls are randomly etched with holes while the massive stairway at the core of the museum is made of smooth concrete.

Finally, the architects broke through the size limits of the original structure by going vertical. Atop the old plant, they added a steel superstructure, imposingly opaque and thickly rusted to complement the red brick of the lower stories. And below, they excavated a vast cellar, accommodating a full-size concert hall.

The lower level reveals a witty touch: the bathroom faucets, GROHE's Europlus E line, mimic the distinctive shape of the Caixa itself, with a thick, peaked upper half suspended delicately from a narrow stem.

The Caixa's architectural style is an intriguing mix of contrasts. The exterior is all rugged edges, but the massive stairway at the core of the museum is a smooth, elegant spiral of concrete. The metal roof is modern, but its

angles and irregular nooks are a nod to the dormers and mansards of the older Spanish buildings next door. And the museum's fortress-like appearance is softened by numerous organic details: the corten steel is randomly etched with holes that flood the restaurant with natural light; the ceiling of the theatre is decorated in relief patterns modeled after natural rust; and the entire building is flanked by a vertical green wall covered in more than 15,000 plants.



#### **Europlus E**

The Caixa's faucets from GROHE's Europlus E feature EcoJoy technology for less water and perfect flow while their StarLight chrome finish helps them retain their sparkle.





## HYDROPOLIS: ALL ABOUT WATER

Submerged inside a 19th century reservoir tank in Wrocław, Poland, is Eastern Europe's most entertaining new museum: the water-themed Hydropolis. But getting in requires a little courage – the entry is hidden by a giant curtain of water that parts automatically to admit visitors just as they think they're about to get soaked.

Wrocław is famous for a history of innovative civic water engineering, so it's no surprise Hydropolis uses GROHE's Euroeco and Eurosmart faucets. Just like the museum's waterfall marquee, they feature settings that can be automatically programmed. The dark, dramatic interior is illuminated by multimedia exhibits on a whimsical array of topics, from the profound (the origins of life) to the

pragmatic (the city's plumbing system). A highlight is a replica Trieste II submersible that offers a virtual reality dive to the bottom of the Mariana Trench. And if water fatigue hits, there's a relaxation room where you can lie on a glowing couch and listen to whale songs.



### **Euroeco Cosmopolitan E**

In the Hydropolis bathrooms, visitors can wash their hands with the sleek, infra-red activated faucets from GROHE's Euroeco Cosmopolitan E line.



This statue at the Hydropolis nicely illustrates how water makes up 60 to 70 percent of the human body.

# FLOWER POWER

What happens when the prettiest tea in the world meets the most convenient faucet in the world?

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRISTIAN HAGEMANN

There's a little bit of confusion around blooming tea, or flowering tea as it's sometimes called. While some people maintain that it's an ancient Chinese tradition, there are others who claim it's a modern invention. Either way, it's an impressive upgrade on what you'd usually call tea.

Tea leaves and flowers bound into a tight bulb are placed in a glass pot, and when the hot water is added, the flowers open up to resemble some sort of lush, underwater plant. It's a thing of rare beauty, reinforcing the original contemplative, time-stopping purpose of brewing tea leaves in hot water. The best way to unleash the power of blooming tea is with the GROHE Red.

GROHE Red provides instant kettle-hot water through the integrated faucet, and this energy-saving invention only heats the water you need. Of course if you haven't got a flower bulb to hand you can always use it for regular teas, coffees and any other piping hot drinks you want in an instant.



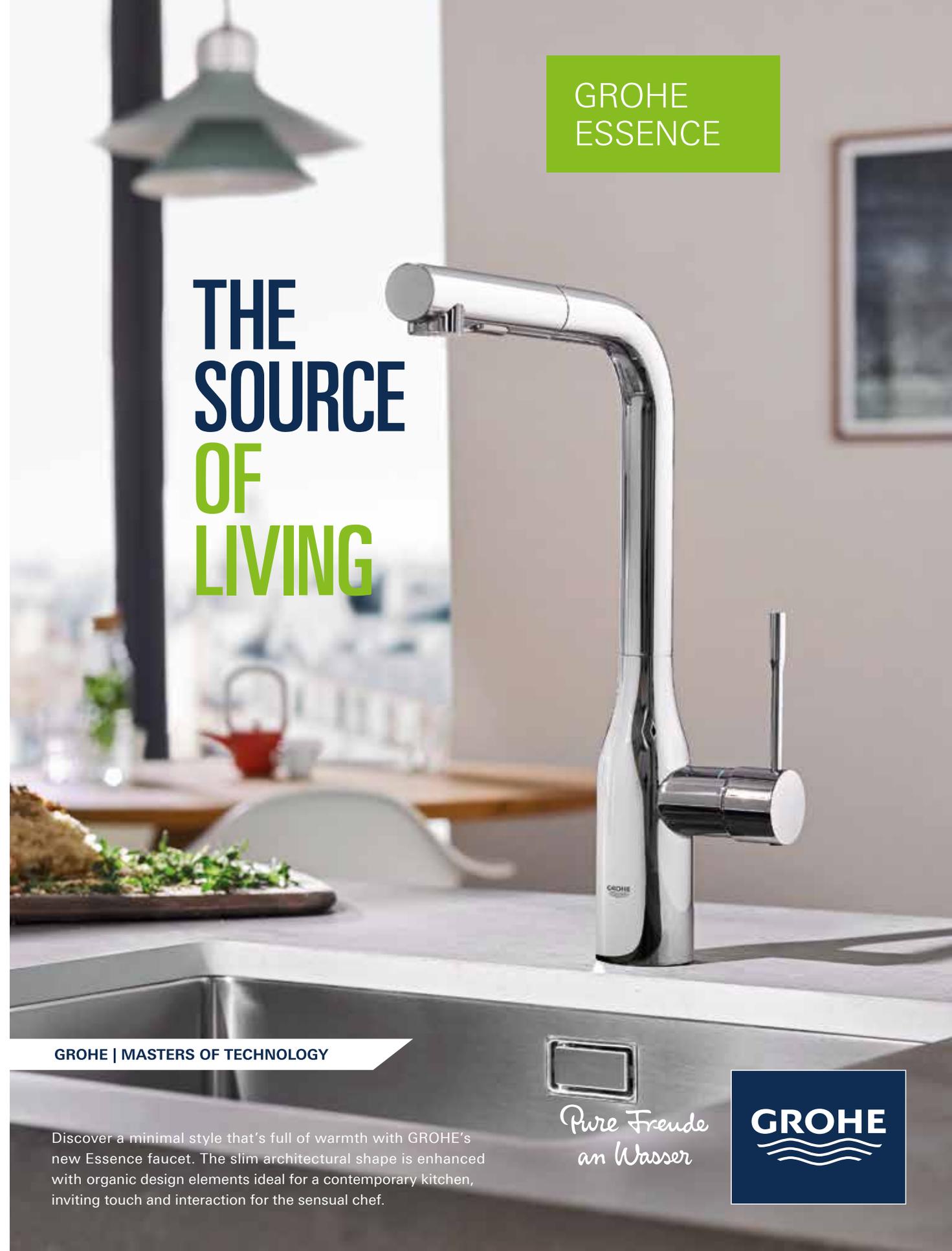
### GROHE Red

GROHE Red doesn't just keep hot water on tap, its five-stage, high-performance filtration system also removes lead, copper and chlorine, leaving nothing but clear, natural tasting water.



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Discover a minimal style that's full of warmth with GROHE's new Essence faucet. The slim architectural shape is enhanced with organic design elements ideal for a contemporary kitchen, inviting touch and interaction for the sensual chef.

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