

Beating the beat

The Stratos Lounge disco in Zurich is a success – and the lights don't dance to everyone's tune!

Going clubbing in Zurich usually means plunging into a disco world of coloured lights flashing to the beat of the music. But the new "Stratos Lounge" dance club is dishing up something a little different from the standard lighting menu. The thumping rhythm resounding from the loudspeakers is supplemented by dramatic background colour changes to underline the exciting or relaxed moods of



the music. The dancers are bathed in music and light, their movements responding to the overall atmosphere in the space. A complete contrast to the run-of-the-mill disco.

LIGHTING DESIGN INTERIOR

STRATOS LOUNGE IN ZÜRICH/CH

Text: Achim Fissmer



The neutral nature of the white room presents the ideal opportunity to fill every corner of the space with coloured light.

Colour psychologists have been preaching the influence of colours on mere mortals for a long time: yellow improves performance, blue calms the soul, red disinhibits, and green revitalises. And there have been many reports and much debate about the significance of colours for the human organism. As yet, these findings have not been given due regard in architectural design.

Philip Meier, promoter of the "Stratos" Lounge, is a great believer in the power of light, which is why he created this festival of the senses in music and colour to make sure his guests get the "good vibes". His partner, Walter Hügli, is responsible for the concept of the new club in the Club des "Rohstofflager" (English: Raw Materials Store) in Zurich-Oerlikon. This old location has accommodated the "Rohstofflager" disco that specialises in superior electronic techno

house music since 1997, and the new "Stratos" club looks like becoming an integral part of this old industrial building.

Theory of the white room

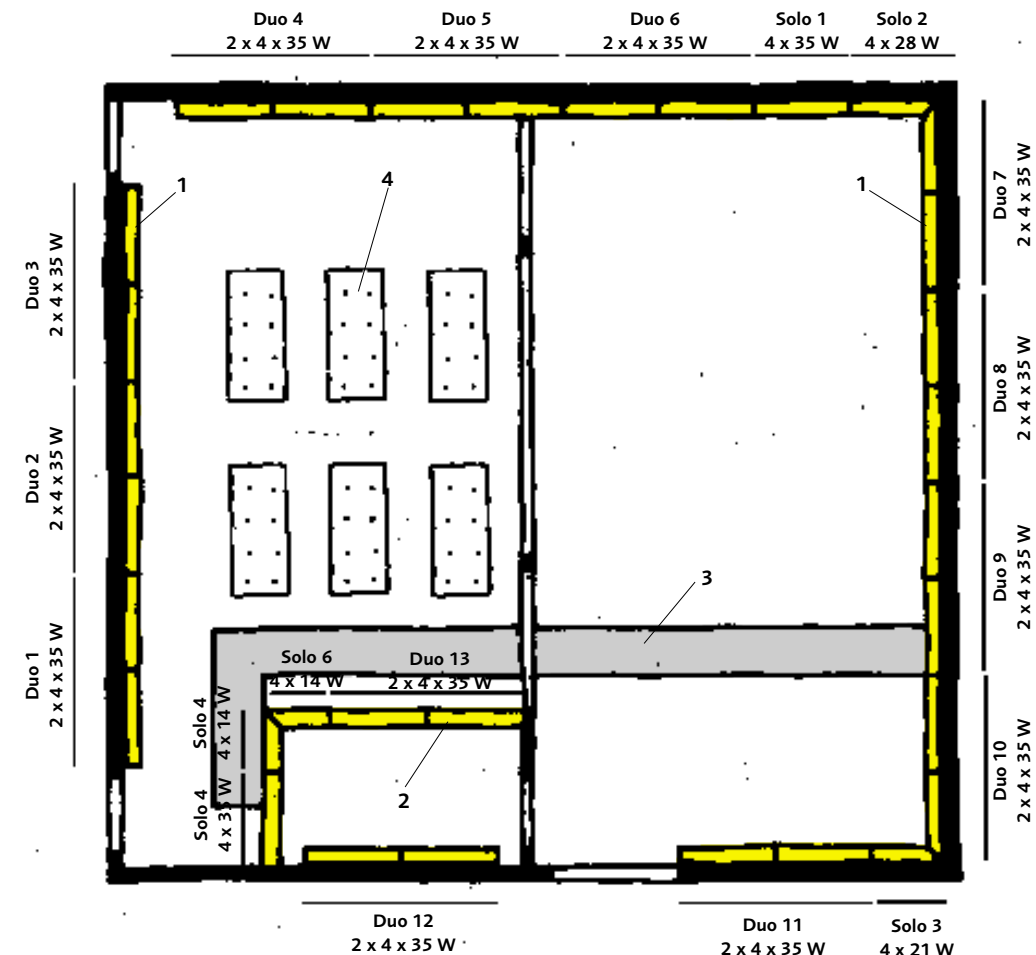
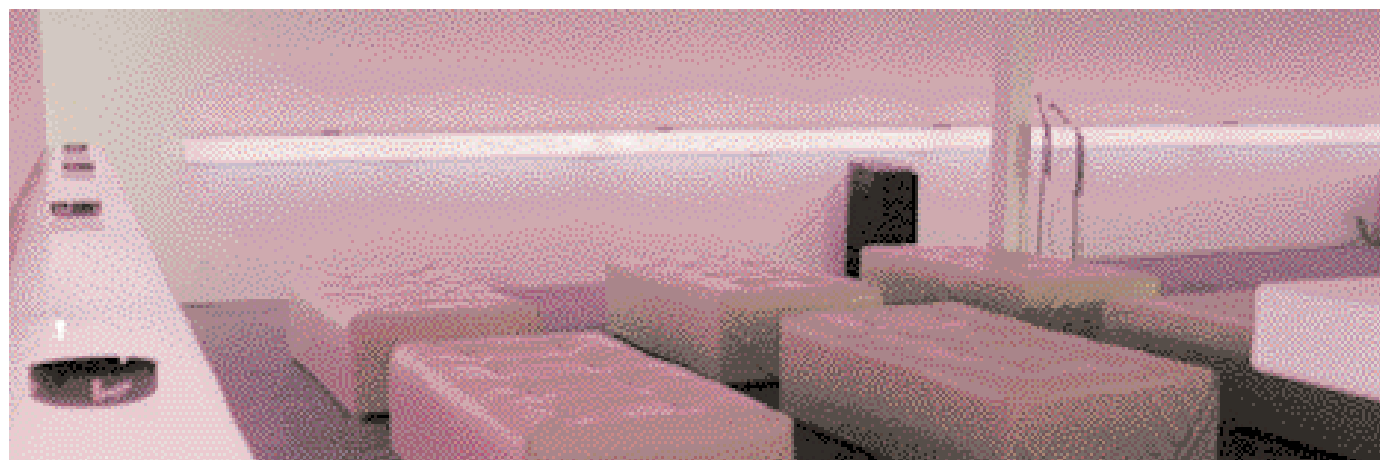
The furnishings and design of the Lounge are geared to meet the requirements of the people that use it. Walter Hügli outlined the idea behind his concept in abstract terms: "The space and all the objects in it are white, so they fade into the background. The human being is dressed in black, he is the focal point in the space; black is symbolical, like the conductor of an orchestra. His clothes are his outer skin, they do not distract from the person who is wearing them. The only colourful items are the plants, the food on the plate, the wine in the glass, these things are the centres of their own respective worlds, with man drawing his entire energy from them".

Based on this theory of the white room and seven basic desired moods, white was chosen as the basic colour for the space and furnishings as neutral colour transmitters. Simple geometric forms and their linear alignment within the space underline the theme of neutrality, even sterility. The overall design is based on the alignment of the longest possible straight lines to the three axes of the room, avoiding curves and diagonal lines.

The changes of mood within this atmosphere are aligned to the perceptible appearance of the objects, which are in turn based on the different reflections and degrees of absorption of the light on the surfaces. One might say that all humans suffer a kind of colour blindness that leads us to believe that one colour can only ever be experienced when perceived among a huge number of other



The Stratos Lounge club is completely different from the stereotype disco in that the lighting comprises no flashlights. Visitors are guided through all the colours of the rainbow, enjoying the interplay of colours and beats. Light and music determine and influence the atmosphere in the space, the lighting being confined to the application of custom-designed fluorescent luminaires.



- Ground plan
 1 Continuous row of luminaires
 2 Bar
 3 Video screen installation (not realised)
 4 Seats

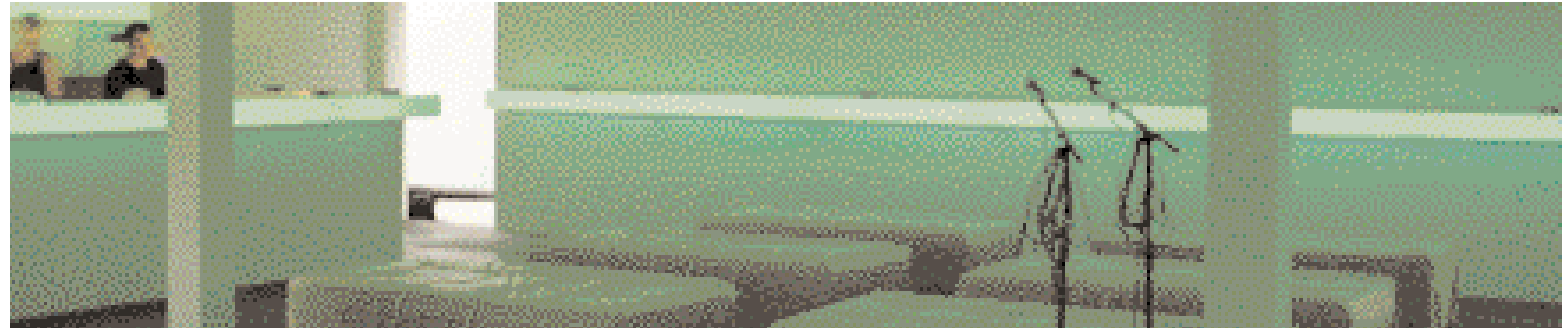
The custom-designed fixtures, Duo and Solo, are the only luminaires used in the entire space. Fluorescent light is therefore omnipresent, but incorporated harmoniously. Each luminaire is equipped with four T5 fluorescent lamps (14 watt, 21 watt, 28 watt and 35 watt), with electronic ballasts (Philips).

colours. We have to make an effort to concentrate on one colour at a time. We live in a panchromatic world, which is why we only retrieve a very narrow range of wavelengths from the spectrum in a space at any given time.

Visitors to this very different kind of disco are fascinated. When they enter they find themselves in an exceptionally monochromatic space. Once inside, a colour mixing system guides them through all the colours of the rainbow. Glowing red changes to icy blue, to blend into sunny yellow before turning deep pink to underline one of life's rosy moments.

The lighting, designed by the Swiss practice SEKTOR4, is as clear and simple as the interior design idea. The designers, Adi Aicher and Doris Marti, positioned the light sources to create shadowless diffuse light in the respective colours in every part of the 140-square metre space. The custom-designed luminaires Solo and Duo are each equipped with four T5 fluorescent tubes (14W, 21W, 28W and 35W) and electronic ballasts from Philips.

It is the profound luminance that gives this plain space its speci-



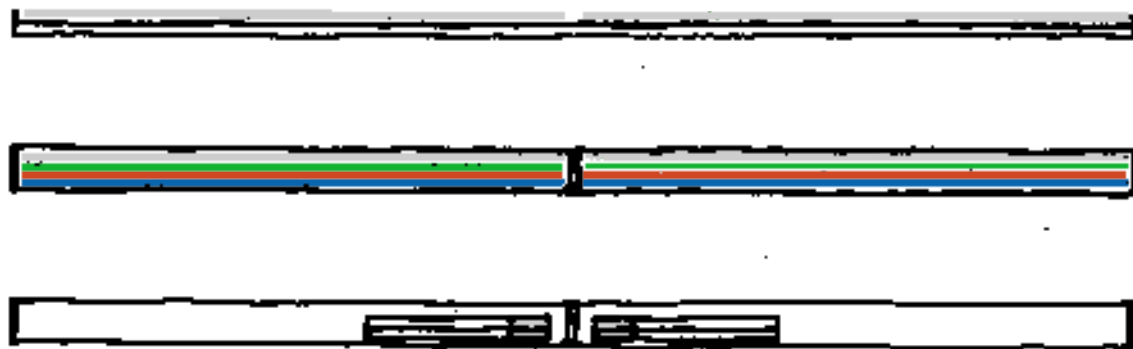
al quality and allows the dancers to feel and hear the music to its full intensity. This is the place to see and be seen, and at the same time a place where you can blend into the colour of the surroundings, go beyond the realms of standard musical commerce, and wallow in a whole range of electronic dance music.

Designers Adi Aicher and Doris Marti have managed to integrate a lighting presence into the "Stratos" Lounge club, where lighting design in the sense it is applied here comes as a surprise! But the new combination of light and dance rhythms presents visitors with a totally new musical and spatial experience: they do not dance themselves into a trance under flashing lights at "Stratos", but move to the music through the colour spectrum. This project is very different from the well known club and disco scene, and focuses the disco experience on the essence of the music and the "vibes".

Project team:
Client: Philip Meier
Concept: Walter Högli
Design: Sektor4, Adi Aicher and Doris Marti

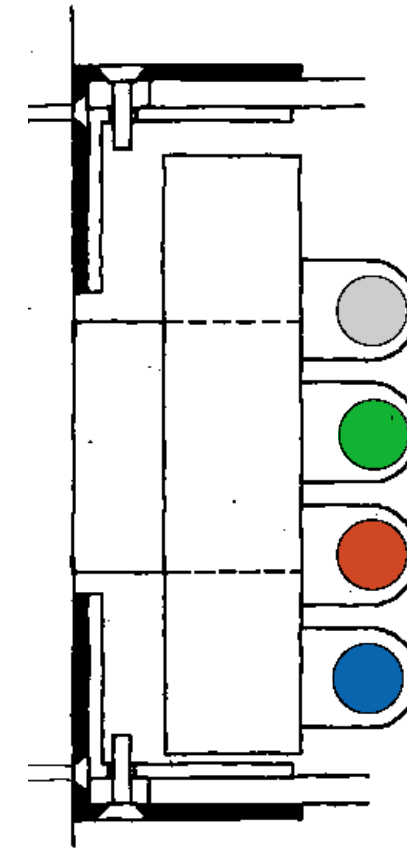
Products applied
T5 fluorescent lamps
14, 21, 28, 35 W, Philips
EBs, Philips

[Info > 16](#)
[Info > 17](#)



From the top downwards: top, front and rear views of the luminaire. The two EBs are positioned centrally.

STRATOS LOUNGE IN ZÜRICH/CH



Section: the fluorescent lamps in the surrounding batten housings are arranged one above the other. The colours (white, green, red, blue) are mixed using a control system.

