

Category: **Wayfinding**

Project: **Karlsruhe Municipal Hospital**



Saying it with flowers

Except on the happy occasion of a birth, a hospital visit is rarely something we look forward to. Which makes it all the more important to make the spaces in hospital buildings pleasant to be in – for patients, visitors and staff. Visitors traditionally bring flowers for their sick friends and relatives – a thoughtful, personal gesture everyone understands: the colours and fragrance can brighten the mood and bring comfort. Aligned with this custom, the concept for the signage and artistic design of the hospital's interior spaces features 24 medicinal plants that lend their colours to surfaces, while their names bring resonance to the different areas.

As we enter the building, we're greeted in the entrance hall by suspended neon words – concepts relating to the hospital's work and selected by the philosopher

Hannes Böhringer. They endow this semi-public space with an urban feel and help to create a distinctive image. This impression is reinforced by a typeface with a constructed handwritten appearance. Selected interior walls and ceilings are painted in delicate floral shades specified by the artist Harald F. Müller. These 30 colours, derived from the medicinal plants referenced, are arranged in a way that may look random but is actually designed for balance. The colours help to identify the different spatial situations. This creates individualised locations, aiding wayfinding.

Plant names appear in neon writing on the walls of the main circulation corridor, giving each individual space a cheerful mood and clearly defining the circulation spaces. Adding a plant name to the wayfinding code helps to individualise locations and make them more memorable: "5b st john's wort" is nicer than the impersonal, administra-

tive "5b", and telling someone to take the elevator "at eucalyptus" is a pleasant and easily remembered instruction. For the walls of the waiting areas, author Miriam Holzapfel has written entertaining descriptions of the individual medicinal plants. The system tells us that here, people are working to help and heal others, signalling care and personal attention – precisely what anyone in hospital needs.

Contact:

büro uebele visuelle kommunikation
Project team: Dominik Bissem (project manager), Carolin Himmel, Nadja Ratz, Marcel Tillmanns (project manager), Andreas Uebele
Client: Städtisches Klinikum Karlsruhe
Architect: wörner traxler richter
Photos: Frank Blümmler, Guido Kasper
Art: in collaboration with Harald F. Müller
Words entrance hall: Hannes Böhringer
Text medicinal plants: Miriam Holzapfel

