



Design | Dornbracht

Setting water in motion

Intelligent system Smart Water finds new ways of bringing water to people

Innovative technologies prove their mettle by facilitating processes, enabling convenience or creating unique experiences. Together with Dornbracht, Meiré und Meiré and Square One, sieger design developed the electronic Smart Water system (2013), that integrates the possibilities for digitisation of applications in the bathroom and beyond. The interface design aspect, in particular, required great care in order to produce a consistent and truly self-explanatory operating concept.

By virtue of their ability to cut complexity and incorporate innovative functions, digital systems are making the leap into ever more areas of life, both at home and at work. Smart Water enables the user to navigate different kinds of water supply. To this end, the concept brings together two Smart Tools: a precision display switch to control outlets, scenarios and ambient factors such as fragrance, and minimalist dials that can either be used to adjust the water's temperature or regulate the amount. When combined, these tools allow for preset or individual choreographies in the shower, in the footbath or at other points where water comes into play.

Designers and communication experts worked hand in hand – in particular to ensure a self-explanatory user interface that makes sense. Which options and operating elements are really needed? How can we make sure that diverse groups of users grasp the interface intuitively? These questions formed the launch pad for developing Smart Water and designing its interface. The user interface links the analogue world of humans with the digital realm. All users have to do is press a button and, following a seesaw motion, the screen in the centre of the interface comes on. Depending on which function is to be activated, white icons represent the options. When one or more outlets are selected and activated, the icons change from white to green. External points of light show precisely where the user has to press. In this way, the interface catches the user's eye and is easy to control by touch despite the often poor visibility associated with the shower. As the tool reacts like a button with touch confirmation, it is ergonomic to use – even with wet or soapy fingers. The display switch guides the user through the single layer, with definite settings staying untouched ready to be accessed the next time the system is used. Thanks to their light aura, the two dials help users to swiftly get their bearings: white is the dial for controlling amounts and red/blue for temperature regulation. In this way, the system is easy to use for a wide range of users – whether short or tall, young or old. And this was one of the defining aims of the interface.

Alongside the preset shower scenarios, configured choreographies can be made to run automatically for footbaths and foot showers. Outlets, a pouring pipe with a laminar jet, and four



nozzles are all controlled to make this happen. Hydrotherapy treatments, in particular, with their temperature stimuli, serve to prevent illness and bring about positive change. Looking beyond these balneological benefits, Smart Water takes the holistic concept into other areas of the house that rely on water, such as the kitchen – where the new solution is known as eUnit Kitchen. This universality is a major benefit, as the system only has to be understood once but can be used in multiple areas.

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Communication Concept, Creation and Architecture for Dornbracht: Meiré und Meiré

ISH innovations magazine 2013 (PDF)

www.sieger-design.com/site/assets/files/1121/ish_2013_innovations-magazine.pdf



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