

REFIT OF A PHOTO STUDIO FOR THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF DORTMUND

by Jutta Paaßen

ON TOP: A PROFESSIONAL STUDIO FOR STUDENTS

At last year's first college ranking conducted by the renown Art Directors Club the Technical College of Dortmund promptly achieved second place on the top ten of German training centres for creative students. Given refurbishment, refitting of equipment and ergonomic improvement of the college's photo studio, the Dortmund Faculty for Design can now do its excellent reputation justice.



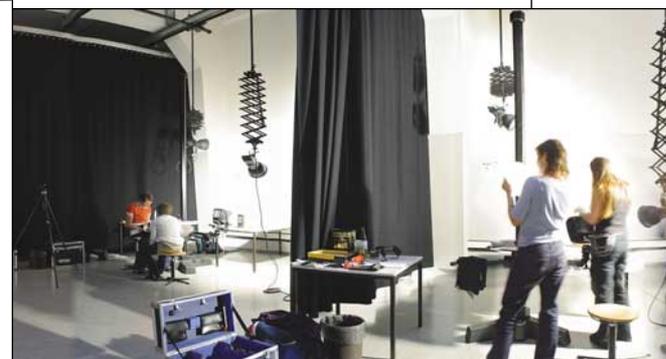
Ready for the start of the winter term 2004 the communication design students at the Technical College in Dortmund were able to use their newly renovated and equipped photo studio. Studio-Service Bacht, a specialist for professional studio fitting, did not only draw up the complex concept for the modernization but also conducted in cooperation with the construction authorities the refurbishment and technical refitting; and that

designed workplaces encourages more professionalism during work. The photo studio has become more attractive for the students and professors. News of the new creative possibilities on the grapevine has had its direct effects: the 3 shift courses on offer since the refurbishment are almost completely occupied 20h per day. Meanwhile, there is no way of getting studio time, without enlisting in the studio usage plan."

**FLEXIBLE ROOM USAGE**

After the renovation, the future photographers now have, over an area of 300m², as many as eight studios of different size to their disposal. The most important modernisation is a variable separating curtain system that given its continuous span across the length of the studio and six mobile traverse curtain bridges enables efficient room usage adaptable to the required situation. In only seconds the open plan studio can be separated into work areas of individual size just by moving the 4.80 m

as requested within the 6 weeks of the college term break. Following the end of the first term of work at the newly created photo studio Werner Thiel, who is the Faculty of Design's workshop director responsible for photo studios, laboratories and digital exposure, enthusiastically concluded: "Even during this short time period it has become clear that the technical equipment within the studio and the optimised spatial concept combined with the ergonomically



Fotos: Udo Geisler



high and 6 m long traverse bridges and by additionally opening or closing certain curtains: "It has made the working area absolutely flexible", says Thiel, "and does not in future place any restriction on working with large objects. Furthermore, the double layer curtain material has a pleasant spin-off; it does not reflect and therefore avoids any influence of the photograph's contrast, which quite often was a problem before modernization when we were using mobile white screens. Owing to the extended Techno-profile system the electricity supply of each workplace has been greatly improved by simply equipping each studio area with a practical suspended socket from above."

Thiel selected specifically for the still-life workplaces diffusion screens and powerful Fresnel spotlights from Bacht. In his opinion, there is almost no match for the perfect combination of adjustment lighting and flash lighting that they offer. The improved lighting is already thought to have had a positive effect on last term's work results.

ALL FROM ONE FIRM

For quite a while now Werner Thiel recognises and appreciates the products and innovative individual solutions offered by the Essen studio fitter, Bacht. To refurbish the studio in Dortmund Werner Thiel was primarily attracted to the option of being able to obtain full services including workshop services from one firm and additionally having the advantage of attaining Christoph Bacht as a competent advisor, who, being a photographer, has the skill and knowledge of the trade. Subsequently, the Studio-Service Bacht was responsible for most of the technical work, involving the preliminary engineering, planning, extension of the ceiling rail system, extension and refit of the flash lighting, supply and installation of the separating curtains and the expert construction of the new cover. "The fact that the building was under preservation requiring specific constructional conditions meant that consistent solutions without too many compromises were needed. That was quite a challenge," reported Thiel. "For example Mr Bacht devised at short notice

special ceiling traverse rails with folding hinges in order to circumvent pillars protruding from the wall and to direct the curtains as near as possible along the walls. Quite simple but ingenious in a way."

NEW PERSPECTIVES

The corner type 8 m x 4m large cove, which was constructed at the rear part of the studio, provides new potential for the students' photographic creativity. "As opposed to the old cove that had a damaged surface, resulting from poor workmanship, and which only allowed the students to work linear to the object, the new cove was installed as people-corner enabling the creation of unusual perspectives and different spatial situations." At the studio's gallery two changing areas and makeup work places have been installed which now provide the Dortmund students with the best equipment for perfect fashion and people photography. "Thanks to the new studio equipment we can compete with any other creative college in Germany."

