

HUES MEDIA

DUTCH DESIGN FIRM COEN! CREATED A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE NETHERLANDS BROADCASTING Corporation using colour test bleeds as its main design element. The shades spilling from art prints on the walls and panels of the building's interiors give it a multicultural identity



COEN! has used wall panels in the halls with other colours on every floor to avoid monotony and make the workplace look vibrant

The Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation in Media Park, Hilversum, looked like any other media office—dark and a tad intimidating. Until the day design firm COEN! reworked it to give it a new look, heralding its new identity, that of a vibrant media group that appealed to the multicultural and colourful mix of viewers across the Netherlands. Literally, different strokes for different folks!

The challenge in doing this project was to thematically unite the three different buildings of this media corp. Keeping in mind safety measures yet providing an open environment were both equally important. The next step was to ensure that the colours and design did not appear dull and monotonous. That the media branch heads were progressive in their thinking helped Dutch conceptual designer Coen van Ham get adventurous with his design ideas. No one expected that a test bleed—a passive VIBGYOR vertical pattern—that appears when there is no broadcast, could transform the premises into a colourful and shiny world that would become the very identity of the office.

Test bleeds used as a VIBGYOR screen, as large curtains and wall panels have given a new colour and identity to the building

Says Coen about the germ for the idea of the pattern, “When I designed it, I had to combine communication, interior design and graphic design into a strong image that reflected the identity of the organisation. I call this the identity layer.”

He redesigned the VIBGYOR screen into a new work of art with a lot more colour and greater dynamics. It is colourful but also neutral, since the NPO (or the Nederlandse Publieke Omroep)—is an umbrella organisation for all Dutch broadcasters. Coen used the test-bleed pattern in large curtains and wall panels in the building. It brought colour and identity into the interior that was left clean, neutral and bright to draw attention to these artworks. Coen dubs this technique as “putting a layer over the interior”. He compares it with an apartment where a builder replicates



The colour scheme helps a first-timer find his route in this media corp building spread across 6000 sq metres with six floors



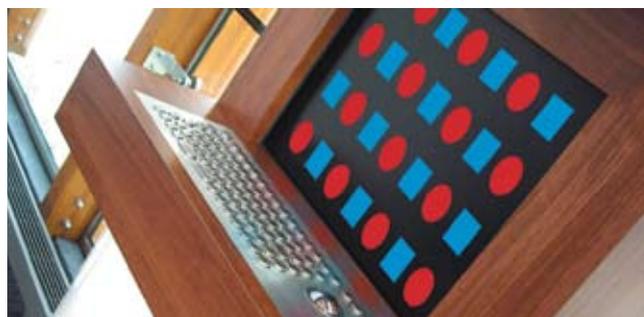
spaces in a building. However, each family will make the space its own with special furniture, colours, art or a family heirloom. Its own identity layer!

Large media offices can be quite intimidating for the first-time visitor. Barring the whirr of laser printers and the buzz of distant telephones, everybody around looks busy and important. At NPO, the office is spread across 6,000 sq

metres with six floors where one could easily get lost! Coen's design led the way. He used colour to create routing for the building. By putting wall panels inside the halls, with different colours on every floor, it's not too difficult to remember the route. He used test-bleed wall panels of different kinds, monotone panels as notice boards, and even in mirrors to make the way down a long hallway seem a bit shorter.



The radio, television and internet columns in the hallway at the building's entrance make waiting worthwhile for visitors



A fine example of melding aesthetics with communication can be seen in the big hallway at the entrance. The white columns were designed as part of an interactive media experience. Low radio columns with a button device produce the sound of a radio station from the NPO when pressed. The television columns show the three national channels, and on the internet columns a visitor can surf the net freely. The white pixel trees in the hallway near the elevators also display television programmes.

Late evening is deadline time and that rush can add to a menacing environment. But Coen took adequate care to offset those vibes. He used lamps on the black ceiling in the hallway that slowly change colour. As an architect and designer, Coen believes that corporate philosophy, identity, product and interiors—everything should reflect the company. Just as pink symbolises romance, roses and hearts, each new logo or design should immediately compel you to associate it with the organisation or company. For viewers of the NPO, a test bleed is no longer a dead screen, but a symbol of a lively, animated news group that means business!

—Text by Vanshika Devuni