

# PRESS RELEASE

NEW MULTIFUNCTIONAL BUILDING „FRITZ“ BY ROCHE PHARMA AG  
GRENZACH-WYHLEN 2018-2021

ARCHITECTURE: CHRIST & GANTENBEIN  
INTERIOR DESIGN: INCHFURNITURE



## VISION AND MISSION

How do we shape the working world of tomorrow? What kind of spaces does a constantly changing, multidimensional environment require?

Based on the vision of Roche Pharma AG to establish a corporate culture that is based on intentionality, i.e. on self-determination, personal responsibility and initiative of the employees, the present project is dedicated to the undertaking of giving this "cultural transformation" a physical equivalent. After three years of intensive development, planning and construction, the result is now manifested in built form as the multifunctional building FRITZ (the name FRITZ is a reminiscence of the pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit of company founder Fritz Hoffmann) on the campus of Roche Pharma AG in Grenzach-Wyhlen.

Implementing a vision together requires the openness of all those involved in the project. The project of Christ & Gantenbein with Roche as an exemplary client, including many involved planners, has always encouraged us at INCHfurniture as product designers to proceed in an explorative, experimental and unconventional way. Above all, the board of Roche Pharma AG has shown great courage to innovate.

## CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

All-pervasive digitization has not only transformed the world of work, it has long since swept through society as a whole. Spheres of life are merging, overlapping and mutually influencing each other. Characteristic of this environment are work processes guided by interdisciplinary ways of thinking, team-based forms of work or hybrid working methods. These indicators require new concepts and, in general, expose a changed view of the meaning and interpretation of work. They gather under the terms New Work, Coworking or Co-Creation. If this insight is applied constructively, it means a synthesis of work, recreation, knowledge production, individual advancement and social interaction. The cultural, individual and professional diversity of Roche Pharma AG is highly endowed and finds its spatial expression under consideration of functional, technical or constructional aspects. The individual with his personal inclinations and needs is equally relevant as an inspiring environment for dynamic, creative teams, interdisciplinary exchange platforms and international conferences with foreign specialists, speakers and guests. Spontaneous social encounters become a valuable calculation, personal retreats for contemplation are deliberately offered. A supporting program of cultural events and gastronomically diverse offerings is also part of the canon of a lived corporate culture. Following this interpretation of outcome-centered work, we derived 10 so-called "Fritz elements" that functionally move at and between the poles of work and recreation, public and private.



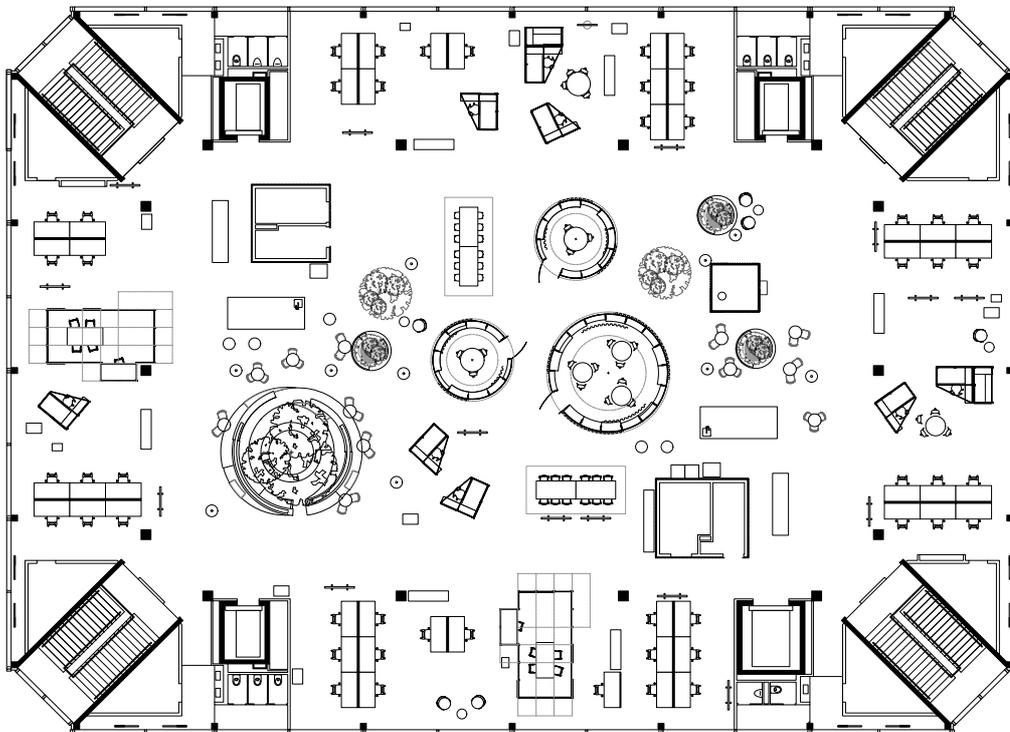
North façade and new main access area to the campus of Roche Pharma AG in Grenzach-Wyhlen (Foto: Mark Niedermann)

## ARCHITECTURE

The multifunctional building designed by the internationally renowned architects Christ & Gantenbein impresses with its prestigious exterior, which gives the campus in Grenzach a new publicity, presence and luminosity, while at the same time integrating it into the architectural language of Roche. The flowing, column-free interior spaces, which are visually clearly defined by a grid ceiling of exposed concrete elements, are made possible by positioning the building circulation at the four corners of the structure. The resulting radical flexibility creates the framework for a forward-looking work concept and for the integration of an auditorium in the center of the building.

## INTERIOR CONCEPT

The architecture forms an optimal basis for a furnishing concept that can freely unfold within it. In these timeless open spaces, we developed a spatial concept from the ground up, which is heterogeneously structured in a natural way to meet a wide variety of needs. Through a high degree of flexibility, it is possible to react to the demands of the users, to different work processes as well as to future changes. In an intensive development process together with the client and Christ & Gantenbein, INCHfurniture designs and curates each object, from the ground floor up to the 4th floor of the new building. In the process, the five floors are assigned very different functions: The first floor serves as the new entrance to the campus and houses the reception and a spacious catering area with barista bar. The 1st floor with the integrated, two-story forum offers plenty of space for training courses, conferences and events. The top two floors are home to the new workspace, where different teams work. This open, flexible project space is loosely zoned by 10 so-called "FOB Fritz Elements". This creates very different working worlds that adapt flexibly to the requirements of their users. The space elements developed by INCH especially for this building are: Creative Lab, Flexible Workstation, Agility Space, Meeting and Silent Hub, Sky Box, Forest Circle, Community Table, Desert Area, Residential Area and Kitchenette. These structures cover functions, needs and requirements that characterize the work of Roche teams. They provide space for concentrated work, social interaction, creative debate, moments of enjoyment, formal and informal encounters, as well as retreat and personal contemplation. The interplay of the FOB Fritz Elements creates the atmosphere of an interwoven urban space.



Floor Plan 4th floor

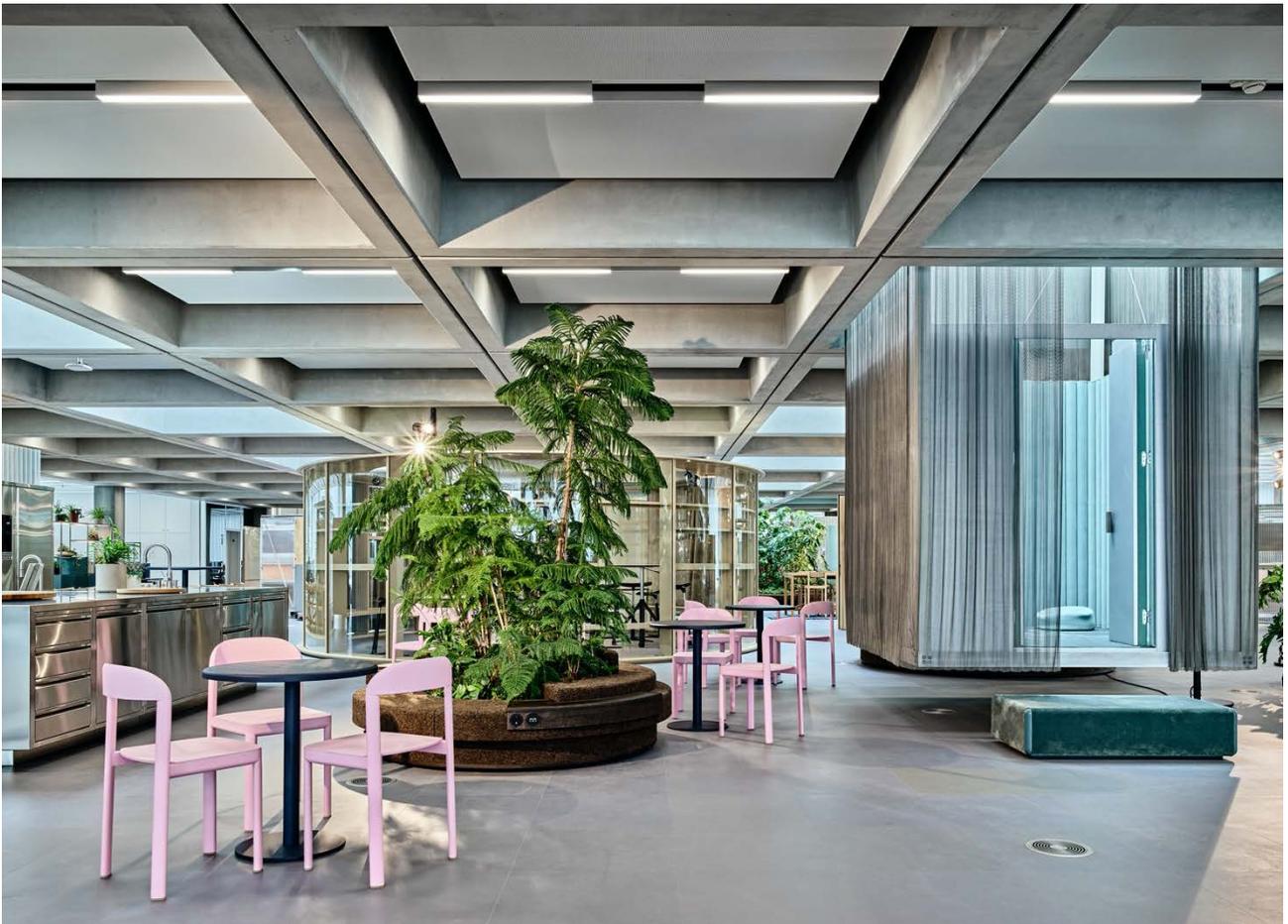
## **RECEPTION/GASTRONOMY**

The new multifunctional building FRITZ has an overriding importance on the Roche campus in Grenzach-Wyhlen. With its reception, restaurant and auditorium, it becomes the new entrance gate and a place of exchange.

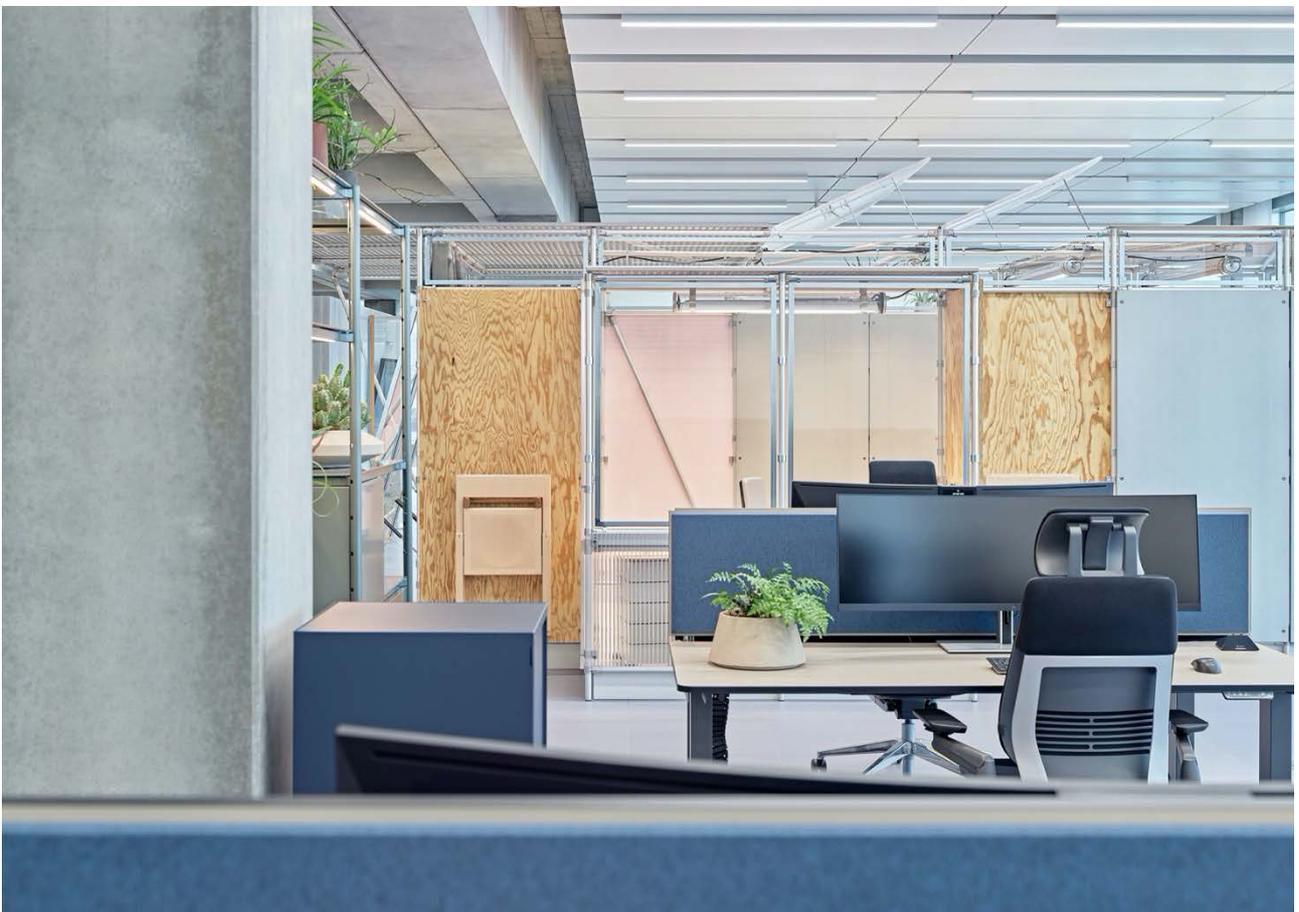
The ground-level reception zone with a floor covering of polished, coarse-grained in-situ concrete is structured by the loose arrangement with custom-made fixtures, heterogeneous furnishings, large-format carpets and lush islands of plants, so that the space appears fluid and generous despite the indispensable safety zone. The elegant sobriety completely reflects the businesslike touch of a healthcare company, yet a touch of international grandeur flows through the space. The fixtures of the reception, barista bar and serving kitchen, which consist of circular segments clad with front aprons made of anodized textured sheet metal, contribute significantly to this. They are flanked by strictly linear bodies made of dark spy mirror. The resulting optical effect of light refraction and reflection alludes to the cultural life that can take place in this place alongside the busy daily tasks. The lobby-like character of this prestigious space is also owed to the finely tuned color accents of the furnishings, the expressive ceiling light rings and the idiosyncratic flora.

## **MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION**

Sustainability criteria were central to the selection of materials, techniques and manufacturers used. The circumstance of change over time was also taken into account in terms of design, and the principles of a circular economy were already taken into account in the design process. Extensive avoidance of composites and bonded joints contribute to this, as does the preferred choice of energy-efficient equipment, manufacturing operations that are as local as possible, durable products, and up- and recyclable materials and resource-conserving production processes. Detailed documentation of the products and materials used simplifies their care, repair and recycling. The service life is thus increased, the possibilities of other areas of use are highlighted and the return of material flows is channeled with as little loss as possible. In addition, the increasing acceleration of technical and social processes requires innovations at ever shorter intervals. The world of work will continue to change, needs and technologies will change, be added or at some point become obsolete. The present space concept is designed to be able to react to these changes through its diversity, its clear structure and its open construction. Flexibility here also means future viability and thus longevity. Thus, thanks to the heterogeneous, patchwork-like design of the space, individual elements can be expanded, renewed or replaced without detracting from the overall concept. It is precisely the stringency of totality and diversity that is able to accommodate new things with ease.



4th floor with SkyBox, Kitchenette, Forest Circle and Meeting Hub Foto: Mark Niedermann



Permanent workplaces with Creative Lab in the background (Foto: Mark Niedermann)



4th floor with Community Table, Kitchenette,, Creative Lab and Meeting Hub  
(Foto: Mark Niedermann)



View through the Meeting Hub's, on the 4th floor with Forest Circle and Community table in the background



"Piazza" with Agility Space and Forest Circle between the meeting rooms on the 3rd floor (Foto: Mark Niedermann)



1st floor with two-storey forum in full assembly mode with space for up to 550 people. The forum can be divided into three rooms and is furnished differently for training, workshops or talks.

Foto: Mark Niedermann



Access to large, walk-in Forest Circle of blackened cork under a glazed ceiling bay on the 4th floor (Foto: Mark Niedermann)