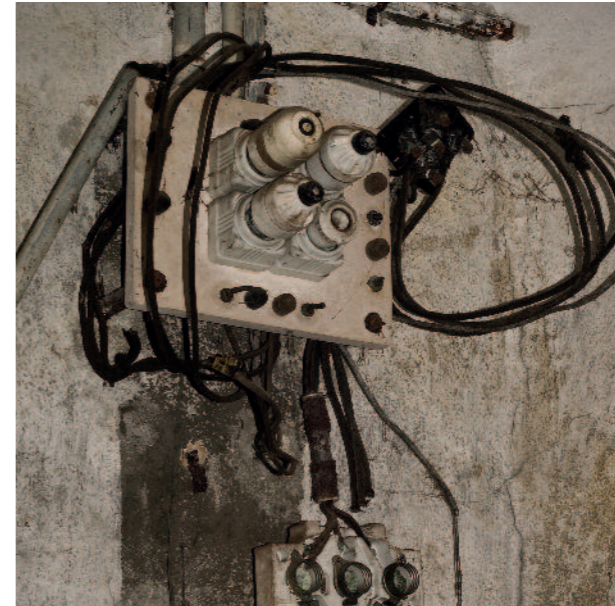


design  
attitudes + triggers

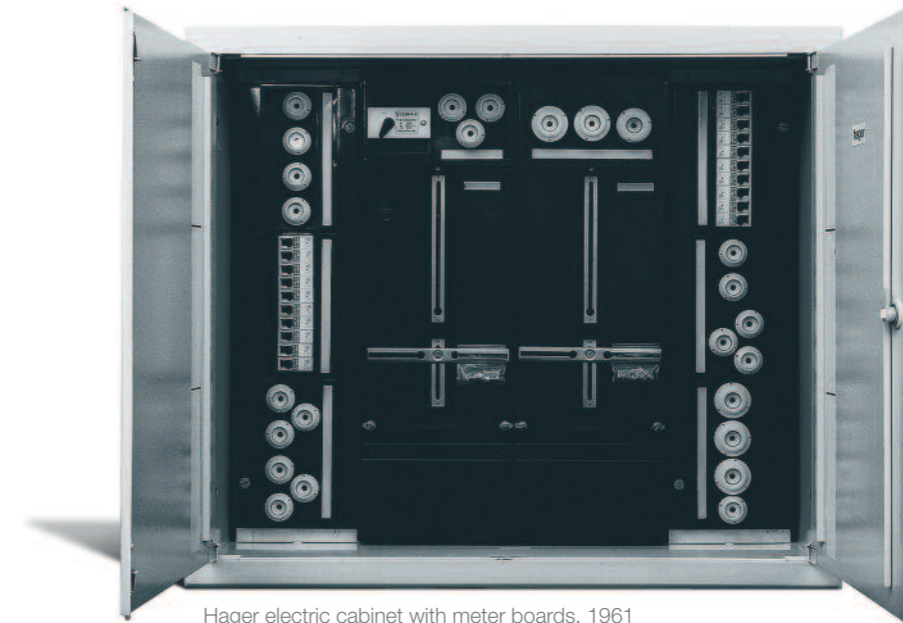


In the beginning  
there was the  
wall recess ...



# ...then came Hager!

For a long time design and electrical engineering seemed to have little in common with each other. Way into the 1950s, cables for energy distribution in both France and Germany were housed in a simple recess in a wall. An electrician would install the connections and a carpenter did the rest, usually with a wood plank. The two brothers Hermann and Dr. Oswald Hager decided to take a closer look at this scenario, discovering the recess to be a key market niche.



Hager electric cabinet with meter boards, 1961

# From the 1950s until now

## Hanover Fair 1959

Brothers Hermann and Dr. Oswald Hager present the first meter panel made from Bakelite. This becomes an eye-catcher and is soon in demand. The first thermoplastic inplate system follows in 1960. The following year sees the first mass-produced enclosure. "These two innovations – the box that replaced the wall recess and the meter panel with inplate system – virtually functioned like a can opener" says Hermann Hager in retrospect. Within no time at all the previously unknown 'Hager Elektro-Plastic OHG' becomes the technological pioneer in the field of energy distribution and has retained this position to the present day.

## 50,000 products later

During the following decades Hager extends its system-linked range step-by step. With its modular appliances and routing systems as well as switch ranges and intuitive user interfaces, the company develops from the 'niche expert' into a cross-the-board supplier of electro-technical appliances for intelligent residential and commercial buildings. Along with the expansion of systematic diversity, demands made on design grow too. Every product has a different function and each of those functions calls for an individual shape – without renouncing Hager's origin.

*„We were already into design when the word itself was little known in Germany.“*



Hermann Hager and Dr. Oswald Hager



In the early 1960s Hager 'reinvents' electrical installations – with the first mass-produced enclosure for the German market (see page 5). Five decades later – today's meter box *univers Z* with multimedia hub.



As of 1974 a new order is established inside the enclosure – by introducing a modular system. The protective devices, switch-gear and control units made by Hager are all recognizable from a continuous blue design line. The illustration shows the current single-pole, 16 amp miniature circuit breaker.



The takeover in 1996 of the routing specialist Tehalit paves the way for new design opportunities. Hager's wall, ceiling and floor ducts still frequently impact modern office architecture – for example the *tehalit.SL* skirting system from 2010.



In 2007 Hager sets new trends in living space with the *kallysto*® range of switches. A completely new wiring technique is embedded in the stylish rocker element.



2009: Once again a niche product becomes a design highlight – the small *golf* distribution box sets new electro-aesthetical standards in more than 70 countries worldwide. Read more on page 14.

# The next step

## **A productive encounter**

Hager's product spectrum has long since outgrown its original horizons. Today an electrical installation at home or in the office has taken over numerous direct functions. And where a person comes into direct contact with technology, that same technology should conversely touch the user – on an aesthetic, a haptic and most importantly an emotional level. Aware of the situation, Hager took up the challenge and decided to invite the industrial designer Erwin van Handenhoven to look into this phenomenon in the late 1990s. Van Handenhoven obliged! Their successful interaction culminated in a memorable meeting where Daniel Hager, CEO of the Hager Group, and Erwin van Handenhoven made the decision to start up an independent design agency. In May 2009 Hager-Winco was launched.

## **A bright future**

In the long term this means Hager-Winco will continue to pursue its successful co-operation at the same time as extending its scope of activities. The aim is to unify function with emotion even more at modular levels while integrating these functions into the most diverse of cultural parameters. And Hager-Winco is the perfect interface to reach this goal with. The design team works in an ancient hydroelectric power plant close to the German-French border near Strasbourg. The inspiring area fosters an awareness of cultural multiplicity and at the same time creates ideal prerequisites for opening up to new markets and broadening individual horizons.

**:hager WINCO** design

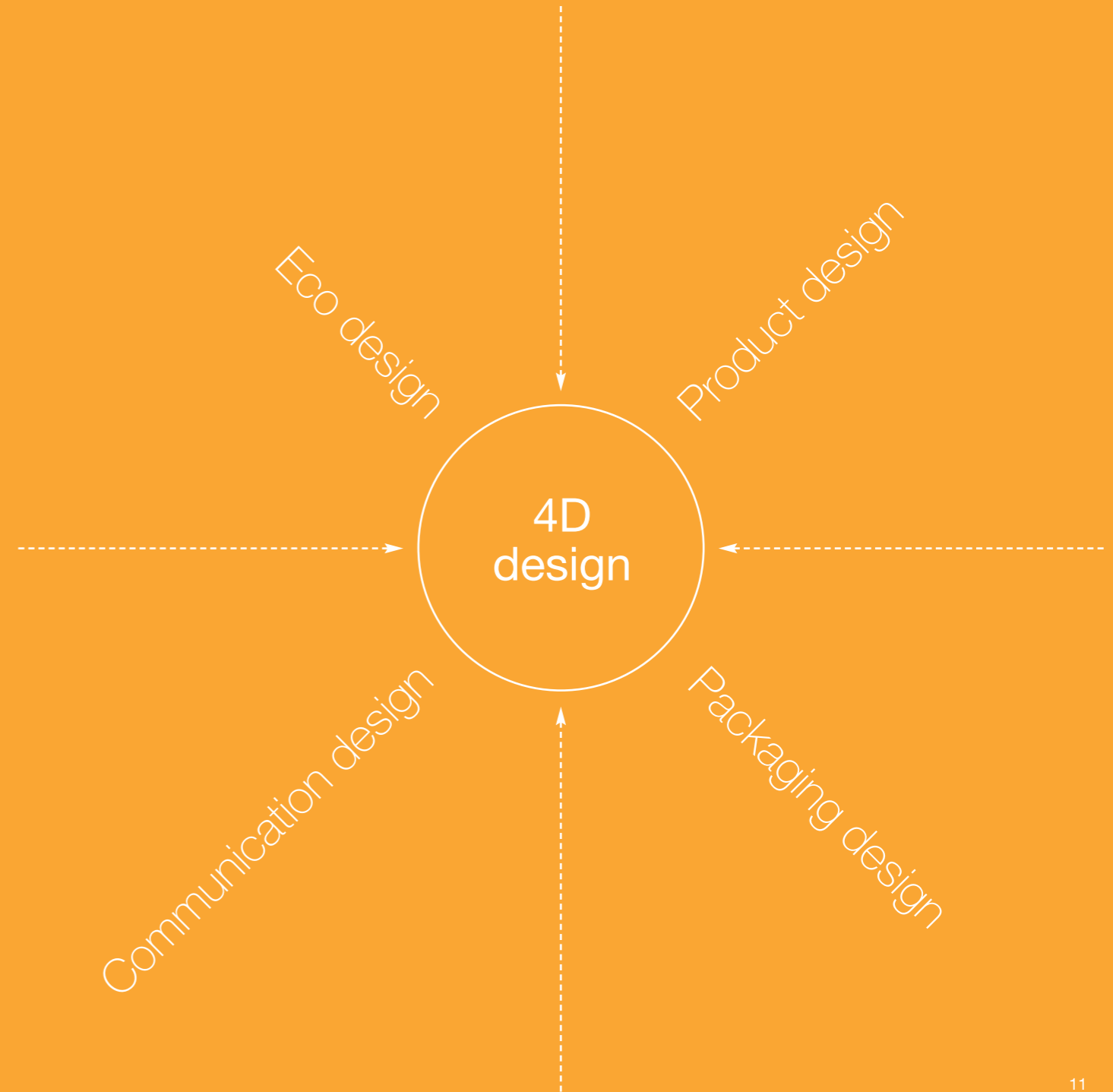


Erwin van Handenhoven and Daniel Hager in front of the historic alternating current generator at Hager-Winco.

*“By bringing Hager-Winco into being, we are aspiring to a long-term design cooperation in order to make our products even more attractive, more user-friendly and more self-sufficient than they already are.”*

# A well rounded package – our holistic design approach

Conventional product design is generally determined by three coordinates – length, width and height. We prefer to go a stage further and consider what has preceded and what will follow a product. How will it evolve? How should it best reach our customers? And in which way are we going to 'sell' it to them? All these aspects constitute our all-embracing design approach. And as this extends beyond three-dimensional product thinking, we refer to it as 4D design.





# From function to emotion

## More than veneer

For more than five decades, Hager has handled functionality and system reliability as top priorities. This is reflected in the shape of our products. Being steeped in structural design tradition, Hager sees to it that a technological product is not simply enveloped with an elegant shell but developed with functionality in mind. The outward appearance mirrors the inner structure – and appearance is becoming ever more important today.

## From hidden treasures...

The modern word 'design' extends way beyond classical precepts. We accordingly have two categories for it. One comprises systems that predominantly flourish in obscurity such as our modular appliances. First and foremost, they need to convince the specialist. This is where we focus on functional aspects such as ease of installation, safety and conforming to standards.

The more the meter box develops into an energy switchboard – thanks to the arrival of smart metering and home networks –, the more visible our 'hidden beauties' become. This is the reason why we provide uniformity and clear visuals – for example with the continuous blue Hager line.



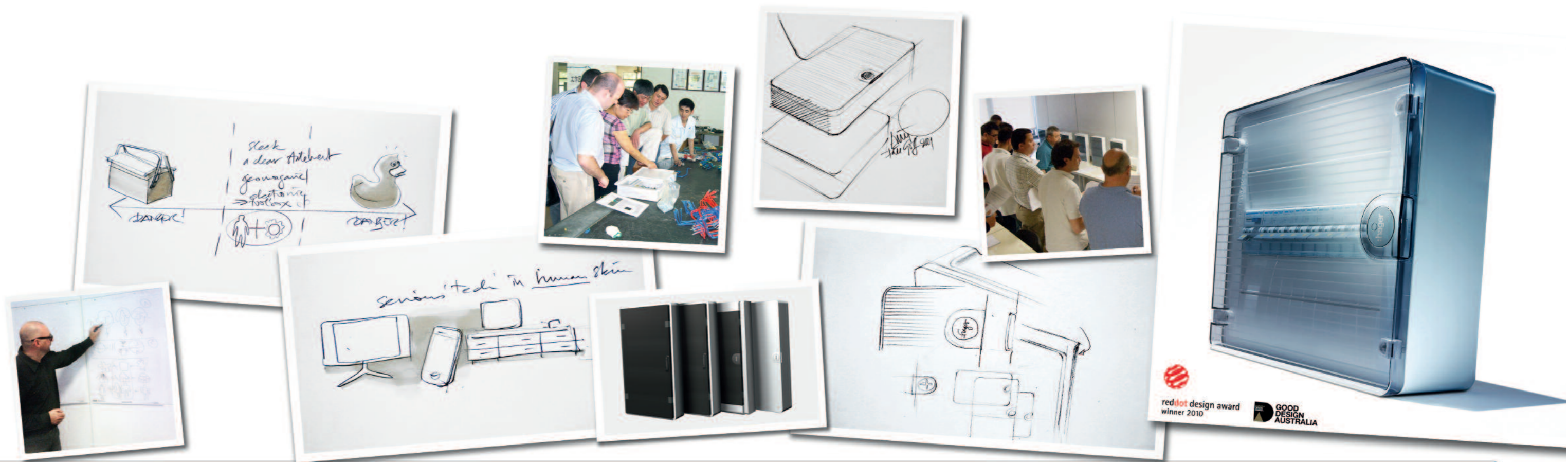
## ... to room exhibits

The second category constitutes products that the end user often comes into contact with – no matter whether they take the form of innovative light switches made from real materials or intuitive user interfaces for monitoring technology in buildings. They not only have to 'function' from a technical point of view but also from optical and haptic ones as well. This is where we focus on an unambiguous design terminology, high-quality surface design and expressive materials. A good design is one that one likes to touch – and one that is touching too.



# From the idea to the ideal

Does a meter box have to look like a meter box? Erwin van Handenhoven may have asked himself this question in 2008 when he was commissioned to develop a new small distribution board for Hager. He presented his sketches to more than 200 customers from six countries. Following highly proactive dialogues which we refer to as 'the customer's voice' and 'the customer's emotion', a complex design process evolved for a completely new type of enclosure – the *golf*. The product is a multi-talent which thanks to a platform strategy connects in more than 70 countries worldwide – a real milestone in that a technical appliance has, for the first time ever, been transformed into a piece of wall furniture.



## Dress code

When it comes to dress, there is a fitting code for every occasion. The same goes for design and this is why we draw up the scope for our future activities at an early stage. The new *golf* is to function as an axis between a technical interior and a human exterior.

## Ambition

At this point we define our objectives and wishes. With the *golf*, this involved developing a totally new design for a technical device – without renouncing its European roots.

## Briefing

In the next step, the exact project requisites are stipulated as well as how to fulfil them. The *golf* should not be too technocratic and not too playful. It is to be clear-cut and powerful, geometrical, but also emotional. And by no means sterile or boring!

## Play time

During this stage we play around with every possible element that comes to mind and into our hands, including materials, photos, words and drawings – in search of interesting correlations and surprising combinations.

## Concepts

At this point the single constituents are blended into a coherent entity. The visionary aspects expressed at the briefing materialise in real, tangible shapes.

## Display time

In the ensuing stage, we gather and evaluate feedback from our customers – the specialists through to the end users. This is followed by fine tuning.

## Focus

We then develop the product's final shape and once again test it with our target groups. The first production steps are likewise closely coordinated with the design department.

## Hooray time

After just over a year, the new *golf* is now ready. Not only does it convince Hager customers the world over, but international expert juries bestow it with the 2010 red dot design prize and the 2011 Good Design Australia award.





Time to 'wrap'. A new



packaging design



2011

**Wrapping, not wasting**

Our customers not only rate what it is they acquire from Hager but also how it is presented to them. And the product packaging is also of fundamental significance when it comes to logistics, storage and distribution – not forgetting the life cycle assessment element. So that is why we tested all packaging elements extensively. When doing this, we focused on three aspects: better protection, a greater degree of recognition and less material consumption. Hager's new packaging materials meet all three requirements outstandingly – as confirmed by the iF-packaging award 2011.

**Less is more**

Since 2010, we have exclusively been using recycled paper without virgin pulp components and without composite materials that are difficult to separate. By consistently using brown paper, we have done away with the need for chemical bleaching agents and reduced the use of printing inks down to one sixth of previous needs. In addition to this, ingenious structural designs have enabled us to significantly reduce our cardboard requirements. The results after year one: more than 300,000 m<sup>2</sup> less corrugated board and 130,000 kg less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions!

### Exemplary sustainability

When creating something new, one automatically co-creates one's environment – be it one's immediate four-walled space or the world outside. That is why we not only take care developing products that stand out technically, but do so in a way so as to create a minimal impact on the environmental balance. As a family-owned company we consistently focus on sustainable development and have even given our philosophy a name of its own – E3.

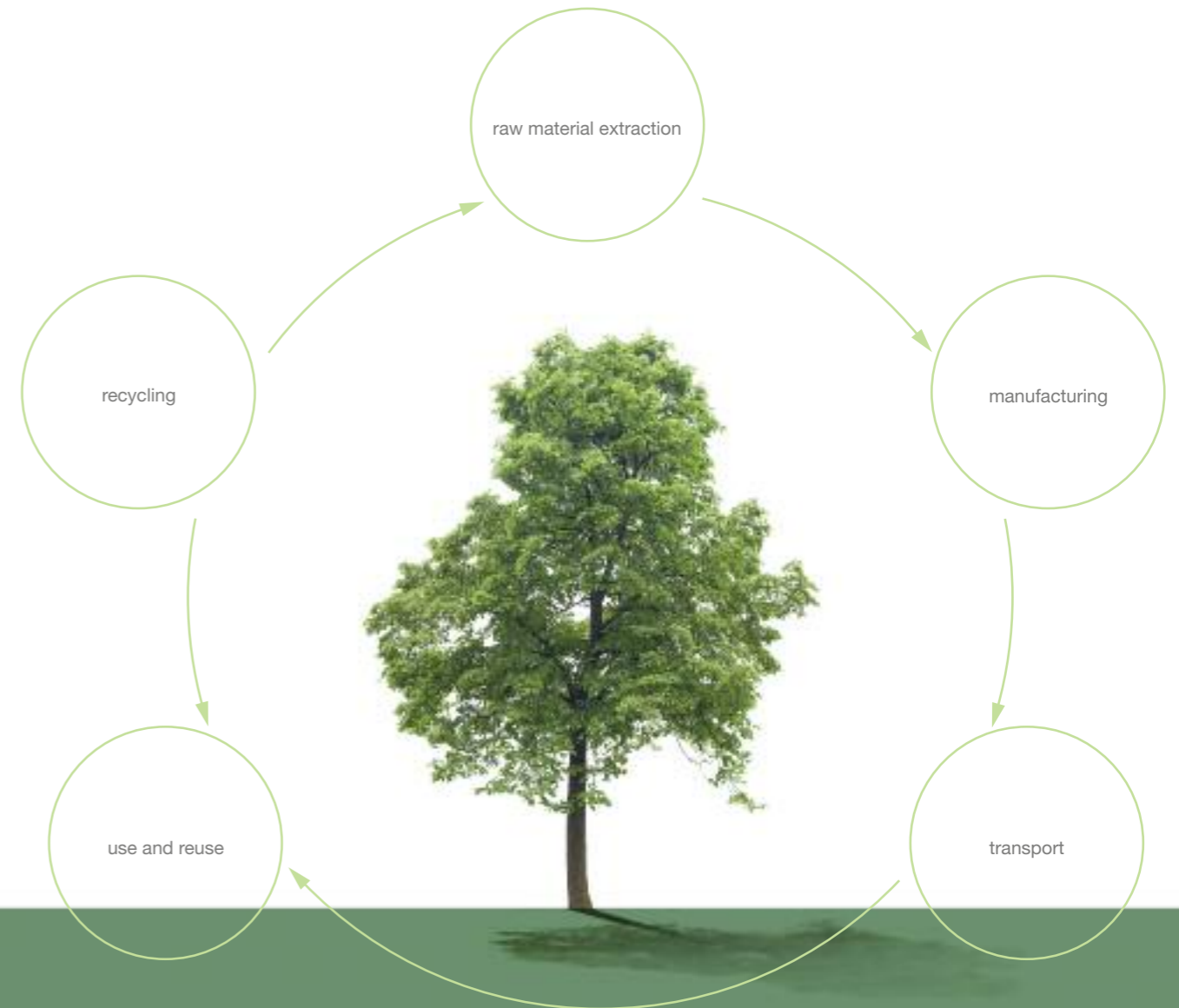


### Make more from less

E3 is a comprehensive concept for treating our planet's limited resources in a responsible way. That is why our factories across the world adhere to the maxim 'make more from less'. In real terms this means that eleven of Hager's production plants are already certified under the ISO 14000 environmental management standard and that we are continually reducing our ecological footprint, at the same time as advancing technology in the right direction.

### Thoroughly thought-out

All Hager product innovations are developed according to ecological design principles. In practise, the complete life cycle of a future Hager product is meticulously examined in terms of procuring raw materials, the manufacturing process, transport and the use of the product itself right through to recycling or disposal. When making a 'life cycle assessment' the environmental effects of each product phase are taken into account and recorded. If they are not acceptable, we go one better by changing the product or by improving the production process. All improvements are evaluated on a regular basis and further optimised where necessary.



# A clean job – thanks to Eco design



# From individual to individual-communication design and

# corporate architecture

## We begin by listening...

If one wants to give the right answers to client's questions, one prerequisite is imperative – being a good listener. This is a tradition at Hager. So before we begin designing, we take a good look at our target group – especially their habits, their needs and wishes but also their concerns. We then integrate these first-hand insights into our development and design processes.



## 'Winning' customer proximity

By means of its 'presentation islands' at trade fairs, Hager invites visitors to take part in a dialogue in a unique way. This method received recognition back in 2008 in the form of the iF communication design award.



## Communicative climate

Our staff also benefit from such interaction. The new administrative building in Blieskastel is representative of Hager's corporate architecture. It leads the way for an even more open-office culture and has been designed as an 'interactive' work space using the latest multimedia technology.

## ...and then we talk!

A discussion held in confidence with a customer will likewise be cultivated in the reverse direction. This will take the form of a visit or call from our sales staff or at a more general level, through classical print or digital media. This active interchange serves as basis for and has been the driving force behind our success for more than 50 years.



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“Everything you see  
and touch highlights  
the notion of ease  
and quality.”

Daniel Hager  
CEO Hager Group

# From mind to matter

## Our corporate philosophy

Design at Hager is not an afterthought which is superimposed on technology, but evolves from the core of the product. Going a step further one could even intimate that design grows from the inner values of our company. Our products mirror our attitude and this attitude manifests itself in our products.

customer proximity  
innovation  
trust  
simplicity  
reactivity  
continuity

## Our design attitudes

Based on this corporate mindset, our designer Erwin van Handenhoven has derived seven unique principles that inspire and discipline day-to-day work with products for Hager and, where it is necessary, make amendments to them. Read on to discover Erwin's thoughts on design.

tail-spirit  
simplimate  
geomorganics  
sensociety  
genero-city  
controlhedo  
yousability

by Erwin van Handenhoven

# #01 genero-city

attitude



A design respecting the client and a proposition that delivers something more and better than expected. A sincere experience that links one to humanity. An exquisite, sustainable 'civilized' design.

# #02 tail-spirit

attitude



100% design that omits nothing, focusing on the smallest details. As human beings we perceive and feel the quality and the beauty of things. Superficial approaches always have a price to pay!



# #03 attitude geomorganics



Friendly structured design with clear and clean form statements. Avoids completely loose and fuzzy shaping. Female and male aspects converge into a balanced unity.

# #04 controlhedo

attitude

Design as a serious pleasure!  
A way of creating things to enrich daily life with small delights. Nothing is overdone. Emotions are perfectly curbed. An inside smile is retained.



# #05 sensociety

attitude



Design should make sense.  
Common sense or new sense but  
no nonsense. Sometimes design  
has an international meaning.  
Conversely, it is often closely  
linked to culture, history, context,  
social environment and perception.  
Sense the sense.

# #06 simplimate

attitude



Simplicity that sublimates.  
Reducing a form language to  
essential quality and style.  
Avoiding 'over-design' and 'over-  
weight'. Searching for authentic  
and easy design that suggests  
more than it shows.



# #07 attitude yousability



Design for the real world and for people. Not exclusively for designers or experienced specialists. Design for young and old, large and small, fully-abled and disabled, relaxed and stressed. Everybody deserves a better experience.

# From implementation to temptation

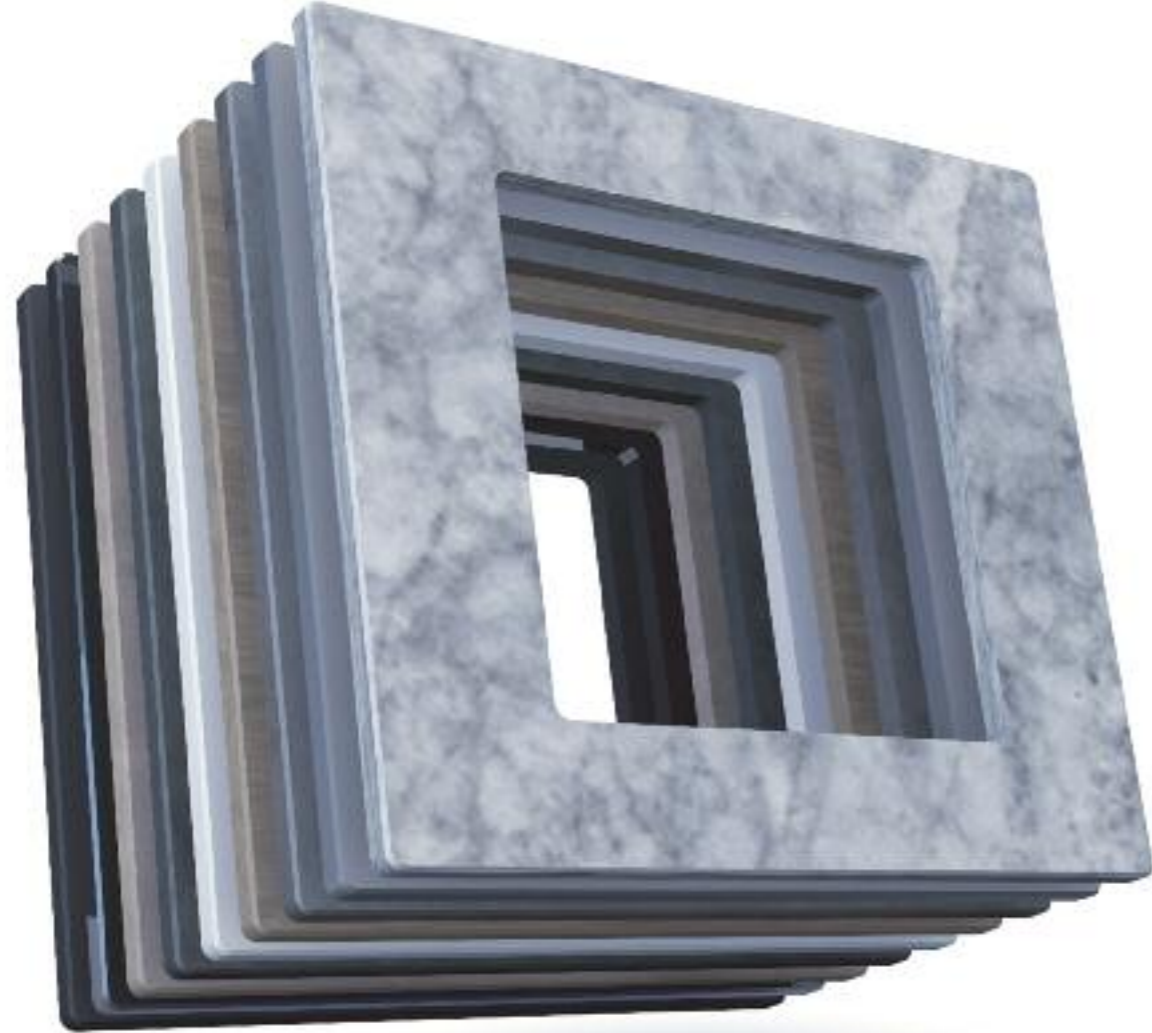
## Our design triggers

An English proverb alleges “You never have a second chance to make a first impression”. And whatever deliberations and attitudes our products embody, it is paramount that they appeal to the onlooker – when first seen, touched and used. So as to accomplish this we employ a range of design triggers.

mat-mut  
ergo-icons  
light-factor  
soft/hard  
2 1/2-D  
by Erwin van Handenhoven

# **A** mat-mut

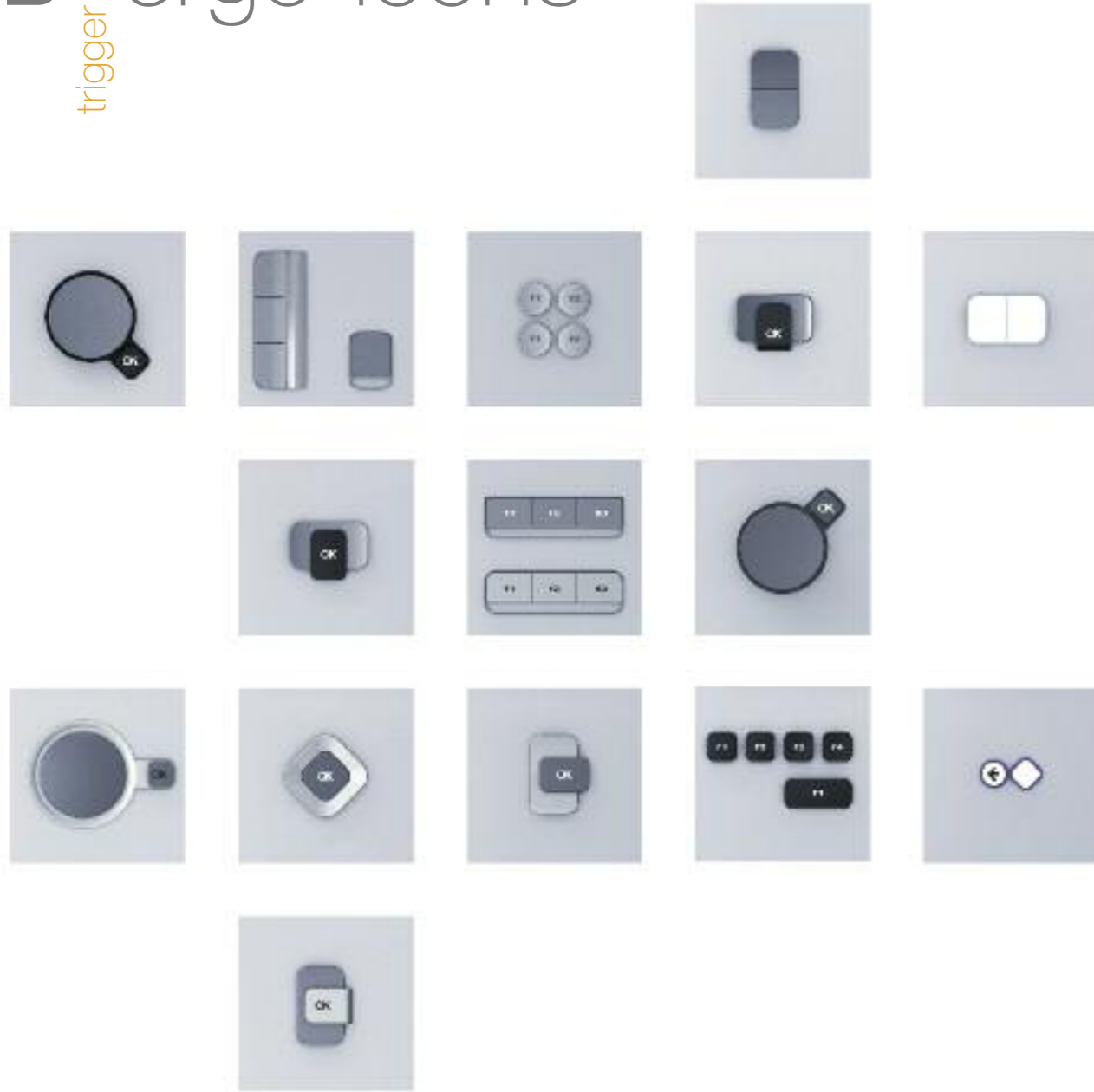
trigger



Material Mutation. Playing with different materials and finishes is more than just a decorative concept. It fits to the architectural approach for wall appliances in home interiors – both visible and invisible. It also extends the expressional range from standard via medium to premium. And it enhances the product family life.

# B ergo-icons

trigger

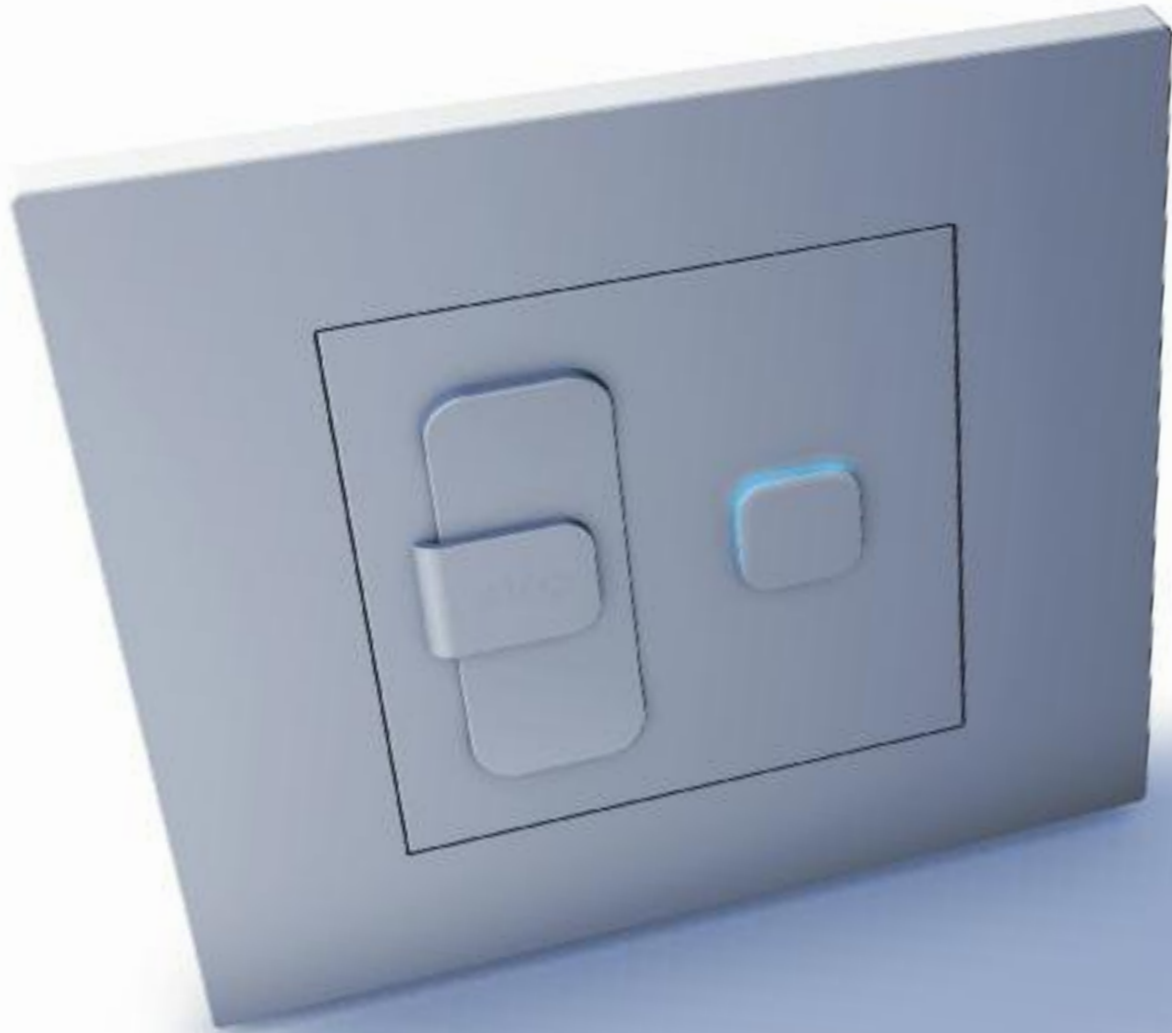


'Ergo-icons' are interface elements with strong visual user impact. They improve ergonomics and brand recognition as they operate similarly to icons. Hager 'ergo-icons' are to be deployed on all the brand's control modules.



# c light-factor

trigger



Light is immaterial magic! It increases the emotional impact of the product. And it suggests activity and elegance – the ‘life inside’. It often also helps as an ergonomic function indicator. New ways to guide, filter and animate light are significant design features.

# D soft/hard

trigger



Venturing with unexpected and exciting material contrasts and combinations. A sensory trip from hard towards soft creates little tactile pleasures. Sensory richness is design richness.

# **E** trigger 2 1/2-D



Flatness, slimness, sleekness. Many high-tech products are heading in this direction. They become easy to move and easy to carry. They disappear from the wall and look a lot smarter. As a result we get micro-design and...graphics.

# Design needs a

# face



Erwin van Handenhoven  
Designer for Hager

Erwin van Handenhoven is a qualified industrial designer. Subsequent to his thesis on non-aggressive vehicle design at Antwerp University, he took up a professorship at the Compiègne University of Technology in 1981. Under his direction, a new product development department was established at the Belfort-Montbéliard University of Technology in 1986. Between 1992 and 2009 he managed the CRIPS design centre – an offspring of the university. In 1999 he began working together with Hager. Ever since Erwin van Handenhoven has been responsible for the design language of many Hager innovations – and from May 2009, as an official Hager partner with his Hager-Winco design agency.



reddot design award



# From a glance to having insight

A discussion with Erwin van Handenhoven



*Erwin – how did your cooperation with Hager come about in the first place?*

**Erwin:** It began to grow like a small, delicate plant – slowly and from the bottom up.

*What did that mean in practical terms?*

**Erwin:** At Hager we didn't start with design itself, but with the design process – working on the method. You have a behind-the-scene view of where we work, how we work and how we think. Before a plant can grow, it is essential for a root system to be laid down.

*And after that?*

**Erwin:** Then we had to prove theory in practice – and of all things, with a modular appliance! Right from the outset, the creative leeway was extremely limited. The smallest detail became the biggest challenge. But in close cooperation with Hager's design engineers, we were plausibly able to show which direction things would go.

*Tell us about this direction.*

**Erwin:** With our very first project we reached our initial goal – market acceptance. This resulted in increased confidence at Hager, leading to many more projects. And word finally got around to Hager's management board. So that delicate plant gradually began to turn into a sturdy tree, with roots based on understanding and trust.

*What has been the most exciting product you have designed for Hager?*

**Erwin:** It's not always the product itself that is exciting. The initial sighting makes it exciting. A sports car may appear interesting at a first glance, a light switch after a second look and a modular appliance after the third. One has to keep looking until the product reveals its most hidden features. Seen from this perspective, Hager only has exciting products!

*Sounds fascinating! Could you please go into more detail?*

**Erwin:** The elation created by Hager products is not only surface-related – it goes much deeper. Hager offers us a rare opportunity to open up the entire spectrum of our creative ability, enabling us to consider the most minute detail which is often invisible. The designer becomes an explorer, even if he or she just sits at a drawing board. The deeper I can delve into things, the more fascinated I get – and the more satisfied I am in the end.

*Which Hager switches do you use at home?*

**Erwin:** Interestingly enough, although I live in France, I use the German *kallysto*® switch line. Mind you I don't view 'my' switches as trophies on the wall but as vital research objects, which over the course of time will provide me with useful feedback. This is rather

different from laboratory tests or group discussions. Who knows what opportunities such long-term experience will disclose – openings which can then be integrated into the development of existing products or the creation of new ones.

*How will Hager's design change in the coming years?*

**Erwin:** In the past electricity used to be associated with danger. In the meantime it has become our friend. Hager has made a considerable contribution to this development. It has actually given energy a face and, even in the current discussion about energy, it must not lose this face. In addition to safety and reliability, an emphasis is increasingly being placed on ecology and sustainability. The individual needs to experience these aspects first-hand via products – without neglecting technological and aesthetic aspiration.

*How many products have you already designed for Hager?*

**Erwin:** No idea... quite a lot!

*Thanks very much for your time, Erwin.*



**Genero-city – electric car charging station**

Emotions without emissions – that’s what the new Hager charging stations deliver. This is made possible by using two sockets – each for two e-cars. Each facility combines environmental protection with an ornamental use – the elegantly styled ‘city trees’ generate soft-light street illumination which at the same time serve as an invitation to stop and look.

**Tail-spirit – kallysta light switch**

Design well conceived – the French *kallysta* switch line takes established premium design a stage further, not stopping at the exterior. Behind the switch’s surface, ergonomic benefits including decreased installation depth, retractable anchors and QuickConnect terminals convince the specialist. What appears as ‘missing’ is perceived as positive space.

**Geomorganics – convenient radio remote control**

Simply versatile – Hager’s new generation remote controls are a case to argue against the increasing loss of control over house and consumer electronics which are becoming ever more complex. All the functions can be allocated and called up flexibly. Simplicity is both visible and tangible. Switching becomes a sensual experience in that some keys are convex and others concave.

**Controlhedo – tehalit.SL skirting system**

The dematerialization of cable management – from an aesthetic point of view, wall cable ducts are generally regarded as suboptimal. We have made a virtue out of necessity by creating the *tehalit.SL* baseboard system which is as light, elegant and ‘invisible’ as possible. This is achieved by its slim contouring and the floating appliance holder with a lateral mirror face. Installation time is equally ‘slim’ thanks to innovative click-into-place technology.

**Sensociety – essensya light switch**

Revolution from below: a nation’s interior design lifestyle and approach to work can partly be ‘decoded’ from the way a switch is used. So before designing a new switch, a designer needs to know and understand cultural ‘switching circuits’. Only then is he or she in a position to completely re-create them. And this is exactly what has happened with the successful French *essensya* switch line. It’s a concept that just goes click!

**Simplimate – small golf distribution board**

One for all and all for one – thanks to its innovative platform strategy, Hager’s new *golf* is used in more than 70 countries worldwide. Various national norms had to be complied with at a technical level while optically, an internationally uniform design language had to be found. The new *golf* by Hager makes modern technology ‘liveable’ – in every room and in every country.

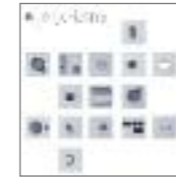
**Yousability – programmable room thermostat**

To hang or to stand alone – a question with an easy answer! The programmable room thermostat controls room temperature and can be located anywhere as it can either be hung or situated as wished. And the more one looks at it, the more one discovers – thanks to its icon-assisted menu navigation, intriguing light management and haptically interesting textures.

**Mat-Mut – the kallysto.art frame**

There is little to discuss when it comes to good technology, but one can have an opinion about the right frame. So that is why Hager takes note of the most diverse user wishes when it comes to living areas. These are usually fulfilled by making straightforward changes by using different materials, textures, colours and shapes. There’s a solution to fit everybody’s taste.

# Product stories

**Ergo-icons – design studies**

We turn ergonomics into ‘iconomics’! By using Ergo icons, Hager translates the functional diversity of its systems into a unified look. Hager Ergo icons look and feel good and unambiguously reveal their origin. For this very reason they are going to characterise future Hager design when it comes to user interfaces.

**Light-factor – a design study of shutter control systems**

Light is life. This is why light design – although immaterial – is an essential element in each and every product. It literally sheds light on product functions and facilitates ease of application. It also elucidates the product’s character – whether for example it is precious, elegant or unpretentious. And it livens up statics by playing with the surface and reflecting prominent details.

**Soft/hard – mobile remote control**

Helping hand and great to hold in one. Hager’s new mobile remote controls are equipped with a soft outer rubber ring which is a pleasure to have in one’s hand. The ‘hard’ element is that all functions can be called up using individually programmable keys. This is how Hager makes technical abstraction tactile!

**2 ½-D – the tebis KNX domovea interface**

Everything is becoming flatter – TV sets, computers and mobile phones. But the shallower they get, the more they contain – and the more important each detail becomes. This is an increasing technological and design challenge. Hager picks up on the ‘slim line’ ideal combining technical depth with a perfect surface design.