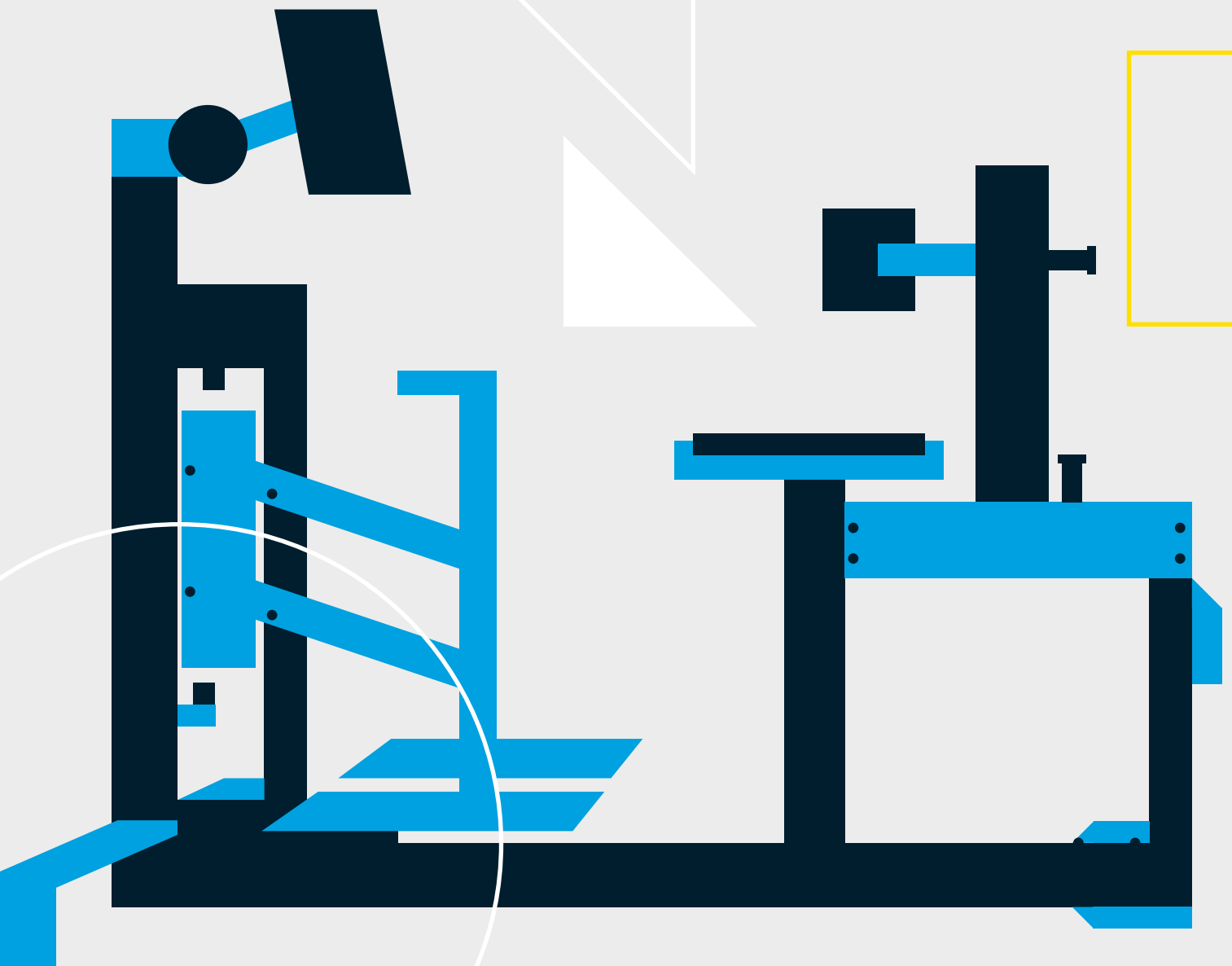
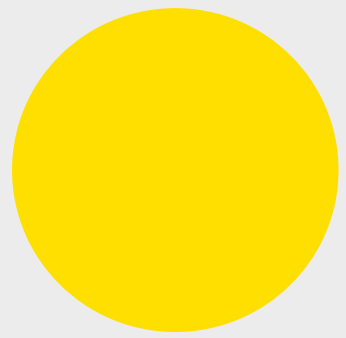


# Reflex 71

The Kieser Training Magazine



**100 years of the Bauhaus –**  
over 50 years of Kieser Training

## Strong figures

427 kg

is the average weight of a machine. The heaviest machine is the Lumbar Extension (LE) machine, which weighs 1.13 tonnes. This means that even a centre with a simple setup has machines weighing around 17 tonnes. An average training floor has 70 machines. This means that the architectural support structure needs to be able to withstand at least 30 tonnes.

160

Kieser Training studios can now be found in 5 different countries. Around 296,000 customers currently benefit from health-focused strength training in Australia, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria and Switzerland.

39

is the number of different machines that can be found on the training floor of a Kieser Training centre. A total of 49 exercises can be done on these machines, and the next prototypes are already in development.

## Imprint

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**KIESER TRAINING**

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Dear Readers,

Last year we asked you how satisfied you are with Reflex. It turns out that 80 percent of you read all or most of our articles, and we were pleased to see that satisfaction levels were almost as high, with ratings of “very good” or “good”. To make sure that it stays this way, we have refreshed our layout. In this first edition using the new format and design, find out why our founder Werner Kieser opted once more for the route of reduction for the architecture and internal fixtures of his centres, what this has to do with the Bauhaus, and why it draws architects such as Professor Johannes Kister to Kieser.

Oh, and by the way, Reflex will now be published three times a year and, from January 2020, will pick up where it left off – providing our readers with useful tips on strength training, in keeping with our motto “Concentrate on the essentials”.

With warm wishes,  
**Michael Antonopoulos**  
CEO, co-owner

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## Professor Johannes Kister

Partner in kister scheithauer gross architekten und stadtplaner gmbh, Cologne/Leipzig. Professor of Design and Building Construction at the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences at Bauhaus Dessau since 1994. Member of the Advisory Board of the German Architecture Museum (DAM) in Frankfurt am Main, editor of Neufert's "Architects' Data". Member of the German Institute of Urban Design.



## Kister on Kieser: “simply timeless”

Professor Johannes Kister, architect and Professor of Design and Building Construction at the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences at Bauhaus Dessau discusses the merits of simplicity and timelessness.

### Professor Kister, it's 3 pm on a Saturday and you're at work?

I always work on Saturdays. It allows me to work on projects without worrying about the time and without disruption. Before, I went to Kieser Training as a preventive measure to counteract the risks my profession involves. It obviously has something to do with my posture when I'm sitting at my desk or my computer, or during meetings. I didn't want to go to one of those gyms where they pump out music and I felt that Pilates was too feminine for me – although I'm sure that's down to prejudice. Kieser had a pleasant appeal for me.

### In terms of its aesthetics or from a functional point of view?

Both. Aesthetically, I like that the interior is minimalist and pure. I like the grey of the machines. You see some machines on which the design is hidden. They aren't designed to be streamlined so as to symbolise a particular flow of energy, instead they are angular, technical, function-

al – but still look good. It is this simplicity that shows their quality. I also enjoy the lack of videos and advertising and the fact that the atmosphere is not sexualised – it forces you to be introspective and focus on your exercises. The more I think about it, the more remarkable it is. I would feel completely out of place in a noisy gym. The concept is not tailored to the needs of one single age group, very young and very old people alike go to Kieser. That kind of timelessness also has merit.

### And from a functional perspective?

I like the matter-of-fact approach and the philosophy that there is no need to struggle on a bicycle for hours at a time or listen to other people's grunts, instead I can complete my programme in a short space of time. You can just sit at the machine, lose yourself, drink some water, and then you are done. I no longer have any back pain, not in my lumbar spine or my cervical spine. That's why I stay faithful to Kieser.

### We were hoping to talk about the Bauhaus ...

Yes, the Bauhaus certainly contemplated the body as a whole through the interaction of sight, perception and physical training through sports. Gymnastics and sport were important

lar, white, as unimaginative as can be. That didn't use to be the case. The Bauhaus was complex and colourful, with a subtle spatial quality. This complexity is easily recognisable in the Masters' Houses. It has nothing to do with what property



themes. There are those famous images showing people playing sports outside. It was about viewing your entire body as an instrument.

advert nowadays tout as Bauhaus-style flats, for example.

### Is the Bauhaus style still relevant?

There are many things that are associated with the Bauhaus nowadays which are essentially banal. Rectangu-



Read the full interview online:  
[kieser.com.au/interview-kister](https://kieser.com.au/interview-kister)

## Form, Function, Kieser

Kieser Training centres have their own distinctive identity. Reduction to the essentials – this motto is not just applied to training, but also to the architecture and internal fixtures. A construction handbook, which establishes a guideline for architecture and interior design, ensures that the centres adhere to the same functional design concept, regardless of which city or country they are in.

Characterised by the lack of any ornamentation and the commitment to simple, functional forms, the centres are inspired by the basic design principles of the Bauhaus and industrial architecture from the early 20th century.

The materials used are steel and glass, for the most part, with contrast being provided by solid wood flooring made from oak or beech. The hope is that the honesty and naturalness of the materials will continue to shine through. The walls and ceilings are left unfinished or are painted pure white. Installations are left visible, lights are strung up in galvanised cable trays to provide strip lighting or are made from linear LED bands. Reception fixtures, lockers or glass walls divide up the functional areas. Everything within the centres is geared towards reducing sensory impressions, in order to encourage concentration on movement execution and body awareness.



### Materials

- ✓ Metal
- ✓ Glass



### Walls/ceilings

- ✓ Unfinished
- ✓ Pure white



### Floors

- ✓ Solid wood flooring (oak/beech)
- ✓ Grey tiles



## Concentrated knowledge



Round corners? White casings? Wrong! The angular, grey-black machines have a conspicuous and recognisable design. Casings are only used if required for safety reasons. Only one thing guides our engineers and designers: a machine must produce effective muscle mass.

The timeless design is functional: the ability to individually set the seat, backrest, pads, footplates or radius of movement ensures anatomically correct, isolated training of the target muscles, while the eccentric technology guarantees variable resistance throughout the entire range of motion. Thanks to the finely adjustable training load, your training can be adjusted almost continuously to match your visibly increasing level of strength.

## The muscle factory



1966. A bare wooden floor, unpainted walls, a standing desk for a reception, a laundry room converted to showers, drinking water from the tap, and several tonnes of iron in the form of weights – that is how the first Kieser Training centre looked when it was opened by Werner Kieser in a derelict building on Nordstraße, Zürich. And today? Solid wood flooring made from oak or beech, whitewashed walls, reception fixtures made from steel, drinking water from a fountain, free-standing shower cubicles made from stainless steel – and several tonnes of steel in the form of grey-black training machines.

Functionality, reduction and minimalism set the tone throughout all the centres – and not just in terms of training. If minimalism was initially just a reflection of a lack of means, it has long since become a deliberate stylistic choice. A leaking shower, of all things, is what pointed company founder Werner Kieser in the direction of Bauhaus, De Stijl and International Style at the end of the 1960s. As tilers and plumbers tried to shift the blame to each other, Kieser resolved “From now on, I will build showers that don’t need tilers or plumbers.”

In search of a solution to this problem, the trained carpenter cut through to the very core of the issue, asking himself a set of fundamental questions about the essence of his company. What is the purpose? What benefits does it offer to the customer? What is needed? And: what is not needed, or rather, what is actually detrimental to training success? “I immersed myself in writings and sketches and in the architecture of Rietveld, Gropius, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.”

While he was stacking a bookshelf, something very important became clear to Kieser. “I uncovered a relationship between my own concerns and the Bauhaus principle of “Form follows function” – the idea of working out and developing a design on the basis of its functions.”

Continued on p. 8

“Style is the result of limited means.”

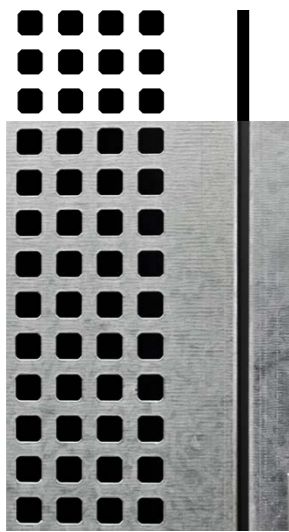
*Werner Kieser*



### A machine for increasing lean body mass

Ultimately, however, it was the influence of the French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier that was particularly crucial for Kieser. Corbusier had coined the term “housing machine” in 1921 in an issue of the “L’Esprit Nouveau” magazine. “A house is a machine for living in.” “A chair is a machine for sitting on.” “Washbasins are machines for washing.” And a strength training centre? Kieser explains: “Where it was previously a room where training machines could be found, in keeping with Corbusier’s concept, I now saw my centre and its contents as a machine for increasing lean body mass. This had a lasting effect on its design.”

With the relocation of his centre in 1979 to a former textile factory on Kanzlei-straße, Zürich, where the company’s headquarters were located until 2011, the Swiss pioneer reduced his internal fixtures even further, to just the essentials.



He threw out anything that did not help to build muscle and anything that had been added in the meantime in the belief that it would improve competitiveness, for example a sauna, a solarium, a drinks machine and plants. Kieser recalls: “At that time, my internal fixtures were in keeping with the ‘normal’ tastes of the Central European bourgeois: colourful and snazzy, as you would expect from a gym. But yet the more alternatives they were offered, the less customers actually trained.”

The result of this reduction? A whitewashed muscle factory made of steel and glass that forces users to be introspective and focus on their exercises.

With this in mind, a series of groundbreaking – for the time – muscle-training machines were lined up side-by-side in rows on the training floor. Back then, these were the Nautilus machines developed by Arthur Jones and newly arrived from the USA, which, for the first time, subjected the muscles to variable resistance and enabled isolated and thus efficient training. Nowadays, all machines come from a dedicated Machine Development division. “The factory-like arrangement is in keeping with the aim of increasing muscle mass. The machines apply the required resistance to the muscles at the correct location and in the correct proportion. Everything else is redundant.”

“Less is more”

*Mies van der Rohe*

“2x 30 minute training sessions. Then a shower. Done!” – that is how Werner Kieser describes the concept that has earned him the “title” of the “Mies van der Rohe of fitness. Less is more” (Independent, 22 Jan 2002). Less is more for the sake of efficiency – this describes Kieser Training both then and now.



### On the subject of showers

The idea for the new shower unit ultimately came to Kieser during a ferry crossing from Sardinia to the Italian mainland. “The ferry is made from steel. It is watertight. Shower walls should also be watertight. I will build showers made from steel”, he said. Back in Zürich, he sketched a prefabricated shower where only the inlet and outlet required installation. His architect built and installed that shower in the new centre. “The unit reminded the building authority officials of an oversized dishwasher”, Kieser recalls. Now these take the form of free-standing individual cubicles made from stainless steel.

## A dematerialised training shell



Unlike an advertising brochure or a customer magazine, architecture is not just a visual experience – you can also literally walk through it. It is an outer shell for strength training. In the same way as “Corporate Design”, the “Corporate Architecture” of Kieser Training is a vital component of its corporate identity. Aschaffenburg in southern Germany has been home to an architectural prototype of a Kieser Training centre for the past ten years or so.

The silver cube located in the industrial area of Aschaffenburg, designed by Carole Iselin, an archi-

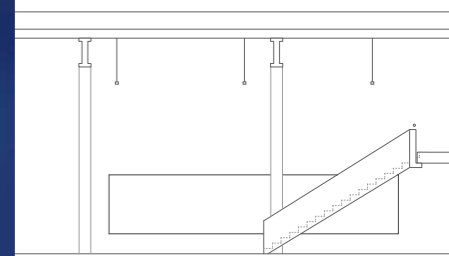
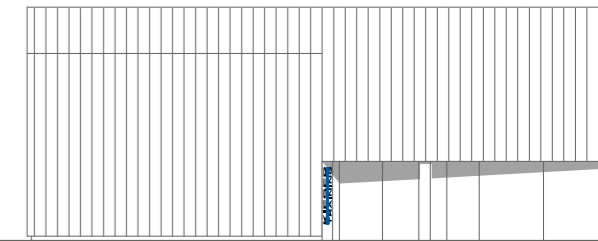
tect from Zürich, represents a steadfast commitment to aesthetic reduction: restriction to just a few basic, cuboid shapes, materials and colours. “The aim of the prototype was to build a centre on greenfield land quickly and cost-effectively, which did not just function as a shell for training and help to optimise the flow of people, but was also highly representative of the brand”, Iselin explains. She is one of six architects currently working to develop and implement the architectural concept of Kieser Training – be it a new construction project such as the one in Aschaffenburg or a relocation project like in Hamburg-Altona. “Kies-

er Training centres should have their own distinctive identity around the world. The overall appearance should be pristine, curative, light, spacious, generous and open. The spaces should be more reminiscent of a Zen monastery than a fitness centre.”

In Aschaffenburg, prefabricated reinforced concrete columns and porous concrete masonry perpetuate the Bauhaus concepts of standardisation and industrialisation of construction. The large-scale zinc aluminium panels used to clad the building accentuate its cubature. At street level, the facade appears broken and folded inwards. A large

window facade gives passers-by a view of the high-ceilinged training room, which spans two storeys. The shell fades into the background, particularly at night, to show the systematic training that is taking place inside.

The training room, with reception on the ground floor, is two storeys high. The changing rooms are located on the gallery and are separated only visually by lockers. Covering an area of 743 m<sup>2</sup>, the architect has used only few resources to create a functional and generous training platform.





# How a centre is built

## 1. Site evaluation

Before a centre is built, the site is evaluated. For example, we want to know: who lives nearby? Which businesses are located here? What are the transport links like?

## 2. Preliminary planning

A centre needs a suitable entrance, bright spaces, water, and fresh air. Is that possible here? The site is inspected and evaluated with regard to the surrounding conditions, suitability, and the probability that approval will be granted. The architect develops a planning concept as a preliminary draft in the 1:200 scale. He estimates the extent of building work required and the costs.

## 3. Design planning

Building on this, the architect develops a draft of the final planning concept in the 1:100 scale, giving consideration to design, functional and structural requirements, for example. The final extent of construction or expansion work required is identified and the cost estimate is finalised. Design planning provides the foundation for approval planning.

## 4. Execution planning

More detailed plans are developed using a scale between 1:50 and 1:1. These show where the ventilation system will be installed, for example. Technical planners are consulted and coordinated. Afterwards, a tendering process is undertaken for the services of the approximately ten trades involved and furniture, advertising equipment and internal fixtures are ordered.

## 5. Architectural supervision

Do we have all the necessary approvals? Is everything going according to plan and on schedule? The architect coordinates the delivery of specially designed internal fixtures and the installation of advertising equipment, lettering and characteristic design elements – ultimately, the centre's finished appearance should be fully in keeping with Kieser Training's image.

**Watch the development video here**



[kieser-training.com/en/studio-creation](https://kieser-training.com/en/studio-creation)



*“The reduced internal fixtures of Kieser Training centres inspired me to try this kind of reduction in my private life as well, and shift focus to the essentials. Since then, I feel happier and stronger both mentally and physically and have a better lifestyle. It’s easy to climb stairs again and I find everyday life less difficult. I have also become inwardly calmer. Everything is more effective. Kieser Training led the way.”*

**Fabian Knapp**, a customer of the Offenbach centre

## News

### Openings Kieser Training Compact in Germany 2019:

The time has come. We are ready to launch our new business model. Kieser Training Compact will soon enable us to provide our services at selected smaller sites with 40,000 inhabitants or more. These compact centres are condensed in terms of training area, machinery and staffing requirements, although the functional concept, training management/methodologies and quality are the same. The next compact centres will open soon in the following locations:

**Heidenheim**  
Clichystraße 6  
89518 Heidenheim an der Brenz

**Aalen**  
Weidenfelder Str. 2  
73430 Aalen

**Bad Soden**  
Königsteiner Str. 6 A  
65812 Bad Soden am Taunus

### Openings Kieser Training in Australia 2019:

**Kieser Ringwood**  
1 Ringwood St, Ringwood,  
3134 Victoria

**Kieser Cammeray**  
467 Miller Street, Cammeray,  
2062 Sydney, New South Wales

**Kieser Bundall**  
106 Bundall Road, Bundall,  
4217 Gold Coast, Queensland

## Werner Kieser's corner



### Kieser Training and “Occam’s razor”

One of my role models is William of Ockham (1288–1347). This monk from the time of Scholasticism developed a principle that dismantled contemporary theories and “proofs of God’s existence”: “entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily”. This heuristic research principle was a hard blow for the Catholic church, and one from which it has still not completely recovered today, although it did clear the way for scientific development.

Ockham was a “Nominalist”, belonging to a school of thought which states that universal ideas such as “humanity” are nothing more than constructs that

only exist in thought and have no corresponding reality. What this means is that there are only individual people, such as John, Mary, Steve, etc.

The principle known as “Occam’s razor” relates to the practice of scientific investigation and means that, when faced with a number of theories relating to one single situation, you should choose the most likely one and eliminate the rest using the razor; hence the principle of reduction. This epistemological principle was henceforth adopted as the guiding principle of scientific work, and is still used today. It also has applications beyond science and

philosophy. Wherever a decision needs to be made – assuming that there are defined objectives – this principle simplifies the decision-making process.

This principle was espoused for the development of Kieser Training. I often hear other takes on this, such as “you should leave yourself open to other options”, or “do one thing without neglecting the other”. I think next to nothing of such “agnostic” views. Anyone who finds themselves on the path towards a goal will have to make a decision at every crossroads; otherwise they are just standing still.

**Werner Kieser**



