

## Interior courtyard of an old people's home in Stuttgart

Water glides softly through stone channels, makes a pleasing sound in little waterfalls then disappears again among the aquatic plants. The sound brings a sense of magic to the space, and life into the old people's home.

The natural stones have been treated artistically, the gliding wave structures swirl like pennants.



For people who like to have greenery around them the Nicolaus-Cusanus-Haus in Stuttgart offers an internal space with a lot of plants, thus bringing nature even to those who are confined and can only control how they spend their own time to a limited extent: the occupants of old people's homes and nursing-homes. The first impression is that of being in the tropical house in a botanical garden, though without the greenhouse atmosphere that quickly drives Western Europeans back out into the fresh air. This idea comes from a luxuriant display of mainly evergreen plants, in a glazed inner courtyard covering 800 square metres.

Water is the crucial element that creates the atmosphere of this space. It is first noticed on the level of sound: the splashing and gugging creates a comfortable acoustic background. But water makes its biggest effect here because of the surfaces it runs down, from which it drips and over which it runs away. All these features are made of stone and discreetly sculpted. Long horizontal scales are worked into steeply sloping lumps of stone, and the water drips down these, leaving some parts dry and allowing various kinds of moss to grow. Natural stone blocks were piled up, and Herbert Dreiseitl had meandering and branching grooves chiselled and cut into them. The water flows through them as if it had made these pathways for itself, and finally ends up in troughs and basins after running under little bridges and washing around stepping stones. The inner courtyard of the Nicolaus-Cusanus-Haus has set new standards for old people's living conditions, indeed for humane living conditions. The residents enjoy expansive views of terraces, steps and paths on four storeys, or can sit in sheltered alcoves away from it all. They feel at home in temperatures between 18 and 25 degrees – and also that they are being cared for in a very special way.



The courtyard offers changing perspectives.