

TRENDING
BATHROOM DESIGN

FRESH TAKE

The current wave of out-there bathroom trends signals a shift towards more personal and playful spaces. The bathroom is turning from a functional room into one that showcases design as obviously as the rest of the home. The mood of the moment leans towards luxurious surfaces and layered textures, amenities that offer an indulgent sensory experience, and a more individual approach

TEXT: JULIA FREEMANTLE



PLAY TIME

India Mahdavi's latest collaboration with Bisazza Bagno offers a refreshingly light-hearted collection that is the antithesis of clinical minimalism. The optimistic colours — pistachio, strawberry and blueberry — and retro-inspired lines create a "bubble of colour and humour" that brings a sense of fun into the bathroom. The playful names (you'll find pieces named "Plouf", "Splas" and "Wow" in the collection) and rounded shapes also contribute to a softer, almost nostalgic effect. Another micro trend to watch out for is the increase in curvier, more organic forms. This doesn't just apply to baths and basins but to all aspects of the space, from mirrors and consoles to light fittings.

MORE IS MORE

Maximalism is a current design direction that applies not only to bathrooms but to interiors as a whole. But as a space that's usually less decorated than the rest of the home, this is a new area to apply an opulent aesthetic. Marble, metallics and timber are popular choices now and layered together give serious impact, as seen in this spectacular powder room by Space Exploration, which combines high-impact finishes and an on-trend palette to create a statement.



PERSONAL TASTE

Individualised design and specs suited to your needs or aesthetic requirements is a major shift in how brands are approaching bathroom products. Being able to select the dimensions, finishes and added extras, rather than having to settle for a one-size-fits-all solution, is a game changer. Dado's different colour baths and basins and compact range of tubs give designers freedom to personalise, while AXOR's MyEdition range opens the door to a new level of luxurious customisation with interchangeable tap plates ranging from glass and leather to black marble and walnut.

spaceexplorationdesign.com, bisazza.it, decus.com.au, axor-design.com, hansgrohe.co.za, dado.co.za, dornbracht.com, kohler.com

NEW NEUTRALS

With more colour coming into bathrooms, monochrome schemes now feel stale. Instead blue, black, green and pink are being used as the base "neutrals" and accented with accessories in black, white and grey, rather than the reverse. A warm nude-toned bathroom by Decus Interiors in rose onyx marble, with rose gold accents and a grey wall, illustrates the shift in emphasis. It's a bold new approach, creating spaces with more personality regardless of whether the palette is uplifting, nurturing or soothing.



WATER AS WELLBEING

The "bathroom as spa" trend is expanding, supported by tech advancements that allow for an increasingly multisensory experience through sound, sight and touch — from automated music and colourful mood lighting to highly specialised water textures. Dornbracht's designs take into account the positive effect that water can have on our lives and have a whole section dedicated to its LifeSpa water applications. Even if on the low-tech side, finishes and details that reference traditional hammams — like this pale-blue mosaicked shower by Kohler — or a zen aesthetic can create a spa-like effect.



IMAGES: FELIX FORREST/DECUS INTERIORS, NICOLE FRANZEN/SPACE EXPLORATION, AND SUPPLIED

IMAGES: MARCO CRAIG, ANDREA FERRARI AND SUPPLIED

DESIGN



BEAUTY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

Patricia Urquiola's work in the bathroom space has solidified her standing as one of the world's most accomplished and prolific talents

TEXT: JULIA FREEMANTLE



'I am my own client, the only client I really know. I try to make this client happy. It's the only way to really be sincere with my work'

PATRICIA URQUIOLA
DESIGNER

Patricia Urquiola, the quintessential designer's designer, has achieved almost iconic status in the creative world. Working with high-design furniture brands Moroso, De Padova, Kettal and B&B Italia and large-scale hospitality projects like Mandarin Oriental and the W Hotel, her scope seems endless and ever-expanding.

Educated in Madrid as an architect as well as a designer, Spanish-born Urquiola made Milan her home and established her own studio in 2001. Her understanding of structure and space, deep conceptual thinking and drive to innovate give her designs a sense of delight that render them classics.

Urquiola's projects speak to her audience on a very human level as she takes into account how the end user sees the product's design, as well as how they interact with it. Designed to elicit emotional response and aesthetic appreciation, she also considers the longevity of a product.

One of the first high-profile designers to think about bathrooms holistically, Urquiola was an early driver of the bathroom-as-living-space trend in terms of how the space can appeal to all the senses.

Since 2004, she has collaborated with Agape, the Italian bathroom company whose calling card has been fresh interpretations and innovation since 1973. Named after Lake Como (which used to be called Larius), the Lariana for Agape combines straight and curved lines in an ode to early 20th-century Milanese architecture — a perfect example of how Urquiola combines

classical elements and forward-thinking design and technology to appeal to the emotions as well as the eye.

Also for Agape, her Cuna (meaning cradle) design harks back to her training, so expressive is it of its form. The tubular stainless-steel frame holds the rounded tub, displaying its shape and making a feature of the bath itself. Her Rigo concept takes this structural approach even further, with a furniture system inspired by architecture; a versatile and linear system that allows for both simple and complex permutations.

A 2012 project with the Axor brand for Hansgrohe saw her creating a feminine, playful and personal space celebrating the idea of sanctuary, using light and water as design elements. Here she wanted to have "a conversation about intimacy".

Urquiola moved further into the tech and conceptual space through her association with Swiss brand Laufen, working with its revolutionary high-tech ceramic material SaphirKeramik, on SONAR, a collection of elegant wall-hung and free-standing washbasins, countertop bowls and bathtubs.

"For me, Laufen means innovation, choice, research on the finest materials, and respect for design aimed at achieving maximum quality," says Urquiola. Her goal here was to combine the rigour of architectural minimalism and understatement with the dynamism of sound waves and their relationship with water.

patriciaurquiola.com

5 of the best
BATHROOM UPDATES

1 Hanging faux fern R1,199, home.co.za
2 Shower caddy R399, Umbra at superbalist.com
3 Black Chaapi laundry basket R1,195, weylants.co.za
4 Three-tier shelf R599,99, mpricelhome.com
5 Tower makeup mirror with accessory tray R499, Yamakazi at superbalist.com