



BATHROOM TRIFLOW
by Zaha Hadid
Triflow Concepts Ltd

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The new Triflow tap by Zaha Hadid takes inspiration from the fluid movement of water. The design is a formal expression of the continuous flow of liquid - merging spout, body and handle in a seamless trajectory of curvilinear geometries - see page 62

MOD BASIN
Vitra

Tel: 01235 750 990. www.vitra.co.uk

Vitra offers very distinct collections for the domestic market and the contracts sector. But some ranges, such as High Q+, which features LED lighting fitted below touch-free glass basins, or Ross Lovegrove's Mod collection, pictured, can appeal to both sectors equally - see page 69



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influences

Having just taken Jacuzzi UK through the biggest launch the brand has ever seen, md **Mark Prince** is confident that the introduction of its first mid-market range, the Bathroom Collection, will help it reach its ambitious growth targets - page 48



Don't ask a zany, unorthodox world-acclaimed designer like **Zaha Hadid** to create you a new product if you want nice. She doesn't do nice. What she does do, is innovative and exciting. And for Triflow Concepts she delivered magic. Check out the results - page 61



WATER DIVINER

Zaha Hadid is a name to conjure with in terms of revolutionary design in a career that spans 30 years and has earned her global acclaim. Her work ranges from visionary architecture to re-moulding interiors. Now she seduces with kitchen and bathroom taps for Triflow Concepts

Words **Gae Ratcliffe**

The newly-named Triflow Concepts – previously Avilion until January this year – has wasted no time in staking its place in the annals of top-end, design-rich British brassware design, by employing the services of world acclaimed architect Zaha Hadid. The name prompts instant recognition and awe by those who follow design, and warrants admiration for the company with the foresight to invest large in winning the services of such an icon for its first product launch.

For Triflow Concepts part, the investment in Zaha to “explore the boundaries” was key to its strategy of signalling that the sale of Avilion two years ago – and with it the departure of the original Avilion design-hot owner duo Greg Rowe and Bob Perrin – would in no way indicate any loss of style and innovation in the pursuit of brassware excellence by the new owner De Heerd.

Au contraire. The launch of this kitchen and bathroom design

sensation, described by the company as “the continuous flow of liquid-merging tap spout, body and handle in a seamless trajectory of curvilinear geometries”, includes Triflow’s patented three-way water delivery technology. Hot and cold water delivery is by the tap’s discreet handle, while the drinking water element for both kitchen and bathroom taps is activated via an electronic button.

But the design from the Zaha Hadid London practice could never be a lone venture. Such a revolutionary shape fuelled a formidable production task for the R&D team at Triflow. It was obliged to go way beyond normal production boundaries and employ a highly sophisticated manufacturing process “never before used in the UK” to produce a marriage of high design with engineering excellence.

The products will be available from March for architects and designers, followed by top-end retailers, but initially exclusively at Poggenpohl London.



Photograph by Steve Double

Internationally-renowned London-based architect Zaha Hadid is famous for her fluidity of design – often seemingly defying the conventional legitimacy of a piece

While Zaha Hadid's work has been praised as 'almost unscripted and spontaneous', the result is much admired for the logic and research that morphs into a series of transformations before exiting as a triumph. Or, as Zaha says about the Triflow design: "Our starting point was a series of formal studies on the conceptual terms of 'fluidity' and 'seamlessness' as we wanted to generate the fluid geometries of water in motion."

You've never designed brassware before. Why did you agree to this collaboration?

Designing products is of great importance to us. The pieces are experimental, quicker to execute than the architecture and inspire creativity. We learn a great deal from them and we have a whole section of our office researching new design and construction techniques. The office maintains this principle and there is always a lot of collaboration with engineers and with people doing experiments with materials to work on new discoveries and push them into the mainstream.

What exactly was your brief?

I understand that Triflow Concepts wanted to approach a designer to reinterpret the conventions of traditional brassware. The intention was to challenge existing design and production methods and to attract a new audience to the brand.

What did you use as a starting point for inspiration?

The collaboration with Triflow Concepts was about creating something fun and new, something that feels good, and uses state of

the art design and manufacturing technology. We wanted to create something which suggests the dynamic and flowing contours of water in motion. We like to work a lot with fluidity because we believe it visually simplifies everything, and you can then cope with more complexity without crowding or cluttering the visual scene. Therefore, our response has been to develop an organic, fluid design language for our work – and the designs for Triflow Concepts are, appropriately, among the most fluid of our designs to date.

How did you marry the technical function with your signature flowing lines – and in this case, the mesmerising snaking curves?

We are finding that clients are increasingly calling for something radical – and this is certainly the case with Triflow Concepts. We have established a reputation amongst clients for delivering our own ideas and interpretations that weren't tied to traditional forms.

We worked a great deal with Triflow Concepts' engineers to develop new production methods and incorporate new technologies for this design. For example, the touch-sensitive actuator was an element that Triflow Concepts were considering, however this is the first time it has been used in their brassware. Integrating Triflow Concepts's unique Triflow system with the fluidity of the design was a specific challenge that required detailed research into unique casting processes.

To what extent did you find the function a hindrance to your design?

Design should be the complete marriage of form and function – one should never be sacrificed for the other, and the functional requirements of the taps for Triflow Concepts give a basis on which to develop the design.

You have an amazing reputation worldwide, witnessed in reinvented interpretations of 'old' design. Was this an added pressure?

I think as architects, we must trust our intuitions

even if they seem bizarre and strange – for only the truly original contributions become part of an established history. I have also been fortunate to have clients that share my passion for design and are inspired by my work.

What were the elements that proved instrumental in deciding how to differentiate between the kitchen and bathroom brassware?

Primarily, the two were seen as one; as part of a family. Neither the kitchen nor bathroom brassware was designed to look as if it would distinctly fit in a kitchen or bathroom. Rather, the differences are more subtle and lie in scale, orientation, and functionality; there are more constraints on what must fit under a kitchen tap and constraints on the space a bathroom tap can fit into.

Were you given a price point for the end product or was the sky the limit?

Cost was always a concern in the design and development of the brassware. The attempt was to marry function and provocative design with efficient methods of manufacture – so that the design was economically feasible. That said, the complexity of production limits the number of companies which can produce brassware of this quality.

To what degree did the technical requirements dictate – or indeed compromise – your design?

There is a strong reciprocal relationship whereby our more avant-garde design visions

The Bathroom Triflow by Zaha Hadid cuts a softer form than its kitchen counterpart, yet retains the coherent formal language of the set. Echoing the fluid, spiralling form of the kitchen tap, it is an equally strong statement of luxury



The new Triflow tap by Zaha Hadid takes inspiration from the fluid movement of water. The design is a formal expression of the continuous flow of liquid – merging spout, body and handle in a seamless trajectory of curvilinear geometries



'ZAHA AND TRIFLOW CONCEPTS HAVE A LOT IN COMMON – SHE WON'T COMPROMISE ON STYLE AND WE WON'T COMPROMISE ON FUNCTION'

Duncan Yardley

LIQUID ASSETS

Duncan Yardley has made a seamless transition from R&D manager during the pre-sale Avilion days, after the sale and subsequent review period, before emerging as R&D director of Triflow Concepts Ltd. He shares the trials and triumph of the Zaha Hadid collaboration



essential design innovation Zaha Hadid

The Kitchen Triflow by Zaha Hadid is the most recent evolution of Hadid's design language. Organic and surprising, the sculptural sensibility of the tap's fluidity makes a bold and elegant gesture of a signature piece

'WE WANTED TO **CREATE** SOMETHING WHICH SUGGESTS THE **DYNAMIC** AND **FLOWING** CONTOURS OF **WATER IN MOTION**'

Zaha Hadid

encourage the continuing development of the new digital technologies and manufacturing techniques required to make those visions a constructed reality—and those new developments in turn inspire us to push the design envelope ever further. Great things come out of this method of working! So it is never a compromise, but more of a synergy between the engineering and design of the brassware.

Which of all your global designs are you most proud?

It's hard to say. Each project can change as the research reveals things. Every period

there is a new set of challenges. We're currently doing a large master-planning project in Istanbul, fragments of which are very exciting. As we've learned to do in our buildings, where elements fit together to form a continuum, we've applied this to whole cities. We can develop a whole field of buildings, each one different but logically connected to the next. With these techniques we can do something radically different than we saw at the beginning of the 20th century, when buildings were oriented in disconnecting chaos.

Why Zaha?

When De Heerd took over as sole owners in 2007, Triflow Concepts was challenged to return to its roots of innovation in design and technology. A world first that truly broke the existing boundaries of tap design, the three-way Triflow tap still offered huge potential and was a natural place to concentrate our engineering efforts. Recognised for pushing the boundaries of design, we knew that Zaha would be unconstrained by existing tap technology but also driven to break from the norm. With that in mind, we knew this was going to be an exciting product development programme from the outset!

When did you decide to go this route and why?

We first signed the commercial terms with Zaha in March 2008 with a view to launching the new product in January 2009. We were aware that Triflow Concepts had kept a fairly low profile over the years, producing great quality products, classic in design and reliable in form. The new drive towards innovation was always going to be a real departure from the company that retailers and consumers had known. So, it was important for us to make a bit of noise about our new design intentions and working with Zaha meant we could do just that, as well as make a mark in the sand for future developments.

Was price point an issue?

The result of our collaboration with Zaha Hadid was always going to carry a high price tag but, as a manufacturer of luxury products, this was something we had factored in. At Triflow Concepts, we engineer our products to last rather than engineering them to a price point. The Triflows by Zaha Hadid combine our engineering excellence with this world famous architect's unique, exciting design for a statement piece that will last for life.

What technical limitations did Triflow Concepts need to impose on Zaha?

In terms of design, we were careful not to impose limitations though we did have to outline the basic functional requirements in terms of spout reach and the need for hot, cold and filtered waterways. It was really important for us not to inhibit Zaha's creativity and once we had received her design our R&D team worked extremely hard to keep as close as possible to the original concept, even to the extent of using a unique casting process to produce the unusual tap form.

What exactly was the brief?

It was essentially a blank piece of paper. We simply said to Zaha that we wanted her to design a new kitchen and bathroom Triflow.

As far as we were concerned, Zaha was to be given no boundaries.

Which element of the market is this product aimed at – more architects and designers – or top-end retailers, too?

We have targeted select luxury-end retailers to offer the new taps as the price point is really only suitable for a very niche sector of the market. Our ideal consumers are the high net worth individuals that are design savvy and prepared to invest in a statement piece. It's also the perfect item for the eco-conscious among them as the Triflow technology means filtered water direct from the tap – the ideal alternative to the hassle and waste that comes with bottled water.

What sort of financial investment for Triflow Concepts has this collaboration comprised?

Admittedly, Zaha's involvement has meant an investment for Triflow Concepts but one that we feel is worthwhile. We know it will reap the rewards on many levels and it is our intention to maintain an ongoing relationship with Zaha. We're already looking into other possible product development.

How easy was it working with Zaha?

While it has been challenging to work with a design perfectionist like Zaha, it has also been a really valuable experience for the R&D team in particular. Making an unusual design like Zaha's tap has really helped to develop the team, bringing out their strengths and highlighting the real talent within Triflow Concepts. Sleepless nights aside, Zaha and Triflow Concepts have a lot in common – she won't compromise on style and we won't compromise on function. It's the perfect partnership!

How pleased are you at the result?

We're really delighted! There really is nothing like it on the market today. The form is striking and intriguing while the Triflow technology means the tap also has the added value of offering filtered water with user-friendly electronics.

Is it all being made in the UK?

All unique brassware parts are made in the UK. Only elements like the flexi-hoses and valves are produced elsewhere. It is as 100% British as we can make it – like all of our taps.

When will it be available?

It will be on sale from the end of March. For architects and designers, Triflow Concepts will be offering the taps direct, while exclusive, select retailers will be offering the tap to the consumer.

