

Montaha Hidefi provides an insight into the use of metallic coatings and fabrics on building façades



# Gold and metal mesh fabrics

With the combination of trends and technology in design and architecture, architectural coating systems are integrating innovative and modern elements into old and current structures leading to impressive schemes of visual effects and colours. Façade finishes are no longer limited to the stillness of a coat of outdoor dispersion paint or a silver metallic powder coated curtain wall. They are rather turning into vibrant and animated characters with a personality of their own, adding a surprising component to the structure and wowing the passers by. The lines between tradition and technology, architecture and media, coatings and fabrics are becoming hazy, allowing for more creativity and innovation in the architecture coatings sector.

We are witnessing a transformation from the silver metallic effects predominantly used in exterior architectural coatings for over a decade into a fresh gold and copper pearl effects providing a more stylish and extravagant gaze. This transformation is noticed not only in dispersions but also in high end finishes powder coatings. In our fast-paced way of living, there is an increased tendency to use gold pearl effects in combination with blacks, whites and reds for interior wall coatings and coverings to create an artificially calm yet elegant environment transporting us to the old-fashioned slow and timed days reminiscent of the theatre, drama and naive era.

New interior wall dispersions using pearl and metallic effect pigments are

Ralph Lauren has recently introduced Gold Base and Silver Base to its signature Regent Metallics range for interior applications



opening new perspectives in the interior design world. The sparkling and shimmering pearl-lustre effect pigments add a new sensation to interior decoration. They provide an appearance that can be mysterious, mystifying, complex, multifaceted, simple and colourful. Most major paint producers have currently paints containing effects pigments in their interior dispersion paint ranges. Even Ralph Lauren has recently introduced Ralph Lauren Gold Base and Silver Base to their signature Regent Metallics range for interior applications ([www.ralphlaurenhome.com](http://www.ralphlaurenhome.com)).

## THE GOLDEN ROOF

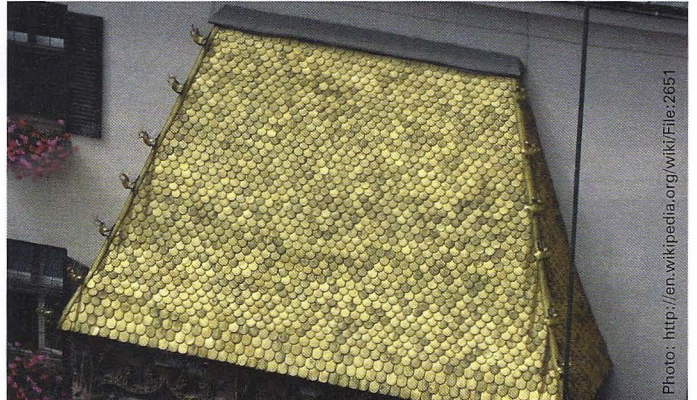
The Golden Roof (Goldenes Dachl in German) is a 15<sup>th</sup> Century Austrian landmark in Innsbruck, originally decorated with 2657 fire-gilded copper tiles for the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. The Golden Roof is on the three-storey balcony in the central plaza of the Old Town.

To bring back its traditional shiny and long-established look, the roof has been recently renovated using Caparol's (www.caparol.com) CapaGold Paint, a high grade semi-gloss dispersion paint incorporating gold pearl effect pigments for interior and exterior applications.

The freshly painted Golden Roof provides the Innsbruck Old Town visitors with a feeling of the past and a touch of the present.

## METAL MESH FABRICS

Perhaps the Bibliotheque Nationale de France in Paris is considered the starting point for the use of metal fabrics as a functional element in architecture and design. Since then, the magical appearance and astonish-



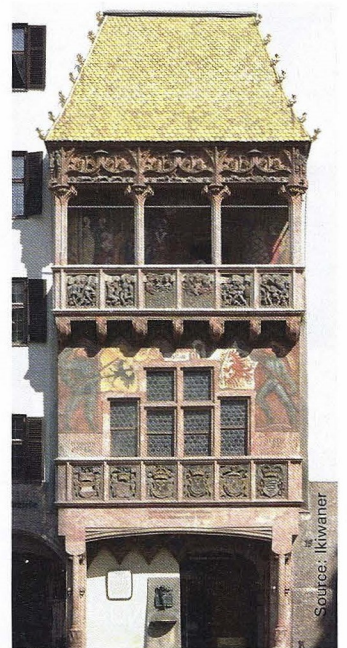
The Golden Roof, above and below right, is a 15<sup>th</sup> Century Austrian landmark in Innsbruck, which has recently been refurbished

ing expediency of metal mesh has created an increasing demand among the design and architecture community for indoor and outdoor applications.

Metal mesh fabrics, already used as interior wall coverings, suspended ceilings, sunshades, partition walls, displays and other industrial products, are further expanding into exterior architectural design applications. Metal mesh fabrics are open stainless steel systems that tolerate all temperatures. They are available in a variety of designs, colours and finishes and have been recently using pearl effect pigments to provide a lustre – an even more attractive finish. Because they can be manufactured in various weaves and degrees of transparency, they allow a high level of originality and flexibility when it comes to design and functionality.

Metal mesh fabrics have been incorporated into prestigious and monumental landmarks in many parts of the world. The Skylobby on the 123<sup>rd</sup> floor of the tallest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, has used stainless steel fabric mesh supplied by GKD ([www.gkdmetalfabrics.com](http://www.gkdmetalfabrics.com), [www.gkd.eu](http://www.gkd.eu)).

Balancing modernism with nostal-

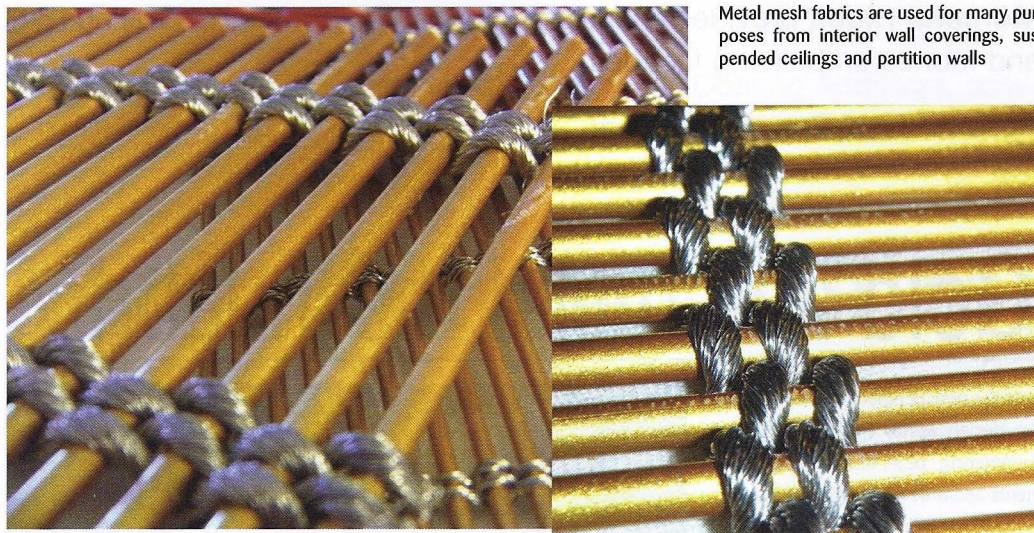


gia, the new Iron Mosque in Malaysia, with its 70% steel construction has also used GKD metal mesh on its shimmering spiral façade claddings. Besides fulfilling an aesthetic requirement, the metal mesh also protects against sun and rain ([www.gkd.eu](http://www.gkd.eu)).

The newly built Park Square at Doral, near Miami's airport in Florida, is turning heads with its 11-storey tall metallic façade also designed by GKD. The chequered patchwork effect on

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Metal mesh fabrics are used for many purposes from interior wall coverings, suspended ceilings and partition walls

the façade is created by the difference in woven density of the mesh panels varying from bottom to top (www.gkd.eu).

**MEDIALISATION**

Medialisation is the addition of programmable elements to metal mesh fabrics, adding to them potential illumination and interactivity. Medialised mesh functions as an illuminated wall, a dynamic backdrop or an advertising panel.

When embedding programmable LED lights to the metal mesh fabric profiles, the mesh can deliver graphics, text and video on a large scale. They display many types of information, respond to motion, sound or environmental changes and reduce energy cost. There is a rising demand for medialised metal mesh to enhance public space attractiveness and deliver information to a growing target audience.

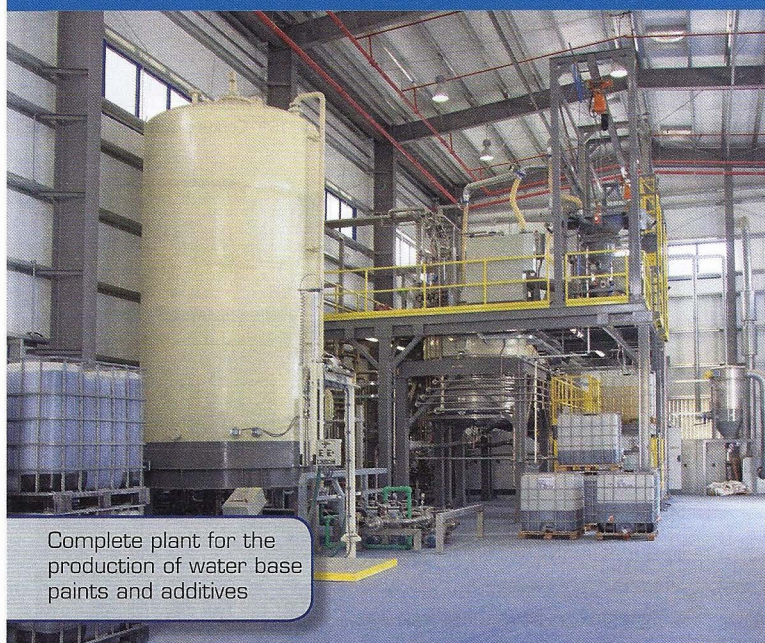
Europe's largest medialised mesh system façade on the Piazza del Duomo in Milan, Italy, was developed in collaboration between GKD and the mediatecture company ag4 media façade. The façade consists of Mediamesh, a stainless steel mesh with LED profiles woven into it. As a transparent mesh cladding, the façade allows a peek of the building behind it and functions equally as a media platform for communication.

The newly renovated 5-star Crowne Plaza Times Square hotel in New York City also used Mediamesh semi-transparent shell made from stainless steel mesh and integrated LED profiles on the lobby façade.

The potential demand for medialised metal mesh in architecture, as well as in the world of media, is further increasing because it has the ability to enhance public spaces and deliver information to a growing audience through billboards that are incorporated into the building as an element of design.

Not a traditional choice for façades or interior decoration, the new growing tendency to use coated and uncoated stainless steel metal mesh fabrics and medialisation over conventional systems is worth watching due to the versatility, flexibility and recyclability these technologically advanced emerging systems provide to a building's structure.

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