



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Metal mesh at the Palace of Versailles: Giving Pavillon Dufour a golden glow

With the €500 million renovation program for the Palace of Versailles agreed by the French state in 2003, the starting signal also sounded for the refurbishment of Pavillon Dufour. The internationally renowned French architect Dominique Perrault won the architectural competition that was held in this connection in 2011. Instead of an annexe in Cour des Princes, he planned to extend the building in the form of a new underground basement. In order to tie in with the opulence of the Palace, he chose golden Escale metal mesh from GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG for the ceiling and wall design on the first floor of Pavillon Dufour.

Within the scope of the *Grand Versailles* program, which is due to run until 2020, the historical buildings, décor and gardens of the Palace of Versailles have been renovated step-by-step since 2003. The main focuses here also include the modernization of the technical infrastructure and the complete revision of all aspects of visitor management. Pavillon Dufour plays a decisive role in this. As such, in order to reorganize the flow of visitors Perrault created a central reception area spanning 2,700 square meters for the approximately six million individual visitors yearly during the course of the Pavillon's renovation. Moreover, exquisite gastronomy, a hotel on the second floor and an auditorium accommodating 200 people also attract non-museum visitors. Perrault's visitor flow concept is based on the idea of a strict chronology of the individual rooms. From the Cour Royale, visitors walk through the Pavillon Dufour and into the Palace. A columned entrance hall guides them into the magnificently decorated foyer on the first floor of the pavilion. Perrault has converted this area into the entrance to the Baroque



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

world of the Palace of Versailles. In line with the design of Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost, he designed a golden ceiling that floats above the entire foyer like a gigantic canopy with waves of various sizes. For this, Perrault chose Escale 5 x 1 aluminum mesh from GKD. He had aluminum rods of varying lengths anodized in three different shades of gold and then inserted in to the spiraling, matt golden flat wires in a random pattern. The resulting effect lends the mesh a particularly vivid appearance. Glossy lamps provide an exciting contrast to the matt mesh while at the same time recalling the magnificent chandeliers of Louis XIV. The supple and flexible GKD mesh was also used for the rest of the interior design, with metal fabric wall hangings underlining the subtle reference to the historic décor. A staircase grants visitors access from the foyer to the newly created cellar vault, where they can find the cloakrooms, toilets, lockers and also the museum shop. From here, a stone staircase takes them to the open-air Cour des Princes while panels of golden-anodized metal mesh from GKD draped like banners with integrated lights hover above the heads of the visitors.



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