



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

## **Woven skin for the *Blue Whale* of Buenos Aires**

### Whale-shaped concert hall in the Centro Cultural Kirchner

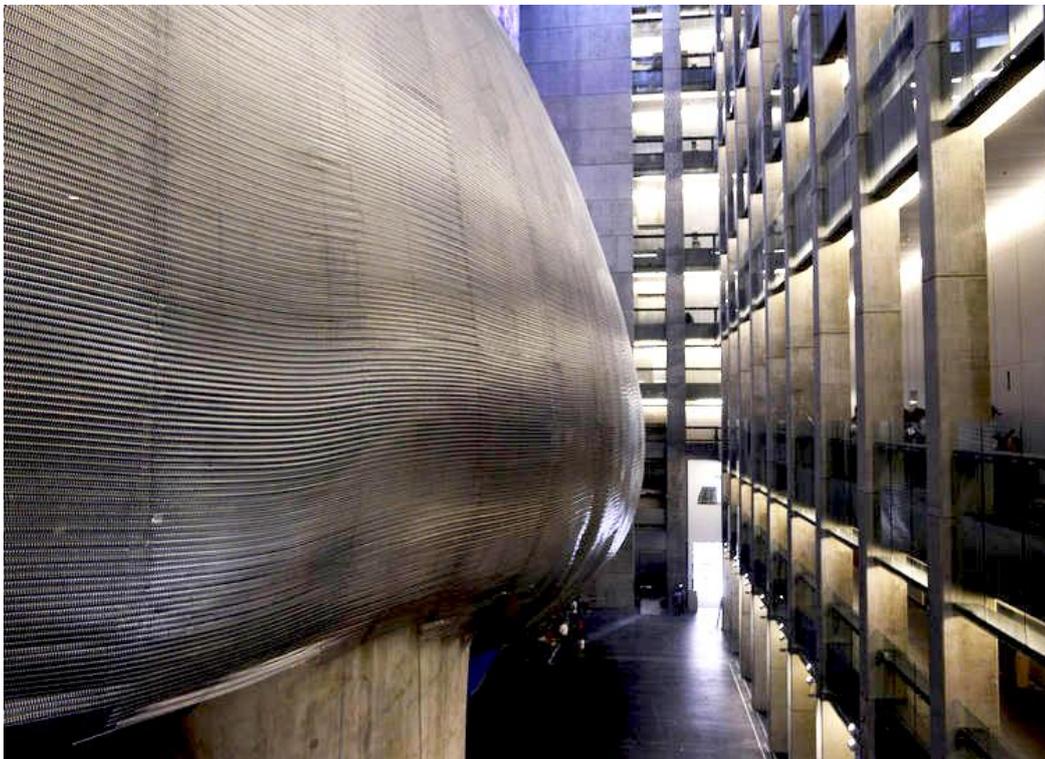
With more than 40 rooms and halls, including a concert hall for 1,750 spectators and a chamber music hall accommodating 600 listeners, a superlative cultural centre has been created in Buenos Aires. The Centro Cultural Kirchner, named after the former President Néstor Kirchner, bears comparison in terms of size with other famous cultural centres such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Tate Modern in London or the Lincoln Center in New York, and is the largest building of its kind in Latin America. The heart of the monumental building is the concert hall, which is commonly known as the *Ballena Azul (Blue Whale)* due to its form and colour. Seamlessly encased in Escale metallic fabric from the world's leading technical weaver GKD – Gebr. Kufferath, the whale-shaped interior façade reflects the blue of the surrounding walls and skirting.

Around ten years ago, the then President Kirchner launched a competition aimed at renovating and modernising the former headquarters of the postal service, the Correo Central, in the Argentinian capital. The grand palace, opened in 1928, had most recently stood empty for a number of years. B4FS arquitectos from Buenos Aires won the competition in 2009. They created a place where cultural events of all kinds could be encountered and experienced over 116,000 square metres in a space that is bold and people-oriented in equal measure. The design – a mixture of architectural avant-garde and faithful restoration of façades, furniture, plasterwork, ironwork and woodwork – makes the palace situated between the historic centre of the capital and the extensively modernised harbour area an attractive focal point. The *Blue Whale* rises beneath enormous glass exhibition rooms suspended from the ceiling like an abstract chandelier. GKD manufactured over 1,200



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individual elements for its supporting construction made up of 5,000 metres of cladding, which lend the *Whale* its shimmering, three-dimensional skin. Without any visible joints or connections, the flexible spiral mesh forms the ellipsoidal body, thereby successfully continuing the series of similarly challenging solutions for structures including Bertelsmann's "Planet M" pavilion for Expo 2000 in Hanover or the "Children's Palace" children's hospital in Guangzhou.



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### **GKD – WORLD WIDE WEAVE**

As a privately owned technical weaver, GKD - Gebr. Kufferath AG is the world market leader in metal, synthetic and spiral mesh solutions. Four



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independent business divisions bundle their expertise under one roof: Industrial Mesh (woven metal mesh and filter solutions), Process Belts (belts made of mesh and spirals), Architectural meshes (façades, safety and interior design made of metal fabrics) and Mediamesh® (Transparent media façades). With its headquarter in Germany and five other facilities in the US, South Africa, China, India and Chile – as well as its branches in France, Spain, Dubai and worldwide representatives, GKD is close to markets anywhere in the world.

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