



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Bronze membrane for Hermès flagship store in Bangkok

Curved interior façade made of metal mesh

The ICONSIAM is a one-of-a-kind shopping and leisure paradise that is unparalleled throughout the world. Costing 1.65 billion US dollars, the 750,000-square-meter multifunctional complex designed by Urban Architects stands on the banks of the Chao Phraya river. The eight-story megamall and two luxury apartment towers cater to even the most demanding of wishes. A display window of large-format, twin-angled glass fins and panes that spans three stories and measures 300 meters in length with a width of 24 meters lends the ICONSIAM its unmistakable appearance. For the design of the two-story Hermès flagship store at the main entrance of the mall, French architects RDAI took this striking vision a step further: An unbroken interior façade at the same angle made of bronze-coated metal mesh by GKD – Gebr. Kufferath AG (GKD Group) gives the luxury brand a special sheen.

With 23 million tourists per year, Bangkok is one of the most popular travel and shopping destinations in the world. Countless gigantic shopping centers vie for custom in the booming center of the Thai capital on the east side of the Chao Phraya. On the opposite west bank, in the historic heart of the city, ICONSIAM opened its doors as a spectacular counterpart to this. It quickly became the country's new landmark. Covering a sales area of 525,000 square meters, the mega complex combines endless shopping pleasure with an unparalleled offering of artistic, cultural, gastronomic, and lifestyle attractions. It was this concept that prompted Hermès, one of the most high-end providers of luxury goods, to open a new flagship store in the ICONSIAM. The French company, which is steeped in tradition, has operated stores in Thailand for 21 years. With a sales area of 368 square



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meters, the store in the Iconluxe – the luxury wing of the prestige mall – is its third and largest branch. It sells the whole range of fashion, accessories, and furnishings on two floors. The outer skin of the Hermès store is the hanging fully-glazed façade, which is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Its large-format glass panes in a zigzag arrangement open up the store toward the river. This visual connection is in keeping with the architectural leitmotifs of transparency and opacity that RDAI architects employ the world over in the design of all Hermès stores.

Challenging dimensions and angles

To retain an unencumbered view of the outside world as well as the intimacy of the shopping experience, the people at ICONSIAM opted for a free-hanging interior façade made of metal mesh. It was intended not only to connect the two levels of the store visually, but also to follow the dynamic lines of the façade like a curtain. Due to the curved and angled façade, the woven membrane had to compensate height differences of up to twelve centimeters. Ensuring the exact dimensional accuracy and angularity of the woven metal façade elements that this required called for innovative solutions for cutting-to-size and finishing. RDAI found the perfect partner for this task in leading global technical weavers, GKD. The specialists from the GKD Group developed a procedure for Hermès that made it possible to mount the giant panels in a curve – in exactly calibrated lengths and widths. The prototypes GKD produced at its main facility in Düren impressed the RDAI architects in every possible aspect when they visited the plant. 815 square meters of bronze-coated Sambesi stainless steel mesh were used for the interior façade of the Hermès store. A total of 56 panels – each 7,000 millimeters long and between 1,200 and 2,500 millimeters wide – were cut at right angles at the top and individually cut to size at an angle at the bottom, with flat profiles for mounting. The ceiling-height panels were mounted in an



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overlapping formation, suspended from the ceiling on both floors at a distance of 50 centimeters from the façade and fastened to the floor with no tension. This created a shimmering membrane, the textile appearance of which underlines the sophisticated ambiance of the store with its terrazzo floor, amber-tinted glass, and warm woods. At the same time, the transparency of the fabric – which is typical of the material – affords open views of the river, lending the store a unique, airy atmosphere.

4.375 characters incl. spaces

GKD – WORLD WIDE WEAVE

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