



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Fabric skin for the Blue Whale in Argentina

The Centro Cultural Kirchner, right in the heart of Buenos Aires and named after former President Néstor Kirchner, is currently the largest cultural center in Latin America. The building is commonly known as the *Ballena Azul* (Blue Whale) because the concert hall wing within is shaped like a whale. Covering some 2,200 square meters, this is a key element of B4FS Arquitectos' design. The hall is wrapped seamlessly in Escale metal fabric from GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG, which reflects the blue paintwork of the skirting and walls.

Formerly the magnificent Correo Central (Central Post Office) of Argentina, which opened in 1928, the building is located in the historical city center of Buenos Aires. In 2006, the then President of Argentina decided to renovate the listed palace building and convert it into a cultural center. Following his death in 2010, his wife and successor in office, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, implemented his idea and saw it through to completion in 2015. Argentinian architectural firm B4FS Arquitectos won an international architectural competition with their bold design, a mixture of architectural avant-garde and faithful restoration. The huge, whale-shaped concert hall wing is the building's main attraction. The "belly" of the whale contains an auditorium that seats 1,950 and a chamber music hall for 540 visitors. To create this space, that particular part of the building, just behind the original facade, was gutted and a large steel cage was constructed to provide a supporting structure. But the special effect that earned the hall its nickname comes from its shimmering skin of stainless steel mesh, which seamlessly covers the three-dimensional body and reflects the blue of the walls and skirting. When choosing building materials, the architects opted for Escale 7 x 1 metal fabric from GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG. The entire surface of the ellipsoidal body was covered uniformly and without any visible joins or connections. For the shell of the 5,500-square meter colossus, a special version of the fabric with 70-millimeter-high stainless steel spirals and round aluminum bars was used. GKD produced more than 1,200 individual elements for the visually seamless skin,



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which is attached to the whale-shaped structure at the top and bottom using fastening hooks.



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For more information:
GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG
Metallweberstraße 46
D-52353 Düren
Tel.: +49 (0) 2421 / 803-0
Fax: +49 (0) 2421 / 803-211
E-Mail: metalfabrics@gkd.de
www.gkd.de

Please send a reprint to:
impetus.PR
Ursula Herrling-Tusch
Charlottenburger Allee 27-29
D-52068 Aachen
Tel.: +49 (0) 241 / 189 25-10
Fax: +49 (0) 241 / 189 25-29
E-Mail: herrling-tusch@impetus-pr.de