



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Architectural metal fabric: encourages meeting and communication

The new headquarters of the high-tech Tencent Holdings Limited in the Chinese metropolis of Shenzhen reinterprets the classic campus concept based on a US model. For the cladding of the atrium, the architects from NBBJ selected 1,850 square meters of special golden fabric made of stainless steel from GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG. The key factors for the architects were the transparency and design of the GKD metallic fabric.

Internet giant Tencent was looking for a classic campus based on a US model for its new global HQ building. The idea was for the company HQ to become a spacious meeting area, where people could automatically meet one another, chat, and develop new ideas together. However, the plot of land for the new building was located right in the heart of the city and only offered a relatively small area. The architects from NBBJ, who were also responsible for designing the corporate headquarters of Amazon, Google, Microsoft, and Samsung, developed an intelligent concept to harmonize the ideas of the high-tech company with the circumstances on site. The campus was implemented vertically based on their idea. Two towers made of glass and steel, boasting 50 and 39 floors respectively, are connected by three copper-colored pedestrian bridges, giving the appearance of two robots that are hugging one another. The lobby of the new building, which can be accessed from two sides, links the inside and outside world, making it a lively place for meeting and communication. For the cladding of three sides of the atrium from the third floor upward, some 28 panels of a golden GKD metal mesh were installed, each measuring four meters wide by 16.5 meters high. The special fabric used resembles that of the façade at the Kunsthalle Mannheim

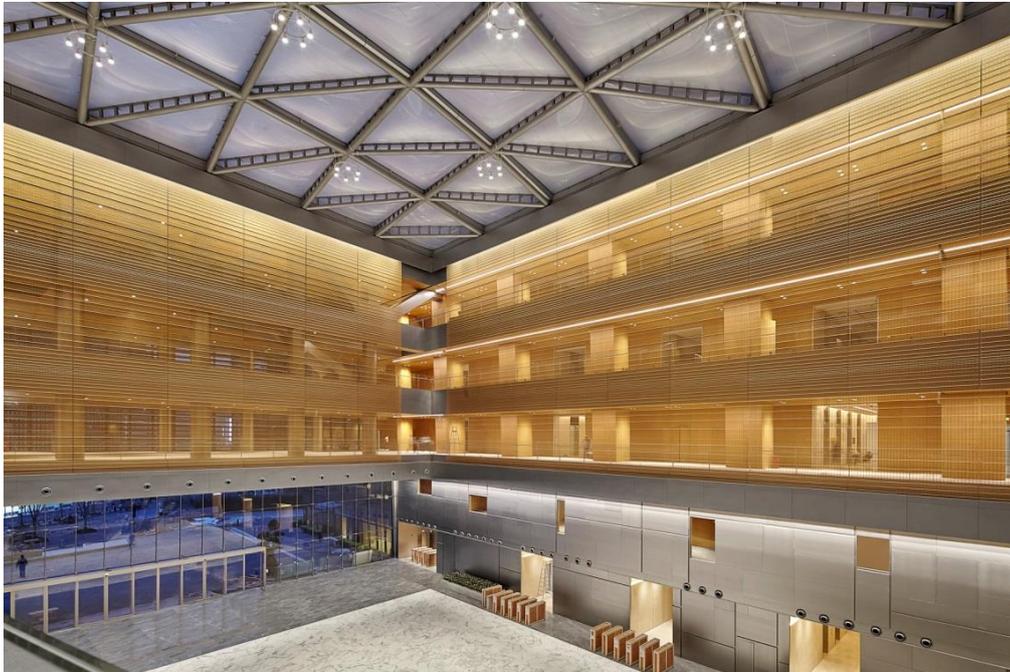


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museum of modern and contemporary art with its mesh design. Just like there, golden-anodized aluminum wires and tubes were also used here. These were interwoven with alternating spacings in three-wire warp wire groups made of untreated stainless steel. However, this special metal fabric design presented GKD with several challenges. One important issue was to compensate the differences in tension resulting from different weft wire thicknesses during the weaving process. Throughout the assembly process, also performed by GKD, the tubes then had to be aligned precisely in the panels to create the appearance of a seemingly endless texture. The soft golden tone of the fabric, created according to the customer's specifications, connects with the colors of the wood and ceiling coverings in the atrium and contrasts with the cool gray marble flooring and walls of the lobby, lending them a pleasant sense of warmth. At the same time, the golden fabric creates a special ambiance in the space, making it a pleasant place to spend time despite its size. The transparent membrane of the cladding grants unrestricted visual connections between the lobby and the atrium, thereby picking up the communicative aspect of the campus idea.



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