



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Golden sail in metallic mesh

On the edge of the historic town centre of Albi, in southwest France, leading French architect Dominique Perrault built the Grand Théâtre des Cordeliers during the course of extensive urban renewal. A three-dimensional shroud of gold-coloured, anodised metallic mesh from GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG has transformed the structure into a new landmark of this picturesque town.

On a gross floor area of 30,000 square metres, in addition to a theatre with 900 seats and an "experiment hall" with another 250 seats, the building also houses eight cinema screens, administrative and conference rooms as well as restaurants and an underground car park. Hence, the networked culture and congress centre connects a part of the new town with its historic core. Visible from afar, the woven skin of the Grand Théâtre, twinkling like gold in the sunlight, outshines the brick architecture typical of the region. Up close, the simple geometry of the building, with its concave, shimmering veil, blends organically into the almost directly adjacent buildings. The gold-coloured aluminium mesh enveloping the entire building gives the Grand Théâtre its distinctive character. Based on strict specifications from Perrault, GKD developed a customised solution using their Escale spiral mesh with a spacing of 150 x 20 millimetres for the opposing curves and different heights of the mesh skin. 36 panels in lengths from 16 to 25.6 metres and widths from 5.2 to 11 metres form the 4,800-square-metre, three-dimensionally curved mesh veil. Each of the 4,835 spirals in total was made in individual lengths, then assembled - a feat of production engineering successfully accomplished by the world leaders in architectural fabric. Even the golden tone of the anodised aluminium mesh was specially adapted, as per Perrault's requirements, to the colour of the stone façades in the historic city



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of Albi. Another challenge for GKD lay in the bowed and at the same time concave edge design of the woven sheath. The oblique longitudinal sides and bottom edges were fixed to the substructure with additional lateral bracing. Special stainless steel cables were drawn into the mesh for this custom-made solution.



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