



WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Return of a cult symbol

MEDIAMESH[®] brings faces to life

Philadelphia is considered the birthplace of American democracy. With the *Liberty Bell* and *Independence Hall*, it is home to two of the country's most historic icons. In this city on America's east coast, the transparent MEDIAMESH[®] media facade system from GKD – Gebr. Kufferath AG has now injected new life into a cult building. For almost 100 years, it was impossible to imagine the city without the advertising banner of a small clothes store that opened in 1891 and subsequently developed into one of the city's leading shopping locations. However, altered spending habits among consumers then led to the once-so-famous department store closing its doors in the mid 1970s. Years later, an elaborate restoration project, conducted by Brickstone Companies, ushered in a new era for the splendid building. The display, made of stainless steel mesh with integrated LED profiles, forms part of the striking new look.

The legendary Lit. Brothers Department Store on the corner of Market Street/North 8th Street in Philadelphia shaped the appearance of the fifth largest city in the US for 80 years. The huge advertising banner that lined the roof of the building on both sides, bearing the slogan *A Great Store in a Great City*, developed into one of the city's greatest landmarks. After the store closed in the 1970s, the building stood empty for seven years and was even threatened with demolition. It was almost exactly at this time that national monument preservation authorities and the investors from Brickstone recognized the architectural potential of the building that was constructed in the second half of the 19th century. The entire building complex, with its Baroque sandstone and cast iron facade and octagonal



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corner tower, was then finally placed under a preservation order in 1979. Some ten years later, it was reopened as the Mellon Independence Center, since which time it has generally been considered one of the most attractive buildings in the district. The fact that the reconstruction of the building steeped in tradition received the National Preservation Honor Award in 1989 serves to further underline this. Boasting total floor space of almost 67,000 square metres, it is today home to exclusive offices, retail stores and restaurants. Sitting below a glass ceiling that floods the area with light, the interior is characterized by imperiously arranged storeys that encapsulate a spacious atrium with large-format mosaic floor and escalators with glazed sides. In the centre, an imposing grandfather clock made of cast iron underlines the nostalgic charm of the lovingly restored building.

Illuminated business card

More than twenty years after the reopening of the building complex, the decision was then taken to inject new life into the traditional banner on the roof. Stantec Architects, who had been commissioned to execute the project, decided to go with a modern interpretation in the form of a transparent media facade. This allowed the building to comply with the strict stipulations of city and building heritage authorities, while also meeting the expectations of the investors. They ultimately chose the MEDIAMESH[®] system from GKD – Gebr. Kufferath AG, as its open, sophisticated design seemingly blends into the meticulously restored architecture. The brilliance of the image rendering despite the requisite viewing distance, the view toward the sky, the maintenance-free nature and the ecological aspects all spoke in favour of this solution. Another benefit of the MEDIAMESH[®] system, made of stainless steel mesh with integrated LED profiles, is its particularly low power consumption. In addition to this, the robust stainless steel material is 100% recyclable at the end of its useful life after many decades. Standing 4.4



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meters tall and 110 meters wide, the transparent display in place on the roof of the Mellon Independence Center is the first MEDIAMESH® installation in Philadelphia. The large MEDIAMESH® screen, which boasts a total area of approximately 480 square meters, is made up of 37 panels with vertical LED spacing of 4cm and horizontal spacing of 4.25cm. The display is flanked by seven GKD Tigris mesh panels. The large-screen display, which was completed at the start of 2015, is fully video compatible and can be used to display advertising or other content. At the same time, the sophisticated design blends in harmoniously with the cult character of the famous, free-standing advertising banner from decades past.

4.303 characters incl. spaces

GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG

The owner-run technical weaver GKD – GEBR. KUFFERATH AG is the global market leader for metal and plastic woven solutions. Under the umbrella of GKD – WORLD WIDE WEAVE the company combines four independent business units: SOLID WEAVE (industrial meshes), WEAVE IN MOTION (process belt meshes), CREATIVE WEAVE (architectural meshes) and COMPACT FILTRATION (compact filter systems). With its seven plants – including the headquarters in Germany and other facilities in the US, Great Britain, South Africa, China, India and Chile – as well as its branches in France, Spain, Dubai, Qatar and worldwide representatives, GKD is never far from its customers.

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