

OKACOLOR - REFERENCES

Russia | St. Petersburg | GEMA Office block

**Project:**

GEMA Office block

Location:

St. Petersburg, Russia

Product:

OKACOLOR

Project Volume:

4.160 m²

Special features:

Facade which successfully combines traditional and contemporary styles

Architect:

nps tchoban voss Architects, Berlin, Germany

Execution:

Panorama Aluminium Building Systems, St. Petersburg, Russia

Completion:

2007

St. Petersburg, the Russian capital of culture, is rich in treasures of all kinds. It is important that these are preserved and made accessible to the public. The new GEMA building is an example of one of the various ways this can be done. The building is located on the shore of the Newa and has a façade which successfully combines traditional and contemporary styles. The GEMA building – also known as the Benois Building – is located in what is now the Kalininski District of St. Petersburg. It is the result of the redevelopment of a former four-story industrial building. The building was in-

creased by another four stories in reinforced concrete frame construction and elongated by adding several axes. Whereas the construction and form of the narrow wings are more on the reserved side, the extravagant design of the façade is sensational – in two ways. This is because the frontage and the courtyard front reflect two totally different atmospheres: Whereas on the frontage, colorful, playful figures stage a kind of theater performance, the courtyard front shows a modern design in various shades of gray. In his draft, Architect Sergei Tchoban of nps tchoban voss, Berlin wanted to take



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up elements from the history of the site as well as Russian culture. To this end he decided to use several sketches that the famous Russian artist Alexander Benois (1870-1960) had designed for theater costumes as a basis for the design of the large-surface glass façade. As initiator and designer of the Dyagilev Theater era, Benois had given Russian art and culture worldwide renown. Moreover, the building in which Benois had lived at the end of the 19. Century was located on the premises of the present GEMA office block. The substructure of the entire glass front consists of an

aluminium pillar waling construction. The one-story high, black and color printed glass alternates with the transparent elements. This result in a lively façade which, on the one hand, takes up the cultural aspects with its colorful themes and, on the other hand, attracts the attention of the observer. The abstract façade design of the rear of the building is in sharp contrast to these traditional elements. It has only four different shades of grey in pixel quality. The entire glass was printed with the OKACOLOR procedure from OKALUX. This digital printing procedure guarantees a photographically



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realistic reproduction with a high color brilliance and is therefore especially suited for the printing of colorful theater figures. The course of the street requires the building to make a bend. This bend in the shape of the building is also emphasized by a change in the design of the façade: OKAPOINT from OKALUX, a point supported insulating glass, makes up the façade which extends over the entire eight stories and marks the entrance. Once in the lobby, the visitor is surrounded by a generous space which extends over the entire height of the building. The covering

of the interior walls in the lobby was realised with white printed glass from OKALUX. By bonding the glass with supporting sheets the white panels could be mounted invisibly on the walls using shadow gaps. This cool and elegant atmosphere with reduced appearance lends a contrast to the playful and dynamic façade of the exterior. The creative and multi-faceted façade design with printed glass perfectly stages the St. Petersburg GEMA building making it unforgettable.



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