

Building in Maestro Nicolau Light and colour in urban planning at Barcelona

Façade in the vanguard at Maestro Nicolau: local colours.

The residential area that surrounds Maestro Nicolau street has acquired a new air through the use of laminated glass with Vanceva® colour interlayers on the façade of an office-block. The infrastructure is now the centre of the gaze, thanks to the use of brisse-soleils made of laminated glass, which has brought some high-impact yellow, red and orange shades to the outside walls.

The building was planned under study b720, for the property-development company Layetana, and both promoter and architects wanted the building to have a degree of individuality that would distinguish it when attending to the planning of the area, though without totally ruining the character of the neighbourhood in which it was located.

Thus, one of the main concerns of Fermín Vázquez, head architect of b720, was to convert the building into a distinctive feature in the nondescript urbanisation of the area. It was necessary to look for a means of making it stand out among the other buildings, but without making it seem out-of-place. It was decided that colour was the right tool, and the solution of brisse-soleils, as a mobile item, proved to be the most suitable. The outcome is a gradation of colours on the façade, ranging from yellowish-red to reddish-orange. There is nothing casual about the choice of shades. Before choosing them, a chromatic study was conducted, which supported its inclusion into the surroundings and produced the result that an implicit tradition arose in the neighbourhood, whereby the selected colours came to predominate. For example, they were extensively used in the awnings of homes and surrounding establishments, and characterised the surroundings of a row of orange-trees (again, the same colours). In short, the façade of the building at issue attracts attention by being original and challenging, for its vitality and its size, yet it does not clash with the architectural style of the area.



PROJECT FACTS

CLIENT

Layetana

PROJECT/ARCHITECTS

b720 – Fermín Vázquez

WINDOW MANUFACTURER

Cricursa (www.cricursa.com)

COMPLETION DATE

early 2003



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Distinct perspectives

As already noted, the graded effect succeeds, apart from the use of colour, thanks to forty rows of ten sections of brisse-soleils. To cope with a high-level installation, the use of laminated glass was essential for safety reasons, hence each one of the strips is made of 6mm glass plus the Vanceva® colour interlayers by Solutia, which gives the finished result on the building's distinctiveness. By combining colours from Vanceva's basic range it becomes possible to produce over 1,000 different shades, meaning that the search for the shades sought by architects becomes much easier. In co-operation with the glass manufacturer Cricursa, the various options were examined and finally resulted in made-to-measure laminated glass panels with distinct colour combinations. If the aim was to make it possible to achieve a seamless transition from one shade to another, it has succeeded completely, as the gradation from one shade to another is imperceptible. Yet the singular effect produced by the building's façade goes much further: depending on the time, and thanks to the sun's rays, different colours were projected onto the asphalt of Mestre Nicolau. The appearance of the street has

been completely renewed, since it previously managed with very little lighting. As Fermín Vázquez affirms, the façade is "a protective colour screen". However, all this colour and style is merely the external face of the street. The architects decided to place the laminates in the horizontal position, and attached to the wall by only one of its faces. In this they succeeded in making the colour virtually imperceptible from the interior, while the view from inside the building is transparent.

Utility, but design as well

The benefits of using this type of laminates are not just aesthetic. The cost of air-conditioning is much lower, as there is control over solar light reaching the interior of the offices. In this way, a significant energy saving is achieved in the summer, as penetration of the sun's rays remains limited. However, Vanceva materials do not merely provide insulation from heat during stiflingly hot periods; they also bring other benefits to the building, for example, greater resistance to insults and atmospheric effects, and ultimately greater protection for those found inside the building.

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