

# Mesh Weaves Versatile Solutions

By Heather Collins



A building element that sometimes is taken for granted—but proves its worth in countless ways—is a smartly constructed ceiling system. Contractors who choose the right one for their project will gain a distinct advantage in the design and function of their interior space. With the emergence of new and versatile ceiling systems, things—and people—are looking up.

## Beauty and Longevity

Among the impressive new ceiling systems available today is one crafted with architectural mesh. A woven metal, mesh most often is manufactured from stainless steel and can accommodate a number of different patterns to match a building's design or theme. The very nature of stainless steel, of course, is resistance to scratches, denting and corrosion. This is just one benefit of using architectural mesh as a ceiling system, but it's an important one as longevity and durability stand at the forefront of design and construction considerations.

## Playing Dual Roles

It's not good enough for a ceiling simply to cover the unsightly workings above it. Sure, in

Architectural mesh brings modern sophistication, elegance and supreme functionality to Victory Plaza in Dallas.

Architectural mesh is a fascinating material, marrying unique aesthetics and functional versatility.

## Woven Metal Provides New Look, Functionality in Ceiling Design

most cases, it must conceal overhead ventilation and sprinkler systems, but at the same time, it needs to fit in aesthetically with the space it occupies.

This need for a striking visual element—a "wow factor"—is another area where mesh more than delivers. Woven metal fabric is a unique-looking material, but it is not limited to a certain style. Its elegant, sophisticated, modern and sometimes edgy quality allows it to blend

in to or accent almost any design imaginable.

"Architectural mesh is perfect for ceiling systems because of how effectively it marries function and flexibility—and it looks great doing it," said Larry Windsor, director of sales and business development for Cambridge Architectural, Cambridge, Md. "What's so fascinating about metal fabric is that visually, it's like nothing else, but inherent in that design are all of the functional necessities that contractors look for. It offers the best of both worlds."

Other qualities that are inherent in architectural mesh are acoustics control and improved ventilation. Mesh is unique in that it divides a space and provides cover without disrupting air and sound flow. The result is a design element that occupants can see and appreciate, but one that the building never notices. It is this paradox that makes metal fabric a growing trend in building construction.

## In the News

Architectural mesh's versatility allows constant reinvention. In the recently opened Newseum—an interactive museum of news in Washington, D.C.—Cambridge Architectural installed a ceiling cladding for the museum's


largest gallery. The mesh panels are custom-painted black to match the gallery's design, blending into the background and allowing the museum pieces to stand out. Simultaneously though, the mesh diffuses the light, protecting the paper artifacts below.

"The mesh panels were very easy to install and work with because it was a modular system," said Stephen Hattwick, project engineer and exhibit coordinator for the Newseum's general contractor, Turner Construction, New York. "We just screwed the panels onto the perimeter of the framework. This way, the middle panels can be removed first without any unscrewing, which makes it very easy to access the systems above the ceiling."

Rigid metal fabric can be installed as a traditional flat ceiling, or flexible metal fabric can be employed ornamentally, as in a draping effect. However it is used, architectural mesh offers contractors a simple installation and reduced maintenance costs without the need for replacement materials. Mesh offers indestructible ceiling cladding with a life cycle measured in decades.

## Function Over Form

For contractors who seek a unique and stylish ceiling system but don't want to sacrifice function, architectural mesh is one of the best options available. Metal fabric provides a gorgeous facade for overhead ventilation and sprinkler systems and creates elegantly diffused light patterns. The sometimes simple, sometimes complex aesthetic of mesh makes it relevant in every scheme, from sophisticated to fun, without disturbing acoustics or ventilation.

Architectural mesh rises above traditional alternatives to create beautiful, functional ceiling systems. 

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The Cambridge Architectural mesh ceiling blends in with the style of the Newseum in Washington, D.C.



Light diffusion is just one of the many benefits of woven metal fabric ceiling systems.



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