



News Release

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MasterTop coatings at German Pavilion of 2018 Architecture Biennale in Venice

Walls, their impact on people, and the opportunities opened by their disappearance, are at the center of 'Unbuilding Walls', Germany's contribution to this year's Architecture Biennale in Venice, Italy. With polyurethane coatings from the MasterTop range, Master Builders Solutions® supported the German pavilion as a material sponsor. Concept and design of the pavilion have been realized by Berlin architectural firm Graft, and Marianne Birthler, former Federal Commissioner for the documents left by the former GDR's state security service.

Stepping into the pavilion, visitors are immediately confronted by a seemingly impenetrable wall. Once they start to move around and change their perspective, however, the wall dissolves, revealing itself, instead, to consist of a number of columns placed at even distances with wide gaps between them. And this is also where Master Builders Solutions comes into play as a product sponsor: The columns and parts of the floor are coated with a MasterTop system in black to emphasize the visual appearance and the seeming impenetrability of the 'wall'. On their rear, the columns document the development of the former death strip and its various transformations and utilizations until today. The far wall – the 'Wall of Opinions' – is dedicated to the voices of people from Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Israel

and Palestine, the US and Mexico, North and South Korea, as well as from an outer EU border in Ceuta, Spain, all of whom have to live with a wall.

The right coating for the desired effect

In creating the effect of a continuous wall that appears to grow out of the ground, a decisive part was played by the coating solution used on the columns. Here, the manifold requirements included: a deep black color; support for seamless blending of column and floor surfaces; low-gloss visuals; and, importantly, a high-class look. The floor, too, required coating – and the solution used here had to be absolutely indistinguishable visually from the columns. In addition, the spacious, high-walled interior of the pavilion made effective impact-noise reduction a requirement, as well as easy-cleaning properties for quick removal of any marks or smudges left by visitors and to ensure an immaculate visual appearance. With these and a number of other requirements on their list of priorities, the architects talked to an applicator – a Master Builders Solutions partner – and discovered the polyurethane coatings of the MasterTop range. These offer maximum design freedom and are designed for a variety of different applications.

Working closely with the Master Builders Solutions sales and marketing teams, the exciting project was organized and realized in a very short period of time. “Which of our MasterTop polyurethane systems were the most suitable for application on the columns and the floor of the pavilion was quickly determined”, reports Stephan Siegle, Head of Marketing, Master Builders Solutions Germany, Austria and Switzerland. “Even so, there were a number of challenges, primarily with regard to time: Project planning, manufacture of the material in the desired color at our Oldenburg site, delivery to Venice by truck and ship, and, not least, flawless installation locally at the pavilion – all this had to be accomplished within a short timeframe.”

The Architecture Biennale will be open until November 25, 2018. Further information on the MasterTop range and the Venice Biennale can be found on the internet at: <https://www.master-builders-solutions.basf.co.uk/en-gb/products/mastertop> and <http://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/2018>.

About La Biennale di Venezia

Established by a late-19th-century Venice mayor, the original Biennale was an international art exhibition held in Venice bi-annually in odd-numbered years, starting in 1895. The national pavilions built for that exhibition in the *giardini*, a park complex in the east of the city, are still in use today. The idea stuck, and the term 'Biennale', or 'Biennial' as it is often called in English, came to be used for bi-annually held art exhibitions, festivals or similar events elsewhere as well. Today, there are 'Biennales' of various kinds across all continents. The original Biennale di Venezia has not only become one of the world's most important exhibitions of contemporary art but has also grown to integrate additional art forms: 1930 saw the first installment of the Biennale Musica, followed, two years later, by the first Venice Film Festival; the theater festival, Biennale Teatro, was established in 1934, and since 1999 Venice also holds the International Festival of Contemporary Dance. While all other later additions are held annually, the Architecture Biennale – established in 1980 and at first only organized at irregular intervals – has been held bi-annually in even-numbered years since 2002; the Architecture Biennale alternates with the now-renamed Art Biennale and also uses the national pavilions in the *giardini*.

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