

Colourful Reflections

NARIMA™ from SCHOTT creates dazzling colour effects at the Bavarian State Opera House's rehearsal building in Munich.

Following the complete remodeling of the "Marstallplatz", Munich's Old Town has now gained a lively new centre. This cultural plaza located directly on Maximilianstraße and in direct proximity to the Bavarian State Opera, Bavarian State Theatre and Residence unites three independent buildings to form a harmonious complex that allows both old and new to merge in a subtle manner.

The ensemble developed by the renowned Berlin based architectural firm Gewers Kühn + Kühn consists of the glassy cube in the "Maximilianhof" with its historic portico at the centre, the "Bürklein building" with its grandly reconstructed facade, as well as the rehearsal building used by the Bavarian State Opera House, with its dazzling coloured glass front.

The north facade of the rehearsal building with its "Bühnenfenster" (Stage Window) lighting installation was designed by the internationally renowned Danish artist, Olafur Eliasson, and is certainly the central attention grabber at Marstallplatz. This ranks as one of the greatest publicly displayed artworks in all of Germany. Its outside surface consists of a total of 300 m² of NARIMA™ colour effect glass from SCHOTT, as well as a 175 m² mirrored surface located directly behind it. Both transparency and reflections have been achieved, as a result.

With "Bühnenfenster", Eliasson deals with the theatrical topics perception, reality and illusion. His installation creates an artistically staged platform that reflects life in the city and establishes relationships between the people on the plaza. At the same time, it suspends the partition that separates indoors from outdoors by transforming the activities that take place inside into a playfully motivated pattern of refracted light impulses.

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To achieve the desired appearance, Olafur Eliasson decided to use NARIMA™, a dichroic colour effect glass from SCHOTT that is coated using a dipping process. This glass was developed to meet the artist's specific colour requirements.

For the glass construction located in the middle of the facade, laminated safety glass consisting of a 12mm thick outside float glass pane in a toughened safety glass version, a 1.52 mm thick PVB layer and a 4mm thick pane of NARIMA™ were chosen. Here, several sheets of NARIMA™ were laminated onto a larger pane of float glass as a base glass.

The panes were then inserted into three rows located above each other that each had room for 17 elements. The large format of 380 cm x 190 cm made it possible for the individual modules to fit into the elegantly detailed pattern of the facade of the new building in a harmonious manner.

The thicknesses of the glasses ranged from 12 mm to 17 mm and, therefore, posed a special challenge. For this reason, some of the existing profiles had to be refitted. The mirror installation in the background was mounted while this was being done.

The colour effect glass and mirrors create a centre perspective that corresponds with the stage room found behind it. The Marstallplatz develops into an auditorium from which colours and the light display can be viewed. At the same time, the colourful mirrors and glasses reflect images from the plaza onto the facade.

The reflected image consists of two elements. The lower mirror reflects events in the Marstallplatz, whereas the upper mirror reflects the sky above. Due to differences in the lighting conditions, artificial light in the evening or the pedestrians' viewing angles, subtle or dramatic "stage images" are created on the facade. This can truly be considered a play that is performed live in which the people on the plaza are the actors.

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NARIMA™ colour effect glass, combined with mirrors, reflects images from the plaza onto the façade of the Bavarian State Opera House's rehearsal building.

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