

They are fire retardant, can be disinfected and stay looking good for a long time - glass déco fabrics from Vitrulan are becoming the wall covering of choice in Europe's hospitals.

A recent good example of the use of this wall covering can be seen at the Hospital of the Order of the Brothers of Mercy, Graz, Austria, where 35,000 m² of fabric was recently used to decorate the walls of a new wing. As a salute to the hospital's history, the order's pomegranate emblem was woven into the fabric, historically linking the new wing to its 17th century predecessor.

In order to guarantee the highest level of medical care in the future, many parts of the building have been renovated and expanded. The most ambitious project to date is a recently completed 9,000 m² state-of-the-art hospital wing.

Combination

Vitrulan is a leader in glass déco fabrics used throughout the new wing to cover the walls. In total, 35,000 m² of fabric was used. Once on the walls the fabric was given a coat of silk latex paint to give the right finish. As all the patients' rooms and corridors were to be decorated with this combination of fabric and paint, light and low-key tones were chosen.

Consult architect, Markus Jocham, says: "After discussing various options it was clear to



the hospital management, that in such a challenging environment, glass déco fabrics would best stand the test of time ...our many years of experience with these fabrics have borne this out, this is why a large proportion of all hospitals are looking to glass déco fabrics as their wall covering of choice." Only by using glass déco fabrics, according to Jocham, "can functionality as well as aesthetics be taken equally into consideration".

Renowned for their hygienic

Disinfection qualities of glass déco fabrics

Modern treatment for renovated, state-of-the-art, 17th century Austrian hospital

qualities especially in highly sensitive areas, glass déco fabrics have obvious advantages over conventional wall coverings. Used together with silk latex paint, the fabrics form clean, sealed surfaces. This means the walls in the hospital can be easily and quickly cleaned and do not offer microorganisms any spaces or mediums to settle in. Moreover,



the hospital interiors can now be scrubbed, disinfected and decontaminated. Because glass déco fabrics are so easy to clean and are ecologically harmless, it is little surprise hospitals are waking up to their advantages over conventional tiling options, especially in operating theatres where high levels of hygiene are a priority.

Another compelling reason for choosing glass déco fabrics for the hospital walls are their fire retardant qualities. Combined with the appropriate coats of paint, glass déco fabrics are fire retardant and even have the highest rated fire resistance mark - all without using fire retardant additives.

From a structural perspective the reinforcing function of the material proves itself to be extremely beneficial in the clinical area in preventing permanent damage to the building structure. Glass déco fabrics can help prevent fine plaster cracks from forming over time. This is particularly important in areas that experience temperature

fluctuations - they also cope with stressed walls and hardly stretch at all.

Due to these structural physical properties glass déco fabrics provide long-term protection to interior walls. This is important in hospitals. "Beds are pushed around, televisions and medical equipment installed on the walls - one can imagine everything a wall covering in a

glass déco fabrics can be painted up to ten times without compromising the look of the texture. This enviable longevity will not break the bank either if viewed as a long term investment. For instance a square metre of woodchip paper costs around 1.5 to 2 euros and the price for glass déco fabrics is around 3 to 6 euros, however, over a few years as other coverings need replacing the glass déco fabrics will be looking as good as new.

The commissioned local painting and decorating company had no trouble working with the fabric. "Unlike woodchip papers or non-woven fabrics, the fabric can be moved around a little, without any trouble while being hung. Its position can be corrected as required, due to glass déco fabrics not stretching when wet. So the joints of the fabric can be matched absolutely exactly," says Jocham. Only after about 20 minutes do the fabric and wall bond. In seven to twelve hours the fabric is dry and it can then be painted.

Consultant architect, Markus Jocham concludes: "Our project in Graz highlighted all the advantages of glass déco fabrics over other wall coverings. In terms of its aesthetic, structural, fire-retardant and hygienic qualities it makes the ideal wall covering for inside today's hospitals."

hospital has to endure," says Jocham. "Traditional wall coverings do not last long with these physical loads. Dents and plaster damage are inevitable. Glass déco fabrics on the other hand provide long-term protection against such damage."

Tests prove that when it comes to reinforcing, no other wall coverings can compare with glass déco fabrics. A five centimetre wide strip of high quality glass déco fabric has a tensile strength of 704 Newtons where a similar strip of average vinyl wallpaper can only bear 308 Newtons - not even half the tensile strength of a glass déco fabric. Standard woodchip wallpaper has a maximum tensile strength of only 98.5 Newtons, suggesting that apart from its aesthetic value it has few or no functional benefits.

Unlike other hospitals that use traditional wall coverings, The Brothers of Mercy hospital interior will not require a comprehensive refurbishment after 7 to 15 years. "Glass déco fabrics go on forever, all you have to do is give them a coat of paint from time to time," explained Jocham. Vitrulan's



Emblem: the Brothers of Mercy's pomegranate emblem was woven into the fabric, historically linking the new wing of the hospital to its 17th century predecessor

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