

(headline)

Sustainable landscape art using Tikkurila products

(lead)

The city of Kemi brightens its image with art in the public space, visible also to those speeding past the city on the motorway. Tikkurila was involved in an exciting design project to liven up the motorway bridge with a light gate.

The landscape architecture turns the bypass roads into something thought-provoking. You can experience this in Kemi. The 30-meter-long piece, called Valoportti (light gate), was placed on the bridge of the Kemi central junction on the E18 motorway. The Finnish Transport Agency and the Lapland division of the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment wished to create experiences for motorists as well as nurture a positive image of the city of Kemi.

- Art provides good means to interesting design for road environments, say sculptor Marjukka Korhonen and Mari Siikonen, Head of Unit for the WSP Design Studio and manager of the road facade project.

A desirable and lasting tint using a finish

Valoportti was manufactured by Tehomet Oy, who specialise in lamp posts. The piece consists of composite pipes manufactured by Exel Composites Oyj Plc and surface treated with the Ice Blue III finish. Thousands of lighting variations are possible with the piece's light control unit. The piece is visible from kilometers away and, additionally, brings some refreshing light to underneath the bridge itself.

At Tikkurila, the pipes' coating solution was designed by Application Engineer Mårten Juslin. He says that the task has not been one of the easiest. The location is a demanding one as the work must function as an impressive piece of environmental art around the clock, all year round.

- At Kemi's latitude, of course, variations in temperature over the year are intense, but even harsher is the external surface damage caused by the sun's UV rays and pollution from traffic, says Mårten Juslin.

- For the light posts, we developed a finish from the Temadur range, achieving the desired effect. A tinted polyurethane finish adheres well and forms a translucent color surface. Previously, the same type of effect was created using caramel finishes or even, a long time ago, the milk finishes that Alvar Aalto used on his furniture.

- the smooth surface of the light pipes minimises the effects of pollution. The pipes are washed only once or twice a year - it is hardly possible to do so more often on the motorway, anyway.

A light gate for northern conditions

In sunlight, the pipe produces an ice blue metallic luster, and at night it lights the environment magically. The landscape architecture in Kemi has made a bold opening move in the development of the city's image. A successful end result requires careful cooperation.

- We tested the transparency of the tint carefully, together with the team's designers, architects, lighting designers and manufacturer, and believe that the chosen blue tint represents, as well as can cope with, the demanding northern climate, Marten says.

The same tint had already been used in interior solutions such as the wallboards for cinemas, several cruise ships and the Linnanmäki amusement park.

- Ambitious designers give accurate instructions on what they are looking for and demand uncompromising quality and unique tint solutions. In this way, also our own skills continue to improve as we realise these special projects, Mårten Juslin stresses.

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Photos: Kati Leinonen