

## Liverpool Metquarter

**Specialist in Flame Retardant Fabrics. Manufacturer and Installer of all types of Theatrical Drapes and Stage Equipment**

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Leading drapes and fabrics manufacturer, J&C Joel, supplied and installed a special fabric covering for four spectacular light sculptures designed by Turner Prize nominee artist Mel Chantry. Located in Liverpool's brand new £75 million MetQuarter development the newest, funkiest and most stylish retail experience in the City, the light sculptures provide a focal point to a new shopping experience.

MetQuarter is a completely new take on shopping. The whole environment is about creating a pleasant and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere in which visitors can relax, interact and feel comfortable in between purchasing or browsing. It is a hybrid environment, resembling both art gallery and the entrance area of a contemporary chic hotel.

J&C Joel were requested to provide their specialist input into the sculptures by Mel Chantry, who engages in regular shopping mall and retail work with Peterborough based Midas, who manufactured the impressive 10 metre high sculptures, which are internally lit with LED's.

Mel Chantry of Midas comments, "We asked J&C Joel onboard for this element of the work because of their expertise with fabrics and because they were very highly recommended. We needed a manufacturer/installer that could see that part of project all the way through. The team was enthusiastic and paid great attention to detail."

At J&C Joel, Drapery Manager Neal Cartwright took up the challenge, which was to produce a suitably durable fabric that took light well. After much experimentation with light sources and materials, Joel's came up with a white Cotton Lycra 170 cm wide Ultra Stretch fabric, which was treated with Durably Flame retardant to `BS 5867 Part 2 Type B`.

Neal Cartwright revealed, "J&C Joel had undertaken similar aesthetical projects before, but nothing of this size and scale. Therefore we were excited about the challenge of being involved in such a prestigious piece of work".



The portable aluminium frames were brought to J&C Joel's Sowerby Bridge factory for the fabric to be designed and manufactured to suit each shape and contour. Neil Cartwright confirmed, "Apart from getting the 10m long sculptures in the building the tricky part of the fabric installation was allowing just the right amount of 'spare' fabric in the shape, so that the final adjustments could be made once they were on site and in situ". All this and as all four sculptures were different designs, each fabric covering was produced and fitted individually then removed for transportation to site.



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The manufacturing process took just over a week to complete, where after transportation to the MetQuarter, a pair of J&C Joel installation team personnel went to one Liverpool site to install the fabric covers, where they are spread out along the main atrium concourse – to great effect.

The wooden columns for the sculptures were produced by Hutchfield Furniture from Chatham, Kent and Equation Lighting from London designed the illuminations.

As the dusk draws in, the sculptures glow alternatively pink and blue - thus swapping identity. Every hour they pulse through all the colours of the spectrum for 10 seconds and then go to their next colour which grows in intensity.

Chantry also created a massive 70 metre illuminated ceiling artwork with which the lanterns work in unison, and of course, it all looks equally as stunning during the day.

The whole project has so far proved a massive success, pulling record crowds of shoppers into the complex to enjoy some glamorous retail opportunities and imbibe a unique ambience.



### About MetQuarter

Owners Milligan has been developing the site of the Old Post Office since 2003, and before then it was dormant for many years. The original building was constructed between 1894 and 1899, designed by architect Henry Tanner to resemble a Loire chateau. It was badly bomb damaged in the Second World War Blitz, and the interior was gutted after the Post Office moved out, leaving the shell to await development for many years. It is one of a series of innovative flagship developments contributing to Liverpool's spectacular ongoing urban regeneration.

### Content

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