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GIVING VOICE TO THOSE WHO CREATE WORKPLACE DESIGN & FURNISHINGS

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## Top Honors in the Arts, Worldwide

The Japan Art Association has announced the 2022 winners of the Praemium Imperiale. The international award is given to recognize achievement in architecture, painting, sculpture, music, and theater/film. Contributor John Morris Dixon gives us a look at the exceptional, thought-provoking work of this year's recipients.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3...



## Chemetal's Metallic Modes

Chemetal's materials are specified for commercial interior projects, from corporate to hospitality settings. Designers can choose from over 200 metal designs and laminates. Geoff Schaefer, president and creative director at Chemetal, talked about the company's popular aluminum products, and gave us a preview of what will be on view at BDNY.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 11...



## Originality Deconstructed: A New Traveling Exhibition from Be Original Americas

Contributor Stefanie Schwalb recently attended a reception to celebrate the opening of a new traveling exhibition from Be Original Americas. "Originality Deconstructed" gives viewers a look at the key elements found in furnishings and fixtures. Ann Petersen, Suzanne Tick, and Ricardo Nabholz also discussed the problem of counterfeit design.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 16...



CITED:  
"COURAGE IS WHAT IT  
TAKES TO STAND UP  
AND SPEAK; COURAGE IS  
ALSO WHAT IT TAKES TO  
SIT DOWN AND LISTEN."  
—WINSTON CHURCHILL



## Chemetal's Metallic Modes

by Anna Zappia

Chemetal's materials are specified for commercial interior projects, from corporate to hospitality settings. With a collection of more than 200 metal designs and laminates, designers can choose from classic to contemporary looks. Metallic styles are perennial favorites because of their versatility. "Metal is such a luxurious material that

brings energy to spaces, and it really can create an environment that's interesting," said Geoff Schaefer, president and creative director, Chemetal.

The Classic Metals, decorative anodized and HPL aluminum sheets, are a core Chemetal offering. Also among the most popular, they emulate the look of more expensive metals. "The

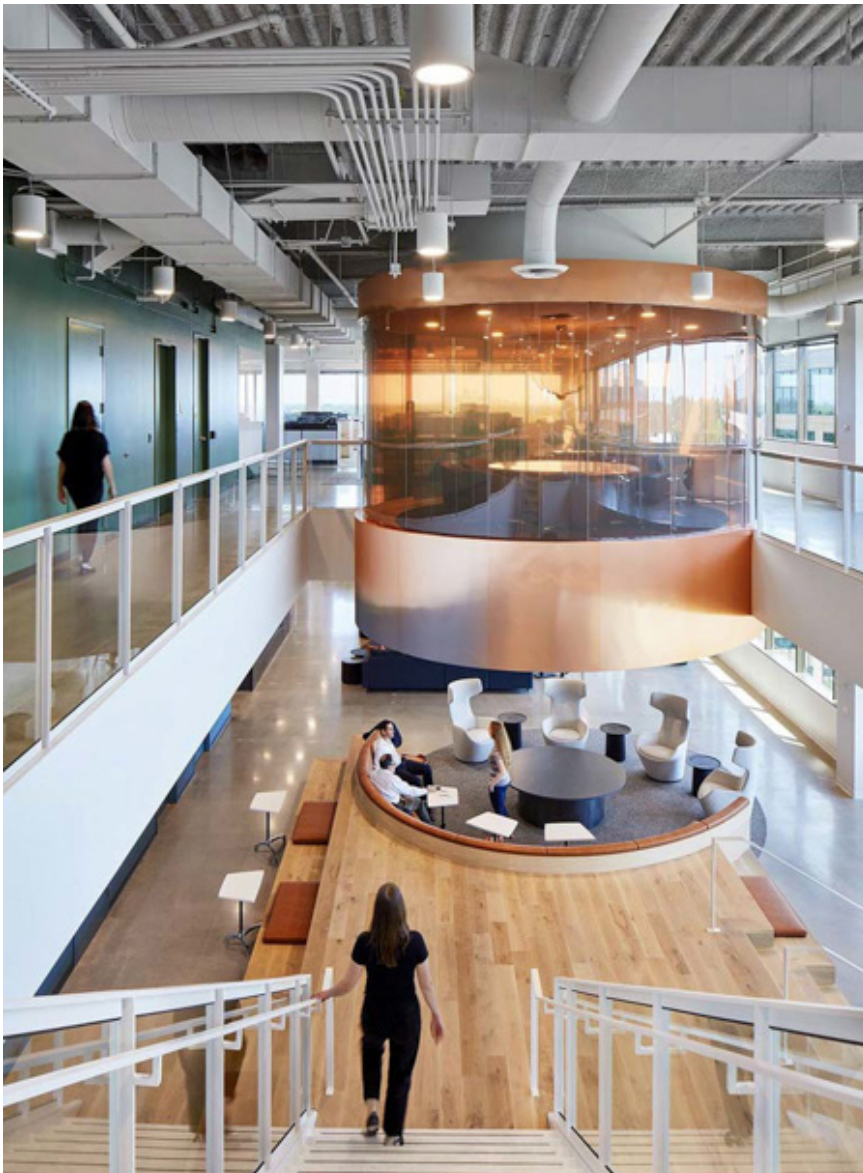
anodizing process creates a protective coating, but you can add pigment to it. So you can make it look like brass or you can make it look like bronze. And you're starting with different kinds of graining on the metal, too, whether it is satin or brushed," Schaefer noted.

Chemetal aluminum is ideal for inlays or panels with added sheen, designed to enhance a range of surfaces. "It's reflective, so you can use it in a space almost like a mirror to create a sense of expansiveness and bring in light," Schaefer explained. "When you have a sheet that looks like a polished metal, it's fantastic."

The metal is malleable so it is often utilized to cover bare walls or columns, transforming them into interesting focal points. "The thing about aluminum is that you can bend and mold it. If you are using thick metals, they are harder to fabricate. A thin, anodized aluminum can be cut with normal woodworking equipment. There's a lot that you can do with it," Schaefer said.

Chemetal not only offers high-shine options but darker metallics that have an industrial touch. The Surface Mode Collection features designs on thicker metals, in a variety of black shades. "People really like a darker metal panel, similar to a loft-style industrial door. And they wanted the same look in a sheet, so we started doing that," Schaefer said.

He noted that Surface Mode is a popular alternative because of the contrast to typical shiny aluminum, and it pairs well with concrete or wood accents. "When we began working on Surface Mode, we thought about all of the colors and the different palettes we could choose. We decided to start with black metal because it is a foundation that can be used anywhere."



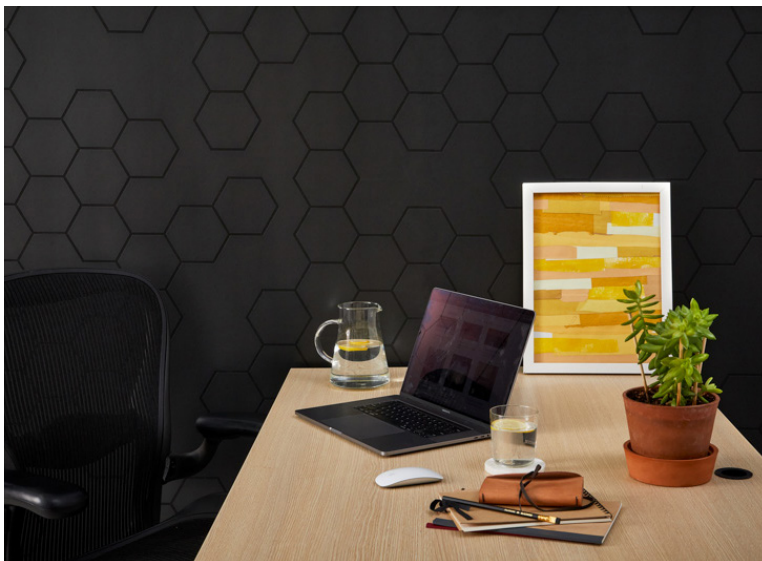
Chemetal's HPL sheet in Satin Copper brings a sophisticated sheen to the Digi International conference room. Photos courtesy of Chemetal

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*Chemetal's HPL in Satin Silver adorns columns in a Haworth showroom.*



*Ideal on office walls, Surface Mode panels feature designs on thicker metals, in black shades.*

The designs are on a thicker metal, and as Schaefer explained, when they developed the line, that meant taking both company and client timelines into consideration. "We launched Surface Mode a little over a year ago, and the CNC-routing on these particular pieces is a pretty slow process. We not only came up with designs that we liked and thought would do well in the marketplace, but we asked, how long are these going to run? Working with wood is quick, routing metal takes a while."

A supportive laminate backer is unnecessary, reducing installation time, but for Schaefer, the highlight of the original Surface Mode product is the texture found in each of the 14 styles. "It's actually a great background, because there's variation," he said. Now Chemetal is moving to the other end of the spectrum, with a lighter look and feel that captures the post-pandemic mood.

At BDNY in November, the company is previewing Transparency, the latest addition to Surface Mode. Laser-cut and powder-coated on .062" and .09" aluminum



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sheets, Transparency is the newest way to divide spaces. The nine designs include classic linear motifs and biophilic curves that bring a contemporary aesthetic to interiors. “We see screening with felt and other materi-

als,” Schaefer said. “And we are doing that here with shapes and visual and actual transparency.”

Schaefer also noted that the plexiglass trend has finally waned, but he still wanted to strike a balance be-

tween totally clear and opaque. “That was definitely part of the conversation, whether or not we were cutting too much area out and if the material was going to be rigid enough. So there’s a compromise there. The designs are intricate, but you can still put your hand through these panels.”

The color story, Schaefer explained, is a departure for Chemetal, with brighter hues like Saffron, Sky Blue, Terracotta, and Arctic White in the collection. “We saw a lot of color, like pastels, coming from Europe, and it is being interpreted in furniture and for the office. But we grounded it a bit. We kept it playful. It’s fun, this powder-coated color with energy.”

Schaefer added that he is looking forward to the full launch of Transparency—and what’s next for Chemetal. “We offer A&D professionals metal designs for interior spaces. This is the progression, a new direction for us, and we’re excited about it.” ■



*Laser-cut and powder-coated on aluminum sheets, Transparency is the latest addition to the Surface Mode line.*



*Colorful Transparency panels can be used as privacy screens in the office.*