The Albertina currently houses around 65,000 drawings and almost one million prints from all the important artistic periods, ranging from the late Gothic to the contemporary modern. After a long period of hibernation, an effort is under way to revitalize and restructure the entire collection. The palace of the Albertina, located in the historical heart of Vienna and home to these artistic treasures, is currently being renovated in order to expand and convert it to a modern exhibition and research center.

The palace itself will be converted according to a totally new and spacious room concept. Once construction is final, the Albertina together with a new temporary exhibit hall, will boast a total of about 2,400 square yards (2,000 square meters) of exhibition space.

**Art database**

In addition, a deep storage vault will serve as a safe place to store the collection. Fully automated high-shelf storage will provide ample space for the 10,000 masterpieces, stored in cassettes. A computer-controlled storage administration system delivers items within 90 seconds. Since February 1999, and as part of the construction project, Albertina employees have been digitally capturing the pictorial data of all drawings and watercolors for inclusion in a huge database. This project has the support of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Once the deep storage vault is completed, a research building furnished with state-of-the-art equipment, reading rooms, digital studios, a library and records office, and a reproduction and restoration department will be built. This building will function as the nerve center of the Albertina’s collection activities.

By the end of 2002, the renovation of the Albertina should be complete with its totally new exhibition concept.
The Albertina has now decided to glaze pictures with “Mirogard Protect” before sending them to temporary exhibits. Aside from protection from UV rays, “Mirogard Protect” safety glass offers color neutrality, high brilliance, freedom from reflection and mechanical protection – in more than one way. The UV protection foil glued between the glass panes prevents the formation of damaging splinters in case the glass breaks. When transporting the pictures, it is therefore no longer necessary to remove and replace the conventional glass panes, saving valuable time. The laminated safety glass used for the pictures and showcases also protects them against theft and vandalism.

The Albertina has already signaled to the Schott Austria Sales & Distribution Co. that after its reopening it will use “Mirogard Protect” for all artworks displayed in its permanent exhibition rooms.

Construction will conclude in the fall of 2002. Then, with its deep storage vault, research building, new exhibition hall and a totally new exhibition concept, the Albertina will once again regain the importance it once had in Austrian and international artistic circles.

Protection with quality glass

The conservation of priceless works of art will increasingly demand special precautions, especially when works are sent out as part of a larger temporary exhibition. This unavoidably exposes the art works to all kinds of dangers, above all to the “ravages of time”, which in conservation circles simply means ultraviolet rays. Practically all materials that the artist used to create the work of art are slowly but surely damaged by UV rays with the passage of time: colors, canvases, wood or paper – all suffer. Most of these materials lose their original brilliance: colors become pale and matte, losing their power; paper and wood gradually turn darker. This is one reason why so many works of art are displayed only under very low light.

The Albertina has already signaled to the Schott Austria Sales & Distribution Co. that after its reopening it will use “Mirogard Protect” for all artworks displayed in its permanent exhibition rooms.

Functional Glass with Added Advantages

“Mirogard” compared to conventional glass:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>“Mirogard” / “Mirogard Protect”</th>
<th>Window glass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of reflection</td>
<td>0.9 %</td>
<td>approx. 8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of transmission</td>
<td>99 %</td>
<td>approx. 91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived color rendition</td>
<td>outstanding, true</td>
<td>limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splinter protection</td>
<td>high with “Mirogard Protect”</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical protection</td>
<td>medium to high with “Mirogard Protect”, depending on glass thickness</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UV protection (300–380 nm)</td>
<td>99 %, with “Mirogard Protect” Standard 3/2</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advantages of “Mirogard Protect”:

- True color rendition
- No distracting reflections
- Practically invisible
- Protection against prohibited access against splinters in case of breakage against substance damage caused by UV rays

Mirogard compared to conventional glass. The non-reflective glass (left) allows a clear view of Rembrandt’s ‘Golden Helmet’ which can be seen in the ‘Gemäldegalerie’ in Berlin.