The technology company SCHOTT invested some 114 million euros in research and development in 2002, which is equivalent to around six percent of sales. Application-oriented research and development is an important prerequisite in order to remain competitive and to ensure the company’s long-term success. By developing new technologies SCHOTT can improve existing products and create new ones. Several factors are necessary to be successful in these efforts. The SCHOTT managers who are responsible for Research and Development are convinced that “the freedom to be creative, technical know-how and a business sense” are among the most important.

Creativity is crucial

“Things of seemingly little importance can often make the difference between profitability and unprofitability, or success and failure,” says Dr. Uwe H. Böhlke, the former Head of SCHOTT’s Research & Development and now Executive Vice President of the Home Tech Strategic Business Unit.

When developing new technologies, the idea is to identify and exploit these so-called things of little importance with a kind of artistic creativity. The premise that scientists and artists are motivated by similar creative challenges led to the idea of a photo exhibition. Dr. Böhlke and the photographer Werner Feldmann decided to document a series of development projects over three years. The assignment was to photograph the individual steps of the development process without revealing the innovative trick. The result is a collection of very extraordinary high-tech motifs.

The photo exhibition entitled “Fascinating Innovation” with motifs of some of SCHOTT’s technological developments shows the work of engineers and scientists from a totally different perspective.
Interesting shots and angles

Although the technology itself is probably only interesting for experts, the photographer has opened a completely new aesthetic dimension to the technical aspects. Werner Feldmann’s photo exhibition primarily consists of subtly lighted close-ups showing the details from an unusual perspective. With his know-how, professional craftsmanship and the brilliance and clear definition of the poster-size pictures, the photographer has succeeded in presenting fascinating high-tech phenomena from different angles and thus captivating his audience.

The original titles of the photos create humorous associations: for example, “A long breath” and “Some like it hot” on the subject of melting; “Like making pretzels” and “A lens dish” for producing optical lenses; or “Light-duty washing” and “Bubbling with variety” for machining components. Viewers are also offered a serious explanation for each of the 36 motifs.

The exhibition conveys exactly what the title promises: “Fascinating Innovation.” As the initiators say, the artistic presentation of innovation indeed offers many interesting shots and angles.