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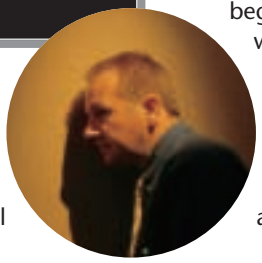
From *Obsidian*

How long has glass existed? The answer to this and many other intriguing questions about this universal material can be found at the Schott GlasMuseum in Jena, which opened its doors on September 1, 2000.



Visitors can listen to the sounds of glass – a variety of tones from a versatile material.

The museum's location is of great historical significance to Schott, because Jena is where company founder Otto Schott began with a melting furnace and a few employees in 1884. Thus, it was only natural for the Schott Group to open the museum 116 years later, on the exact same spot.

A part of the building now occupied by the museum was once part of the original "Laboratory of Glass Technology". So it's no accident that the Schott GlasMuseum now stands quite literally on the cradle of the German special glass industry. It was right here that Otto Schott laid the foundations of modern glass science and technology.

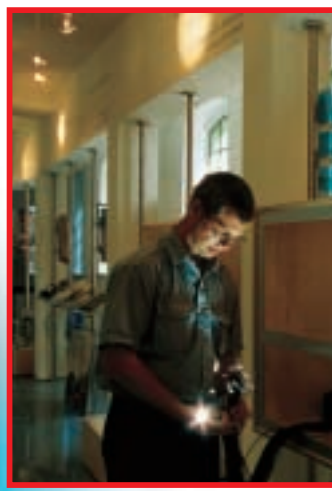
Schott presents here a highly interesting setting, much unlike classical museums with traditional exhibition halls. "We wanted to create a modern museum that would express the ways that Schott sees itself and that spans the beginnings of glass and continues with the milestones of technological and production breakthroughs all the way to Schott's current innovations", explains Dr. Jürgen Steiner, Manager of Corporate Culture and Project Manager of the museum. In order for this ambitious goal to become a reality, Schott commissioned the Wuppertal advertising agency Panroyal with the total conception and project coordination. The agency then brought architect Torsten Czech (Essen), exhibition designer Frank Joerges (Krefeld) and the Frankfurt media experts at Kaleidomania and Audiomania to Jena. The highly creative team joined forces to create a modern museum with state-of-the-art media and presentation techniques. Panroyal manager Norwin Kandera says: "The first reactions we got from the museum's visitors confirm that we achieved a good mix of contents, architecture, exhibition design and media."

The fascination of glass

Upon walking into the museum, visitors see a large piece of obsidian, a natural glass created by the mighty forces of a volcanic eruption.

So visitors can get into the right mood, two walls full of videos consisting of ten monitors vividly introduce them to the fascinating history of glass. It is here that visitors learn about the basic trio called Sand – Fire – Glass. At the end of the video sequence, the floor lights up and the viewer gets the impression of standing on an oversized, hot "Ceran" cooktop panel. Dramatic music directs the visitors' attention to a large hourglass built of two 25-liter laboratory flasks which suddenly appears out of nowhere.

As visitors move about, they often run across smaller hourglasses precisely where the informative video clips have been installed. A turn to the left makes the video clip start in German, while



This interesting and informative display illustrates how special glasses are shaped by a machine.

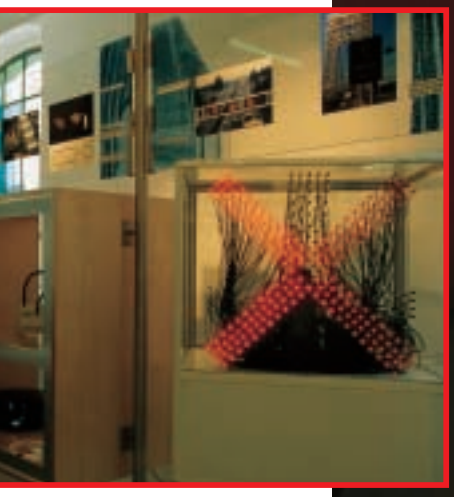
to LASER GLASS

a turn to the right delivers the English version. Visitors can look at the hourglass at any time to see how much time has elapsed.

All of the explanatory texts are bilingual as well. "After all, we are an international group of companies and would like to attract an international audience", explains Dr. Steiner. Using the practical audio guided tour, the visitor can embark on his own individual museum trip. The small device resembles a mobile phone and every station along the trip offers the choice of German or English.

Milestones in the development of glass technology

Next to the creative use of picture, video and light, authentic exhibition pieces reflect Schott's innovative achievements. Some of the highlights include the original optical glasses developed by Otto Schott, the heat-resistant glass cylinders that once helped gaslight to achieve a technological breakthrough and helped Schott become an industrial giant in the process. The famous Wagenfeld teapot with its Bauhaus design, as well as fiber optic components and glass-to-metal seals used in electronic



A wide range of displays illustrate how glass is used – here, for example, fiber optic light guides in variable message signs.

Video walls and exciting music at the entrance to the museum get visitors into the right mood for glass. The floor lights up to give the sensation of standing on a "Ceran" cooktop panel. In the background is a giant hourglass.

Clever interior design of the 400 square meter Schott GlasMuseum successfully achieves a feeling that it is compact and spacious at the same time.

applications are also on display. At the same time, visitors can marvel at the revolutionary "Ceran" glass ceramic cooking surfaces that have conquered kitchens throughout the world since 1972. Also impressive is the "Zerodur" glass ceramic used in the world's most powerful telescopes. Exhibits dealing with Schott's coating technologies and a reconstruction of Otto Schott's laboratory are further points of interest.

Innovations for the future

At the end of the museum tour, visitors learn how Schott, as an innovative forward-looking group of companies, is set to meet the challenges and visions of the third millennium with its special glasses and other high-tech materials. One learns that Schott's optical materials are used for microlithography in the manufacturing of microchips or that the company makes the world's thinnest glass (only 0.03 mm thick!). Thin glasses are used, for example, in cell phone displays or in notebooks. The centerpiece of the "Innovations for the Future" section is clearly a large statue made of laser glass. It clearly symbolizes the almost endless possibilities of the material glass. 3,500 of these laser glass plates, key components of the world's largest laser system, will soon do their part to reconstruct the processes on the sun in order to produce unlimited energy here on Earth.

The Schott GlasMuseum shows products made by Schott not only as exhibits, but also in the exhibition technology itself. "Mirogard" coated glasses for showcases and display boards is used, as well as a newly developed fluorescent light with glass tube profiles for basic lighting, halogen lamp reflectors for the exhibition piece and fiber optic components in showcase lighting.

Coming face to face with the past: Classic items of household glassware from Jena, for example heat resistant "Jenaer Glas" cookware and tableware and a "Sintrax" coffeemaker.

Schott GlasMuseum

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Opening hours:
Tuesday – Friday 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Group tours can be arranged.
Admission is free.

A museum for everyone

"The Schott GlasMuseum is not only an important contribution to corporate culture but it also provides an extensive overview of the technological development seen in the entire special glass industry", said Wolfgang Meyer, Managing Director of Schott's Jenaer Glas GmbH.

Nevertheless, the museum is only the first of three stages. The second stage of expansion will be the renovation of the original Schott Villa, paying tribute to the work of Otto Schott and certain aspects of the company history. The third stage envisions the presentation of large historical machines as well as other oversized exhibition pieces taken from the Schott Group ■

The use of state-of-the-art presentation techniques makes a visit to the museum a multimedia experience as well.

Schott innovations provide a glimpse into the future. The centerpiece is a fascinating laser glass statue. Laser glass is used in the world's biggest laser to generate energy by nuclear fusion.