

# Marble, Gold and “Mirogard”

The reopening of the renowned **Albertina** Museum in Vienna in March 2003 was the media event of the year in Austria. Queen Sonja of Norway and Austrian President Thomas Klestil opened the renovated museum, which had remained closed to the public for nearly 10 years. Many of the exhibits are now protected by “Mirogard” products, SCHOTT’s anti-reflective picture glazing.

► Professional photograph restorer Andreas Gruber has been a busy man. He restored the photographs displayed at the new exhibition of the Albertina Museum in Vienna entitled “Eye and Camera – a History of Photography.” Some 300 photographs of the newly established collection had to be framed and protected by anti-reflective “Mirogard” for picture glazing. “Many of the exhibits had been exposed to dust and dirt for decades,” explains Gruber. So the restorer had to carefully clean the photographs and mend any creases or tears before they could be exhibited. Some of the artwork had to be painstakingly restored.

## Glass for all requirements

Picture framer Theobald Wirth fitted the glass in some 100 wooden frames and 200 aluminum frames. He personally measured all the photographs, made the passe-partouts and cut the “Mirogard” glass to size. Andreas Gruber then carefully placed the photos in the finished frames. For the restorer, the choice of glass depends on a number of criteria. How thick is the glass? How heavy is the glass? How large is the picture? Can the frame hold the weight of the glass? What glass thickness would be most suitable for the frame? How well must the glass be able to protect the picture against ultraviolet rays? How important is protection against splintering? All three types of “Mirogard” products were used for the various requirements.

“Mirogard” was not only required for the photographs on display. Sixty paintings by Edvard Munch are also exhibited at this museum, including his world famous painting, “The Scream.” With 30 international collectors willing to loan their works, the Munch exhibition was the largest ever seen outside Norway.



Glazing with “Mirogard protect” allows a reflection-free view of Edvard Munch’s famous painting, “The Scream.”

## Impressive art collection

The Albertina’s own inventory of art treasures would be ruined if they were exposed to daylight. With nearly one million prints and 65,000 drawings, the museum owns one of the most valuable graphic collections in the world. In the 20th century, for example, the Albertina displayed large numbers of artwork from Schiele, Klimt, Kokoschka and Picasso. In addition, the Albertina has collections of photographs and architectural artwork. Almost all the exhibits, including Albrecht Dürer’s world famous watercolor Hare, must be protected against damaging light exposure and thus can only be displayed for a short time. For this reason, the Albertina will not have any permanent exhibitions. Some 12 temporary exhibitions with the museum’s own artwork and exhibits on loan are planned every year.

## A museum of superlatives

After being extensively reconstructed and expanded, the Albertina’s underground area is now larger than the space above ground. A 3,500-square meter storage facility extends 24 meters into the ground, and an exhibition hall was built into the bastion. The four-story study and research center has as well been constructed underground. The museum also houses 25,000

objects of the architectural collection and the newly acquired collection of some 75,000 photographs.

Some 100 million euros, a considerable amount of which was donated by sponsors, were invested in the reconstruction of Austria’s most contemporary museum. The palace of the “Albertina” has been turned into a real pearl. For the first time ever, visitors can tour 18 Hapsburg staterooms that have been renovated according to the originals. They have been refurbished with 20 kilometers of newly gilded moldings and many square meters of marble. The historical patterns and colors of the silk wallpaper were reproduced by Rubelli in Venice.

For the professional restorer Andreas Gruber a particularly busy time has come to an end with the conclusion of this project. But the expert need not worry about a lack of work. In fact, the next projects are already in the offing. Nor has the Albertina had to be concerned about business. The rush of visitors has exceeded all expectations. ◀

[www.albertina.at](http://www.albertina.at)



The Hapsburg staterooms in the palace of the “Albertina” were restored according to the originals.



With one million prints and 65,000 drawings, the “Albertina,” which reopened in 2003 after extensive reconstruction and expansion, owns one of the most valuable graphic collections in the world.



Some 300 photographs were fitted with passe-partouts and professionally glazed for the new exhibition at the Albertina entitled “Eye and Camera – a History of Photography.”

## Glass for Artwork

A total of 117 square meters of “Mirogard” products were required for glazing the artwork in the Albertina: 61 square meters of “Mirogard,” 28 square meters of “Mirogard protect” and 28 square meters of “Mirogard plus.” Most of it was used for the photographs to be displayed in an exhibition. The project was supervised by SCHOTT Austria Sales & Distribution Co.

“Mirogard” combines excellent anti-reflection properties with outstanding color brilliance.

“Mirogard Protect” is a laminated safety glass that also offers protection against vandalism and absorbs 99 percent of damaging ultraviolet rays.

“Mirogard plus” is an alternative when protection against splinters is not required, whereas good protection against ultraviolet rays is necessary.