

# A Rainbow

Optical glass from Schott and light are the two main working materials that Hermann Schroeder needs in order to conjure surreal light worlds on celluloid with the aid of his camera.



*"Light life" photographer Hermann Schroeder*

The viewer can't make up his mind: Is it just a piece of broken glass or maybe an iridescent glacier? Has all of this been painted or does it really exist?

The one thing that is certain is that these bizarre photographs have created new multicolored worlds: Pastel-colored crystals illuminate dark nights and red waves break on green plains.

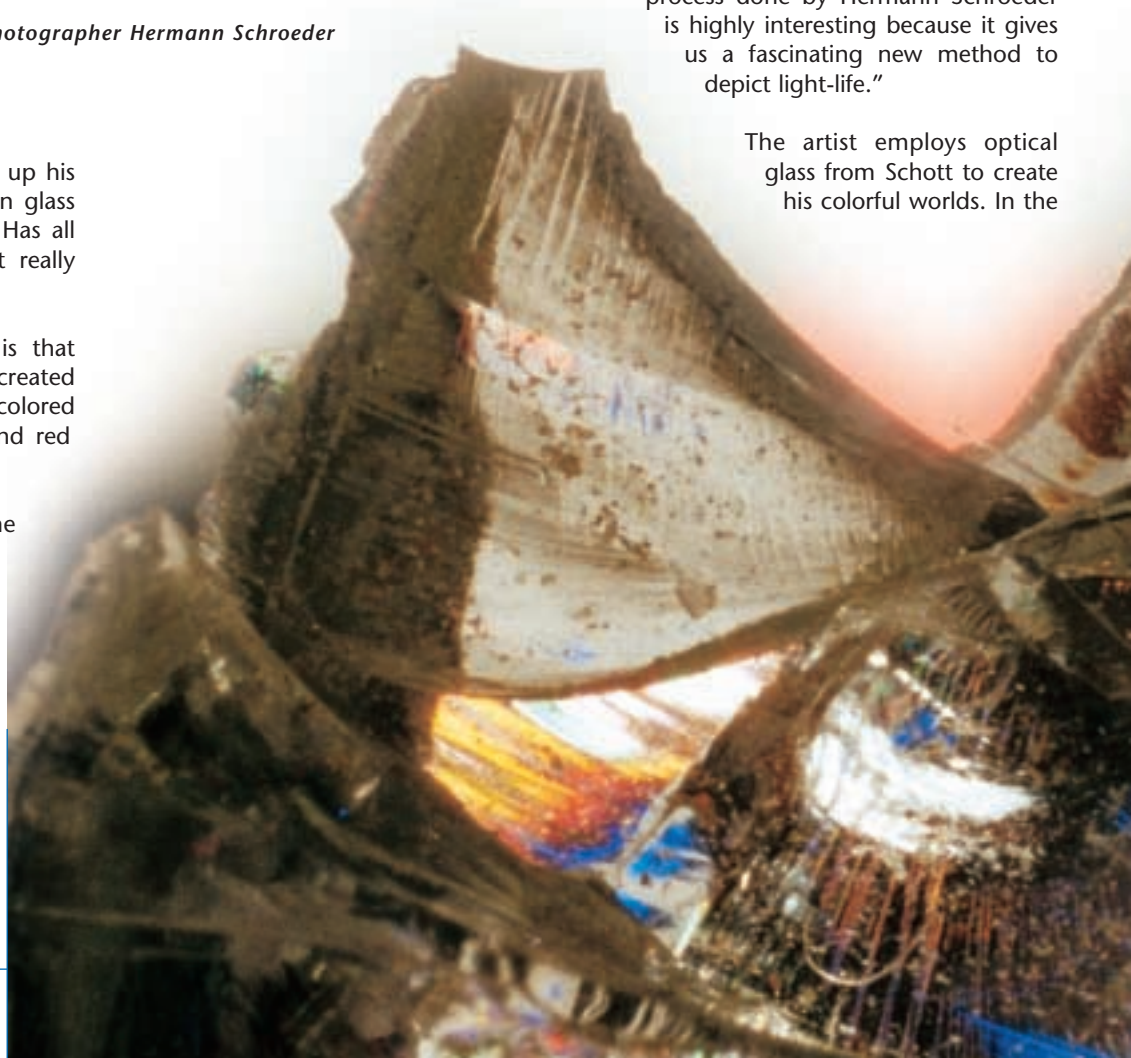
And it's exactly here where one encounters the two elements that the artist uses – light refracted on clear glass. The photos taken by Hermann Schroeder of Halver, Germany

show segments of broken glass pieces, some of which are magnified up to 200 times. The tiny objects that contain such abstract color worlds are nothing more than everyday 5- to 10-mm-long pieces of broken glass photographed with powerful macro lenses, but creatively lit and modeled by the artist. "Maybe these pictures should be called 'semi-abstract' works of art", thinks Hermann Schroeder. "They are real photographs that have no subsequent manipulation of any kind, no computers are involved here. By selecting the right broken glass pieces and providing suitable lighting and color design,

they will often remind the viewer of very natural subjects that look deceptively real."

The idea to create such artistically unique photographs dates back to the early seventies, when the photographer went in search of new subjects to capture on film. He began aiming his lens at very simple pieces of broken glass. The next step was to "color" the clear glass by light refraction, "livening it up" in the process. The idea remained in the trial stage, until the mid-nineties when Schroeder retired and therefore had enough time at his disposal. Now was the time to experiment in earnest! The colorful pictures are popular. Seven photo exhibits attest to the magic of Schroeder's pictures. Art Professor Ernst Fuchs from Vienna is enthusiastic about the unique photos. "The experimental process done by Hermann Schroeder is highly interesting because it gives us a fascinating new method to depict light-life."

The artist employs optical glass from Schott to create his colorful worlds. In the



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beginning, he sees a simple pile of broken glass before his eyes. Then he starts looking for the right surface – the objects are carefully scrutinized through a magnifying glass. Schroeder seldom has an exact idea how the final picture should look. “Quite often, the final picture looks completely different from the broken glass piece,” says the artist.

The exact process is Hermann Schroeder’s secret. And secretive it will remain, much like the magical colored worlds that the artist creates with the help of glass, light and a camera ■



*The ice bird (above) and an ice mountain (left): When photographed with a macro lens, breakage in glass is often reminiscent of subjects close to nature.*