

## Colourful Play with Shapes

### **Glasses from SCHOTT create a unique and colourful façade at Novartis' new office building in Basel**

The transformation of the Novartis headquarters, the Swiss pharmaceutical company, into an extremely modern research campus is well underway.

Gradual replacement of the buildings started with the glassy new 'Forum 3' office building designed by the renowned Basel based architects Diener + Diener. The five-storey building offers open plan offices for approximately 400 employees.

The highly complex facade consisting of coloured glasses that are stacked on top of each other can be considered to be the main attention-grabber. These glasses surround the structure with its 735 square metres of space, much like a colourful dress. The unique relief that hangs in front of what is actually the glass facade was designed and installed by the Swiss painter, Helmut Federle, together with the Austrian architect, Gerold Wiederin. The intense colours are intended to be reminiscent of the beginnings of the chemical industry that began with dyes in Basel.

To achieve the floating effect of the installation, a total of 1,200 panes of glass in over 20 different colour shades and rectangular shapes were inserted into three different vertical layers. From both the inside and the outside, the facade resembles an over-sized watercolour painting. Its colours vary from blue, dark blue, light blue, green, red, violet, gray to yellow, depending on the incident light and the angle of view. The overlapping of layers and the mixed colour shades adds to the colorfulness. The body tinted coloured glasses used, ARTISTA® and IMERA® from SCHOTT, are known for their impressive intensive colours

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The facade consists of a laminated glass that is composed of a 10mm toughened white glass and approximately 3mm toughened SCHOTT coloured glass up to a size of approx. 400 x 150 cm. "As this was one of the largest architectural glass orders we have ever received, this project presented us with a major technological challenge from the very beginning," says Udo Ehlers, Sales Manager for Architectural Glass in SCHOTT's manufacturing unit near Hanover in Germany. "After all, these panes had to be three times longer than the glasses that we normally produce," he adds.

The length issue was resolved by using the laminating technique by placing several smaller sheets of the solid-coloured glass on top of the white base glass and "fixed" until the required glass size was achieved.

The construction of the facade was planned by Emmer Pfenniger Partner AG from Basel and executed by Schmidlin AG Fassadentechnologie from Aesch. Their work proved to be just as challenging as manufacturing the glasses. With the ambitious demands of the architects in mind, the planners developed a unique facade support concept that was then subjected to wind tunnel testing. It calls for the entire glass structure to be held by steel tension rods that were installed between the various panes on three levels.

Each of the various panes is point-mounted at up to eight different positions using short cantilevers that are affixed to the tension rods. The different positions, sizes and thicknesses of the glass panes made it necessary to custom manufacture many of the system components, yet another major challenge.

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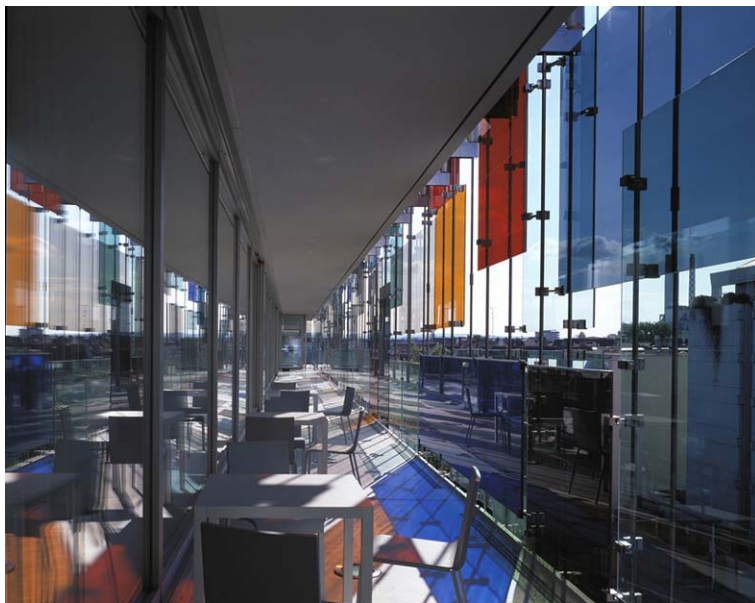
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At the Novartis headquarters in Switzerland over 20 different coloured glass shades from SCHOTT represent the beginnings of the chemical industry that began with dyes in Basel.

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