

Otto Schott (1851 – 1935)

Founder of the specialized glass industry

Even as a young boy, Otto Schott was fascinated by his father's glassmaking business in Witten (Westphalia). He was so enthusiastic about the family tradition of glassmaking that he studied chemistry, mineralogy and physics in Aachen, Würzburg and Leipzig, and, in 1875, he wrote the dissertation »Contributions to the Theory and Practice of Glass Fabrication« in Jena. In the year 1879, he began conducting basic research on the melting, glass forming and crystallization behavior of many different chemical compounds. In 1882, he moved to Jena to reinforce his collaboration with the physicist Ernst Abbe (1840–1905) and Carl Zeiss (1816–1888), the owner of an optical workshop. This is where he founded the »Schott & Associates Glass Technology Laboratory«, together with Abbe and Zeiss, in 1884. For the first time, Schott developed specialized glasses with precisely defined properties for a wide variety of applications and turned his laboratory into an industrial company of international stature. With the development of entirely new types of glass and new production methods, Schott not only became the founder of modern glass science and glass technology, but also of the specialized glass industry as a new industrial branch. Without reservation, Otto Schott supported the socio-political ideas of Ernst Abbe that led to the creation of the Carl Zeiss Foundation. His business in Jena was the breeding ground for the SCHOTT technology company today, with its headquarters in Mainz.

