SCHOTT
glass made of ideas

German Book and Script Museum, Leipzig

Project Report

Display cabinet made of intelligent glass

The 21 m long and 2.8 m high display cabinet with its exhibits at the German Book and Script Museum in Leipzig is really more a complete work of art than a typical display case. The semi-transparent transformation glass MIRONA® provided an innovative solution on how to present the museum's milestones of media inventions in an impressive manner.

The Task

A celebration marked the opening of the German Book and Script Museum's new permanent exhibition in Leipzig in March 2012. The museum had moved to its new location in the fourth extension building of the German National Library designed by Gabriele Glöckler just the year before.

The nearly 1,000 square meter permanent exhibition in the entrance area depicts the historical development from the first printing press all the way to the digital world of the Internet in a presentation entitled "Codes – Books – Networks: from Cuneiform Writing to Binary Code." Here, special importance was placed on developing an emotional experience through exhibit design.

The Challenge

The Berlin-based firm Iglhaut + von Grote was responsible for the overall concept and exhibit design. The goal was to present the exhibits in an appealing and fascinating multimedia manner by creating a fluent and open pathway.

The extremely different materials used in the exhibits posed a special challenge. In addition to showing objects made of wood and stone or paper and metal, they also had to find a way to present the media surfaces of e-book reading devices and LED tickers. The core element of their approach was to make the dynamic development of mass media over the last 100 years able to be experienced and to allow the viewer to become part of the presentation. They began looking for an equiva-

lent to the mass media's ability to encapsulate the world like a second layer of reality. The exhibit makers contacted the experts at SCHOTT Architecture for help in finding innovative solution to this problem. Together, they began developing and testing prototypes.

THE MATERIAL

- Laminated safety glass made of 2 x MIRONA® High-Reflective Grey | 4 mm and grey glass | 4 mm
- Dies with pre-drilled holes

The Solution

Five individual freestanding white showcases positioned in the room portray the history and importance of scripts and book printing. In order to present the mass media of the 20th century, a large black display case 21 m in length and 2.8 m high was selected.

This is conceived to be a media theater with a chronological sequence that is driven by the speed of the media over the last 100 years. Lighting, captions, LED tickers and videos are orchestrated like a show in rhythm with fast moving images and omnipresent informational offerings. After sampling different types of glass, MIRONA® High-Reflective Grey was chosen as monolithic glass. A laminated glass featuring specially defined transmission and reflection properties had to be developed and manufactured because the safety requirements called for laminated safety glass to be used.

The black display case made of 17 panes of the reflective, semi-transparent glass MIRONA® is mounted to an exposed concrete wall. Objects and media images can only be seen when they are illuminated for a brief moment. The viewer gazes through the reflective surface in these areas behind which the timed lighting illuminates the ensembles of objects one after another. The visitor himself also appears on the reflective surface, along with the entire exhibition room and all of the other repeating presentations. The goal of making the viewer part of the staged production was thus achieved.

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