



## Shaping the future: The WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory is officially opened

**Dialogue between industry and culture / official opening, award ceremony and exhibition launch in the Production area on May 23, 2014**

**Shaping the future. With its new, ultra-modern and resource-efficient Mechatronics Centre – the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory – WITTENSTEIN AG is pointing the way to future production concepts at the Group's headquarters in Igersheim-Harthausen (South-West Germany). Just two years after the ground-breaking dig, this 35 million euro project – the single biggest investment in the history of the company – was officially opened at a colourful ceremony on the evening of May 23, 2014 in the presence of some six hundred invited guests.**

**The main theme of the event was an intensive dialogue between art and business inspired by the thoughts of Peter Sloterdijk (philosopher and Rector of Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design) on the meaning of the term "innovation" – one of the two components consciously chosen for the new Innovation Factory's name. This exciting exchange then continued with the award ceremony for the winners in the "ENTREPRENEUR 4.0 AWARD" photography competition and the launch of the "Portraying Visions" exhibition by Oliviero Toscani, the internationally celebrated photographer.**

The first staff actually moved into the new building, designed by HENN Architekten with around 18,000 square metres of usable floor space, in mid-March; however, sufficient space was left clear in the middle of the Production area for the official ceremony which took place just over a week ago. "The new building underlines the clear commitment of WITTENSTEIN and the owner family both to our Igersheim-Harthausen site and to Germany as a manufacturing location", emphasized Dr. Manfred Wittenstein, Chairman of the WITTENSTEIN AG Supervisory Board, in his welcoming address. "At the same time, the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory marks the dawn of a new era for us. We are optimally equipped to face the

May 25, 2014

High-tech products made by WITTENSTEIN fly into space and win Formula One races. Intelligent drive systems – from the world's smallest high-performance servo drive to the latest state of the art in medical technology – are developed, produced and marketed by a team of around 1800 employees. With a blend of dedication and enthusiasm, we set benchmarks – every day – worldwide.



Official ceremony in the Production area of the new WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory

---

#### WITTENSTEIN AG

Walter-Wittenstein-Straße 1  
97999 Igersheim · Germany

**Contact: Sabine Maier**  
Press Officer  
Tel. +49 7931 493-10399  
Fax +49 7931 493-10301  
E-Mail: [sabine.maier@wittenstein.de](mailto:sabine.maier@wittenstein.de)  
[www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)

challenges of the future." The name selected for the new building sends out a clear signal: "It represents the conscious fusion of innovation and factory, which used to be two separate worlds but are now merged together in a way that is instantly visible to customers and visitors alike. Innovation is a common thread running through the entire value chain of our mechatronic products; at the heart of the Innovation Factory are our production processes.

Dr. Wittenstein, the Factory's 'landlord', then made way for two special guests keen to offer their personal congratulations: Professor Gunter Henn (HENN Architekten) began by handing over a work of art by Thomas Baumgärtel, the German artist also known by the pseudonym "Banana Sprayer". His sprayed bananas, which are reminiscent of Andy Warhol's "Velvet Underground Banana" by, can be found all over the world at the entrances to many art galleries and museums – and in future hanging in the new Innovation Factory. Professor Wolf-Dieter Lukas, Head of the 'Key Technologies – Research for Innovation' Department at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, likewise declared his immense admiration for WITTENSTEIN's newest construction project: "Something truly great has been created here".

### **Spearheading Industry 4.0**

The WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory, in which the production of mechatronic drive systems finally got under way a few days ago, plays a key role with regard to "tomorrow's products and production processes. Its inner workings are designed to spearhead Industry 4.0 in several different ways. Through the Innovation Factory WITTENSTEIN is pushing ahead with the development of mechatronic products and systems for customers' future applications. Parallel to this the company is gradually establishing dedicated assembly processes in line with Industry 4.0 principles. The goal is the so-called 'smart factory', which will provide staff with the tailored information they need to take decisions in the right place and at the right time in order to sustainably enhance productivity and flexibility. The new hybrid building provides an ideal point of departure on the road to this ambitious goal – an ingenious, architecturally distinctive and highly sustainable combination of production and all other functions such as offices, labs and testing stations. It houses all the Group's mechatronic Business Units including all associated departments such as Development, Production, Sales, Order Control, Purchase and Logistics, Quality Assurance and Customer Service.

---

#### **WITTENSTEIN AG**

Walter-Wittenstein-Straße 1  
97999 Igersheim · Germany

**Contact: Sabine Maier**  
Press Officer  
Tel. +49 7931 493-10399  
Fax +49 7931 493-10301  
E-Mail: [sabine.maier@wittenstein.de](mailto:sabine.maier@wittenstein.de)  
[www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)

The consistent ecological and economic concept applied throughout has already been rewarded with a pre-certificate in gold by the DGNB (German Sustainable Building Council).

### **How to create value by blurring boundaries**

Whereas in the past work groups went about their respective tasks more or less in physical isolation, tightly interconnected units comprised of Development, Production and Sales are now emerging in the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory. "The complete value creation process takes place here within a thirty metre radius – from the initial idea to the finished product", said Dieter Spath, President of WITTENSTEIN AG, summing up the overall concept of the new Mechatronics Centre. In his keynote speech on the Friday evening he went on to predict that new value will be created by blurring boundaries: "That's why we expect to become faster and more efficient – and generally better than ever as far as our customers are concerned".

In the factories of the future, human beings are at the centre of the production process. "People come first, not machines", Spath announced to the six hundred guests from the worlds of business, science, politics and the arts who accepted the invitation to the official opening: "The machines will simply provide staff in Production with all information relevant to a specific task in real time. Put another way, tomorrow's employees will be planners and decision-makers in a complex environment. Of course, a higher skills level will simultaneously be demanded of them, which is why people must be properly qualified to leverage the benefits of Industry 4.0."

He continued in the same vein: "The core ideas of Industry 4.0 give us a unique chance to respond even more flexibly to customer needs – not only with dedicated products but also with innovative, dedicated production processes." Spath was extremely enthusiastic about the new opportunities for flexible work organization: "I4.0 powered by people".

The WITTENSTEIN President is convinced that the new building offers the best possible conditions for achieving this objective: "We'd obviously be delighted if customers from all over the world came to visit us in the beautiful Tauber valley, curious to learn more about the prospects for cooperation with us in a partnership driven by innovation. Who knows, maybe the Innovation Factory will become another popular place of pilgrimage for future production methods, similar to the one already set up in Stuttgart-Fellbach with our 'Urban Production' concept."

---

**WITTENSTEIN AG**

Walter-Wittenstein-Straße 1  
97999 Igersheim · Germany

**Contact: Sabine Maier**  
Press Officer  
Tel. +49 7931 493-10399  
Fax +49 7931 493-10301  
E-Mail: [sabine.maier@wittenstein.de](mailto:sabine.maier@wittenstein.de)  
[www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)

## **The meaning of 'innovation' from a cultural-philosophical perspective**

Professor Peter Sloterdijk, philosopher and Rector of Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, took to the stage next to deliver a speech focusing on the evolution of man – an inquisitive creature by nature – into an architect and artist of innovation. With his pointed anthropological portrayals of homo sapiens on his long journey from predator to innovation-tolerant being – it took the cultural and historical influences of the Renaissance to 'give the green light' to human curiosity again as the driving force behind all innovation – Sloterdijk cast a spell over the audience in the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory from his very first words. "The way was then clear in Europe for a successful symbiosis of merchantry and engineering. It was the marriage between banking and engineering that paved the way for economic prosperity, which has continued up until this day!"

In his inimitable way Sloterdijk wound up his philosophical discourse with a few words of praise for the new Innovation Factory: "Congratulations on this magnificent installation! I'm still not absolutely sure whether it sprouted from the fields or landed from outer space?"

## **"Industry versus art": the Innovation Factory becomes a photo gallery**

The second big highlight of the evening event was the award ceremony for the winners in the international "ENTREPRENEUR 4.0 AWARD 2014" photography competition initiated jointly by Dr. Manfred Wittenstein and immagis, the Würzburg photo agency. The competition was endowed with prizes worth a total of 23,000 euros. The task of the photographers was to open up, through their interpretation of future entrepreneurs – in other words, the Entrepreneur 4.0 – new visual (creative) spaces for thought and for reflecting on the world in the 21st century. Thirty internationally renowned photographers and twelve students at the Ostkreuz School of Photography in Berlin participated.

The presentation of the awards to winning artists Sascha Weidner, Bastian Gehbauer, Mara Ploscaru and Julia Runge by star photographer Oliviero Toscani on the Friday evening, coincided with the newly opened Innovation Factory's transformation into an art gallery. The photographs submitted not only by the winners but also by several other nominees will be on show throughout the new

---

### **WITTENSTEIN AG**

Walter-Wittenstein-Straße 1  
97999 Igersheim · Germany

**Contact: Sabine Maier**  
Press Officer  
Tel. +49 7931 493-10399  
Fax +49 7931 493-10301  
E-Mail: [sabine.maier@wittenstein.de](mailto:sabine.maier@wittenstein.de)  
[www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)

building from now until the end of the year in an exhibition entitled "Portraying Visions", for which Felix Hoffmann, Chief Curator of C/O Berlin, has agreed to act as curator.

"Art is creativity in perfection" – this was the passionate doctrine proclaimed by Toscani on May 23. "If you don't have courage, you can't be creative. And without creativity there is no innovation." Photography in the context of Industry 4.0, embedded in the daily production routine of WITTENSTEIN, a mechatronics corporation – to Oliviero Toscani, guest speaker and chairman of the competition jury, a brilliant source of inspiration: "In my opinion, photography is the most appropriate art form for understanding the future. Our work inevitably presupposes that we have understood the present. After all, we can only photograph something that actually exists, though we obviously also make use of the opportunities opened up to us by picture editing technologies."

The official opening of the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory, hosted by radio and television presenter Andrea Grießmann, was followed on Sunday, May 25 by a lavish staff party including an ecumenical ceremony to consecrate the new building.

- **For all the latest information on the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory, see [www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)**

#### **Photos:**

- The WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory was officially opened on the evening of May 23, 2014 in the presence of some six hundred invited guests.
- Impressions of the official ceremony
- Impressions of the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory on the big day and illuminated later the same evening
- View of the "Portraying Visions" exhibition in the reception area of the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory

Texts and photographs in printable quality can be downloaded from <http://www.wittenstein.de/presse.html>.

#### **WITTENSTEIN AG – one with the future**

With around 1800 employees worldwide and sales of €250\* million in 2013/14 (\* provisional figure), WITTENSTEIN AG enjoys an impeccable reputation for innovation, precision and excellence in the field of mechatronic drive technology – not just in Germany but internationally.

---

#### **WITTENSTEIN AG**

Walter-Wittenstein-Straße 1  
97999 Igersheim · Germany

**Contact: Sabine Maier**  
Press Officer  
Tel. +49 7931 493-10399  
Fax +49 7931 493-10301  
E-Mail: [sabine.maier@wittenstein.de](mailto:sabine.maier@wittenstein.de)  
[www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)

The group comprises eight pacesetting Business Units with separate subsidiaries for servo gearheads, servo actuator systems, medical technology, miniature servo units, innovative gearing technology, rotary and linear actuator systems, nano technology and electronic and software components for drive technologies. Through its 60 or so subsidiaries and agents in approximately 40 countries, WITTENSTEIN ([www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)) is additionally represented in all the world's major technology and sales markets.

---

**WITTENSTEIN AG**

Walter-Wittenstein-Straße 1  
97999 Igersheim · Germany

**Contact: Sabine Maier**  
Press Officer  
Tel. +49 7931 493-10399  
Fax +49 7931 493-10301  
E-Mail: [sabine.maier@wittenstein.de](mailto:sabine.maier@wittenstein.de)  
[www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)