

Press Release

space-time continuity

Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Bahnhofstrasse 1
16 December 2021 – 22 January 2022

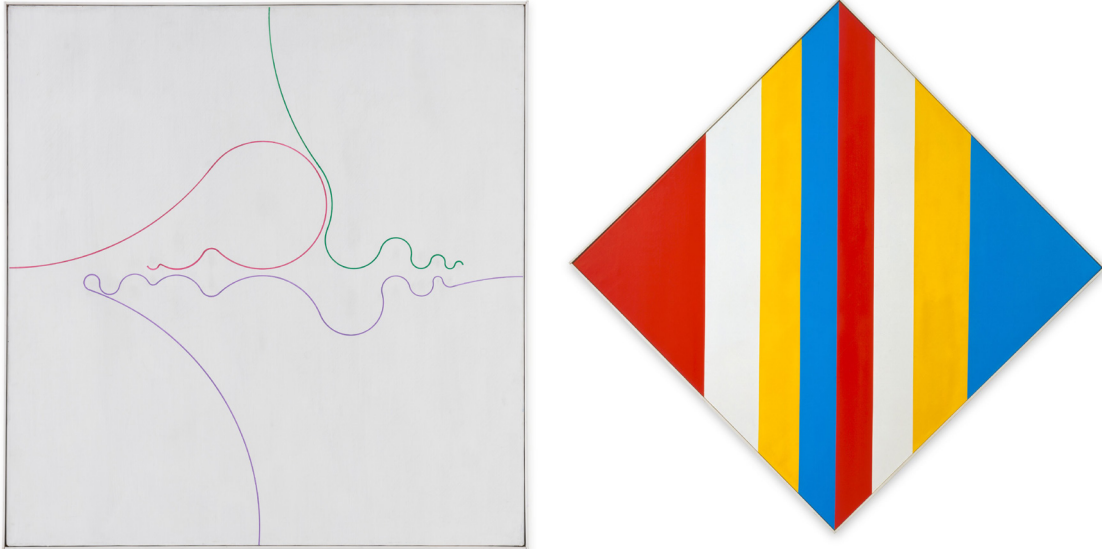


“The art in question can, perhaps, best be defined as the building up of significant patterns from the ever-changing relations, rhythms and proportions of abstract forms, each one of which, having its own causality, is tantamount to a law unto itself. As such, it presents some analogy to mathematics...” – Max Bill (1949)

This December, the exhibition ‘space-time continuity’ at the gallery’s new space on Bahnhofstrasse 1 will examine the dialogue between Max Bill, artist, designer, theorist, writer, curator and pedagogue, and a group of his contemporaries who explored a similar territory to his own art and ideas. Many of the works on display are from Max Bill’s private collection, indicating personal friendships as well as aesthetic exchanges. ‘space-time continuity’ is a testament to Bill’s proximity with, and attentiveness to, his artist peers and shows how he was at the very centre of the conversation to develop a radical new art. The artists featured in this exhibition alongside Max Bill include Josef Albers, Hans Arp, László Moholy-Nagy, Kurt Schwitters, Fritz Glarner, Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Georges Vantongerloo amongst others.

Max Bill’s contribution stems from the way we define and describe the art on view: the precise manner he approached the use of terms such as abstract, concrete, construction, non-objective; and the relationship between art, geometry, and mathematics. At the centre of the exhibition is an extraordinary, white marble sculpture by Bill, titled ‘konstruktion aus einem kreisring’ (Construction from a Ring) (1942), which is shown alongside two- and three-dimensional works spanning from the 1940s to the 1970s, such as ‘drei linien’ (three lines) (1944-46) and ‘acht flächen gleicher grösse’ (Eight Fields of Equal Surface) (1970-1971). The exhibition offers a way to understand Bill’s own consistent journey as an artist in the context of an ongoing aesthetic conversation and exploration of form.

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The title 'space-time continuity' refers to Bill's as well as Vantongerloo's engagement with mathematics, logic and physics, and with the crucial impact of Albert Einstein on their work, in particular Einstein's Theory of Relativity (1915), which explored the link between space and time. Building on his teacher Hermann Minkowski's geometric interpretation of relativity, Einstein united the three spatial dimensions and the fourth dimension of time and introduced the idea of the space-time continuum. Such a continuum was expressed by Bill through his moebius-shaped sculptures of endless ribbons, and by Vantongerloo particularly in his hanging works, such as 'Ligne circulaire et cercle à rayons variables' (Circular line and circle with changeable radii) (1946). Both artists explore the possibilities of topological form in a variety of materials. Through these shapes Bill and Vantongerloo sought to express ideas of continuity and infinity in their work, as well as exhibiting their profound interest in a changing understanding of energy, movement, cosmology and astrophysics.

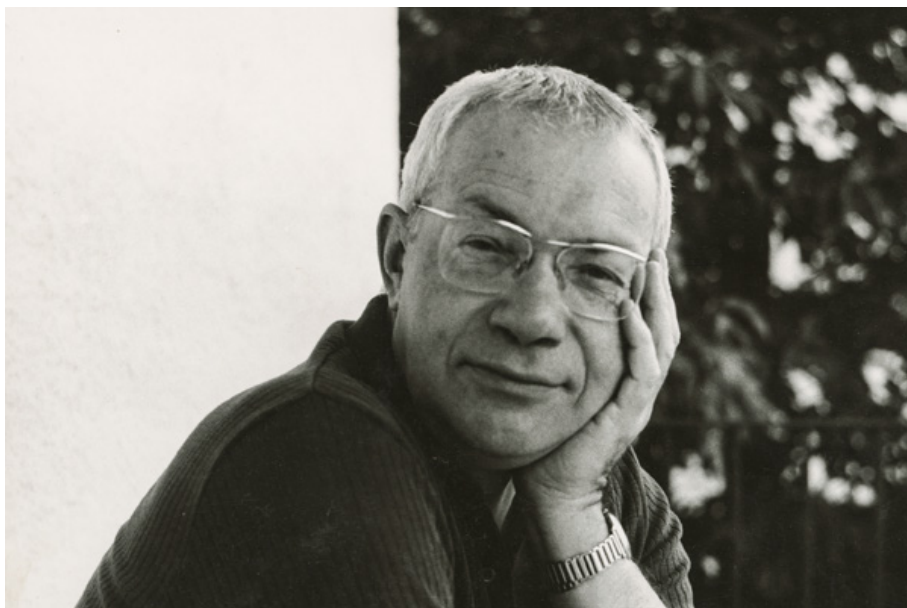
Not only did Bill create his own sculptural monument to Einstein in 1979-82, he also acquired the stone threshold from the physicist's house in Ulm, bought from the builders demolishing the building, and installed it in the garden of his self-designed Zumikon house. Such gestures indicate the perpetual interest of the artist in themes shared between art, mathematics and science. The artists included in this exhibition also testify to another kind of continuity: that of the individual dialogues, aesthetic relationships and of Concrete art through the decades.

Max Bill's work will also be presented at Hauser & Wirth New York, 69th Street, in the exhibition 'max bill & georges vantongerloo. crossover', opening on 27 January 2022.

About the artist

Max Bill (1908 – 1994) was a great Swiss polymath: an artist, architect, industrial designer, graphic designer, and teacher. He attended the Bauhaus where he was taught by Josef Albers, László Moholy-Nagy, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and Oskar Schlemmer. Bill remained closely associated with the Bauhaus school and was a key figure in developing and propagating its principles, through his professorship at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich and especially as a founder of the Ulm School of Design. Through his pursuit of a new visual language that could be understood by the senses alone, Bill defined the conventions of Swiss design for decades to come. His influence spread and was especially important in South America, where he was a catalyst for the Concrete and Neo-Concrete art movements.

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The Max Bill Georges Vantongerloo Stiftung was established by Bill's widow, the independent curator and scholar Dr. Angela Thomas Schmid, to represent the part of these two artists' estates entrusted to her care. Despite maintaining entirely distinct artistic practices, artists Max Bill and Georges Vantongerloo were bound together in their desire to forge new developments in the field of twentieth-century Concrete art, and by their lifelong friendship. Their close relationship and an extended personal written correspondence – which unfolded over the course of more than three decades – united their independent artistic and intellectual endeavours, and helped each to push the boundaries of his work to the fullest. The progress of this extraordinary creative exchange mirrors the artistic and philosophical breakthroughs that defined the last century.

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Hauser & Wirth Zurich

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Gallery hours:

Tuesday to Sunday
10 am – 6 pm

New opening hours 2022:

Monday to Saturday
10 am – 6 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy information:

Max Bill
konstruktion aus einem kreisring (Construction from a Ring)
1942
White marble
39.2 x 39.9 x 39.9 cm / 15 3/8 x 15 3/4 x 15 3/4 in
© 2021 ProLitteris, Zurich
Collection of Angela Thomas, Zumikon. Courtesy the max bill georges vantongerloo foundation and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Jon Etter

Max Bill
drei linien (Three Lines)
1944-1946
Oil on canvas
110 x 105 cm / 43 1/4 x 41 3/8 in
© 2021 ProLitteris, Zurich
Collection of Angela Thomas, Zumikon. Courtesy the max bill georges vantongerloo foundation and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Jon Etter

Max Bill
acht flächen gleicher grösse (Eight Fields of Equal Surface)
1970-1971
Oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm / 47 1/4 x 47 1/4 in
© 2021 ProLitteris, Zurich
Collection of Angela Thomas, Zumikon. Courtesy the max bill georges vantongerloo foundation and Hauser & Wirth

Georges Vantongerloo
Ligne circulaire et cercle à rayons variables (Circular line and circle with changeable radii)
1946
Chrome-plated brass
ø 15 cm
© 2021, ProLitteris, Zurich
Collection of Angela Thomas, Zumikon. Courtesy the max bill georges vantongerloo foundation and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Jon Etter

Max Bill in Montagnola, July 1974
Photo: Angela Thomas