

MAX BILL
1908 – 1994
curriculum vitae

- 1908 Born 22 December, raised in Winterthur, Switzerland
- 1923 Schooling in Oetwil am See in Zurich
- 1924–1927 Zurich School of Arts and Crafts
- 1925 Study trip to Paris (Le Corbusier, Melnikoff)
- 1926 Study trip to Italy
- 1927–1928 Studies at the Bauhaus in Dessau under Albers, Kandinsky, Klee, Moholy-Nagy and Schlemmer
- 1928 Stay in Positano, Italy
- 1929 Work as a painter, sculptor, graphic designer, publicist, architect in Zurich
- 1930 Participation in the cabaret 'Der Krater' (the crater)
- 1931 Marriage to Binia Spoerri
- 1932–1936 Membership in 'Abstraction Création' in Paris
- 1932 Meets Hans Arp, first visit to Piet Mondrian
- 1933 Moves into own home in Zurich-Höngg
Beginning of lifelong friendship with Georges Vantongerloo, in Paris
First large sculptures
- 1935 Sculpture: 'Die unendliche Schleife' (endless loop); painting: 'Quinze variations sur un même thème' (five variations on a theme)
Contact with Max Ernst and Alberto Giacometti
Stay in Ticino with Aline Valangin, Max Ernst and Vladimir Vogel
- 1936 Swiss Pavilion at the Triennale di Milano, awarded the Grand Prix
First version of the text 'Konkrete Gestaltung' (concrete design)
- 1937 Membership in the Swiss Artist's Association 'Allianz'
Contact with Antoine Pevsner
- 1938 First meeting with Marcel Duchamp, in Paris
Printing of his 'Quinze variations' in Paris, at the same printers used by Henri Matisse

- Publication of text 'Konkrete Kunst' (concrete art), in 'Werk' No. 8/1938
- 1939 Work with Hans Schmidt for the Swiss National Exhibition
Holiday in Chateau de la Sarraz with Hans Curjel, Ernesto N. Rogers, Alfred Roth, Georges Vantongerloo
'Complete Works' vol. 3 by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret is published
- 1939–1945 Repeated service in the military
- 1940 The Swiss state rules Max Bill a 'left-wing extremist' to be interned in case of war
- 1940 Publication of text 'Paul Klee', in 'Werk' No. 8/1940
- 1941 Foundation of 'Alliance Publishing'
Construction of a house in Bremgarten, Switzerland, using prefabricated building elements
- 1942 Birth of son, Jakob Bill
- 1944 First exhibition 'Konkrete Kunst' (concrete art) at Kunsthalle Basel
Beginning of work in design
- 1944–1945 Lecturer at the Zurich School of Arts and Crafts
- 1945 Involvement in reconstruction efforts after the World War II
Contact with Adrien Turel
Stay in Paris with George Vantongerloo, contact with František (Frank) Kupka
First conference in Milan for reconstruction in Italy takes place
- 1947 Large version of the sculpture 'Kontinuität' (continuity); creates first picture column
Beginning of friendship with Henry van de Velde
- 1948 First journey to Germany since 1932; meets Willi Stoph in Leipzig
Guest lecturer in Darmstadt, Stuttgart; stays in Frankfurt, Munich, Ulm
Lecture at the 'Schweizerischer Werkbund (SWB)' – Swiss federation of architects, artists and builders – in Basel: 'Schönheit aus Funktion und als Funktion' (beauty from function and as function), published in 'Werk' No. 8/1949
- 1949 'Die gute Form' (good design) exhibition at the trade fair Basel and Werkbundaustellung (exhibition of the federation of architects, artists and builders) exhibition in Cologne, subsequently as a travelling exhibition in Switzerland, Germany and Austria
Kandinsky award
Membership in UAM, Union des artistes moderne, Paris
'Pevsner, Vantongerloo, Bill' exhibition at Kunsthaus Zurich, catalogue text

- Meets Tomás Maldonado in Zurich
Publication of monograph 'Robert Maillart' (Brückenbauer)
- 1950 Planning the Ulm School of Design
- 1951 Swiss Pavilion at the Triennale di Milano, again recipient of the Grand Prix (as in 1936) as well as two gold medals
Collaboration with Le Corbusier, Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Georges Vantongerloo, Adrian Turel and Giuseppe Somona
Solo exhibition in São Paulo (March–May); Bill does not travel to Brazil
In autumn, travels to Brazil for first time, on invitation from Lina Bo Bardi and Pietro Maria Bardi
Grand Prix for sculpture at the Biennale de Arte São Paulo
Publication on Kandinsky
- 1951–1956 Architect and rector of the Ulm School of Design
- 1952–1953 New edition of book on Wassily Kandinsky
Member of the Central Board of the Swiss Werkbund, SWB (until 1962)
Monument 'Denkmal für den unbekanntten politischen Gefangenen' (monument to the unknown political prisoner) entered in an international competition
Second journey to Brazil, this time accompanied by Binia Bill
Lectures in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo
Member of the jury for the major architecture award of São Paulo
Journey to Peru, meets Josef and Anni Albers for first time in 25 years
Continues journey to North America, meets Ray and Charles Eames, Philip Johnson, Antoine Pevsner, Edgar Kaufmann jun., Konrad Wachsmann, Mies van der Rohe
- 1954 Participation in Triennale di Milano, receives gold medal
- 1955 Ulm pavilion at the National Exhibition in Stuttgart
Publication on Mies van der Rohe
First monograph on Max Bill published in Buenos Aires
Project for a monument to Georg Büchner in Darmstadt
- 1956 Resigns as rector in Ulm, remains as a lecturer
Becomes member of the German 'Werkverband' (federation of architects, artists and builders)
Receives design award 'Compasso d'oro'
- 1957 Resigns from Ulm due to differences of opinion with the foundation 'Geschwister-Scholl-Stiftung' (sponsor of the Ulm School of Design)
Reopens Zurich studio
Construction of the Cinévox in Neuhausen, Switzerland
- 1958–1959 Member of BSA, association of Swiss architects

- Organises the exhibition 'Swiss design' in London
- 1960 Consultant for the national exhibition (Expo) Lausanne 1964
Exhibitions 'Konkrete Kunst, 50 Jahre Entwicklung' (concrete art, 50 years of progress) and 'Dokumentation über Marcel Duchamp' (documentation on Marcel Duchamp)
Construction of Lichtdruck AG, Dielsdorf (prefabrication)
Election to the Federal Arts Commission (1961-69)
- 1961 The French state buys an 'unendliche Schleife' (endless loop)
Leading architect of section 'pictures and design' for the Expo 64 (Vidy theatre)
Constructs a courtyard with fountain in Berlin
Elected to Zurich's city parliament
Construction of office building 'Imbau' in Leverkusen, Germany
- 1962 Journey to Montreal
Construction of radio studio in Zurich
Organises the Vantongerloo exhibition in London
- 1963–1964 Stage set design for 'Oedipus' in the theatre in Ulm
Honorary member of the American Institute of Architects
Journey to Saint Louis, Chicago, Montreal, London
Monograph on Max Bill published in London
Voted to the board of trustees of the 'Geschwister Scholl' foundation
Expo 64 opening
Sculpture in Uster 'Rhythmus im Raum' (rhythm in space)
George Vantongerloo dies in Paris
- 1965 Construction and furnishing of a tent theatre for 'Ubu Roi' by Alfred Jarry
Participation in the congress 'Vision 65' at Southern Illinois University, US
Journey to Dallas
Construction of the Lavina bridge in Tamins GR, Switzerland
- 1966 Journey to Chicago, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York
Extension buildings for the radio studio in Zurich
Receives the award 'International Congress of Critics and Artists'
Designs complete stage set in the state opera Hamburg, commissioned by Rolf Liebermann
Sculpture 'Familie von fünf halben Kugeln' (family of five half spheres) for the University of Karlsruhe
- 1967 Sculpture: 14m high 'Windsäule' (wind column) for the Swiss pavilion at the world's fair in Montreal
Construction of his new home with integrated studio in Zumikon
Appointed professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg (until 1974)
Lecture in Aspen, Colorado in the US
Elected to the Swiss National Council, in Bern (until 1971)

- 1968 The city of Hamburg buys the sculpture 'Rythmus im Raum (rhythm in space)
Participation in the film '22 Fragen an Max Bill' (22 questions for Max Bill) by
Georg Radanowicz
Presentations in London at the Institute of Contemporary Art, and in
Düsseldorf
Film about Max Bill by Petra Kipphoff
- 1969 Biennale Nuremberg
Stay in New York
Journey to Graz and Vienna
Jury member of 'Die gute Form' (good design) of the Federal Ministry for
Economic Affairs in Germany
- 1970 Co-editor of 'Die Grossen der Weltgeschichte' (the greats in world history)
(Kindler)
Journey to Tokyo with Federal Councillor Rudolf Gnägi
Member of the subcommittee assisting the committee on urban planning of
Jerusalem
- 1971 Member of 'Conseil supérieur de la création esthétique industrielle' at the
French Ministry
Presentation at the Mondrian-Symposium in New York
Journey to London, Boston and Buffalo, New York
Jury member of the international diamond jewellery competition
Receives award at the biennale for sculpture in Budapest
- 1972 Member of the international jury for the Exempla-Preis, Munich
Member of the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin
Journey to New York, Buffalo and Toronto
Organises the Fritz Glarner exhibition at Kunsthalle Bern
Stay in Cairo, Luxor and Karnak
Various presentations in Germany and the US
- 1973 Journey to Stockholm
Member of the Royal Academy of Science, Letters and Fine Arts of Belgium
Honorary counsellor of UNESCO
Stay in Rome
- 1974 Preparation for the Max Bill travelling exhibition in the US
Journey to Buffalo, Washington, New York
Lecture on the Almir Mavignier exhibition in Zurich
Max Bill meets the student Angela Thomas in Zurich
Organisation of Max Bill exhibition in Los Angeles
- 1975 Journey to LA, Mexico City, Oaxaca, Monte Alban, San Francisco, New York
Lectures in Zurich, Stockholm and Rapperswil
Stay in Washington and Jerusalem

- 1976
- Opening speech at the exhibition of František (Frank) Kupka at Kunsthaus Zurich
 - Max Bill exhibition in Hamburg, Berlin, Stuttgart
 - Organisation of Max Bill exhibition in Berlin with Angela Thomas
 - Experts conference for UNESCO in Nairobi
 - Cooperation for the film 'Max Bill' by Jean-Louis Roy
 - Lecture at the Brancusi centenary in Bucharest
 - Bauhaus colloquium Weimar
 - 50th anniversary of Bauhaus Dessau
 - Planning of a studio complex for Agam Yaacov in France
- 1977
- Lectures in Stuttgart and Gelsenkirchen
 - Completion of the Radio Zurich building complex
 - Preparations for a Max Bill exhibition in Parma, Pfäffikon, Linz and Vienna
- 1978
- Installation of 'Drei Bildsäulen' (three picture columns) in Ulm
 - Organises Fritz Glarner exhibition in Bottrop, Germany
 - 'Die unendliche Schleife' (endless loop) installed in Essen, Germany
 - Travel to Teheran, erection of 'Rhythmus im Raum' (rhythm in space)
 - Start of planning for a pavilion sculpture on Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich
- 1979
- Extension of house in Zurich-Höngg for son's family
 - Preparation for the travelling exhibition of Georges Vantongerloo in US
 - Board member of the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin
 - Exhibition in Caracas, travel to Venezuela, Mexico and US
 - Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
 - Awarded title 'Dr. ing. h.c.' from the University of Stuttgart
- 1980
- Exhibition in Winterthur, Winterthur Art Prize
 - Retrospective in Madrid and Barcelona
 - Solo exhibition in Lugano
 - Installation of a granite column in Geneva
 - Organizes Georges Vantongerloo retrospective in Washington and in LA with Angela Thomas
 - Visits Ray Eames and travels to New York with Angela Thomas
 - Installation of a ball sculpture in St. Gallen, Switzerland
 - Portrayed twice by Andy Warhol
- 1981
- Organisation of Vantongerloo exhibition in Brussels
 - Model of pavilion sculpture in Zurich triggers a public debate
 - Organizes Vantongerloo exhibition in Kunsthaus Zurich with Angela Thomas
 - Honoured with a hall in Padua
- 1982
- Journey to Jerusalem for a symposium
 - Opening ceremony for Einstein statue in Ulm
 - Large order for 'Kontinuität' (continuity) issued by Deutsche Bank

- 1983 Installation of two statues, 20 and 16 meters high, in Munich
Sculptures are installed in Zurich and Riehen, Basel
Pavilion sculpture is erected on Bahnhofstrasse Zurich
- 1984 Beginning of work on 'Kontinuität' (continuity) in Carrara, Italy, for Deutsche Bank
Journeys to Chicago, New York, Paris and Budapest
Granite sculpture in Goslar, Germany
- 1985 Chairman of the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin
Two sculptures in Tel Aviv
Journeys to Egypt and Berlin
Delivery of two sculptures in Berlin
Solo exhibition in Todi, Italy
'Spirale' (spiral) in Dortmund
Named commandeur in the 'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres'
- 1986 Georges Vantongerloo retrospective in Milan, Berlin, Bottrop
Vice-president Academy of Arts Berlin
Max Bill retrospective in Budapest, Belgrade
Delivery of 'Kontinuität' (continuity) at the head office of Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt
Sculpture in Utrecht, Netherlands
- 1987 Design of a Swiss five-franc-coin to mark 100th birthday of Le Corbusier
Max Bill retrospective in Weimar, Prague, Frankfurt
- 1988 First prize in the Premio Marconi in Bologna
Exhibition of graphic series in Leipzig, Bauhaus Dessau, Rostock
Tributes for 80th birthday in Winterthur
Lecture in Moscow, accompanied by Dr Angela Thomas
Death of first wife Binia Bill-Spoerri
- 1989 Solo exhibition at Kunsthau Zurich and Stiftung für Konstruktive und Konkrete Kunst, Zurich
Max Bill poster exhibition in Zurich
Retrospective at the Ulm School of Design
Piepenbrock award for sculpture in Osnabrück
Order for monument placed by Ernst Bloch, Ludwigshafen
Three statues and plaza design in Stuttgart-Möhringen
Meets American artist Keith Haring
Sculpture erected in front of Winterthur Insurance building, sculpture later collapses
- 1990 Solo exhibition in Ludwigshafen
Helmut Kraft award in Stuttgart

- 1991 Stage set for the play 'Herkules und der Stall des Augias' (Hercules and the Augean Stables) by Friedrich Dürrenmatt to commemorate 700 years of the Swiss Confederation at the Federal Palace in Bern
Graphic series in Ljubljana, Slovenia
Solo exhibition at Casa Rusca, Locarno, organised together with Angela Thomas
Marriage to Angela Thomas
- 1992 Erection of a large sculpture in Studen near Biel-Bienne, Switzerland
Installation of a granite sculpture in Zurich-Zollikon
'Endlose Treppe' (endless steps) bought by Swiss government for the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne
- 1993 Creation of Movado watch
Together with Angela Thomas, received by Friedrich von Weizsäcker and Manfred Stolpe in Berlin
Presented with the 'Nobel Prize for Art': the fifth Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo
Construction of a large granite sculpture in Schaan, Liechtenstein
- 1994 Opening ceremony in Berlin for a multicolour pavilion sculpture made of granite
Large sculpture at the European Patent Office in Munich
Wooden pavilion sculpture at Deutsche Bank in Ulm
Organisation of Hans Hinterreiter exhibition in Baden, Switzerland
Honorary doctorate from ETH Zurich
Death at airport in Berlin, on December 9