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Circle! Square! Progress!

Zurich's Concrete Avant-garde. Max Bill, Camille Graeser, Verena Loewensberg, Richard Paul Lohse and Their Times

Edited by Thomas Haemmerli

Edited by Brigitte Ulmer

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- The first comprehensive survey of the Zurich Concretists, Switzerland's legendary Modernist art movement
- Explores the Zurich Concretists' roots in the Bauhaus and their relations to the art theories of Theo van Doesburg, Johannes Itten, and Piet Mondrian, as well as influences from mathematics and music
- Traces the struggles of the Zurich avant-garde of the 1930s and 1940s against the anti-modernism of the period
- Lavishly illustrated with key works by all artists that belonged to the movement and with rich material from archives, some of which is previously unpublished

They were reviled, ridiculed, and ignored. Today, the Zurich Concretists — along with Dada — are considered the most important art movement originating from Switzerland. ***Circle! Square! Progress!*** tells the story of the city's avant-garde movement, which is rooted in the Bauhaus and renewed the formal language of art, shaped design and architecture, and also positioned itself politically. It traces its relations to the heroes of Constructivist–Concrete art, such as Johannes Itten, Piet Mondrian, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Theo van Doesburg, and Georges Vantongerloo, and looks at the influences that came from graphic art and advertising, jazz music and dance, colour theory, and mathematics.
Max Bill, Camille Graeser, Verena Loewensberg, and Richard Paul Lohse — a group incidentally thrown together rather than true conspirators — formed the centre of gravity of a milieu that wrestled with critics, institutions, and authorities. Lavishly illustrated, the book explores Zurich as the habitat of highly gifted people engaged in lively debates at bohemian cafés, drifting in jazz clubs, celebrating excessively at the legendary annual artists' fancy dress ball, achieving fame and artistic triumphs with creative power and a sense of mission. It illuminates the Zurich Concretists' successes of the 1960s, their at times extremely violent quarrels of the 1970s, and their disputes about the beauty of form.

Thomas Haemmerli is a Zurich-based director of film documentaries, journalist, and writer. **Brigitte Ulmer** is a scholar of history based in Zurich and London who works as a cultural publicist and writer.







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