

MB&F – Genesis of a Concept Laboratory

2018 marked the 13th year of hyper-creativity for MB&F, the world's first-ever horological concept laboratory. With 15 remarkable calibres forming the base of the critically acclaimed Horological and Legacy Machines, MB&F is continuing to follow Founder and Creative Director Maximilian Büsser's vision of creating 3-D kinetic art by deconstructing traditional watchmaking.

After 15 years managing prestigious watch brands, Maximilian Büsser resigned from his Managing Director position at Harry Winston in 2005 to create MB&F – Maximilian Büsser & Friends. MB&F is an artistic and micro-engineering laboratory dedicated to designing and crafting small series of radical concept watches by bringing together talented horological professionals that Büsser both respects and enjoys working with.

In 2007, MB&F unveiled its first Horological Machine, HM1. HM1's sculptured, three-dimensional case and beautifully finished engine (movement) set the standard for the idiosyncratic Horological Machines that have followed – all Machines that tell the time, rather than Machines to tell the time. The Horological Machines have explored space (HM2, HM3, HM6), the sky (HM4, HM9), the road (HM5, HMX, HM8) and water (HM7).

In 2011, MB&F launched its round-cased Legacy Machine collection. These more classical pieces – classical for MB&F, that is – pay tribute to nineteenth-century watchmaking excellence by reinterpreting complications from the great horological innovators of yesteryear to create contemporary objets d'art. LM1 and LM2 were followed by LM101, the first MB&F Machine to feature a movement developed entirely in-house. LM Perpetual and LM Split Escapement broadened the collection further. MB&F generally alternates between launching contemporary, resolutely unconventional Horological Machines and historically inspired Legacy Machines.

As the F stands for Friends, it was only natural for MB&F to develop collaborations with artists, watchmakers, designers and manufacturers they admire.

This brought about two new categories: Performance Art and Co-creations. While Performance Art pieces are MB&F machines revisited by external creative talent, Co-creations are not wristwatches but other types of machines, engineered and crafted by unique Swiss Manufactures from MB&F ideas and designs. Many of these Co-creations, such as the clocks created with L'Épée 1839, tell the time while collaborations with Reuge and Caran d'Ache generated other forms of mechanical art.

To give all these machines an appropriate platform, Büsser had the idea of placing them in an art gallery alongside various forms of mechanical art created by other artists, rather than in a traditional storefront. This brought about the creation of the first MB&F M.A.D. Gallery (M.A.D. stands for Mechanical Art Devices) in Geneva, which would later be followed by M.A.D. Galleries in Taipei, Dubai and Hong Kong.

There have been distinguished accolades reminding us of the innovative nature of MB&F's journey so far. To name a few, there have been no less than 4 Grand Prix awards from the famous Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève: in 2016, LM Perpetual won the Grand Prix for Best Calendar Watch; in 2012, Legacy Machine No.1 was awarded both the Public Prize (voted for by horology fans) and the Best Men's Watch Prize (voted for by the professional jury). In 2010, MB&F won Best Concept and Design Watch for the HM4 Thunderbolt. In 2015 MB&F received a Red Dot: Best of the Best award – the top prize at the international Red Dot Awards – for the HM6 Space Pirate.

Milestones

2018: MB&F begins the year with the unveiling of the second Performance Art piece in partnership with Stepan Sarpaneva: MOONMACHINE 2. This is followed by the HM9 'Flow' as well as the opening of a new M.A.D. Gallery in Hong Kong.

2017: MB&F plunges into the water at the SIHH with Horological Machine n°7 Aquapod. The Legacy Machine Split Escapement is launched in October.

2016: MB&F is invited to join the prestigious SIHH watch fair in Geneva. Melchior's little brother is born: 'Sherman' is presented at SIHH. Balthazar joins the robot-clock line-up a few months later. In Dubai, a third MB&F M.A.D. Gallery opens its doors in January. Caran d'Ache and MB&F present the Astrograph pen, and HM8 Can-Am is launched in October.

2015: MB&F celebrates 10 years by launching anniversary pieces: HMX, the 'Melchior' table clock created with L'Epée 1839 and MusicMachine 3. Additionally, MB&F and watchmaker Stephen McDonnell reinvent the perpetual calendar complication with the LM Perpetual.

2014: Two new Machines: HM6 Space Pirate and Legacy Machine 101, which includes MB&F's first in-house conceived calibre. Opening of a second M.A.D. Gallery in Taipei, Taiwan.

2013: The second Legacy Machine (LM2) comes to life. The HM3 is re-engineered as the HM3 'MegaWind. Also in 2013, the first co-creation between MB&F and music box manufacturer REUGE: MusicMachine 1 starts a trilogy of music boxes with spaceship-like designs.

2012: Launch of HM5, inspired by iconic 70's supercars – back "On the Road Again", 40 years later.

2011: Legacy Machine N°1 marks the beginning of a new line: the Legacy Machines are a tribute to 19th century watchmaking. The same year, the opening of the first MB&F M.A.D. Gallery in Geneva takes place, "where both horological machines and **Mechanical Art Devices** reign supreme".

2010: Winner of the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève (GPHG), the HM4 Thunderbolt is MB&F's most radical piece to date. Two variations of the HM3 are also released: the HM3 'Frog', and the JLWRYMACHINE created with jewellery house Boucheron.

2009: Launch of the iconic HM3 series with the Horological Machine n°3 'Sidewinder' and 'Starcruiser'.

2008: Horological Machine N°2 revolutionises the world of *haute horlogerie* with its distinctive shape and modular construction.

2007: MB&F unveils its first Horological Machine, HM1.

2006: While developing his first Machine, Max travels around the world to convince his future retail partners to join him in his adventure.

2005: After decades of conforming to the rules of corporate watchmaking, Maximilian Büsler breaks the chains and starts a rebellion called MB&F.

Biography – Maximilian Büsser

Maximilian Büsser was born in Milan, Italy, before moving at an early age to Lausanne, Switzerland where he spent his youth. Growing up in a multi-cultural environment and family – his father was a Swiss diplomat and manager who met his mother, an Indian national, in Mumbai – led Büsser to develop a cross-cultural, broad-based approach to life and to business.

In July 2005, at the age of 38, Büsser created the world's first horological concept brand: MB&F (Maximilian Büsser & Friends), in which he is now partnered with Serge Kriknoff. Büsser's dream with MB&F is to have his own brand dedicated to developing radical horological concepts by working in small, hyper-creative groups composed of people he enjoys working with.

Maximilian Büsser's love for high-end horology was nurtured by his first employer, Jaeger-LeCoultre. During his seven years in the senior management team during the 1990s, JLC strongly increased its profile and multiplied its turnover tenfold. Büsser's responsibilities at Jaeger-LeCoultre ranged from Product Management & Development to Sales & Marketing for Europe.

Entrepreneurship is Büsser's forte. In 1998, when only 31, he was appointed Managing Director of Harry Winston Rare Timepieces in Geneva. During his seven years there, Büsser developed the company into a fully-fledged and well-respected haute horlogerie brand by developing the strategy, products, marketing and worldwide distribution, whilst integrating design, R&D and manufacturing in house. The results were a 900% increase in turnover and the positioning of Harry Winston as one of the leaders in this very competitive segment. To everyone's surprise, Büsser declined a generous new contract from Harry Winston, opting instead to follow his dreams.

Ten days later, the world's first horological laboratory was born: MB&F (Maximilian Büsser & Friends). "When I created MB&F, everyone said, 'That's the lamest name ever for a watch brand. You can't call it '& Friends.' But I wanted to put back the human being into the equation. We're the only ones in the watch industry who give credit to all those who transform the sketch into reality."

Thanks to the Friends, MB&F unveiled his first radical concept in 2007: Horological Machine No.1. The three-dimensional case and beautifully finished movement set the standard for the idiosyncratic Horological Machines that have followed: Machines that tell the time, rather than Machines to tell the time.

In 2011, MB&F launched its round-cased Legacy Machine collection when Büsser wondered: "What would have happened if I was born in 1867 instead of 1967? In the early 1900s the first wristwatches appear; I would want to create three-dimensional machines for the wrist, but there are no Grendizers or fighter jets to inspire me. But I do have pocket watches, the Eiffel Tower and Jules Verne... What would my machines look like? Legacy Machine N°1 was my answer."

As the F stands for Friends, it came naturally for MB&F to develop special collaborations, embodied by its 'Performance Art' and 'Co-creation' collections. Those are respectively MB&F pieces reinterpreted by artists, watchmakers and designers which Max admires; and pieces conceived and designed by MB&F, but engineered and crafted by unique Swiss Manufactures.

Since MB&F deconstructs traditional watchmaking to reconstruct it into 3-D kinetic art, a natural extension of that idea was the creation of the first M.A.D.Gallery in Geneva (M.A.D. stands for Mechanical Art Devices). The gallery showcases not only MB&F's Machines and collaborations, but also works by kindred mechanical and kinetic artists; it has since grown to include three other M.A.D.Galleries in Dubai, Taipei and Hong Kong.



HOROLOGICAL LAB

In September 2018, Maximilian Büsser was awarded the Gaïa Prize for Entrepreneurship – the most prestigious award recognising extraordinary careers in the field of watchmaking, often considered by industry insiders as a Nobel Prize of watchmaking. According to the jury, the prize was “in recognition of his creative approach to watchmaking in the design and marketing of his products, and for the innovative way he manages his business.”

Büsser graduated in 1991 with a Masters in Microtechnology Engineering from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne.