

GIBBS FARM

KAIPARA HARBOUR
NEW ZEALAND

When Alan Gibbs bought the land now laconically known as Gibbs Farm, in 1991, he already had three decades of significant art collecting behind him. Commissioning art works was in the back of his mind “but not the major purpose” of searching for a rural retreat. Looking back, it is clear now that 1991 marked the beginning of a whole new art collecting adventure for Gibbs. He is a rare breed for several reasons. With the assistance of his son-in-law architect Noel Lane, Gibbs has made a total commitment to open-brief commissioning of major site specific works from key artists. They are forming a collection of permanent private commissions of a scale rarely seen.

—*Rob Garrett*

Cover:

Len Lye —
Wind Wand
2003

Back cover:

Anish Kapoor —
Dismemberment, Site 1
2009

Left:

Richard Serra —
Te Tuhirangi Contour
1999/2001



“Essentially everything here is the biggest art work the artist has ever done” says Gibbs. “It’s a very demanding landscape.”

The landscape rolls across ridges and gullies and extensive flatlands that have been contoured over the years. But it is a landscape that is dominated by the Kaipara Harbour, the largest harbour in the Southern hemisphere; and it is this body of water which greatly increases the property’s sense of scale. The harbour is so vast it occupies the whole western horizon; and it is very shallow, so when the tide goes out, the shallows are exposed for several kilometres and the light shimmies and bounces off it across the land. Equally, it is the forecourt to the prevailing westerly weather that sweeps, sometimes vehemently, across the land.

Gibbs and Lane have adopted expanded roles for their enterprise, which has required that they become the artists’ accomplices and often, as a consequence, the art producers. Richard Serra recalls their first meeting when Alan “threw down the gauntlet and said “If you’re going to do something here I want your best effort.” Gibbs acknowledges that “the challenge for the artists is the scale of the landscape; it scares them initially and demands something more from them”. One result, though not Gibbs’ intention, is that the art works have tended to be the largest the artists have ever done. In responding to the demanding landscape, the artists tend to push beyond what they have previously attempted or achieved; “then we end up having to make the works” says Gibbs “and we particularly enjoy the challenge of making something that no one’s ever done before and solving the engineering problems to get there.”

Left:
Andy Goldsworthy —
Arches
2005



... walking the landscape and coming into close quarters with each art work, one after the other, their own scale and particular character unfolds ...



Gibbs Farm is the perfect environment for what can only be described as a double experience of many of the art works. On the one hand they can mostly be seen from a distance and their true scale is deceptively disguised by the drama and scale of the landscape around them which often out-muscles them. But walking the landscape and coming into close quarters with each art work, one after the other, their own scale and particular character unfolds, until one at a time, each art work fills your viewing horizon and imagination. Walk underneath the Dawson and it will tower above you with the scale of a tall building; or approach the Serra from above and it has the delicate tracery of a ribbon furling across the land, but walk below it and it assumes the full weight of a dam bulging with water.

—Rob Garrett

Above:
Alan Gibbs in front
of Richard Serra's
Te Tuhirangi Contour

Left:
Bernar Venet —
88.5° ARCx8
2012



1

Richard Serra —
Te Tuhirangi Contour
1999 / 2001

56 Corten steel plates 252m x 6m x 50mm

Serra's 56 steel plates lean out by 11 degrees from the vertical and trace a single contour line across the land in a way that, in the artist's words, "collects the volume of the land."



2

Richard Thompson —
Untitled (Red Square / Black Square)
1994

4 units of welded and painted steel 4 x 4 x 5.7m

Each Gibbs Farm sculpture rewards the viewer who will walk up to and around them; and Thompson's work elegantly offers a different red, or black, or red and black abstract composition with every circumnavigating step.

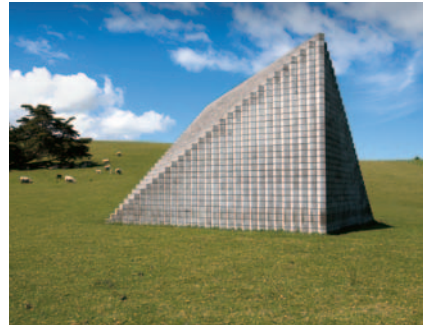


3

Daniel Buren —
Green and White Fence
1999 / 2001

Fence posts at 4m intervals, painted green and white 87mm stripes 3.2km long

Daniel Buren worked directly on the first 544 metres of this sculpture as working fence along a single ridge line and since then the theme has been extended until it will be the main form of fence inside the property.



4

Sol LeWitt —
Pyramid (Keystone NZ)
1997

Standard concrete blocks 7.75 x 16 x 16m

This work's minimalist aesthetic lies in various intriguing paradoxes: it is units and yet a single form; it is conceptually simple but perceptually complex; and it is a minimalist sculpture while also appearing to be architecture.



5

George Rickey —
Two Rectangles, Vertical Gyrotory Up (V)
1987

Stainless steel 3.5 – 8.13 x 12.14m

Rickey has very successfully combined movement with the aesthetic and is one of the few artists who has managed to bring them together into an inseparable synthesis. This elegant work never appears to repeat itself in its response to the wind.



6

Marijke de Goey —
The Mermaid
1999

Welded and painted tubular steel 10 x 3 x 32m

The work bridges an artificial lake that has been coloured "a lovely intense blue, using environmentally friendly pigment" as the artist says, and marks the culmination her cube-skeleton series, which range in size from tiny brooches to monumental forms.



7

Kenneth Snelson —*Easy K*
2005

Aluminium and stainless steel 6.5 x 6.5 x 32m

Snelson's sculpture, intended "to unveil the exquisite beauty of structure itself," is delicately held together by the tension between its rigid pipes and flexible cables; a form of structure which the artist calls "floating compression."



8

Jeff Thomson —*Giraffe*
2011-12

Corrugated iron and steel 6 x 3 x 1m

Jeff Thomson's objective was to create a generic giraffe in order to capture the elegance and wonder these creatures occupy in our imagination, rather than copy the particular creatures that wander the slopes below the sculpture.



9

Maya Lin —*A Fold in the Field*
2013

105,000cu.m earth-fill covering ca.30,000 sq.m (3 ha.)

A Fold in the Field is Maya Lin's largest and most ambitious earthwork to date. Lin's five folds make dramatic new forms in the flattest and lowest section of the Farm: the coastal flats. Creating five undulations in this location, Lin's work responds to the existing site by introducing a systematic ordering of the terrain.



10

Bernar Venet —*88.5° ARC x 8*
2012

Corten steel, 8 arcs each 27 x 0.75 x 0.75m

The vertical orientation of the eight curved steel columns contrast with the broad horizontal planes of land and sea below the sculpture. They also capture the distinctive Kaipara light; as Venet says of his work, "I am thinking about the sunrises and sunsets, and the golden light that steeps the Corten steel in red and brown hints."



11

Leon van den Eijkel —*Red Cloud Confrontation in Landscape*
199625 cast formed and painted concrete cubes
17.5 x 17.5m

Tried and true colour harmonies based on the three primary colours of red, yellow and blue, are pitted against what van den Eijkel calls his "Pacific colours" in a dialogue between European modernism and the southern hemisphere environment.



12

Zhan Wang —*Floating Island of the Immortals*
2006

Stainless steel 4.8 x 8.6m

Inspired by monumental office block sculptures in Beijing and feng shui landscape gardening traditions, Wang's scholar's rock is an enlargement of the so called "Chinese miniature landscape." In the past, people would search for an idealistic world of immortals within these landscapes.



13

Neil Dawson —*Horizons*

1994

Welded and painted steel 15 x 10 x 36m

Dawson's is one of the few works that can be seen from the road, which is fitting for its tromp l'oeil suggestion of a giant piece of corrugated iron blown in from a collapsed water tank on some distant farm.



14

Peter Nicholls —*Rakaia*

1996 / 1997

Locally sourced Eucalyptus wood painted with Timbacyl 4 x 5 x 60m

In the artist's own words, this is the culmination of a series of "loosely narrative, site specific" sculptures, "laterally configured and descriptive of journeys;" in this case a response in title and braided form to the Rakaia river, near the birthplace of Alan Gibbs.



15

Graham Bennett —*Sea / Sky Kaipara*

1994

4 tri-part stainless steel and glass units
2 x 2.1 x 25m

Of the inspiration for this site specific work Graham Bennett said "I was impressed by the changing nature of the estuary, its reflections, its colours and its relationship to the sky."



16

Anish Kapoor —*Dismemberment, Site 1*

2009

Mild steel tube and tensioned fabric
West end 25 x 8m East end 8 x 25m Length 85m

Composed of a vast PVC membrane stretched between the two giant steel ellipses, Kapoor's work is architectural, and yet it also has a fleshy quality which the artist describes as being "rather like a flayed skin."



17

Len Lye —*Wind Wand*

2003

Red fibreglass tube 45m x 200mm

This is one of only two such sculptures by the late Len Lye in existence; and it is a concept that could only be realised and fabricated to Lye's specifications after his death, as only then had technology caught up with what he imagined.



18

Andy Goldsworthy —*Arches*

2005

Pink Leadhill sandstone blocks stacked into
11 freestanding arches. Each arch is 7m long
with each block 1.4m²

Built with stone quarried in Scotland not far from where Gibbs' forebears came from, and formed from ancient Roman arches, this work looks back; yet its tidal site brings the viewer face-to-face with the ever-changing character of its surroundings and the here and now.

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Gibbs Farm is a private property, open to artists, educational institutions, charities and the public monthly, by prior appointment only.

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|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Richard Serra | 10. Bernar Venet | B Barn: |
| 2. Richard Thompson | 11. Leon van den Eijkel | Meeting place |
| 3. Daniel Buren | 12. Zhan Wang | WC Toilets |
| 4. Sol LeWitt | 13. Neil Dawson | P Parking |
| 5. George Rickey | 14. Peter Nicholls | |
| 6. Marijke de Goeij | 15. Graham Bennett | G Giraffe House |
| 7. Kenneth Snelson | 16. Anish Kapoor | Z Zebra enclosure |
| 8. Jeff Thomson | 17. Len Lye | |
| 9. Maya Lin | 18. Andy Goldsworthy | ••• Fountain |
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GIBBS FOUNDATION
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