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Auckland Art Gallery MEDIA RELEASE

The Max Gimblett and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett Gift 2008

Senior New Zealand artist Max Gimblett and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett are gifting a major collection of the artist's works on paper to the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation in support of the gallery's development project – at a special event held at the Auckland Town Hall tomorrow.

Auckland Art Gallery director Chris Saines says the gallery is greatly indebted to Max and Barbara for their exceptional generosity.

"I'm so pleased that this important body of work should be the first major gift to the gallery through its foundation.

"This gift consolidates and amplifies our Gimblett holdings in the most remarkable way, allowing us to represent this major artist in unparalleled depth," says Saines.

Max Gimblett says he and Barbara are honoured to gift the works of art to the foundation to demonstrate their support of the development of the gallery's main building.

"Barbara and I recognise the importance of a creative and healthy gallery. This gift shows our support for the role of the foundation in strengthening the gallery's position as the leading art museum in New Zealand," says Gimblett.

Gimblett, who has lived in the United States since the mid 1960s and exhibited widely in New Zealand and abroad, is gifting key works from the last 40 years of his artistic practice.

Auckland Art Gallery's curator of contemporary art, Natasha Conland worked closely with Gimblett at his studio in the Bowery, New York, to select the 51 works on paper that make up the gift.

"This collection captures the extraordinary range in Gimblett's artistic temperament from his early portraiture to his achievements with abstract form and a long-standing exploration of Zen calligraphic technique.

"Most of all this collection reveals the artist's extraordinary sensitivity to the very materials of art, especially ink, paper and pencil," says Conland.



A number of key works from the gift will be included in the new collection displays that will be the feature of the newly developed main gallery building in late 2010.

Gimblett contributed to the development of New Zealand painting through the exhibition of early abstractions and his much-admired quatrefoil-shaped paintings, which emerged in the early 1980s and now feature in most public collections in New Zealand.

In recognition of his work with calligraphic form, Gimblett is included in a major group exhibition opening at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, *American Art and the East* opening in January, curated by Alexandra Munroe, senior curator of Asian art.

The art works will be formally gifted to the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation at a special event attended by Max Gimblett, foundation chairperson John Judge, Auckland city Mayor Hon. John Banks and gallery director Chris Saines in the Auckland Town Hall on Wednesday, 21 May at 6pm.

Background

The Auckland Art Gallery Foundation was established in 2005 to assist in raising the additional capital required to support the development of Auckland Art Gallery's main building.

The government recently announced a \$30 million contribution towards the final budget cost of \$113 million.

Auckland City Council's contribution to the project now stands at \$48.10 million or 43 per cent of the total budget.

Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, which has already raised a staggering \$15.75 million, will raise the \$33.4 million balance.

The gifting of major works of art to a public gallery through an associated foundation body is consistent with practices in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. However, the gift is the first of its kind made in New Zealand.

Image credit: *Witness* 1987, acrylic polymer on Arches Aquarelle French 300lb Cold Press mould made paper, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, gift of Max Gimblett and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2008

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