

***The Functional Series***  
Collection of works by Mark Gibian

### *cantilever chair*

This sculptural piece of furniture utilizes the unique qualities of both steel and glass. The steel creates the structure and mold for the glass to slump over, which conforms to the shape of the backbone. The *Cantilever Chair* functions both as a comfortable seat and as a formal expression of gesture, movement and balance.

1993 | Steel and glass | 32in x 24in x 24in





*leaf table*

1992 | Steel, slumped glass and polished plate glass top | 30in x 42in x 84in, polished  
plate glass top measures 5/8in thick





In 1977, Gibian studied abroad at the Universidad de Barcelona so he could be in close proximity to the curvilinear masterpieces of Spanish Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí. Revered for his distinctive architectural style, Gaudí engineered his own structures organically, and looked to nature as his sourcebook. Combining Gothic and curvilinear Art Nouveau forms, all his works feature catenary arches which form naturally, as when a rope is hung. To determine the loads on the arches of his architectural opus, the Sagrada Família Cathedral, he hung measured sacks of lead on inverted models.

In *Leaf Table*, Gibian follows suit with Gaudí by allowing the structure to develop organically. The curved ribs supporting the slumping glass top were bent and assembled upside down on a flat surface and the larger structural members grew from there.

Gibian initially experimented with slumping glass over steel forms at his 1989 “Intersections” exhibition at BACA Downtown Gallery in Brooklyn. *Leaf Table* evolved from this exhibition series, but initially came to engender challenges that pushed the limits of slumping glass. In order to preserve the basic table function, the tabletop could not be wavy or uneven. Therefore the artist recreated the tabletop surface through illusion. By inserting a draped bent glass unit underneath the smooth plate glass top, the curvilinear elements of the slumped glass remained visible, which created the overall effect of a giant leaf floating within the table. As a conceptual bent, Gibian inverts the traditional presentation of sculpture by placing the pedestal (the plate glass top) above the structure instead of below the work.



### *augenblick*

The namesake of this sculpture derives from the German word *Augenblick*, which means, “blink of an eye.” Inspired by organic forms and structures, *Augenblick* is shaped like an exotic eye. Comprised of successive steel ribs and slumped translucent glass, the sculpture winks at the notion of an iridescent eye-shadowed lid with heavily mascaraed lashes. The combination of diaphanous and opaque materials simultaneously exposes and obscures what is within ones vision, creating the illusion of an interior space. Gibian often uses hard edged, brittle, rectilinear, and sharp industrial materials in the construction of his sculptures, but transforms and softens them by heating, hammering, bending and forging. The glass was sandblasted to look as if it sat in a desert windstorm for years.

1996 | Steel, glass and halogen light fixture | 15in x 36in x 8in



### *vuelo*

This wall sculpture/sconce was constructed with aerodynamics in mind; therefore Gibian aptly titles the work *Vuelo*, the Spanish word for “flight”. The work’s repetitive steel ribs encased within a kite-shaped framework echo with the V-formation of migratory birds in flight. Evocative and abstract, the buoyancy of the light piece suggests the work is in a constant state of flux, floating up the wall.

1996 | Nickel-plated steel, glass, and halogen light fixture |  
15in x 36in x 8in



### *truss table*

*Truss Table* is inspired by Gibian's daily interaction with the many beautiful bridges in New York City, specifically the railroad bridge adjacent to the Triboro Bridge. Trusses and bridge structures are an integral part of the artist's sculptural vocabulary and are reflected in many of his works. As homage to Manhattan's bridges, *Truss Table* is wrought with steel rectangular volumes, which mimic industrial footings, and fashioned with four curved trusses, which rhyme with steel arch scaffolding. A polished glass plate crowns this handcrafted coffee table.

1995 | Steel and plate and glass top | 15in x 28in x 50in





## *crescendo*

Permanently installed on a new pier along the Williamsburg waterfront in Brooklyn, *Crescendo* presents a dramatic, open work amphitheater for visitors to inhabit while viewing the Manhattan skyline. Comprised of two crescent shaped trusses made out of conveyor belt mesh, the larger convex structure sweeps grandly over the pier, providing shade for park-goers, whereas the smaller concave structure snakes inward and serves as bench. *Crescendo* is visually compelling from multiple vantage points; in particular both aerial and worms eye views offer striking interplays of form and crisscrossing shadows. Despite its large scale, industrial materials and labor-intensive construction, *Crescendo* exhibits a graceful arrangement of function and form, which plays upon the duality between the industrial and the organic

1995 | Welded stainless steel pipe sheathed with woven stainless  
*Niagara* mesh. | Overhead structure - 16 x 26' x 22' and Sculpture/  
Bench unit below - 3ft x 15ft x 8ft | "Northside Piers" North 5th  
Street and East River, Williamsburg, Brooklyn | Architect: FxFowle  
| Developers: RD Management / Toll Brothers.





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