



Shapes from Maine

a project by Allan McCollum

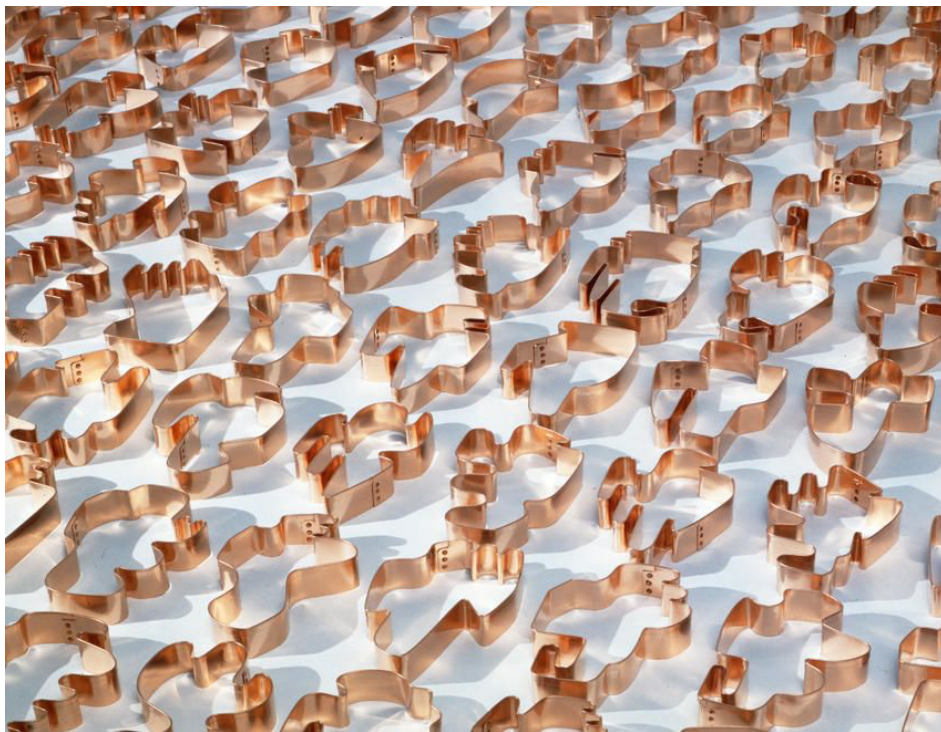
Since 1995, Allan McCollum has designed a sequence of projects involving various regions of the world, exploring ways in which people construct and identify themselves and their communities with emblems and symbols, sometimes based on local traditions, regional history, and geological or geographic distinctions.

Extending upon these projects and his 2005 *Shapes Project* — a system he created to produce (and keep track of) enough unique graphic emblems for every person on the planet, without repeating — he began to think about the Northeast of the United States, where he himself lives, and especially the state of Maine, which he has visited only once. He became attracted to the pride Maine's inhabitants take in the traditions of homecraft, and decided to research artists and artisans of the state who offer custom creations to the public through maintaining their own websites, and who run small businesses out of their homes.

Without ever meeting in person, and after much back-and-forth email conversation, four of the home-based business owners expressed interest in working with him, and he ordered a selection of custom, hand-made "Shapes" objects for the present exhibition.

The folks from Maine who helped McCollum produce the over 2200 one-of-a-kind works in this exhibit are: Holly and Larry Little, founders of [Aunt Holly's Copper Cookie Cutters](#), in Trescott, Maine, designers and makers of copper cookie cutters; Horace and Noella Varnum, founders of [Artasia](#), in Sedgwick, Maine, designers and makers of wooden ornaments using scrollsaw techniques; Wendy Wyman and Bill Welsh, founders of [Repeat Impressions](#) in Freeport, Maine, designers and makers of hand-crafted rubber stamps; and Ruth Monsell, founder of [Artful Heirlooms](#), in Damariscotta, Maine, portrait artist and maker of hand-cut silhouettes.

Throughout his fifty-year career, Allan McCollum has wrestled with the vexed distinctions people make between objects created in quantity and objects created as singular; between objects that are deemed to be alike and objects that are deemed to be different; between objects made by hand and objects made with the aid of machines; between objects created at home and objects created in factories; between objects that come into being through the actions of an individual and objects that come into being through the actions of a group. The *Shapes Project*, is a project he specifically created to be larger than anything he could possibly complete by himself, or in his own lifetime. It has been his intention to have the project take many forms, and find expression through the ideas and actions of others.



Shapes Copper Cookie Cutters



Shapes Rubber Stamps



Shapes Ornaments



Shapes Silhouettes