



ROBERT WATTS ESTATE 2018 YEAR END REPORT



The Robert Watts Estate is pleased to announce that in 2018, The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the sculpture *Chrome Shrimps and Clams* by Robert Watts from 1963–64, along with fourteen selected sheets of his innovative printed materials. Together, these works represent the opportunity for illuminating the intersection of Pop Art and Fluxus.

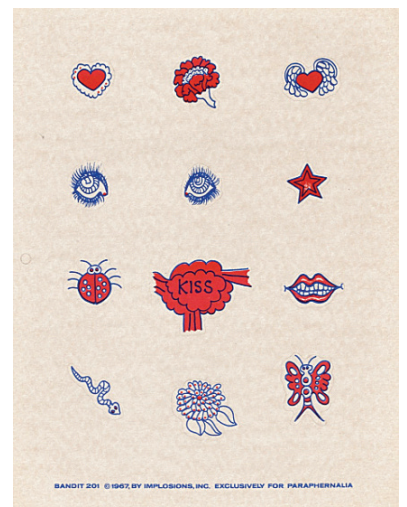
Chrome Shrimps and Clams is an example from Robert Watts’s most familiar and iconic series of cast objects, and is the first piece by Robert Watts to enter The Met Collection. As stated in The Met’s description, “Here nine shiny chrome clam shells and three dazzling chrome shrimp are displayed on an ordinary ceramic dish.”

Watt’s cast sculptures were introduced to the public by Leo Castelli in his 1964 exhibit that showcased works by Watts and then emergent artists, Richard Artschwager, Alex Hay and Christo. Almost immediately afterwards, Watts created a life-size construction simulating a grocery produce stand for the notable exhibition, *The American Supermarket*. He arranged boxes filled with gleaming chrome pears, cantaloupes, peppers and cabbages combined with fuzzy, brightly-colored faux fruits and vegetables. The exhibit also featured works by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein and other upcoming stars of Pop Art, received accolades in LIFE magazine and helped to launch Pop Art into collective consciousness.

Numerous other cast and chrome works by Watts from the same time period now reside in MoMA, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Walker Art Center, Princeton University Art Museum, Zimmerli Art Museum and many other collections worldwide. A sizable grouping was presented in the show *Take An Object* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York during 2015–2016; *Bread (Ten Loaves)* is currently on view at The Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

The printed materials by Watts include ten different examples of his well-known sheets of postage stamps, dating from 1961–1986, and four sheets of *Stick-On Tattoos by Implisions, Inc.* from 1967.

Watts has been called “The Grandfather of Stamp Art.” Self-published throughout his lifetime, his printed stamp sheets, including those commemorating celebrity W.C. Fields (1961), the well-known *FluxPost 17–17* (1964), and *Air Mail Luna* (1984), were predictors of conceptual sheets issued by the US Postal System. His fascination with postage stamps extended through all the decades of his art career. He loaded his own stamps into dispensers modified from government vending machines, used them in sculptures and also affixed them to letters which he sent through the mail. It was with this same subversive instinct that he printed his ruggedly drawn *Dollar Bill* trimmed exactly to size, handed out in early Happenings in lieu of “real” money, and fabricated his own *Cosmic Credit Cards* intended for use in uncharted regions of outer space.

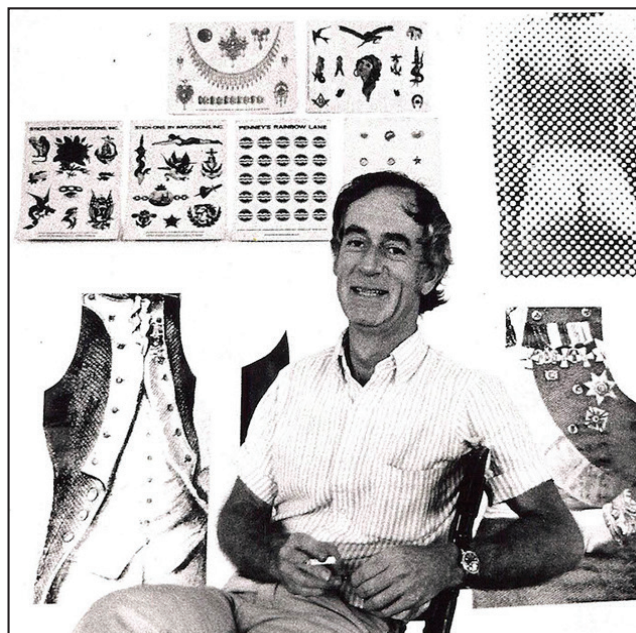


Bandit 201, Stick-On Tattoo sheet by Implisions, Inc., 1967.

Implosions, Inc. was a visionary, formalized business venture established by Watts and Fluxus artist George Maciunas in 1967, prescient in its goal to manufacture mass-produced multiples by artists, and to offer them at modest prices to a general public. Of all the varied Implosions, Inc. products, the tattoo sheets – printed on vinyl with pressure sensitive adhesive – represent the most far-ranging concept, pioneering what now seems a familiar and ubiquitous product, the temporary tattoo.

The entrance of works by Robert Watts into the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art shines the light of rediscovery on Fluxus and the pioneering artists of the 1960s.

For the year ahead, work will continue with curators and archivists regarding many aspects of Watts’s productive practice.



Robert Watts with prototypes of products by Implosions, Inc. (ca. 1968).

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS 2018:

Art Basel (Feature Section), June 2018:
Archivio Conz presents Robert Watts.

Frieze Masters, London, October 2018:
Works by Watts featured in the group exhibition by Castelli Gallery.

Berlin, Germany: *Through a Forest Wilderness: Actions in the Forest, 1960–present.* Fall 2018. A Project of Down With Art!.

Centres Georges Pompidou, *Bread (Ten Loaves)*, 1964
On view in permanent collection galleries.

Shrimps and Clams in The Metropolitan Museum Collection:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/772041>

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Affixations stamp sheets packaged for Implosions, Inc., 1967.

