

heroes
and
sheroes

teacher
resource
packet

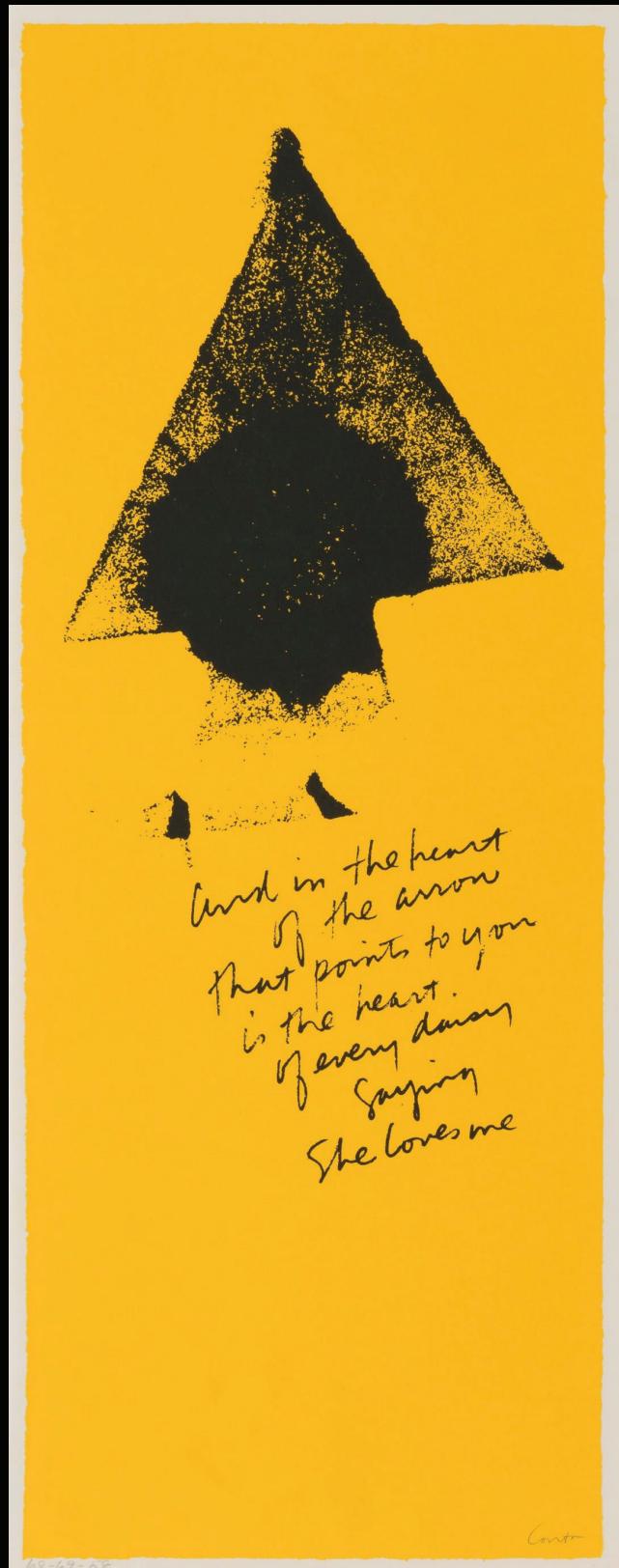
corita
art
center

About the Teacher Resource Packet

This Teacher Resource Packet is a tool developed to aid university-level classrooms engage with the exhibition, *heroes & sheroes*, by the artist Corita Kent. Included in the packet is background information on the artist and the artworks, classroom and gallery activities, discussion questions, writing prompts, an art activity, and vocabulary and reading lists. The Teacher Resource Packet is designed to support learning before, during, and after a visit to the exhibition. Each of the activities is autonomous and standalone, and teachers are invited to utilize the educational materials developed independently or in tandem. There is no specific or set order in which to use the different activities.

The materials included in this packet are designed to cultivate:

- Basic research skills
- Historical inquiry
- Media literacy
- Critical thinking
- Peer engagement
- Observation and interpretation skills
- Independent and collaborative work
- In-class discussion and debates
- Written reflection
- Creativity and trans-historical thinking



Contents

Introduction

- A brief introduction to the artist Corita Kent and background on the conception and creation of the *heroes & sheroes* series.

Works in Focus

- A deeper look into six of the artworks

Discussion Questions & Writing Prompts

- A set of five thought questions that can be used to spur classroom discussion or as prompts for individual written reflection

In-Gallery Activities (2)

- Short activities inspired by Corita's pedagogy intended to encourage extended, critical looking, as well as both playful and analytical engagement with the artworks on view.
- Designed to be completed while visiting the *heroes & sheroes* exhibition.
- Each activity includes a set of reflection questions for small groups and/or the whole class.

Research & Writing Activities (2)

- Three-part activities designed to be completed in the gallery, at home, in the classroom.
- The activities feature a research component, a written component and a discussion component, meant to cultivate student's critical and historical thinking, textual and visual analysis and media literacy.
- Intended to foster research skills and provide an opportunity for students to learn more about research portals and databases, specifically those with historical newspapers and news media.

Art Activity

- A collage activity that can be executed in the classroom and requires no previous art experience.

Vocabulary List

- A list of art historical vocabulary introduced within the Teacher Resource Packet

Reading List

- Further reading on Corita Kent and her artwork and the art historical context in which the *heroes & sheroes* series was created.



Introduction

About the artist:

Corita Kent (1918-1986) was known for her exuberant art, innovative teaching methods, and messages of social justice. Active in the U.S. during the turbulent mid-20th century, Corita's body of work reflects concerns about poverty, racism, and war. Her use of bright colors and graphically-bold text was often combined with handwritten excerpts from religious works, philosophers, poets, and even pop music. Corita carefully selected words and images to deliver accessible, earnest messages about love, hope, and peace.

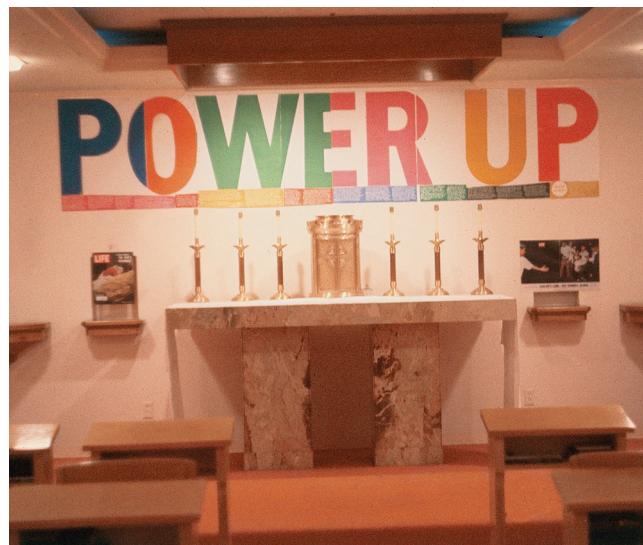
Corita was born Frances Elizabeth Kent in Fort Dodge, Iowa and raised mainly in Los Angeles, California. Coming from a large Catholic family, Corita followed two older siblings into religious life, joining the order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) in Los Angeles shortly after completing high school. As a professor and later chair of the art department at Immaculate Heart College, she helped influence its reputation and recognizable style.

Working primarily with serigraphy, or silkscreen printing, Corita wanted her work to "infiltrate the masses" and reach the largest audience possible. Her vibrant text-based compositions incorporated imagery from consumer packaging, popular media, and other everyday objects, and would become closely aligned with the Pop Art movement. During the 60s, her images grew increasingly political, influenced by the decade's transformative events. By 1968, her art was enormously popular, showing in over 230 exhibitions and held in public and private collections around the world. With this increased fame also came growing criticism from Cardinal MacIntyre, the conservative archbishop of Los Angeles. Exhausted from this conflict and a frenetic schedule of exhibiting, teaching, and lecturing around the country, Corita sought dispensation from her vows and moved to Boston, Massachusetts at the age of 50.

About heroes & sheroes:

Produced during this tumultuous period, the heroes & sheroes series stands out within Corita's oeuvre for being her most pointedly political body of work. Made between 1968 and 1969, the twenty-nine prints respond to the political and social foment in the United States in the 1960s. The series addresses the Vietnam war and its opposition, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr, John F. Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy, the Civil Rights movement, the Chicano labor movement, nuclear disarmament, the space race, the state of the Catholic church, and the 1968 presidential election, among other subjects. Unfettered by a formal affiliation with the church, Corita took a bold and uncompromising stance on what she viewed as the major humanitarian issues facing the country, decrying the bloodshed and violence being perpetrated both at home and abroad.

Corita found that this charged moment called for a new visual language, and to tackle these topics in her art, she turned to the news. She looked to photojournalism, editorials, and news coverage in periodicals like *LIFE* and *Newsweek* as the source material for heroes & sheroes. Alongside these images culled from news media, Corita juxtaposed and superimposed quotations from a wide range of sources: Coretta Scott King, Henry Thoreau, Carl Jung, Leonard Cohen, Daniel Berrigan, Walt Whitman, Rosemary Kennedy, D.H. Lawrence, Albert Camus, and her students, among others. Using collage as a strategy to decontextualize and recontextualize images circulating in the news, Corita leveraged their widespread public consumption to create unexpected associations and invest them with new meaning. The heroes & sheroes series highlights Corita's media savvy and her understanding of how the most politically and socially-urgent issues of the day were being framed and disseminated through mass media.



Furthermore, the heroes & sheroes series represents a departure in Corita's approach to printmaking. In 1967, Corita began to collaborate with master printer Harry Hambly in Santa Clara, California. A professional printer, his studio could undertake production methods that had formerly been unavailable to Corita, namely photo-based serigraphy. To create the screenprints in the series, Corita collaged and annotated maquettes for the prints and mailed them to Hambly, who then printed the artworks according to her designs and specifications and sent them back to the artist. Corita then made edits and alterations and would return the prints to Hambly, until they both were satisfied with the finished product. Though Corita's art making process—from the conception and design stage through to the printing—was always collaborative and involved students and other teachers from IHC, this was her inaugural experience of completely outsourcing the screenprinting of her works.

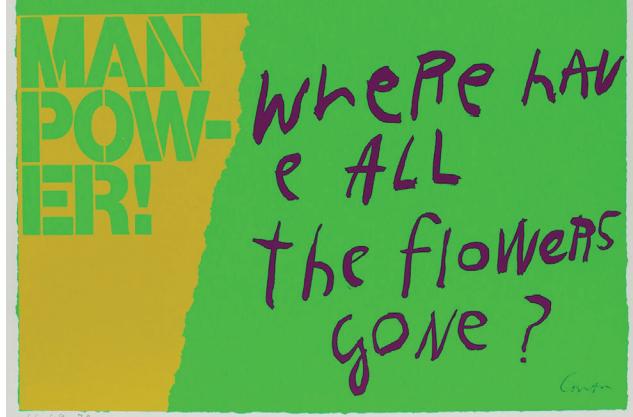
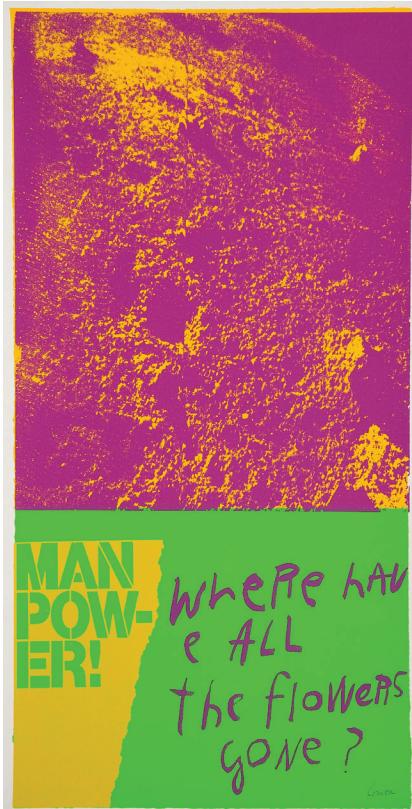
The resulting series of twenty-nine artworks is a portrait of a nation that has lost its way, a country beset by internal struggles and embroiled in external conflicts. Though the prints don't shy away from difficult, controversial topics, they implore their viewer not to give in to despair or hopelessness. Taken as a whole, the heroes and sheroes mark Corita's striking progression as an artist and underscore the ethos that informed her life and work—a belief in the power of collective action and finding joy in the everyday.

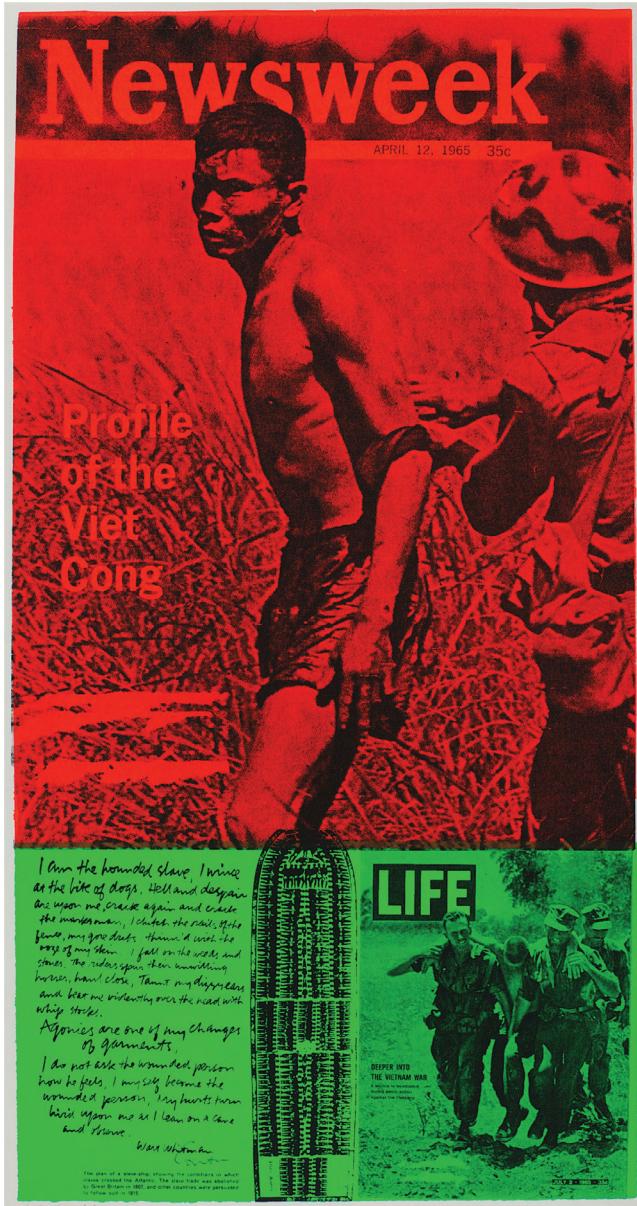


works
in
focus

moonflowers and manflowers

These two prints, manflowers and moonflowers, were created out of a creative mishap that occurred between Corita and the printer she worked with on the series, Harry Hambly. According to their correspondence, Corita sent her design for a print titled "manflowers" to Hambly's studio, with instructions to include a photo from a page torn out of a LIFE magazine (February 11, 1966 issue) in the upper portion of the artwork. However, instead of printing the photo of an injured medic caring for an injured soldier in Vietnam as Corita had intended, Hambly printed a photo of the moon's surface which was on the opposite side of the magazine page. After Corita pointed out the mistake, Hambly explained that his studio had read the text on the print "Where have all the flowers gone?" and "manpower" and assumed that the photo of the moon corresponded with the sentiments being conveyed by the artist. He stated, "I think we felt that this might be the way earth could be after a holocaust of bombing." Corita embraced this unexpected outcome and included both the print she had originally envisioned, manflowers, and the result of long-distance collaborative miscommunication, moonflowers, in the finished *heroes & sheroes* series.





news of the week

When Corita began her series *heroes & sheroes* in 1968, the Vietnam War had reached a critical inflection point. US military participation in the conflict had long been controversial with the American public, and by the time the Tet Offensive was launched in January 1968, anti-war sentiments and the peace movements across the United States were growing in size, visibility, and ardency. Corita supported a cohort of Christian clergy that vehemently opposed the war, figures such as Philip and Daniel Berrigan, Martin Luther King Jr., William

Sloane Coffin (all pictured and/or quoted in the series). Corita's opposition to the war is expressed in multiple prints in *heroes & sheroes* that take the Vietnam War as their subject: *phil and dan*, *american sampler*, *manflowers*, for example. Though Corita did not make overtly political or anti-war work until she left Immaculate Heart College and her Catholic vows in 1968, her anti-war views were greatly informed by her Christian beliefs and values.

As part of Corita's expression of her faith was seeking to reveal connections between the sacred and the secular. She espoused an up-to-date, contemporary form of Christianity that used mass media and current events as a lens through which one could engage with their faith. In a 1966 article, she compared newspaper stories to the psalms, writing, "Maybe you can't understand the psalms without understanding the newspaper and the other way around," she wrote, "So we choose to LOOK at LIFE all the TIME, and though we realize that they are in one sense adult comic books, they are also full of things that speak. A photo of a hurt soldier becomes a holy care or a work of art that is a thing lifted up where it can be seen and can speak."¹ For Corita, the task of elevating the everyday and making photos "speak" could be accomplished by uniting texts and images from disparate sources, and endowing them with new meaning through their juxtaposition.

This artistic strategy informs the composition and content of her print, *news of the week*. In this artwork, Corita combines the covers of LIFE and Newsweek magazines (both covers dated from three years earlier in 1965) that feature images of American and North Vietnamese combatants, respectively. To the left of the LIFE cover, the artist includes the blueprint of a slave ship, a schema of how human bodies were crammed inside the cramped space and carried across the Middle Passage. Next to the slave ship is an excerpt of Walt Whitman's poem, "Song of Myself," that begins, "I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of dogs, Hell and despair are upon me." Together, the images from the Vietnam War, the slave ship diagram, and the Whitman poem create a tableau of pain and suffering. By including photos of soldiers from both sides of the conflict, Corita invites the viewer to consider the lose-lose dynamic at play. The death and destruction created by war benefits no one, every side endures losses and each of those losses is equally human and equally lamentable.

¹ Kent, Corita. "Choose Life or Assign a Sign or Begin a Conversation." *Living Light* 3, no.1 (Spring 1966) referenced in the Reading List.

the cry that will be heard

"Why not give a damn about your fellow man" asks Corita Kent in bright blue letters across the bottom register of her screenprint, the cry that will be heard. The phrase is from the lyrics of the song, "Give a Damn" (1968), by the sunshine rock band, Spanky and Our Gang. Printed above the stenciled letters and printed lyrics, is the cover of LIFE magazine from March 8, 1968. The image for the cover story, "The Negro and the Cities: The Cry That Will Be Heard," is a tightly cropped photograph of the anguished face of a young girl crying, taken by the photographer and activist, Gordon Parks. In the associated cover story, Parks documents one family's struggles to survive in conditions of extreme poverty, and comments on the relationship between race, socio-economic injustice, and cycles of poverty. In the cry that will be heard, Corita incorporates the entire cover of the magazine—including the LIFE logo, the issue title, date and price—but alters the coloration of the logo (from its signature tomato red to a neon pink) and increases the contrast in Parks' photo, shrouding the young girl's face in a black shadow.

LIFE magazine and other photojournalism periodicals were a major source of inspiration for Corita. They served as the raw material that she collaged together to create many of the screenprints in heroes & sheroes. She felt that these magazines were a visual and textual wellspring for understanding the contemporary world and, in order to effectively communicate to her viewers, Corita wanted to use the language of the day: photojournalism. “To choose LIFE means many things,” she wrote, “It means to find where men are, which we discover in the photo journalism [sic] and also in the ads.”² Combining the cover of a popular magazine with the lyrics from a countercultural folk song, in the cry that will be heard Corita implores her viewers to “give a damn,” to hear the cries of their fellow humans, and feel outraged and saddened by the racial injustice that is so deeply engrained in American society. It is a plea against apathy and against indifference.



² Kent, Corita. "Choose Life or Assign a Sign or Begin a Conversation." *Living Light* 3, no.1 (Spring 1966) referenced in the Reading List.

“We shall know him not with useless mourning and vain regrets for the past, but with the firm and indomitable resolutions for the future: acting now to relieve the starvation of people in this country, working now to aid the disadvantaged and those helpless, inarticulate masses for whom he worked long hours, night as well as day.”

Rose Kennedy

pieta 1969

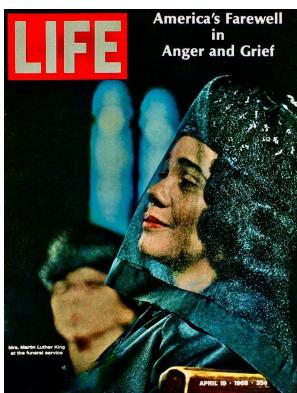
The title and central image in *pieta 1969* are drawn from Christian iconography, that of Mary cradling the body of her dead son, Jesus. Overlaying the tightly-cropped image in white, handwritten script is a quotation attributed to Rose Kennedy, the mother of John F. and Robert Kennedy, who were assassinated in 1963 and 1968, respectively. In this passage, the Kennedy matriarch channels her grief for her sons into a clarion call for continued action in their legacy. Below the image and quotation, Corita prints a letter from one of her students written in response to Rose Kennedy's televised address. Pairing Christian and contemporary examples of mourning, maternal grief, and poignant sorrow, the artist creates a visual and conceptual connection between the deaths of two American politicians and that of Jesus Christ, thereby updating the *pieta* to 1969, as her title implies.

Christian themes and imagery run throughout Corita's artwork and the *heroes & sheroes* series: it can be said of them, sacred heart, god is alive (part 1 & part 2), love at the end, among others. A fundamental aspect of her project as an artist and as an educator was to draw parallels and create correspondences between the holy and the everyday, between the lessons of the Bible and stories in the daily news. In *pieta 1969* and throughout the *heroes & sheroes* series, Corita looks to images in the media and to current events and the pressing issues of her day, refracting them through a lens of Christian compassion and DayGlo sensibility.

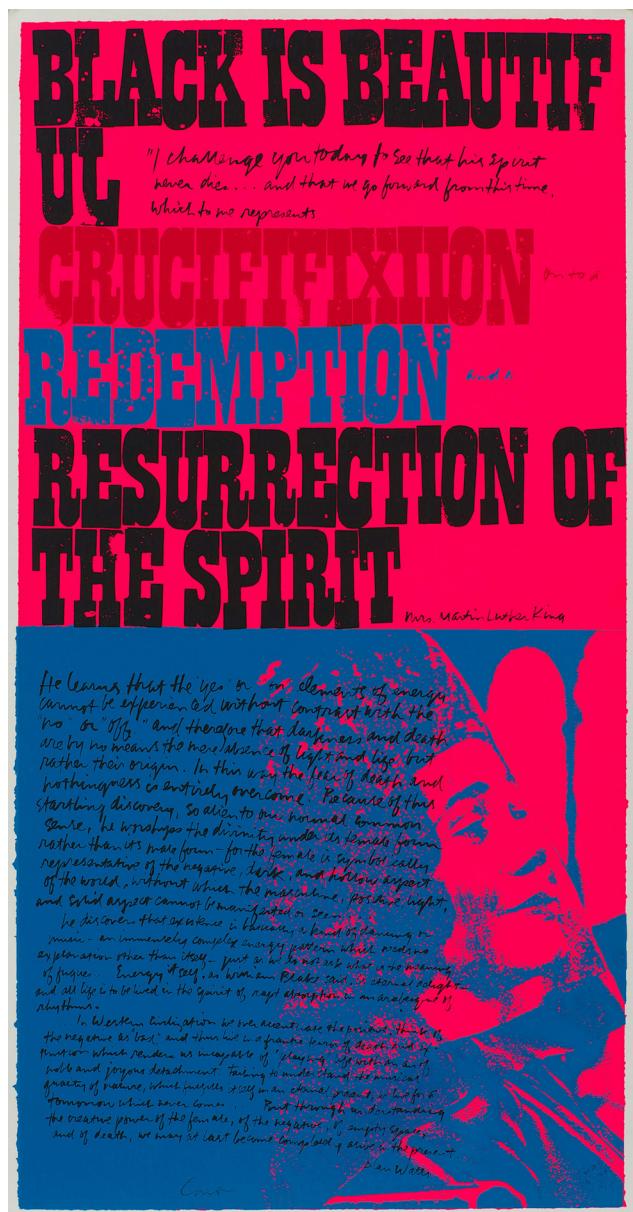
if i

“Black is beautiful” proclaims the print, *if i*, in bold capital letters. Beneath this affirmational phrase, is a quote from Coretta Scott King, civil rights leader and wife of Martin Luther King Jr., from a speech she delivered at her husband’s funeral after his assassination on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. King’s death sent shock waves through the United States and the world, especially within the Black community and Civil Rights Movement in which King had been a galvanizing force and central leader. In the wake of his passing, Scott King’s words are a rallying cry to “see that his spirit never dies,” and that his life’s work be continued in his absence. Fragments of her statement are printed in block letters, creating a visual triad out of the words “crucifixion,” “redemption,” and “resurrection of the spirit.” Scott King invokes Christian language in speaking about the loss and legacy of her husband and analogizes his death to that of Jesus Christ.

The bottom half of the print contains a photograph of Scott King taken by photographer Gordon Parks at King’s funeral and featured on the April 19, 1968 cover of *LIFE* magazine. A quotation from the writer and artist, Alan Watts, overlays the image of Scott King. Written in Corita’s handwriting, Watts’ statement questions Western civilization’s reliance on binary thinking that pits concepts like life and death, light and dark, masculine and feminine against each other. Inspired by Eastern philosophies like Zen Buddhism, Watts aims to reconcile these perceived dualities writing, “therefore that darkness and death are by no means the mere absence of light and life but rather their origin.” Taken together, the quotations by Scott King and Watts both speak to the interconnected nature of life and death, but from different philosophical and religious traditions. Corita’s pairing of Western and Eastern forms of belief demonstrates her ability to create unexpected connections and to find core commonalities within difference.



LIFE magazine cover, April 19, 1968

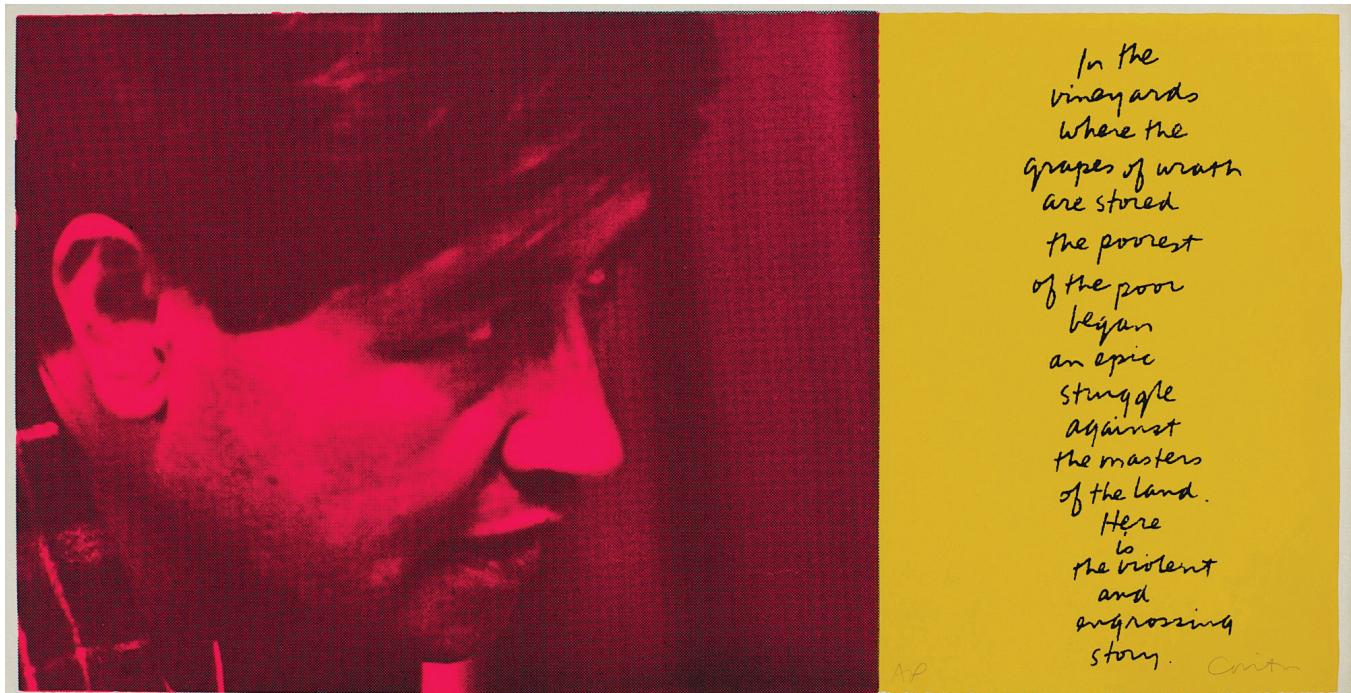


chavez

chavez honors César Chavez, the Mexican American labor leader and civil rights activist who, alongside Dolores Huerta, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association and led the landmark Delano Grape Strike (1965–1970). This strike challenged the systemic exploitation of migrant laborers in California's Central Valley, drawing national attention to their inhumane working conditions.

In Corita's print, a tightly-cropped profile photograph of Chavez is paired with a quote from journalist John Gregory Dunne's 1967 article on Chavez's movement. Dunne's text references *The Grapes of Wrath*, invoking Steinbeck's portrayal of displaced Depression-era farmers to underline the historical continuity of agricultural injustice. Together, the image and quotation form a quiet yet powerful diptych—one that radiates resolve and moral clarity in the face of economic and racial oppression.

chavez is unique among the works in Corita's heroes & sheroes series for its focus on a local issue—California farm labor—rooted in the artist's own lifelong connection to Southern California. Raised in Los Angeles and a member of the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Corita was a Catholic nun, educator, and socially engaged artist. While much of her early work avoided overt political commentary, pieces like *my people* (1965), made in response to the Watts Rebellion, and *chavez* mark a shift toward direct engagement with contemporary social issues.



Through media-sourced imagery and text, Corita amplified the voices of those fighting for justice in her own community. In *chavez*, she distills a moment of personal strength and collective struggle, transforming it into a symbol of enduring resistance.

Discussion Questions

&

Writing Prompts

Discussion Questions & Writing Prompts

1

Would you consider the heroes & sheroes series a form of “protest art”? Why or why not? What is the artist protesting? How can you tell? What is her stance on the issue? How does she convey her opinion?

2

Consider the title of the series: heroes & sheroes. Identify the heroes and sheroes that Corita features in these prints. Who are these figures and what did they stand for? Why do you think they were important to the artist? What makes someone a s/hero?

3

What would you say is the overall tone or mood of the series? Do you think it presents an optimistic view or a pessimistic view or both? Why? What is the artist’s attitude towards American society and politics? Give visual evidence to support your claims.

4

Imagine updating the series to capture the concerns and significant figures of today. Who would you include in a contemporary edition of heroes & sheroes? How do these figures align with the themes and messages of the original 1969 version? How do they diverge from the 1969 s/heroes, perhaps representing a new or different form of heroism?

5

Consider the title of the series: heroes & sheroes. By including “sheroes” in the title of the series, Corita draws attention to the gendered nature of the word “hero” and assumptions around heroism and masculinity. However, while she is disrupting the masculine nature of the word “hero,” she is also maintaining a very binary understanding of gender. How could this title be updated to be more inclusive?



In-Gallery Activities

MAKE A LIST, MAKE ANOTHER LIST

“The making of lists is a most useful device for brainstorming—whether alone or in groups. Don’t censor yourself; accept all ideas, whether or not they seem relevant or repetitious. You will delve more deeply and freely and the results will be a richer and broader spectrum of ideas.”

Corita Kent and Jan Seward, *Learning by Heart*, 1992

Read the quotation out loud. Reflect on it. Use it as a guide for this activity.

Activity

Look at the heroes & sheroes artworks.

Take your time.

Make a list of 50 things you notice about the heroes & sheroes artworks.

Make a list of 50 questions that arise from the heroes & sheroes artworks.

- Quantity Over Quality.
- Follow Corita’s advice! Don’t censor yourself.
- Don’t second guess. Accept all ideas.
- Look and then look again.

Group Reflection

Reunite as a class. If possible, sit down in a circle. Get comfortable. Share your impressions of the exercise.

- What surprised you?
- What was challenging?
- What did you learn about the artworks as you made your lists?
- What did you learn about yourself as you made your lists?
- What happens to your brain through the act of repetition?

Small Group Share

Get into groups of 3 or 4.

Share your lists, each person reading one entry at a time until you all have exhausted your lists. Read quickly and have fun with it.

WORD & IMAGE

Read and reflect on the following quotations.

“Words are the medium and you can make the message.”

Corita Kent, Oral history, April 1976

“...the idea that using words with visual forms and using just short passages is often a way to help awaken people to something they may not be aware of, rather than enclosing it in a book or making a speech about it.”

Corita Kent, Oral history, April 1976

“Words are pictures (they have visible forms) as well as carriers-of-concepts (verbal forms); and with all of the signs that are around us in our manscapes and landscapes, there is a great kind of conversations going on between words and pictures where one beams on the other, illuminating the other as persons do to persons.”

Sister Mary Corita, “Choose LIFE or assign a sign or begin a conversation.” 1966

Activity

Select one artwork in the series that uses both image and text.

Title of Work: _____

Spend 2 minutes looking at your selected artwork. Take notes.

→ Consider color, scale, orientation, clarity and legibility.

Consider the following questions in relation to your selected artwork. Write down your answers.

What is the image(s)?

What is the text(s)?

What is the relationship between the image and the text? For example, do they reinforce a single message? Do they support or oppose each other?

Which element stands out to you the most, the image or the text? Why?

What is the message being conveyed by this print?

Class Discussion

Reunite as a group. As a class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:

Taking the series as a whole, what do you think is the dominant method/mode of communication? Image or text? Words or pictures? Why?

Which is a better source of information? Which is a more trustworthy source of information? Why?

Can images operate as texts? And vice versa. How and why/why not?

THE MEDIUM AND THE MESSAGE

TEACHER

About this Activity

- 3-part activity: in the gallery, at home, in the classroom.
- Focuses on close looking, critical thinking, textual and visual analysis, historical research, written reflection, and class discussion.
- Encourages students to engage with both the form and the content of the *heroes & sheroes* series.
- Develops research skills and provides an opportunity for students to learn more about research portals and databases, specifically those with historical newspapers and news media.

Before Visiting the exhibition:

Review background info (provided in Teacher Resource Packet) on the artist, Corita Kent, and her *heroes & sheroes* (1968/9) series of prints.

In the gallery:

Pick one serigraph from the *heroes & sheroes* series that employs a quotation from an outside source. For example, the stamp of Thoreau includes a quotation from Henry Thoreau.

Get comfortable. Look at the print for 2 minutes (challenge yourself to look for an entire 120 seconds (about 2 minutes), just looking). Practice different forms of looking (up close, far away, squinting, reading the text, contemplating the images, scanning the whole series, and so forth).

Once the two minutes are up, remain in front of your selected print. Answer the following questions:

- What attracted you to this particular print? What stands out?
- What is the dominant imagery? The dominant text?
- How does the artist use color? How does she use scale, juxtaposition, orientation?
- What is the message being conveyed?
- How does this print relate to others in the series? What are the similarities? Differences?
- What further questions do you have? (Try to think of at least 5 questions)

Keep this page of notes and questions.

At home:

Identify the quotation(s) or source(s) used in the print. Consider both the textual and visual sources.

Using the internet or library resources, research the author and source of the quotation.

- Who are they?
- What are they famous for?
- What is the original source of the quotation?
- Why do you think Corita chose to use a quotation from this figure?
- How do they or their work sync with the messages conveyed in *heroes and sheroes*?

Using the page of notes and questions you completed in-gallery and the page of research questions, write a short (300-500 words) reflection on how the textual and visual elements of your chosen print work together to convey its message (or messages). How does this message align or differ from the overarching themes of the series as a whole?

In the classroom:

Assemble in small groups of 4-5 students. Try and get in a group with students that researched different prints from you.

Take turns presenting your prints. Teach your group about the source material (visual and textual) used in the print, present your conclusions about the message it conveys and its relationship to other prints in the series.

Once each member in your group has presented, together choose one print that you all believe to be the “s/heroe image” of the series. In other words, which print best encapsulates the artistic and historical themes of *heroes & sheroes*? Be prepared to defend your decision. Choose one member of the group who will present your choice to the class.

Unite as a class. Have each small group present their “s/heroe image” and give their reasoning. Allow for debate and disagreement. After everyone has taken a turn, find a way to select a single s/heroe image from among those presented.

THE MEDIUM AND THE MESSAGE

STUDENT

Before visiting the exhibition:

Review background info on the artist, Corita Kent, and her heroes & sheroes (1968/9) series of prints.

In the gallery:

Pick one print from the heroes & sheroes series (see "Selected Works").

Get comfortable. Look at the print for 2 minutes (challenge yourself to look for an entire 120 seconds, just looking). Practice different forms of looking (up close, far away, squinting, reading the text, contemplating the images, scanning the whole series, and so forth).

Once the two minutes are up, remain in front of your selected print. Answer the following questions:

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- What is the dominant imagery? The dominant text?
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Unite as a class. Have each small group present their "s/hero image" and give their reasoning. Allow for debate and disagreement. After everyone has taken a turn, find a way to select a single s/hero image from among those presented.

THEN & NOW

TEACHER

About this Activity

- 3-part activity: in the gallery, at home, in the classroom.
- Focuses on media literacy, critical thinking and looking, historical research, written reflection, and verbal debate.
- Encourages students to employ critical thinking when engaging with news media from the present and the past and to develop an analytical approach towards the consumption of media.
- Develops research skills and provides an opportunity for students to learn more about research portals and databases, specifically those with historical newspapers and news media.

Selected Works:

- *i'm glad i can feel pain* (1968/9)
- *a passion for the possible* (1968/9)
- *american sampler* (1968/9)
- *king's dream* (1968/9)
- *love your brother* (1968/9)
- *third eye* (1968/9)
- *if i* (1968/9)
- *it can be said of them* (1968/9)
- *moonflowers* (1968/9)
- *manflowers* (1968/9)
- *chavez* (1968/9)
- *love at the end* (1968/9)

In the gallery:

- Chose one of the “Selected Works.”
- Get comfortable. Look at the print for 2 minutes (challenge yourself to look for an entire 120 seconds, just looking). Practice different forms of looking (up close, far away, squinting, reading the text, contemplating the images, scanning the whole series, and so forth).
- Once the 2 minutes are up, take notes. Record your observations and any questions that may have arisen while looking closely at the print.

At home:

Identify the historical event and/or issue referenced in your chosen print.

Research this event. Find historical articles that speak to this event or issue. What is the historical context? Who are the people or groups involved? What was at stake?

Consider the socio-political climate today. Think of an analogous issue or event from the present day. Find news coverage of this event. If possible, try to locate coverage that demonstrates different perspectives.

Write a short (300-500 words) reflection paper drawing parallels and identifying divergences between the historical and contemporary events. In respect to your chosen event or issue, what and how have things changed between 1968/69 and today? What remains the same? How did the media cover these events? What were the biases involved?

In the classroom:

As a class, divide into two groups to debate the statement:

Very little has changed in the United States since the 1960s. The same basic social, cultural, and political issues remain.

- The Affirmative Team will argue in favor of this statement, and the Negative Team will argue against it. This is called an “Oxford-style debate” and the idea is to argue your side to the best of your ability, whether or not you agree with it.
- Each team is encouraged to back up their statements and arguments with historical and contemporary evidence (the news articles researched are a good place to start). Opinions are more persuasive when backed by facts and evidence. Specifics are more compelling than generalizations.
- Take 30-45 minutes to prepare and then begin the debate. Each side prepares an opening statement and then can alternate speakers and rebuttals going forward. Debate for 15 minutes (or longer, if needed).

THEN & NOW

STUDENT

Selected Works:

- *i'm glad i can feel pain* (1968/9)
- *a passion for the possible* (1968/9)
- *american sampler* (1968/9)
- *king's dream* (1968/9)
- *love your brother* (1968/9)
- *third eye* (1968/9)
- *if i* (1968/9)
- *it can be said of them* (1968/9)
- *moonflowers* (1968/9)
- *manflowers* (1968/9)
- *chavez* (1968/9)
- *love at the end* (1968/9)

In the gallery:

- Chose one of the “Selected Works.”
- Get comfortable. Look at the print for 2 minutes (challenge yourself to look for an entire 120 seconds, just looking). Practice different forms of looking (up close, far away, squinting, reading the text, contemplating the images, scanning the whole series, and so forth).
- Once the 2 minutes are up, take notes. Record your observations and any questions that may have arisen while looking closely at the print.

At home:

- Identify the historical event and/or issue referenced in your chosen print.
- Research this event. Find historical articles that speak to this event or issue. What is the historical context? Who are the people or groups involved? What was at stake?
- Consider the socio-political climate today. Think of an analogous issue or event from the present day. Find news coverage of this event. If possible, try to locate coverage that demonstrates different perspectives.
- Write a short (300-500 words) reflection paper drawing parallels and identifying divergences between the historical and contemporary events. In respect to your chosen event or issue, what and how have things changed between 1968/69 and today? What remains the same? How did the media cover these events? What were the biases involved?

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- As a class, divide into two groups to debate the statement:

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- Take 30-45 minutes to prepare and then begin the debate. Each side prepares an opening statement and then can alternate speakers and rebuttals going forward. Debate for 15 minutes (or longer, if needed).

Things look different to different people depending on where
 They stand
 And if we can share views
 Not convert others to our views
 We would get a larger vision
 No single group can do it alone
 The job is too big and we can only make it
 If we work it out together

Corita Kent, *Footnotes and Headlines*, pp. 26-27

DO IT YOURSELF!

“In this putting together process which we call art there are two kinds of meaning possible—the meaning resulting from the arrangement of forms and the meaning in the sense of ideas or information conveyed. The first meaning must always be present and is enough. Which is to say that if a thing is visual, it is most important that it be visually meaningful before it ‘does’ anything. In fact, it need not do anything else, but it can.”

Sister Mary Corita, “Doors Are Like Letters Are Like Love”
1966

“I think I am always collecting in a way—walking down a street with my eyes open, looking through a magazine, viewing a movie, visiting a museum or grocery store. Some of the things I collect are tangible and mount into piles of many layers, and when the time comes to use saved images, I dig like an archaeologist through my lists and all the piles that have accumulated, and sometimes I find what I want and sometimes I don’t.”

Corita Kent, *Learning By Heart*, p. 60, 1992

DO IT YOURSELF!

Activity

Make a collage in response to what you believe to be the most pressing concern of the present moment.

BACKGROUND

What is a collage?

“Collage” describes both a technique and the resulting work of art, in which various materials (such as scraps of paper, cloth, photographs, or other ephemera) are arranged and glued onto a supporting surface. Collage is an art process that brings together materials from different sources and puts them into conversation with each other in an act of decontextualization and recontextualization. In other words, taking an image or piece of text out of its original context—a magazine, newspaper, advertisement, etc.—and putting it into a new context: the collage.

Corita & Collage

Collage forms the basis of many of Corita's serigraphs.. It is a technique that she adopted to create her layered and visually and typographically complex compositions. She was an avid collector of materials of all sorts (see quotations above) and she used these source materials to construct collages that served as the initial step in the production of her serigraphs. After creating a collage out of the source materials she collected, she would create stencils from her collage and use these stencils to transfer her desired image through the silkscreen and onto the paper, creating the final printed product: a serigraph, or silkscreen print.

Corita drew inspiration and material from a variety of sources: advertisements, newspapers, magazines, poetry, music lyrics, etc. The *heroes and sheroes* (1968-69) serigraphs are some of her first to use found photographs and photojournalism. Prior to this series, Corita primarily included found texts and fragments of advertisements and logos as the source material which she collaged together.

Corita was attracted to collage because it enabled her to unite materials from disparate sources and bring them into conversation with each other. Through the process of decontextualizing and recontextualizing implied in making a collage, Corita could unite a slogan for cereal with the image of a road sign and photograph from LIFE magazine and create something wholly original and entirely unexpected. She was able to draw correspondences between objects and phrases that filtered through everyday life and seemingly unrelated news headlines, poetic and religious texts, drawing the spiritual out of the quotidian and the quotidian out of the spiritual. In the words of the artist:

The basic at the bottom of art or the creativity that starts art is the ability to make relationships. When two or more things are put together, the result is sometimes greater than a simple sum of parts. When you put a match next to another match, you have two matches. But when a photograph of a dying child is put next to a line from an ad that says, ‘Come Alive! You’re the Pepsi Generation,’ or when a picture of a starving man is put next to an outlandish ad for hair dye, what comes out are six hundred or so questions or ideas. The thing suddenly takes on the quality of a symbol or a parable. It means something new—it means many new things.

Sister Mary Corita, “Doors Are Like Letters Are Like Love” 1966

DO IT YOURSELF!

Activity

Make a collage in response to what you believe to be the most pressing concern of the present moment.

Materials:

- Paper in different sizes.
 - Letter (8.5 x 11"), Legal (8.5 x 14") and Tabloid (11 x 17")
- Scissors
- Glue
- Permanent markers
- Collage source materials
 - Newspapers, local and national
 - Collect for a week prior. Try to provide a variety of newspapers, ideally with opposing or differing views
 - Magazines
 - A wide array. News, political, sports, fashion, beauty, music, etc.
 - Comics
 - Junk mail
 - Old greeting cards

Process:

1. Read the two quotations from Corita.
2. Spend time looking at the collage examples.
3. Spend time with the collage source materials. Read. Look. Notice.
4. Develop the theme for your collage. What is the issue you want to address? What is your perspective on this issue? Think broadly and critically. How will you convey the theme visually? How will you convey the theme textually?
5. Cut out images and parts of text that speak to your theme and to your aesthetic.
6. Arrange your image and text fragments into a composition. Glue them onto your paper.
7. Add any additional, hand-written elements to your collage.
8. Title and date your collage.

Reflection Exercise

(Can be a written exercise or done in a small group or class discussion format).

- What issue did you decide to address in your collage? Why did you choose this issue? How did you approach or frame your chosen issue? What visual strategies did you use?
- Consider the first quotation by Corita at the top of the assignment. How were you able to express the two forms of meaning that she discusses in your collage?
- What surprised you about this project? What were the challenges? What did you discover through the process?

Collage: Collage describes both the technique and the resulting work of art in which pieces of paper, photographs, fabric and other ephemera are arranged and stuck down onto a supporting surface. It was first used as an artists' technique in the early twentieth century. Collage can also include other media such as painting or drawing, and contain three-dimensional elements.

Composition: The arrangement of elements within a work of art.

Juxtaposition: The act or an instance of placing two or more things side by side often to compare or contrast or to create an interesting effect.

Media / Medium: Media and/or medium can refer to both to the type of art (e.g. painting, sculpture, printmaking), as well as the materials an artwork is made from.

Photojournalism: Photojournalism is a form of journalism which tells a news story through powerful photography.

Photomontage: A photomontage is a collage constructed from photographs.

Print: A print is an impression made by any method involving transfer from one surface to another.

Printer: The specialist who provides technical aide throughout the printing process. A master printer may have a group of assistants. Historically, printmaking has been characterized by a divided production process, where artist and printer work collaboratively but accomplish different tasks.

Scale: A proportion between two sets of dimensions (as between those of a drawing and its original); a distinctive relative size, extent, or degree.

Screenprint: A variety of stencil printing, using a screen made from fabric (silk or synthetic) stretched tightly over a frame.

The non-printing areas on the fabric are blocked out by a stencil. This can be created by painting on glue or lacquer, by applying adhesive film or paper, or painting a light-sensitive resist onto the screen which is then developed as a photograph (photo-screenprint). Ink or paint is then forced through the (non-blocked areas of) open fabric with a rubber blade, known as a squeegee, onto the paper.

Screenprinting has been used commercially since the 1920s. It first began to be used by artists in 1930s America and the term 'serigraph' was initially used to denote an artist's print, as opposed to commercial work. It has been widely used by artists as a printmaking technique since the 1950s.

The term 'silkscreen' (silk was originally used for the mesh) is also commonly used to describe the technique, particularly in America.

Serigraph: See SCREENPRINT. The term "serigraph" comes from the Latin *seri-* (silk) and *-graphos* (writing).

*All definitions were sourced from Art Terms, the Tate Modern Museum's online glossary, and Merriam Webster Online Dictionary.

To Watch

Corita Art Center - From the Archives

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPsZ3_J-JCIJbQ9Hj-78BOg3AK914fOP9

Art + Life Rules From A Nun by Art Assignment

youtube.com/watch?v=IRPyql3cezo

Become a Microscope by Aaron Rose

youtube.com/watch?v=EaOWOULeH-0

Corita Kent and the Language of Pop

youtube.com/watch?v=OsXi9ZS7L7k

AIGA Medalist

youtube.com/watch?v=tivdlh2mhlU

To Read

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Berry, Ian, and Michael Duncan. *Someday Is Now: the Art of Corita Kent*. The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, 2013.

Crow, Thomas E., et al. *Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965-1975*. Edited by Melissa Ho, Smithsonian American Art Museum; in association with Princeton University Press, 2019.

Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

Kent, Corita. *Footnotes and Headlines: A Play-Pray Book*. Herder and Herder, 1967.

Kent, Corita and Jan Steward. *Learning by Heart*. Bantam Books, 1992.

Kent, Corita. "Catching Sight: Potentialities of Photographs." *The Use and Misuse of Visual Arts in Religious Education*, edited by Celia T. Hubbard. Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966.

Kent, Corita. "Choose Life or Assign a Sign or Begin a Conversation." *Living Light 3*, no.1 (Spring 1966).

Kent, Corita. "Doors Are Like Letters Are Like Love." *Children's Religion*, November 1966.

Kent, Corita, interviewed by Bernard Galm for Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles, April 1976.

About Corita Art Center

Founded by Immaculate Heart Community, Corita Art Center maintains the largest and most comprehensive collection of works by iconic artist Corita Kent (1918-1986). CAC's collection is comprised of Corita's artwork, photographs, ephemera, and other archival material that visitors won't see anywhere else. Corita Art Center is dedicated to preserving and promoting Corita's artistic and educational legacy and her passion for social justice. Today, Corita Art Center oversees image and merchandising rights, produces public programming, supports exhibition loans, and serves as a resource for information about her life and work.

To learn more about Corita Art Center and Corita Kent, visit corita.org or connect on social media channels: [@coritaartcenter](https://www.instagram.com/coritaartcenter) on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

To see the full collection of Corita's heroes & sheroes as well as a comprehensive database of her artworks and additional resources, visit collection.corita.org

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HEROES AND SHEROES

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