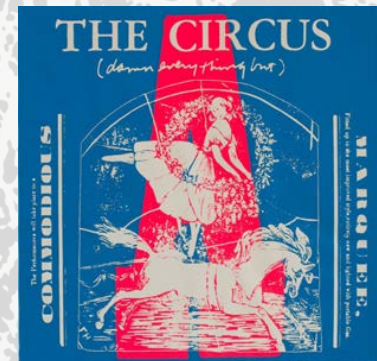
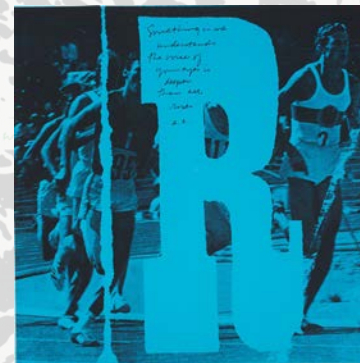
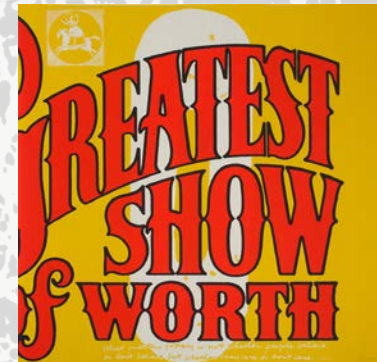
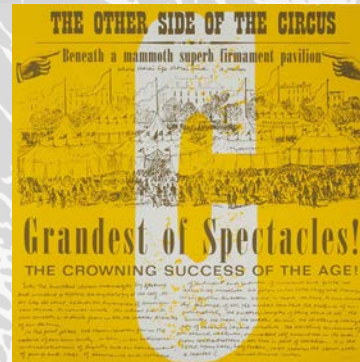


# SOMEDAY IS NOW: THE ART OF CORITA KENT



Viewer Guide by Hilary Knecht ('13),  
produced in cooperation with the Tang staff.

The Frances Young Tang  
Teaching Museum and Art Gallery  
815 North Broadway  
Saratoga Springs, New York  
[www.skidmore.edu/tang](http://www.skidmore.edu/tang)



January 19 - July 28, 2013

The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery

# Welcome to the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery!



The Tang Museum is an interdisciplinary learning space that encourages creative thinking and participation from its viewers, staff, and artists.

*Someday is Now: The Art of Corita Kent* is the first major museum exhibition to display the full range of Kent's serigraph prints, spanning over thirty years.

As you explore the art, use this viewer guide to help answer your questions as well as to raise new ones. This guide is designed for people of all ages to stimulate discussion and provide you with activities. Enjoy the show!



yes people like us, 1965

All works serigraph on paper unless otherwise noted.



Corita Leading Mary's Day Parade, 1964



solw (slow), 1967

**Front cover:**  
*circus alphabet*, 1968  
 (from left to right, top to bottom)  
*C* capital clown  
*O* greatest show  
*R* rosey runners  
*I* i am coming alive  
*T* the tight rope  
*A* i love that one  
**Background:**  
*downwards as well*, 1972  
**Back cover:** *hi*, 1963

# RECAP AND REFLECT

Which of Corita's artworks **stand out** to you?  
Do you prefer a certain **color** scheme or **style**?

How do the prints combine **text** and **image**?  
What **themes** do the prints address?

How do the colors and font help convey Corita's **messages**? Do you think her serigraphs are **effective**?

Find *mary does laugh* (1964).



Think about the screenprint's main characteristics:  
color, text and font, message, and design.

Consider the relationship among all of these elements.

Is one more important than another?

Which component stands out the most to you?

Think about the print within the context of the exhibition. How does it relate to the artworks surrounding it and to the entire exhibition?

# INTRODUCTION TO CORITA KENT

Corita Kent (1918-1986) created *serigraphs* addressing cultural themes including racism, war, poverty, and religion. Corita was inspired by *Pop Art*, which takes images and texts from popular culture out of their original context and repurposes them. She distinguishes her style through vibrant bold colors combined with critical yet hopeful texts. As a Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Corita taught art at Immaculate Heart College for over twenty years.

The process of *serigraphy*, also called *silkscreening* or *screen printing*, involves creating a stencil to block off certain areas of a mesh screen. Ink is squeegeed across the mesh to adhere to paper in the areas not blocked by the stencil. Serigraphs can be easily reproduced on billboards, posters, T-shirts, and more.

Background, above left: *your each moment*, 1977  
Background, above right: *accept the moment*, 1977



Immaculate Heart Silkscreen Room

# Text and Font

Text and the arrangement of words are an essential aspect of Corita's body of work.

At times, it is difficult to decipher all of the words in a piece.



Why do you think the artist chose to do this?



word picture: gift of tongues, 1955

Corita used text both as an image and to convey a message.

**Step 1:** Choose an artwork in the gallery with plenty of words.

**Step 2:** Look at the artwork without reading any of the words, while paying close attention to how the print looks visually.

**Step 3:** Read the words carefully and try to figure out what message Corita was attempting to impart.

**Step 4:** Think about the relationship between the text and image.

- Why do you think the words are arranged the way that they are?
- How would the message be different if it were written simply left to right like a book?
- What effect would the print have if it were only colors and designs but no words?

**Background**

**Above:** fish (detail), 1964

**Below:** peache bread, 1964

Find either the *circus alphabet* or *international signal code alphabet*.

How does your impression of the series change when looking at the entire wall versus only one print?

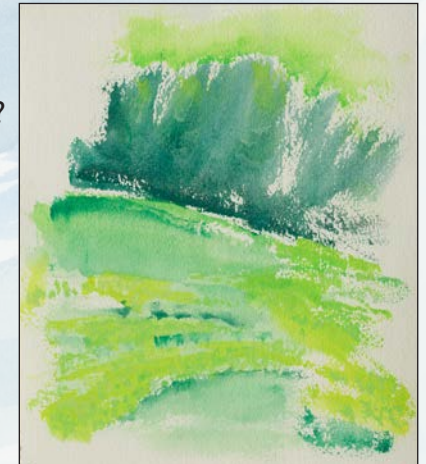


The show is arranged somewhat chronologically, beginning with Corita's works from the 1950s and ending with her works from the 1980s.

In the last room of the exhibition, find the *watercolors* that Corita painted during the last decade of her life.

What connections can you find between these paintings and her earlier prints?

How do the **colors, shapes,** and *brushstrokes* in her watercolors compare to those in her serigraphs?



**Below left:** *Untitled*, 9 October 1985, watercolor on paper

**Below right:** *Untitled*, 14 July 1981, watercolor on paper

**Background:** *Untitled*, 10 September 1985, watercolor on paper

## Exhibition Arrangement

How are the artworks in *Someday is Now* arranged?

What themes can you find in different sections of the exhibition?



power up, 1965

Some artworks, such as *power up*, connect across frames.

- How can you tell that the prints are intended to be displayed together?
- What would you think if only one of the four prints in *power up* were displayed without the other three?
- How would the image be different if it were all in one frame?
- Can you find other examples of this strategy in the exhibition?
- What do you think about this technique?

Some of the artworks are placed <sup>high up</sup> on the wall so that the viewer cannot read all of the words.

Does the artist's message still come across even though some of the words are illegible?

Do the words become irrelevant or lose their power? Why or why not?

**Font**—the letters' size and style — is a key aspect of text.

Why do you think Corita chose to use different fonts in the same image?



someday is now, 1964

What is the effect of having **large bold block letters** next to *smaller scribbled letters*?

*Create your own word art!* Write a sentence about something important to you. If you need inspiration, refer to some of Corita's prints for ideas.

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Then, rearrange part or all of the sentence in the space below. Try to vary the size and direction of the words.

# Color

Try standing in one section of the exhibition and turning in a circle, noticing the range of colors that Corita uses. Looking at the colors is pivotal to understanding Corita's prints.

In general, how would you *describe the colors*?  
Try to think of at least three distinctive adjectives.

Each section of the exhibition includes serigraphs based on similar color characteristics, such as intensity.

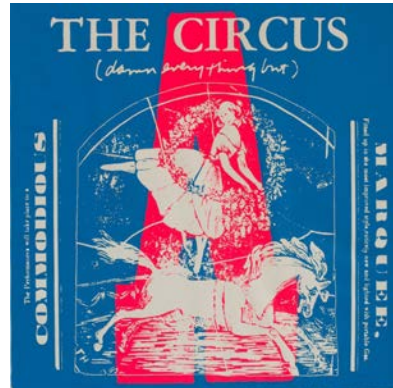
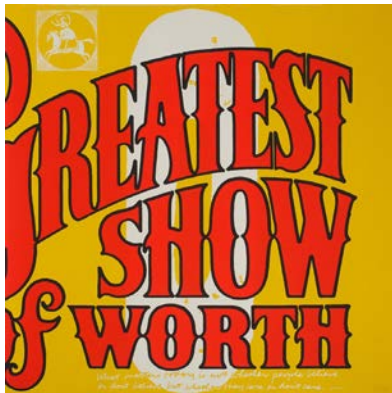
*Intensity* is a color's **brightness** or *dullness*.

What effects do you think the bright colors convey?  
What about the more subdued ones?

Do you think the colors fit with the text? Why or why not?

Observe the colors in the *circus alphabet*.

Are the colors bright or dull?



Do you think the colors reflect the prints' subject matter? Why or why not?

Corita's *international signal code alphabet* (1968) uses common expressions to signify each letter of the alphabet.

Some examples are "O my God," "X marks the spot," and "E for Everyone."

What are some expressions that you use that are based on a letter of the alphabet?



From top to bottom: o is for god; x marks the spot; e is for everyone

*Design your own code alphabet!*  
Pick four letters to incorporate into a design. For each drawing, write a word or phrase that you think signifies the letter.


# Slogans and Expressions

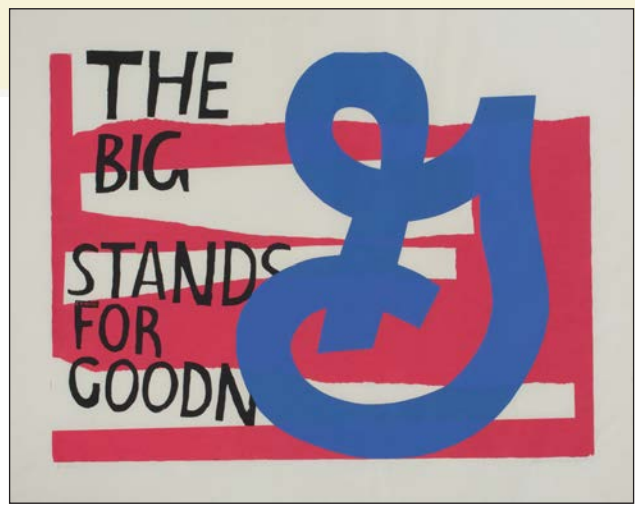
Corita incorporates popular 1960s advertising slogans into some of her serigraphs. You may not recognize some of these slogans now, although many are still popular brands.

For example, General Mills' 1962 slogan for Cheerios was "The big G stands for goodness." Today they use the slogan "The 1 and Only Cheerios."

**Slogans** are short memorable phrases used to advertise a brand or product.

What's the effect of reading references that might be outdated now? Do the slogans lose their meaning if you do not know to what they refer? Why or why not?

Background: enriched bread, 1965  
Below: for eleanor, 1964

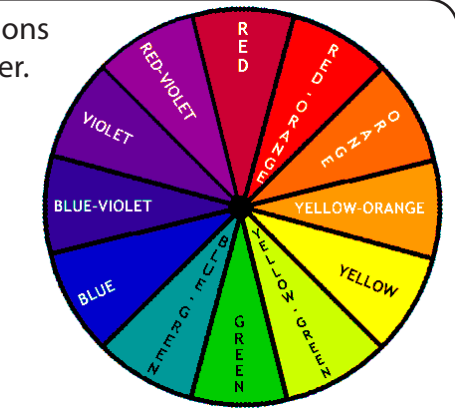


### What slogans stick in your mind?

Try thinking of catchy phrases you have heard on TV or read in a magazine, and write them below.

Corita uses various color combinations that make her colors appear brighter. One of her strategies is to use complementary colors.

**Complementary colors**, such as green and red, purple and yellow, and blue and orange, are colors opposite each other on the **color wheel**—a circle that organizes color relationships.



Find the artwork below, *things go better with* (1967).

How does the black-and-white version printed here compare to the colored original displayed in the exhibition?

Do you think Corita's **complementary colors** are visually pleasing?

Do you think the colors make the artwork more or less powerful?

Do they enhance or detract from the image?



# Activist Art

Much of Corita's artwork addresses issues prevalent in the United States during the 1960s and '70s, including civil rights, feminism, poverty, and war. Her serigraphs reflect her faithful and hopeful outlook for these topics.

Find the artworks below.

- What *themes* do they address?
- What *messages* do you think they convey?
- Are any of these messages *relevant* to your life? If so, how?
- For example, how does the phrase "flowers grow out of dark moments" apply to your life? What do you think it means?



Top left: *the lord is with thee, 1952*

Top right: *flowers grow, 1977*

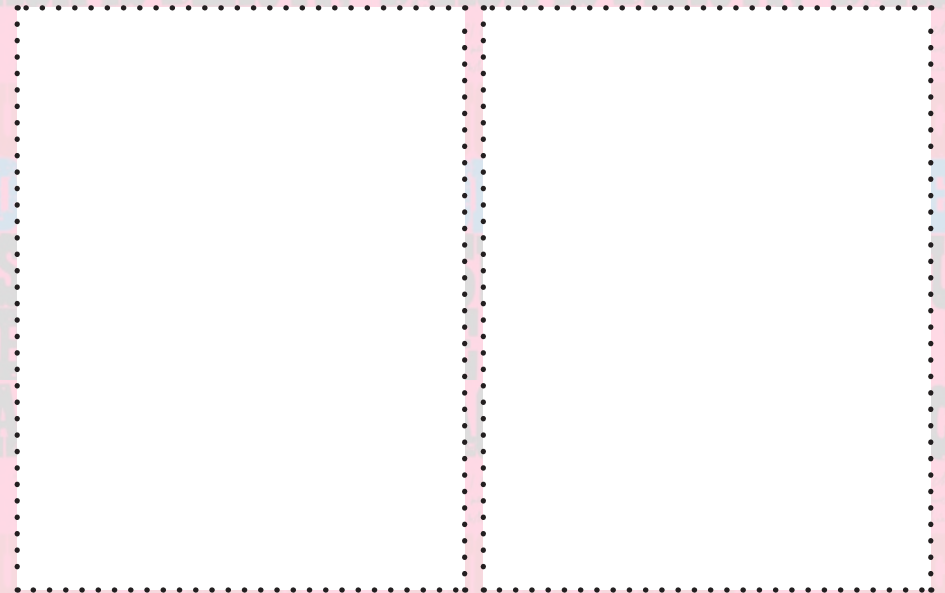
Bottom: *chavez, 1969*

Background: *if i, 1969*

Why do you think Corita chose to make *serigraphs*, a medium that can be easily reproduced and distributed, for artworks with such political messages?

*Express yourself!* Draw two self-portraits. Use only pictures in one and words in the other. The portraits do not need to be literal; think of objects and words that are reminiscent of you, such as activities you do or your hobbies and interests.

Remember to vary the size and direction of your designs like you did for the activity on page 4.



Did you find one of the drawings more difficult to make? If so, which one?

Is one of your drawings more similar to Corita's prints than the other?

Do you think one of your artworks is more effective than the other in expressing who you are?