

SISTER MARY CORITA STUDIO
5500-5518 West Franklin Avenue; 1859-1863 North Western Avenue
CHC-2020-5630-HCM
ENV-2020-5631-CE

Agenda packet includes:

1. [Final Determination Staff Recommendation Report](#)
2. [Commission/ Staff Site Inspection Photos—November 12, 2020](#)
3. [Under Consideration Staff Recommendation Report](#)
4. [Historic-Cultural Monument Application](#)

Please click on each document to be directly taken to the corresponding page of the PDF.

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2020-5630-HCM
ENV-2020-5631-CE

HEARING DATE: December 17, 2020
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: Teleconference (see
agenda for login
information)

Location: 5500-5518 W. Franklin Avenue;
1859-1863 N. Western Avenue
Council District: 13 – O'Farrell
Community Plan Area: Hollywood
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Hollywood United
Legal Description: Hollywood Terrace Tract, Lot 51

EXPIRATION DATE: The original expiration date of December 29, 2020 is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders*

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
SISTER MARY CORITA STUDIO

REQUEST: Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: Franklin Western Partners, LLC
585 Unique Lane
Simi Valley, CA 93065

APPLICANT: Nellie Scott
Corita Art Center
5515 Franklin Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90028

PREPARER: Kathryn Wollan
25 Quaker Bridge Road
Ossining, NY 10562

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Not declare** the property a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Shannon Ryan, Senior City Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Office of Historic Resources

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Melissa Jones, City Planning Associate
Office of Historic Resources

Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Commission/ Staff Site Inspection Photos—November 14, 2020
Historic-Cultural Monument Application

Historic-Cultural Monument Application

FINDINGS

- The Sister Mary Corita Studio does not meet any of the three criteria of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance to be eligible for designation as an Historic-Cultural Monument.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

SUMMARY

The Sister Mary Corita Studio is a one-story commercial building located on West Franklin Avenue between Garfield Place and North Western Avenue in Hollywood. Constructed in 1960 by J.P. Anderson, the building is designed in a utilitarian commercial architectural style. From 1962 to 1968, the subject property served as the studio for visual Pop artist and art educator Sister Mary Corita (1918-1986). The building is located directly across Franklin Avenue from Immaculate Heart High School (formerly Immaculate Heart College), the community in which Sister Mary Corita lived and worked. After 1968, the subject building housed several retail uses and for the past thirty years has been occupied by a dry-cleaning business.

The subject building is located on the northwest corner of the parcel facing Franklin Avenue, which also includes a second building at the northeast corner (not included in the nomination), and a surface parking lot. Rectangular in plan, the building is of concrete block construction with smooth stucco cladding and has a flat roof with a slightly raised parapet. The primary, east-facing elevation is asymmetrically composed with a T-shaped volume projecting from the main plane. Within the projecting volume is the main entrance consisting of paired aluminum and glass doors with a fixed glass transom and sidelite. The north-facing elevation fronts Franklin Avenue and has wing walls on each end that extend to the sidewalk, with the remainder of the elevation slightly recessed. Fenestration is minimal and consists of fixed metal sash windows. There are illuminated signs bearing the name of the business above the entrance, on the south side of the east-facing elevation, and in the center of the north-facing elevation. There is also a freestanding pole sign sited northeast of the subject building.

Sister Mary Corita was born Frances Elizabeth Kent on November 20, 1918 in Fort Dodge, Iowa and later her family relocated to Los Angeles. In 1936 at the age of 18, she entered the religious Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Los Angeles, taking the name of Sister Mary Corita. She obtained a Bachelor's degree from Immaculate Heart College, joining the art faculty there in

1947, and becoming its chair in 1964. While teaching, she also pursued a Master's degree in Art History from the University of Southern California in 1951. Over the course of her career as an artist and arts educator, Sister Mary Corita created over 700 screen prints, or serigraphs, the primary medium of her art. Her work typically combined Pop art with religious imagery or content. Her early work in the 1950s has been described as painterly and often referential to biblical stories and psalms. During the 1960s when the subject property was her studio, Sister Mary Corita's work started to have more political overtones. Some notable works from this time in her career include "wonderbread" (1962) "mary does laugh" (1964), "my people" (1965), "new hope" (1966), and "stop the bombing" (1967). The *Los Angeles Times* named Sister Mary Corita one of nine Women of the Year in 1966. In 1968, after Sister Mary Corita left the Immaculate Heart order, she moved to Boston, Massachusetts where she continued to make art. In 1971, she received a commission from the Boston Gas Company for one of its gas tanks, which became the largest copyrighted artwork in the world. One of her most famous works, the "Love" stamp (an iteration of a stamp originally designed by Robert Indiana), was issued in April 1985. She died in Boston in 1986 at the age of 67.

The subject property has sustained multiple alterations that include an addition along the east- and south-facing elevations and the addition of a new entry to the east-facing elevation in 1972; and the addition of roof and pole signs, the removal of the existing roof and parapet, and additions to the north- and east-facing elevations in 1983. The 1983 additions included a reconfiguration of the primary elevation consisting of the infill of storefront windows and addition of fixed windows. The interior floor plan and features have also been modified.

DISCUSSION

The Sister Mary Corita Studio was not identified as significant in the citywide historic resources survey, SurveyLA, and staff finds that it does not appear to meet any of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance criteria for Historic-Cultural Monument designation.

The applicant argues that the subject property "is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history" as the studio of 20th century pop artist Sister Mary Corita. Sister Mary Corita is an undeniably significant historic personage who utilized the building between 1962 and 1968, the height of her career in which she produced many of her iconic art works. However, the building was substantially altered between 1972 and 1983, and the subject property no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey any significance.

The Cultural Heritage Ordinance is silent on integrity, and therefore the ordinance criteria do not specifically incorporate a defined integrity standard, such as those found in the National Park Service's seven aspects of integrity, utilized for the National Register of Historic Places. Nevertheless, integrity does come into consideration in determining whether a nomination meets the ordinance criteria. Under Criterion 1, integrity may help determine whether a property actually "exemplifies" its significant contributions to history; under Criterion 3, integrity considerations are frequently important in determining whether a specific architectural design "embodies" the characteristics of an architectural style. Under Criterion 2, integrity considerations -- defined by the National Park Service as "the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period"- help determine whether a property "is associated" with an historic personage. Some consideration of integrity or authenticity is implicit within any assessment of the strength of the association between an individual and a nominated property.

In developing detailed eligibility standards for SurveyLA's historic context themes, the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) acknowledged that the Cultural Heritage Ordinance was silent on integrity and that more alterations could be acceptable in evaluating a property for Historic-Cultural Monument status than for a National Register or California Register nomination. OHR has consistently recommended significantly greater flexibility in the application of integrity considerations to properties whose eligibility for designation is based on social or cultural significance, rather than architectural design, or association with historic personages. However, SurveyLA did not set aside integrity considerations altogether in assessing the strength of a property's association with the Cultural Heritage Ordinance's criteria.

To provide additional guidance in assessing properties specifically associated with "historic personages," the OHR in 2018 published SurveyLA's "Guidelines for Evaluating Resources Associated with Significant Persons in Los Angeles." These guidelines, which are largely based on the National Register Bulletin "Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons," include among its eligibility standards an evaluation of whether a property "retains most of the essential character-defining features from the period of significance" and whether it "retains sufficient integrity to convey significance. In applying the seven aspects of integrity to the review of properties associated with historic figures, the guidelines set aside three of the integrity considerations -- integrity of materials, workmanship, and setting -- since these are more applicable to the review of properties with architectural significance. Nevertheless, the SurveyLA guidelines note that a property associated with a significant person "should retain integrity of Feeling, Association, Location, and Design from the period of significance." Another integrity consideration states: "A good test for integrity is whether the significant person associated with the resource would recognize it as it exists today."

The subject property has undergone extensive alterations that are not easily reversible and that have made the building essentially unrecognizable from its period of significance. These include:

- a 194-square foot addition to the rear, south-facing elevation
- a 114-square foot addition to the primary, north-facing façade and removal of the main entrance off Franklin Avenue (previously a wall of storefront windows)
- a 51-square foot addition to the east-facing façade
- the construction of a new entrance facing the parking lot, transforming the original street-fronting orientation of the building
- the loss of the exposed, tinted block construction (now covered with stucco)
- the increase in the roof height by approximately four feet
- and the removal of most of the interior historic fabric

The subject property has lost its character-defining features from the period of significance and no longer retains integrity of feeling, association, or design. While the location of the studio remains the same, the alteration of three of the four elevations, entry doors, windows, roof, and interiors have resulted in a building that does not resemble the studio used by Sister Mary Corita during the 1960s. Sister Mary Corita is a significant historic personage, once strongly associated with the subject property, but with only one original wall remaining intact, the subject property in its present form is no longer able to strongly convey the association with her or her studio.

In addition, the subject property is not identified with any important historical events and does not "exemplif[y] significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city of community."

Furthermore, the subject property does not embody distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, nor does it represent the work of a master designer, builder, or architect.

Based on the information outlined above, staff finds that the subject property does not meet the criteria to be individually eligible for designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

BACKGROUND

On September 24, 2020, the Director of Planning determined that the application for the proposed designation of the subject property as Historic-Cultural Monument was complete. On October 15, 2020, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the subject property under consideration. On November 12, 2020, a subcommittee of the Commission consisting of Commissioner Barron conducted a site inspection of the property, accompanied by staff from the Office of Historic Resources. The original expiration date of December 29, 2020 is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders*.





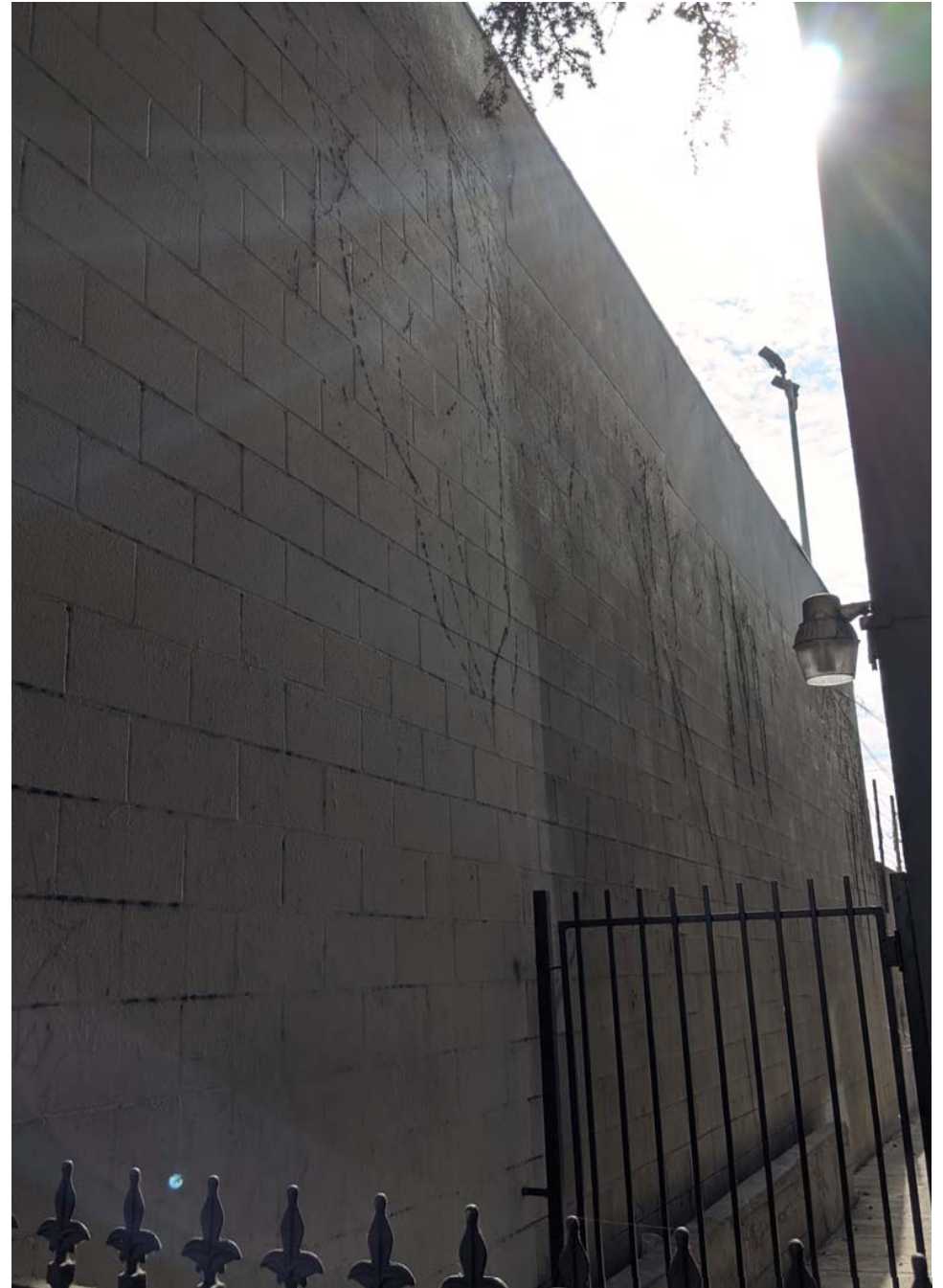
















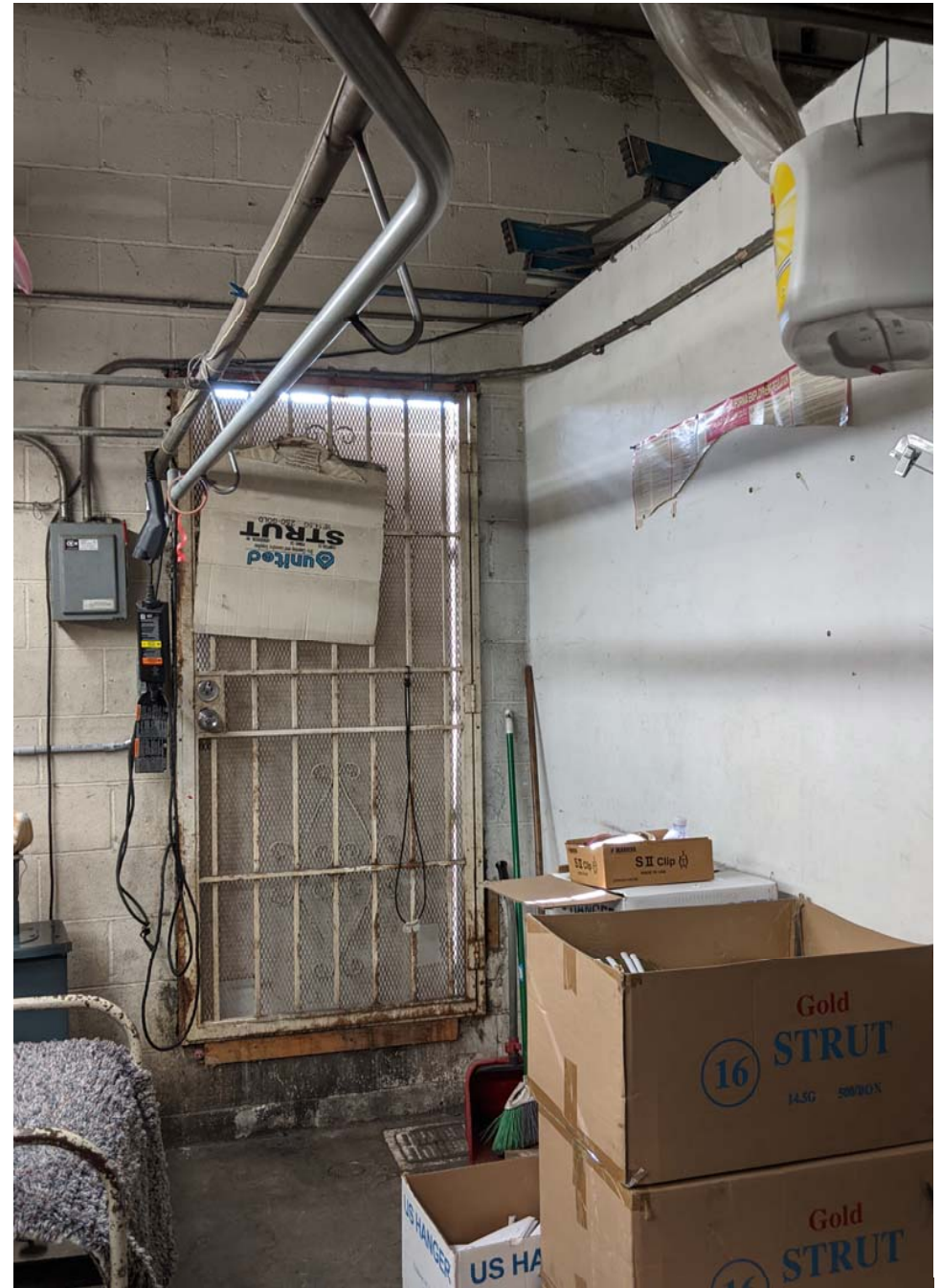




























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and Novitiate, 1916-1917
Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Western and Franklin Avenues
Los Angeles, California

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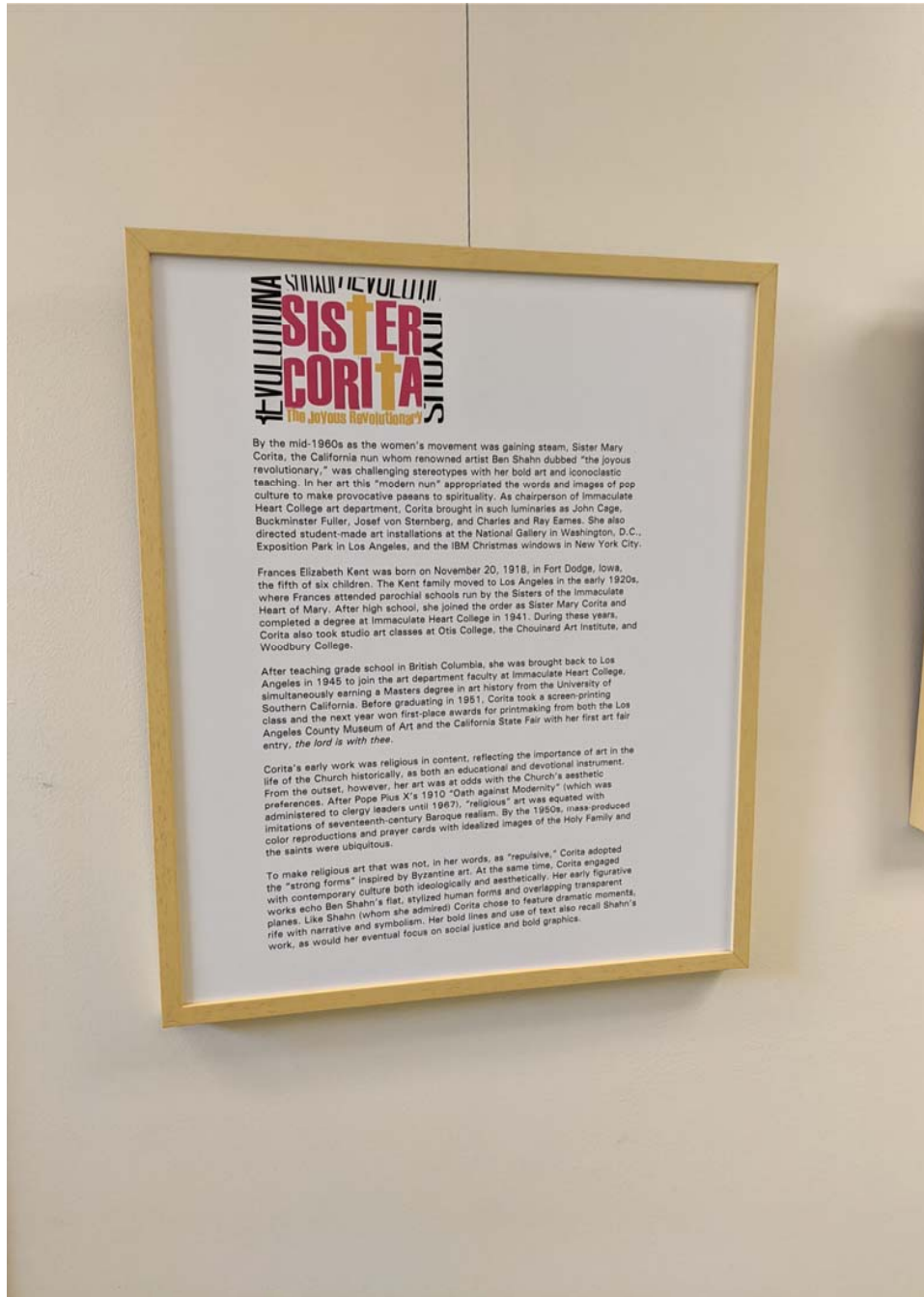


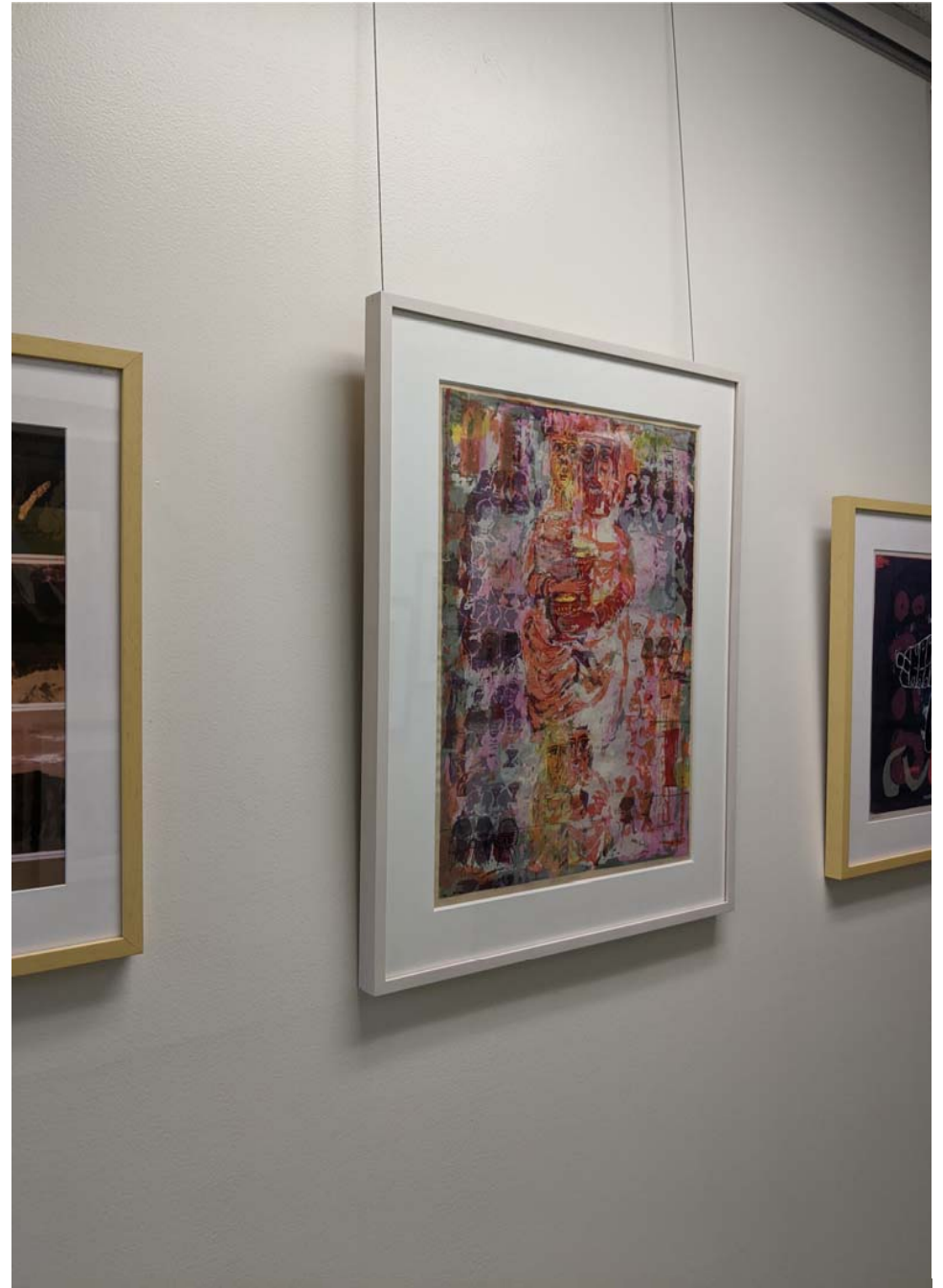
Make sure
side door
Is locked



1914 Motherhouse, 1916-1917
and Novitiate, 1916-1917
Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Western and Franklin Avenues
Los Angeles, California













Corita and Photography
 Photography was an important part of Corita's artistic practice and technical process. She was a prolific photographer and amassed a large collection of 35mm slides that closely documented her immediate surroundings. Corita's works incorporated images of street signs and billboards as well as magazine and newspaper headlines, reflecting the changing urban conditions and rapidly evolving media environment of the sixties. The camera lens inspired Corita to re-frame and examine the smaller, overlooked details in a larger landscape. She often had her students use "viewfinders"—empty 35mm slide holders—as tools to "take things out of context," allowing them to "see for the sake of seeing."

In works such as *stop the bombing* (1967) and *yellow submarine* (1967), Corita employed an innovative stencil technique that consisted of projecting images of manipulated text and imagery onto large sheets of paper, then tracing and cutting the forms to use as stencils in her screens. The same process was used for works like *one way* (1967) and *right* (1967), which reveal Corita's idiosyncratic relationship to language, signs, and meaning. Here, the directives of street signage—normally meant to clearly convey information—are layered, cropped, reversed, turned upside down, and made difficult to read. The dynamic movement of the letterforms and abstract shapes in many of these prints was achieved through the confluence of Corita's physical manipulations to the source imagery and her unique photographic perspective on the world around her.

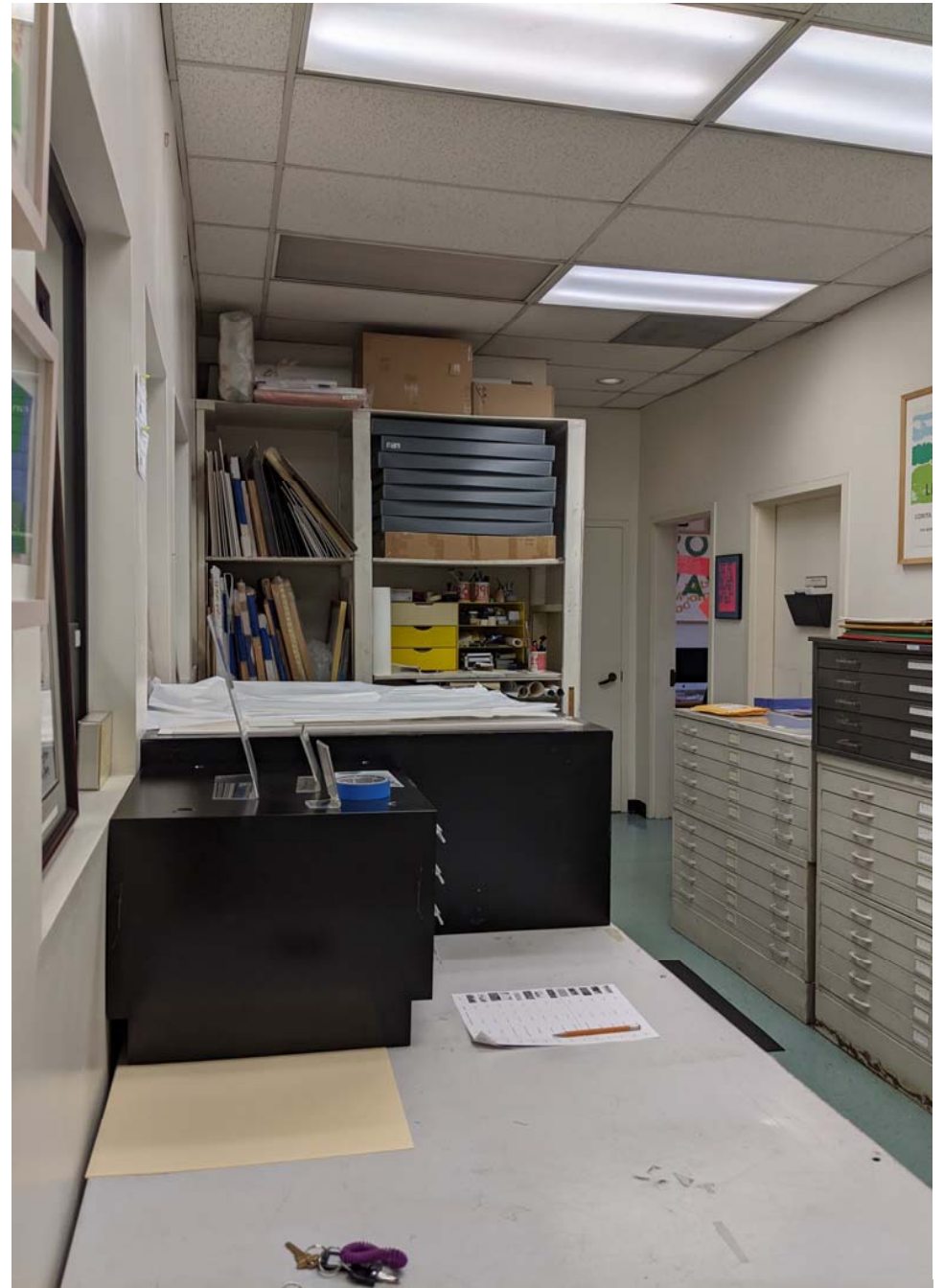


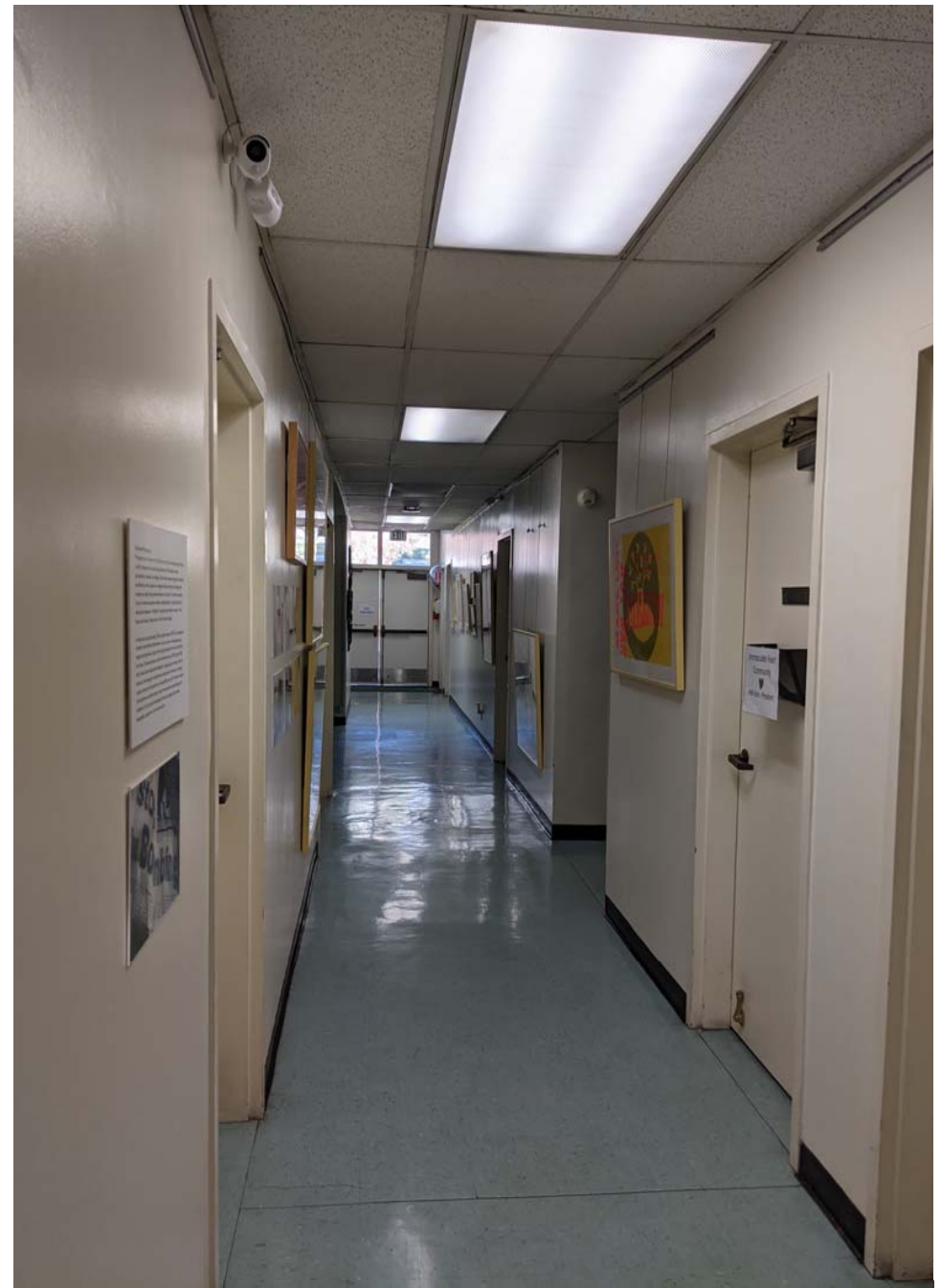
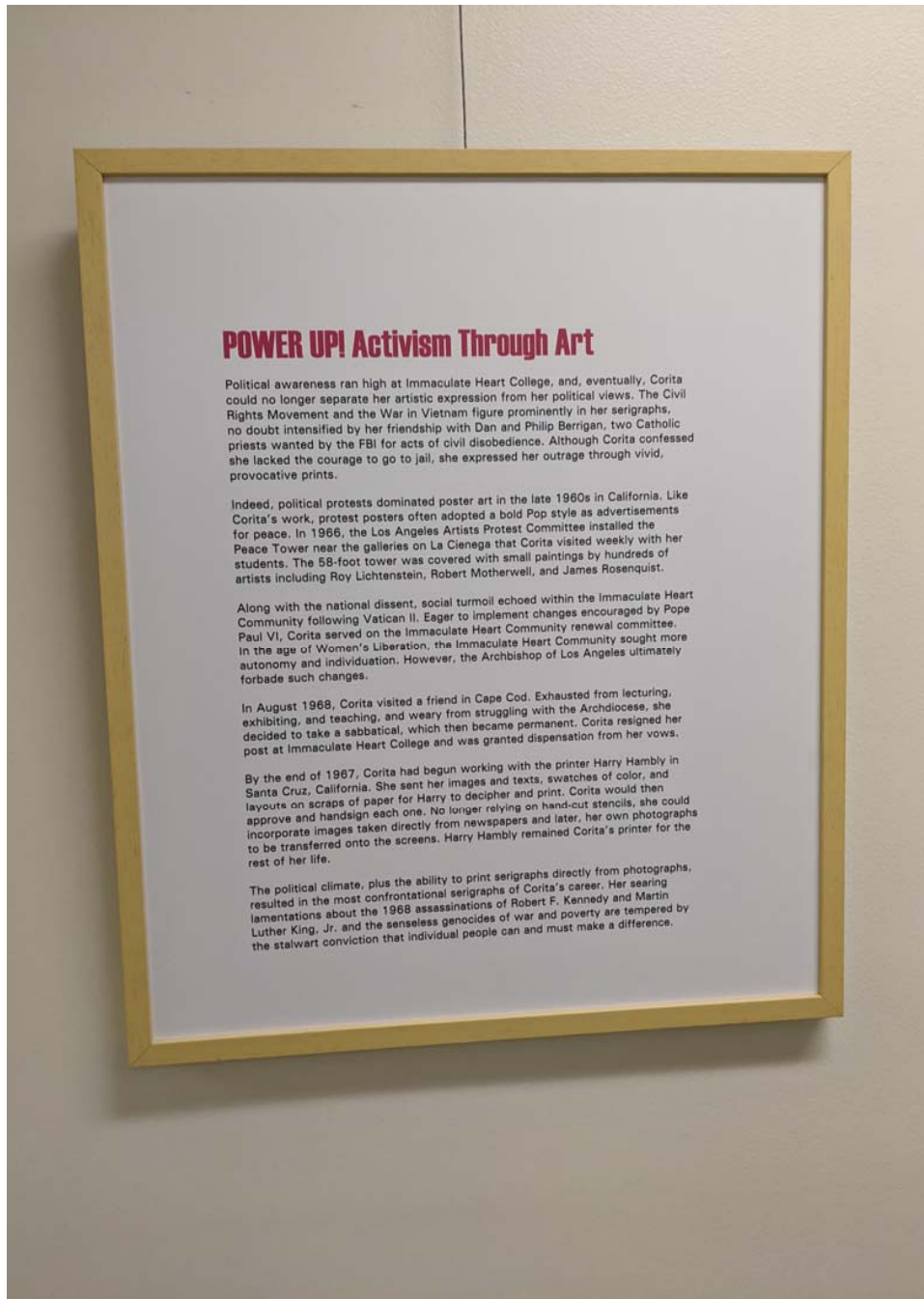
Corita and Photography
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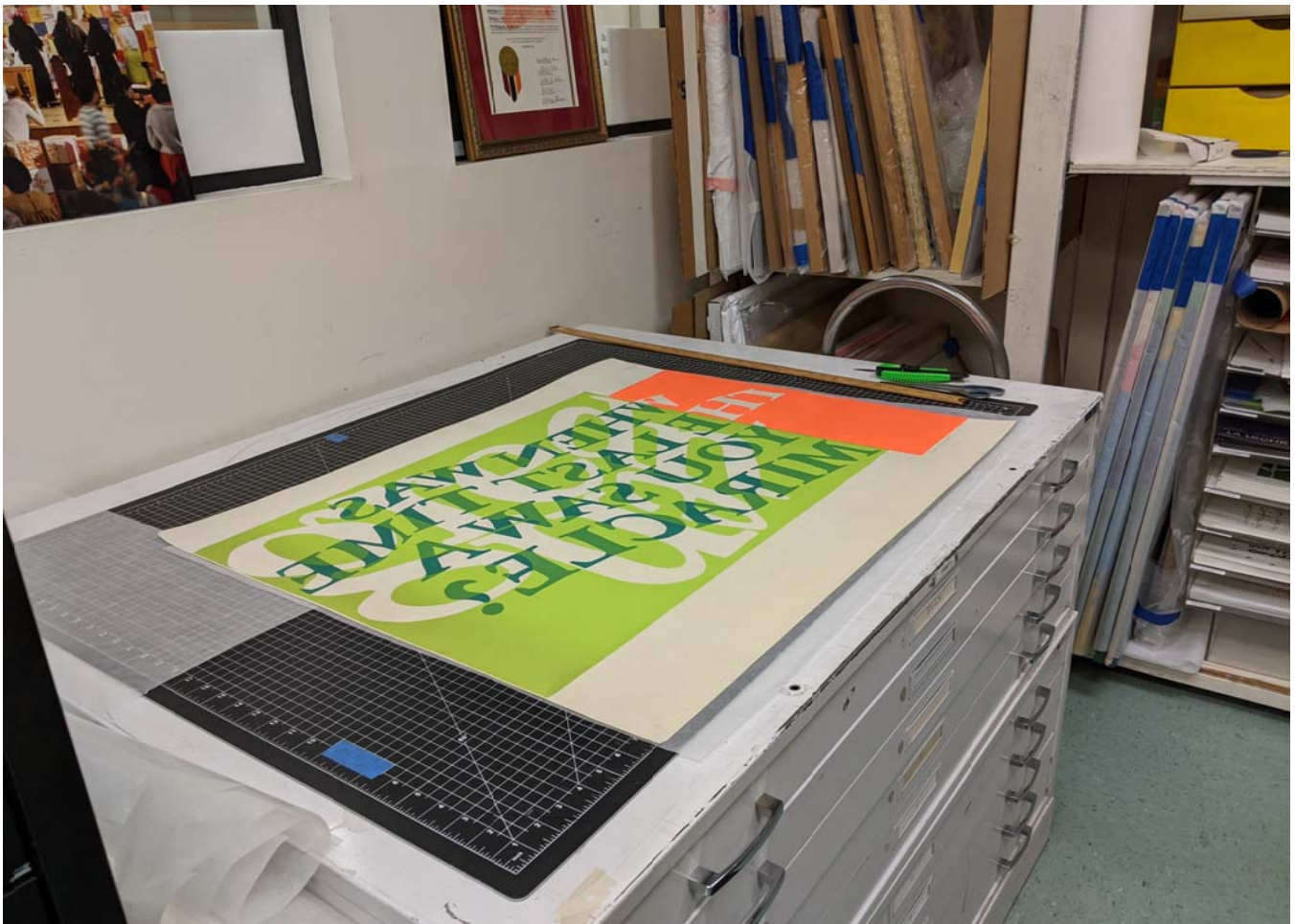














Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2020-5630-HCM
ENV-2020-5631-CE

HEARING DATE: October 15, 2020
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: Teleconference (see
agenda for login
information)

Location: 5500-5518 West Franklin Avenue; 1859-
1863 North Western Avenue
Council District: 13 – O'Farrell
Community Plan Area: Hollywood
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Hollywood United
Legal Description: Hollywood Terrace Tract, Lot 51

EXPIRATION DATE: The original 30-day expiration date of October 24, 2020 per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.10(e)1 is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders*

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
SISTER MARY CORITA STUDIO

REQUEST: Declare the property an Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: Franklin Western Partners, LLC
Victory Inv. Co. Inc. Lessors
585 Unique Lane
Simi Valley, CA 93065

APPLICANT: Nellie Scott
Corita Art Center
5515 Franklin Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90028

PREPARER: Kathryn Wollan
25 Quaker Bridge Road
Ossining, NY 10562

RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

1. **Take the property under consideration** as an Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal warrants further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Principal City Planner
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

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Shannon Ryan, Senior City Planner
Office of Historic Resources

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Melissa Jones, City Planning Associate
Office of Historic Resources

Attachment: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

SUMMARY

The Sister Mary Corita Studio is a one-story commercial building located on West Franklin Avenue between Garfield Place and North Western Avenue in Hollywood. Constructed in 1960 by J.P. Anderson, the building is designed in a utilitarian commercial architectural style. From 1962 to 1968, the subject property served as the studio for visual Pop artist and art educator Sister Mary Corita (1918-1986). The building is located directly across Franklin Avenue from Immaculate Heart High School (formerly Immaculate Heart College), the community in which Sister Mary Corita lived and worked. After 1968, the subject building housed several retail uses and for the past thirty years has been occupied by a dry-cleaning business.

The subject building is located on the northwest corner of the parcel facing Franklin Avenue, which also includes a second building at the northeast corner (not included in the nomination), and a surface parking lot. Rectangular in plan, the building is of concrete block construction with smooth stucco cladding and has a flat roof with a slightly raised parapet. The primary, east-facing elevation is asymmetrically composed with a T-shaped volume projecting from the main plane. Within the projecting volume is the main entrance consisting of paired aluminum and glass doors with a fixed glass transom and sidelite. The north-facing elevation fronts Franklin Avenue and has wing walls on each end that extend to the sidewalk, with the remainder of the elevation slightly recessed. Fenestration is minimal and consists of fixed metal sash windows. There are illuminated signs bearing the name of the business above the entrance, on the south side of the east-facing elevation, and in the center of the north-facing elevation. There is also a freestanding pole sign sited northeast of the subject building.

Sister Mary Corita was born Frances Elizabeth Kent on November 20, 1918 in Fort Dodge, Iowa and later her family relocated to Los Angeles. In 1936 at the age of 18, she entered the religious Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Los Angeles, taking the name of Sister Mary Corita. She obtained a Bachelor's degree from Immaculate Heart College, joining the art faculty there in 1947, and becoming its chair in 1964. While teaching, she also pursued a Master's degree in Art History from the University of Southern California in 1951. Over the course of her career as an artist and arts educator, Sister May Corita created over 700 screen prints, or serigraphs, the primary medium of her art. Her work typically combined Pop art with religious imagery or content. Her early work in the 1950s has been described as painterly and often referential to biblical stories and psalms. During the 1960s, her work started to have more political overtones. Some notable works from this time in her career include "wonderbread" (1962) "mary does laugh" (1964), "my people" (1965), "new hope" (1966), and "stop the bombing" (1967). The *Los Angeles Times* named Sister Mary Corita one of nine Women of the Year in 1966. In 1968, after Sister Mary Corita left the Immaculate Heart order, she moved to Boston, Massachusetts where she continued to make art. In 1971, she received a commission from the Boston Gas Company for one of its gas tanks, which became the largest copyrighted artwork in the world. One of her most famous works, the "Love" stamp, was issued in April 1985. She died in Boston in 1986 at the age of 67.

The subject property has sustained multiple alterations that include an addition along the east- and south-facing elevations and the addition of a new entry to the east-facing elevation in 1972; and the addition of roof and pole signs, the removal of the existing roof and parapet, and installation of a new roof system, and additions to the north- and east-facing elevations in 1983. The 1983 additions included a reconfiguration of the primary elevation consisting of the infill of storefront windows and addition of fixed windows. The interior floor plan and features have also been modified.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community;
2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

FINDINGS

Despite the substantial alterations to the subject property over the years, based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

BACKGROUND

On September 24, 2020, the Director of Planning determined that the application for the proposed designation of the subject property as Historic-Cultural Monument was complete. The original 30-day expiration date of October 24, 2020 per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.171.10(e)1 is tolled, and a revised date will be determined pursuant to *the Mayor's March 21, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling of Deadlines Prescribed in the Municipal Code and April 17, 2020 Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority re: Tolling HCIDLA Deadlines and Revising Expiration of Emergency Orders*.



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name: Sister Mary Corita Studio		First Owner/Tenant <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Associated Names: Immaculate Heart College Serigraph Room			
Street Address: 5518 Franklin Avenue		Zip: 90028	Council District: 13
Range of Addresses on Property: 5500-5518		Community Name: Hollywood	
Assessor Parcel Number: 5544004025	Tract: Hollywood Terrace	Block: N/A	Lot: 51
Identification cont'd:			
Proposed Monument Property Type:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Building	<input type="radio"/> Structure	<input type="radio"/> Object
	<input type="radio"/> Site/Open Space	<input type="radio"/> Natural Feature	
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:			

2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built: 1959-60	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Factual <input type="radio"/> Estimated	Threatened? Private Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architect/Designer: J.P Anderson		Contractor: Robert Genofile	
Original Use: Storefront/Art Studio		Present Use: Dry Cleaners	
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No (explain in section 7)
		<input type="radio"/> Unknown (explain in section 7)	

3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modernism		Stories: 1	Plan Shape: Square
FEATURE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
CONSTRUCTION	Type: Concrete block	Type: Wood	
CLADDING	Material: Concrete block	Material: Stucco, textured	
ROOF	Type: Flat	Type: Select	
	Material: Composition shingle	Material: Select	
WINDOWS	Type: Fixed	Type: Select	
	Material: Select	Material: Select	
ENTRY	Style: Hidden	Style: Select	
DOOR	Type: Glass	Type: Select	



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.

10/16/59	Original building permit--New 40' x 38'8", 1-story building--Retail Sales
03/23/60	Original Certificate of Occupancy. G1 occupancy
07/10/72	"addition and alteration change occ from G1 to G2"
09/12/72	Certificate of Occupancy, change from store G-1 to health food G-2 occupancy
05/13/83	"Pole Sign"
05/13/83	"Roof Pole Sign"
05/17/83	"Remove existing roof and parapet install new roof system on top of existing walls"
08/04/83	"New additions to existing 1st story cleaners"

5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
<input type="radio"/>	Contributing feature
<input type="radio"/>	Non-contributing feature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)
Survey Name(s):	
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.

A. Proposed Monument Description - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

B. Statement of Significance - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant

Name: Nellie Scott		Company: Director, Corita Art Center	
Street Address: 5515 Franklin Avenue		City: Los Angeles	State: CA
Zip: 90028	Phone Number:	Email: nellie@corita.org	

Property Owner

Is the owner in support of the nomination? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Unknown

Name: Franklin Western Partners LLC, Victory Inv Co Inc		Company: Ralph's Grocery Sublease	
Street Address: 585 Unique Lane		City: Simi Valley	State: CA
Zip: 93065	Phone Number: Blake Megdal / 310.801.7254	Email: megdal@gmail.com	

Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative

Name: Kathryn Wollan		Company: Preservation Consultant	
Street Address: 25 Quaker Bridge Road		City: Ossining	State: NY
Zip: 10562	Phone Number: 323-464-3581	Email: ktwollan@gmail.com	

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nomination Form | 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation |
| 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Statements A and B | 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations
(include first construction permits) |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliography | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional, Contemporary Photos |
| 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade
(8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also
email a digital copy of the main photo to:
planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Photos |
| | 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels
(including map) |

10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application. |

Please see
note below

Name: Nellie Scott

Date: 9/11/20

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

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Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources
Department of City Planning
221 N. Figueroa St., Ste. 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-874-3679
Website: preservation.lacity.org

written statements a and b

“Long before those young men in New York invented pop art, a small nun in Los Angeles was showing her students at Immaculate Heart College how to discover the novel and beautiful.”

- Look Magazine, June 28, 1966

SECTION 7: WRITTEN STATEMENTS

A: Proposed Monument Description

Constructed in 1959-60, the building located at 5518 Franklin Avenue was originally designed as a double storefront for retail sales. The property is located near the busy intersection of Franklin and Western Avenues, where Hollywood meets Los Feliz. Its location exhibits the intersection of residential, commercial and institutional life in Hollywood. Standing adjacent to four early 20th century multi-family residences, the building fronts the sidewalk on Franklin Avenue, facing the campus and grounds of Immaculate Heart High School that rises on the hill to the north. Immediately to the east, alongside a bus stop and flower shop, a driveway accesses a large surface parking lot that extends back to serve a large supermarket building, to the south, that has stood at the same site since 1963.

The building's utilitarian style and form are characteristic of storefronts in Los Angeles from this period. The building has a modified square plan, with exterior walls that are originally and primarily concrete block. It rises one-story in height and is topped by a flat roof.

The wood frame flat roof is covered by composition roofing, with a short parapet wall. Some modifications to the roof, including a cross member visible behind the main façade, were completed in 1983.

The main façade, facing Franklin Avenue to the north, has wing walls at each end which extend to the edge of the sidewalk. Two storefront bays flank a solid center wall, inset beneath the main wall to provide a sheltered entrance. Each bay was originally filled with an aluminum and plate glass store front panel, composed of two windows and a glazed entrance door that rose the full height of the recessed wall. (The original storefront windows were most probably infilled in 1972, when the property was converted to a health food store, and was likely necessary due to damage resulting from the San Fernando earthquake the previous year.) The inset wall is now largely blank, apart from two small fixed metal sash windows that light what is now the reception area for the dry cleaner. Housings for original sconce and ceiling lights are still visible on the center wall and the ceiling of the overhang. A narrow metal pole, at the center of the elevation, now provides additional support for the overhang.

The east façade has been altered to provide customer access to the building. An addition of a T-shaped volume projects from the main plane of the east elevation. The paired glass and aluminum entry doors are topped by a fixed glass transom, and lined with a single sidelight on the south. A contemporary backlit business sign hangs above the entry doors on the east wall of the addition. This addition was added in 1983 when the building was converted to use as a dry cleaner.

The south (rear) elevation is composed of a small visible portion of the original concrete block wall, a partial-width rear addition, and a short shed-roof addition. The rear addition, completed in 1972 as part of the change of use to a health food store, rises the full height of the building and extends approximately 7 feet from the original rear wall. The half-height shed roof addition stands at the southeast corner of the building; a tall metal vent suggests the location of a boiler or similar equipment.

The west elevation retains the original concrete block wall intact. The original stepped design of the parapet, while altered to add additional height and create an even plane, is still visible.

Roof and pole signs were installed in 1983. The freestanding pole sign does not materially affect the building. The roof sign has been removed.

The building's interior is equally utilitarian in design. The serigraph room, or silkscreen studio, is described by former students as "open concept" and "adaptable". Historically, furnishing and equipment normally included tables clustered in the middle, for screening, and hanging lines or racks, with clothes pins, for drying the prints around the edges of the room. This space is currently furnished with dry cleaning equipment. Twin restrooms were originally located at the rear of the main room.

There is a secondary one-story storefront building (5500 Franklin) on the same parcel, located at the southeast corner of Franklin & Western. Constructed in 1953, according to assessor records, it was built as a flower shop and continues the same use today. That building, location at 5500 Franklin Avenue, is not directly associated with Corita Kent's productive life.

Despite alterations, 5518 Franklin Avenue retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance for its association with the productive life of artist Corita Kent (or Sister Mary Corita). A complete assessment of the property's integrity has been attached as an addendum to the nomination.

B: Statement of Significance

Summary

5518 Franklin Avenue, constructed in 1959-1960, is a vernacular storefront building that served as internationally renowned artist Corita Kent's (Sister Mary Corita, IHM) primary studio space throughout most of the 1960s. The building is significant under City of Los Angeles Criterion 2 for its association with 20th century artist Corita (Sister Mary Corita) during the 1960s. It is during this period, the most defining of her artistic career in Los Angeles, that she produces the body of work that establishes her as a major, and uniquely significant, figure in the history of Pop art. Moreover, the studio is the only extant property of primary significance in the City of Los Angeles associated with Corita's artistic production. Sister Corita, as she was known during her years teaching and working at Immaculate Heart College, used the building as her primary studio space from circa 1962 until 1968 while residing at the Immaculate Heart Motherhouse across the street (now demolished). The prosaic nature of the building made it a viable production space, as well as a canvas for the art created within its walls. While altered, the building retains sufficient integrity to strongly convey its associations with this prominent artist.

Known as the "Pop Art Nun," Corita Kent (Sister Mary Corita; 1918-1986) was a prominent Los Angeles-based visual artist, uniquely significant for her works that express a radical message of faith through the visual language of Pop art.

A sister of the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sister Mary Corita worked as an artist and arts educator at Immaculate Heart College throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Working primarily in serigraphy, or silkscreen prints, she gained fame and notoriety for her art produced in the 1960s, a time when the Roman Catholic Church began embracing reforms under Vatican II that aimed to modernize the Catholic Mass, introducing vernacular language and contemporary liturgical music and artwork to make the Church's aesthetic messages more relevant to modern, twentieth-century life.

With her use of vivid, fluorescent inks and widely recognized symbolism drawn from commercial advertising, Corita's prints expressed the graphic joy and chromatic vibrancy of the 1960s aesthetic. Her serigraphs exhibit her signature style of juxtaposing inspirational, often scripturally influenced text with images resonant of the "ad age" to create a broadly appealing, ecumenical message of hope and optimism. These eye-catching, accessible, word-based prints were underpinned by Kent's strong social justice commitments and her desire to connect with a wide audience beyond the convent, college, and even the Roman Catholic Church itself.

Kent began to mobilize the visual iconography of Pop Art beginning in 1962, using branded logos and signage in ways similar to her contemporaries Andy Warhol and Ed Ruscha. But in contrast to the work of her Pop art peers, Corita's screen prints went beyond merely commenting on the ubiquity of advertising and mass culture. Her reconfigured advertising slogans morphed into ardent spiritual messages, in effect embodying the core concepts of Vatican II. They propose a vernacular articulation of Biblical scripture for modern Christian life, and extend their reach beyond Christians to spiritual seekers and secular audiences. Throughout the turbulent decade of the 1960s, Kent's work became increasingly political, urging viewers to contemplate serious issues including poverty, racism, peace, and social injustice.

Period of Significance: c 1962-1968

Citywide Historic Context Theme: Visual Artists in L.A.

Corita Kent (Sister Mary Corita)

Born just over 100 years ago, on November 20th, 1918, Frances Elizabeth Kent, Corita was the fifth child to Robert Vincent and Edith Genevieve. Their family arrived in Los Angeles by ship and quickly joined Edith's family in Hollywood in a multifamily housing unit. The Kent family were not rich, and, "Hollywood was, as Corita once described it, a sleepy town." The family resided at 6616 De Longpre Avenue, near Seward and North June street. The small park, De Longpre Park, where movies were often filmed, was just across the street.¹

Corita and her family belonged to the nearby Jesuit-led Blessed Sacrament Parish on Sunset Boulevard. This is also where Corita and her siblings attended the Blessed Sacrament School. Later, Corita would attend the Los Angeles Catholic Girls' High School on Pico Boulevard (also known as Our Lady of Loretto High School), which was partially staffed by the Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters. Corita showed an aptitude for art in early childhood and, outside of family members, it was Sr. Noemi Cruz, IHM, who took notice of Corita's artistic talents and began sharing with the young student what she herself was learning through art classes at UCLA.²

The summer after she graduated from high school, Corita attended art classes at Otis College of Art and Design and the Chouinard Art Institute before following her older sister, Ruth, into a religious life. In 1936, Corita entered the order of the sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the age of 18 and took the name Sister Mary Corita (Corita meaning "little heart").³ Before Hollywood was known as the entertainment capital of the world, it was known as the land of gardens and churches. Corita would have been very familiar with the Immaculate Heart motherhouse that stood on the hill at Franklin and Western avenues as it was not too far from her family home.

¹ Pacatte, Rose. *Corita Kent: Gentle Revolutionary of the Heart*. Liturgical Press, 2017. pp.6-7

² Ibid. p.8

³ Ibid. p.10

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Figure 1: Immaculate Heart motherhouse convent, 1906. Position of the photograph is approximately from behind where the 5518 Franklin building is currently located. Image courtesy of Immaculate Heart Community.

Recognizing Corita's talents, the order encouraged her to train as an art teacher and obtain a graduate degree, which would allow her to teach at the college. In 1951, she obtained her MA in art history from the University of Southern California.

While Corita's first formal introduction to printmaking occurred while taking a studio art class during her final semester at USC, her interest in silkscreen printing (serigraphy) and initial experiments with the medium were conducted prior to that using a DIY kit and the social resources of her community. Corita would ultimately credit Maria Sodi de Ramos Martinez, the wife of Mexican muralist Alfredo Ramos Martinez, for providing her with her most formative and hands-on lessons in serigraphy. According to Corita, Mrs. Ramos Martinez was introduced by a student, and, "in an afternoon just told me all she knew. She showed me some things, and that was really all you needed to know. It's a very simple process. And from then on, with experiment and with just doing it, I think I learned the rest."⁴ In 1952, Corita would win first prize in both the Los Angeles County print competition and at the California State Fair for the work, *lord is with thee*⁵

Corita's prints of the 1950's can be described as painterly and referential of biblical stories, religious figures and psalms. While religious in nature, they do show a larger awareness of the art world, responding to abstract expressionism and peers of the era. Corita cited her early influences of this time period as the IHC professor and art historian Dr. Alois Schardt, artist Ben Shahn and later, designer Charles Eames.

Corita soon became a central figure at Immaculate Heart College, eventually leading the school's renowned art department from 1964-68. Her extraordinary vision and artistic skills, combined with her passion and exuberance as a mentor and teacher, helped transform the small college into a dynamic mecca for artistic innovation and a unique model for community and social engagement. From this unique position, in the midst of a cultural and political awakening, she would go on to transform an era of influence through art.

⁴ Wang, Holly. *Interview of Corita Kent*, oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz0008z9kb&title=Kent, Corita.

⁵ "Recent Addition to the Collection: Corita Kent." *Schneider Museum of Art*, sma.sou.edu/exhibitions/2015-recent-addition-to-the-collection-corita-kent/.

Corita and the Emergence of Pop

The Pop art movement emerged in the mid 1950's in Britain and in the late 1950's in the United States and remains one of the better-known artistic movements of the 20th century. It challenged the traditions found in Western fine art by including, criticizing, expanding, and engaging aspects of popular culture and consumerism. Much of the artwork created in the Pop art movement can be considered counterculture. The movement layered in a conceptual practice that used the 'everyday' to engage the onlooker. This was often achieved through the use of sources from popular culture, such as advertisements, slogans, product labeling, comic books and news media. The informality built between the viewer and the artwork, was often presented with bold colors and a touch of irony.

Pop art went against what a work of art "should be" and actively sought to break down the distinction between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' art. With its wide appeal, Pop art spread both in and outside the art world as it mirrored the consumerist behavior of the generation it reflected - in particular the American material affinity. Pop art embraces the boom of manufacturing that occurred in a post- World War II environment that endorsed mass consumerism in a capitalistic market. Through this, the Pop art movement builds off of the work of Neo-Dada artists and offers a sharp divergence from the contemplative nature of Abstract Expressionism, which centered on the artist as a singular, expressive individual.

The canon of American Pop artists includes figures such as: Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, Edward Ruscha, Robert Indiana, Robert Rauschenberg and Jim Dine, among others. According to one historian of Modern art, "the Pop artists deal principally with the news, the "store bought," the idealized vulgarity of advertising, of the supermarket, and of television commercials."⁶ While Pop art's most renowned decade is the 1960's, it is also the precursor to later 20th century artistic developments such as the Neo-Pop art movement of the 1980's and 1990's. The Pop art movement's larger contributions to our visual and cultural language are unmeasurable.

Corita and the Pop Art Movement

Sister Mary Corita was already a master of the serigraphic process by 1962 when she began appropriating everyday media and typography into her work. While other artists may interpret a bowl of fruit as a still life, Corita found beauty in language and letterform, placing typography center stage. Finding language in everyday sources such as newspapers, signage, advertisements and billboards, she would often physically manipulate the text with her hands—tearing, crumpling or trimming an image before taking a photo of the object and further layering the altered source into her prints during the serigraphic process.

Along with several other exhibitions in Los Angeles, Corita visited the first solo exhibition of Andy Warhol at Ferus Gallery. Corita was well informed on the sociocultural shift occurring in the art world, and was known to take her students on field trips to local art exhibitions. Kent's engagement with the larger art world was not unique to Los Angeles, and annually she and Sister Magdalen Mary traveled to New York to view important exhibitions and commune with the creative community there.

1962 marks a clear delineation and milestone in Corita's career, which foreshadows a shift in style and an exemplary work to come - namely, the creation of the serigraph *wonderbread*. Additional images of artwork and information are provided in the final section of the statement of significance.

⁶ H.H. Arnason. Marla F. Prather, revising author. *History of Modern Art: Art, Painting, sculpture, architecture, photography*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc), 1998, p.540.

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French conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp's first career retrospective was organized by the Pasadena Art Museum (now the Norton Simon Museum) in 1963, and was a touchstone exhibition for Corita and her Pop art peers in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles art scene was undergoing a massive transformation, and the attraction of Duchamp's experimental and avant-garde practice was not lost on a generation of artists in LA. Artists like Corita, Edward Ruscha, Robert Irwin and Andy Warhol who like Duchamp were also re-evaluating the boundaries of art making, helped bring forth an entirely new and different attitude to help shape a distinctly Los Angeles identity.

Continuing to create within this idiom, her screen prints throughout the Sixties "reconfigured slogans from advertising and vernacular culture into ardent spiritual messages."⁷ Her artwork was acquired and is still held by prominent major institutional collections. By 1968, her work was being displayed alongside her artistic contemporaries, including an exhibition with Warhol and Lichtenstein at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Corita produced 220 new works during this period, representing more than a quarter of the nearly 800 serigraphs produced in her lifetime. Artist, notable curator and author of *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*, Julie Ault explains:

"In the scheme of Corita's oeuvre, it is the bodies of work made between 1962 and 1969 that remarkably contrast with what came before and after," as Julie Ault explains, "...due not only to the larger perspective of 1960s cultural and political movements, but to the vibrant community within with nuns, teachers, students, visitors, and even the media participated, and contributed to"⁸

Her rising fame and the popularity of her work during this period is a testament to her significance as a major contemporary cultural figure of the 1960s. Sister Mary Corita was named one of the Los Angeles Times's Women of the Year in 1966. The following year, Harper's Bazaar profiled her as one of "100 American Women of Accomplishment" and Newsweek magazine placed her on its Christmas week cover. That cover presented her both in habit and without, surrounded by images of her prints and announced simply "The Nun: Going Modern." Indeed, Corita's public persona was shattering preconceived stereotypes and led to the international dissemination of her artwork, far beyond the walls of Immaculate Heart College. In *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*, Susan Dackerman, the former Curator of Prints at the Harvard Art Museums and current Deputy Director of the Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, explains:

"[a]lthough she participated in two heady cultural undertakings—the reformation of religion and art—during the 1960s, she was an outlier in both movements, seemingly, and paradoxically, because of her association with the other."⁹

Words Matter: The Confluence of Vatican II, Pop Art and the 1960's in Corita's Art

When speaking to the period of the 1960's, it is important to note the constraints on women, particularly religious women, and what freedoms were permitted and forbidden in relation to daily life and professional advancement. Through that lens, the groundswell of creativity and work that emanated from 5518 Franklin Avenue is a profound testament to the power of Corita's message and the historical significance of her work in Los Angeles and beyond.

The IHM sisters took to heart the words and conclusions found in the Second Vatican Council. The Vatican Council II (1962-1965) called for renewal of the Catholic Church and, in particular, asked both men's and women's

⁷ Rebecca Morrill, ed. *Great Women Artists*. New York: Phaidon Press, Inc, 2019. p 214.

⁸ Ault, Julie. *Come Alive!: The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*. Four Corners Books, 2006. p.20

⁹ Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015. p.15

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religious communities around the world to renew and adapt to the signs of the times. The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary engaged in a study of the Council documents and benefited from hearing eminent theologians who spoke to them about the meaning of the documents and living out the call to renewal. Questioning what does it mean to show up everyday for humanity? In the words of their mother superior, Anita Caspary “More open to the world... more part of the world, more responsive and involved in it.”¹⁰ They looked to meet the citizens of Los Angeles where they were at, physically and spiritually in their life.

Still, during Corita's time as Sister Mary Corita there was no concept of vacation or leisure time. Much of their independent work time-frame would fall according to the school schedule. As with any remarkable creative, regardless of medium, whether that be writing an important novel or writing an album - when inspiration strikes, what comes next leaves a legacy. Dackerman elaborates this point further below:

“During the decade that pop art emerged in Los Angeles and New York, Kent produced over 400 prints that fit the prevailing (and sometimes nebulous) definition of pop art. Like the artists whose work defined the style, she co-opted mass-produced forms and texts, combined figural and abstract pictorial modes, used production techniques derived from consumer culture, and integrated handmade with mechanical methods of making.”¹¹ Screenprinting, the standard mode of reproduction within commodity culture, was the only technique Kent used.”¹²



Figure 2: Corita with pinned sleeves mixing paint at 5518 Franklin Avenue. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

Corita's belief in the role that artists had to play in the larger revitalization of the Church and associated customs. Whereas, Corita refers to Pope Paul VI's request to artists to make the message of Vatican II “tangible,

¹⁰ Caspary, Anita Marie. *Witness to Integrity: the Crisis of the Immaculate Heart Community of Los Angeles*. Liturgical Press, 2003

¹¹ For a general overview of pop art, see Mark Francis, ed., *Pop*, with a survey by Hal Foster (London: Phaidon, 2005). See also Foster, *First Pop Age*. 29. Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

¹² See Guido Lengwiler, *A History of Screen Printing* (Cincinnati: ST Media Group International, 2013). Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

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understandable”¹³ Dackerman further emphasizes where the ethos set forth in the Vatican II reform and the larger Pop art movement meet below.

“Conversant with the techniques and styles of her pop art contemporaries, Kent adjusted her work to serve the context of 1960s Los Angeles, “so that the preaching of the Gospel might be carried out more effectively.”¹⁴ Like Warhol, Ruscha, or Lichtenstein, and as recommended by the Second Vatican Council, Kent turned to the familiar — ordinary objects and texts — for artistic fodder. In a 1964 essay, she defended her contemporaries’ subject matter, and by extension her own: “They [artists] know about the past and traditionally work with the same stuff artists have always worked with, the stuff that is around them. In the eighteenth century, it was ladies and gentlemen and swings in a garden; today it may be Campbell’s soup cans or highway signs. There is no real difference. The artist still takes his everyday world and tries to make something out of it.”¹⁵

¹³ Marj Shippey, “Art Is To Be Enjoyed,” interview with Corita Kent, *Lamp: A Catholic Family Journal* (November 1965):7. Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kent, untitled text, *The Critic* 22 (4) (February-March 1964):61 Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

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Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary Conflict with Cardinal McIntyre

Cardinal McIntyre was appointed archbishop of Los Angeles in February 1948 and was named cardinal in 1953. His legacy would be one fraught with conflict. In his July 17, 1979 Associated Press obituary he was described as, “one of the most prominent, dynamic and controversial of the Roman Catholic church’s prelates in the United States. He was known as a leading conservative in what some Catholic analysts called the church’s internal “cold war” over modernization of secular policies and practices...”¹⁶ His conservative stance on the reforms within the Catholic Church would put him directly at odds with the sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In their recent book, *Set the Night on Fire: L.A. in the Sixties*, writers Mike Davis and Jon Weiner explain what a lightning rod Corita and her artwork had become:

“The attack on Sister Corita was a small part of a larger story: the reform of Catholic practice. Initiated by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council... Resistance to the Second Vatican reforms in the United States was led by Cardinal McIntyre, and resistance to Cardinal McIntyre was led by Immaculate Heart, personified by Sister Corita - not because she set out to challenge the cardinal, but because he focused on her as the exemplar of everything he abhorred in the reforms.”¹⁷

In November 1965, unhappy with the IHM sisters, Cardinal McIntyre carried out an investigation of the Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary, a power he had not exercised on any other congregation in the archdiocese while a Cardinal. Not understanding the larger mission of the IHM sisters, a group of priests asked questions that were rooted in the patriarchal notions of the time.¹⁸

“Don’t you think it will take too much time to fix your hair if you were to update your habit? Do you want to look like a little girl? Do you want to look like a floozy on Hollywood Boulevard? What did you think of a course on James Joyce taught a couple of years ago at your college? Do you know how pornographic Ulysses is? Do you know why your community is investigated?”¹⁹

At the end of this investigation it was found that, in accordance with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the sisters were not observing the silence and were guilty of other infractions of unauthentic religious life.

In 1966, shortly after the Mary’s Day event, Cardinal McIntyre wrote “We hereby request again that the activities of Sister Carita(sic) in religious art be confined to her classroom work ... Any other project that sister Carita (sic) may indulge in will have to be submitted to the Committee on Art” - that is, the one he appointed. As for Mary’s day, “It is our suggestion that in the bulletin of the college that you send to the alumnae, a formal apology be inserted “for ‘the fiesta last week.’”

As the world evolved, so did the conscious attention of the IHM Sisters to the emerging culture they sought to serve. Moved by contemporary philosophies, modern psychology and the women’s liberation movement, this community welcomed change. Springing from their intellectual and spiritual convictions, 525 sisters knew they could not revoke their commitment to the future without destroying their integrity and chose instead to be released from their vows and become the independent Immaculate Heart Community. Immaculate Heart Community formed by insights from eco-feminist spiritualities and with a commitment to the ethos and legacy of

¹⁶ Davis, Mike, and Jon Wiener. *Set the Night on Fire: L.A. in the Sixties*. Verso, 2020.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Pacatte, Rose. *Corita Kent: Gentle Revolutionary of the Heart*. Liturgical Press, 2017.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 54

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the IHM sisters, has continued its community work, in full engagement with the modern world, from the same location in Hollywood for the last 50 years. (For a more detailed summation and information on the history of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the creation of the Immaculate Heart Community, please see Nan Cano, IHM's brief description [here](#).)

Sabbatical, Dispensation of Vows, and Later Life

Exhausted from conflict with the Los Angeles archdiocese and a frenetic schedule, Corita took a sabbatical from teaching and eventually sought dispensation from her vows, moving to Boston. By 1968, Corita's work had been shown in over 230 exhibitions and had an incredibly active and visible public life, participating in lectures, interviews, and larger public commissions. In her essay titled, *A Very Democratic Form: Corita Kent as a Printmaker*, Cynthia Burlingham, Deputy Director, Curatorial Affairs and Director of the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts at the Hammer Museum at UCLA writes:

"Both Corita's working process and the character of her print changed significantly during the two years after she left Immaculate Heart in 1968. As of late 1967/1968 she no longer printed her work herself but had editions printed by the silkscreen printer Harry Hambly at Hambly Studios in northern California..."²⁰

With her departure in 1968 and the relationship with Hambly Studios, who specialized in commercial printing and neon inks. Corita turned her focus to the heavier social and political topics, and began directly appropriating covers of magazines, newspapers and media instead of street signage and advertisements.

On May 31, 1969, a meeting of IHM sisters was called on short notice for a meeting with the Vatican commission where only those living in California could be present during a visit by the Papal Nuncio. Corita was invited and attended. Although she had been released from her vows in November 1968, she had participated in and contributed to the work put forth in the chapter of renewals in 1967. It is noted that during that meeting, Corita stood and asked the Vatican commission "What do you think Jesus would have done had he been given the choice?" - they did not give a response.²¹

At this time her work evolves into a sparser, introspective style, influenced by living a secular life in a new environment, and later on, her battles with cancer. Burlingham expands further on this shift in her process below:

"By 1970 she had reduced her forms to simplified painterly gestures in primary and pastel colors. Residing in a small apartment in Boston, she no longer has access to a large studio with scores of student assistants, which suggest a partial explanation of the substantive changes in her work during this time. As her production methods simplified, so did her imagery, which was increasingly based on her own watercolors rather than on outside sources."²²

²⁰ Burlingham, Cynthia. "A Very Democratic Form: Corita Kent as a Printmaker Essay." *Someday Is Now: the Art of Corita Kent: Someday Is Now: The Art of Corita Kent, Curated and authored by Ian Berry and Michael Duncan, The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, January 19-July 28, 2013, and Three Other Institutions at Later Dates*. The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, 2013. p.6

²¹ Pacatte, Rose. *Corita Kent: Gentle Revolutionary of the Heart*. Liturgical Press, 2017. p.8

²² Burlingham, Cynthia. "A Very Democratic Form: Corita Kent as a Printmaker Essay." *Someday Is Now: the Art of Corita Kent: Someday Is Now: The Art of Corita Kent, Curated and authored by Ian Berry and Michael Duncan, The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, January 19-July 28, 2013, and Three Other Institutions at Later Dates*. The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, 2013.p.6

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Julie Ault describes the changes in form and content in Corita's work of the 1970s, after her departure from Immaculate Heart and move to Boston, as "sudden, even shocking." She explains: "Deprived of her influential contexts of many years, much of the complex spirit, formal innovation, and critical force of her prior work vanished."²³ Nonetheless, Corita remained active in social causes and through these years she continued to produce works that paired her personal messages of hope and joy with calls to advocate against oppression and inequality. While her geographical location moved her to the other side of the United States, living the remainder of her life as a secular artist in Boston, her calling towards advocacy through her art remained consistent in her work and she frequently returned to Los Angeles.

Over the course of her career Corita would lend her talents and artwork to organizations that shared a hope for a humane collective future. Such commissions and contributed designs include Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers, the Washington March on Poverty, Physicians of Social Responsibility and American Civil Liberties Union. In an interview with the Los Angeles Times in 1985, Corita states:

"I earn enough to support myself and in a very small way groups I believe in. I'm not a marcher. I admire people who march. I admire people who go to jail. I don't have the guts to do that, so I do what I can. So I think, 'Well, I've got my job.' The world is worth saving and individual effort is what helps save it." Those individual efforts, of the marchers, demonstrators and other workers for peace are the efforts of people without the money, power and influence of the system they are opposing, she said, "but I think the spiritual energy that comes out of that effort is what keeps us from blowing up. That's power. That's real strength."²⁴

Later in life, her desire to reach a wide audience would also manifest in larger public and private commissions, including a hundred and fifty foot rainbow swash on the Boston Gas Tank and the popular 1985 US Postal Service "Love Stamp," which sold over 700 million copies.

In 1986, following an earlier battle with cancer, Corita passed gently in the company of friends. *"She left instructions: no funeral. Her friends, she wrote, might decide to gather for a party, that would be just fine. East Coast and West, they did."*²⁵

Corita bequeathed a selection of works to the Grunwald Collection, now a part of the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and a selection of correspondences to the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her estate, artwork and rights were left to the Immaculate Heart Community in Los Angeles.

In 1997, with a commitment to preserve and share Corita's legacy with future generations, the Immaculate Heart Community opened the Corita Art Center.

²³ Ault, Julie. *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*. Four Corners Books, 2006. p.25

²⁴ "Love Is Still the Message : Corita Continues Her Heartfelt Work." *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 15 Dec. 1985, www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-12-15-vw-825-story.html.

²⁵ Berrigan, Daniel. "The Colors of Corita Kent Essay." *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*, by Julie Ault. Four Corners Books, 2006. p. 116.

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Someday is Now: Corita and the Legacy of Pop

The art historical evaluation of the significance of women artists in the Pop art movement has not been limited to Corita. In Kim Levin's *ARTnews* essay, "Where Are the Great Women Pop Artists?"²⁶ the writer discusses and questions the lesser known role of female Pop artists working parallel to male peers in the 1960s. While many of the male artists of this movement, such as Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenberg and Robert Indiana are universally recognized, the women artists remain unknown.

"Unacknowledged or under-acknowledged at the time, relegated to the margins or forgotten by history, the profound female artists of their time inverted the male gaze and anticipated the future while male Pop artists were getting stuck in their own styles. The tenuous thread that ties them all together is linked to feminism and the contemporary art that was still to come."²⁷

In reviewing curator Angela Steif's *Power Up: Female Pop Art*²⁸ exhibition and catalog, Levin continues to underline that "women's Pop-related art had its own intentions" and states "the star of the exhibition is Sister Corita Kent..."

Corita's well-earned place in the larger art historical canon is now finally being acknowledged. Since the mid-2010s, critics and scholars have revisited Corita's work, going beyond a narrow and marginalized label of "Pop art nun," to recognize her as a major, yet uniquely significant, figure of the Pop art movement, both in Los Angeles and nationally. Dackerman's scholarship, in particular, focuses its attention on Corita's work as part of "the dominant art and cultural movements of her time," while Ault examines her practice from its highly specific origins within the Immaculate Heart and Hollywood communities. Taken together, they provide a clear understanding of Corita's historic significance as an artist, both within the most proximate contexts of the Immaculate Heart, the Los Angeles archdiocese, and the city, as well as the wider significance within the history of American Pop art and the Catholic reformations under Vatican II. (Copies of both the Dackerman and Ault essays have been included with this nomination as supplemental documentation for further reading.)

Highlighted solo museum exhibitions in the last decade include *Someday is Now: The Art of Corita Kent*, curated by Ian Berry and Michael Duncan, and on display as a travelling exhibition between 2013-2015, at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), and the Pasadena Museum of California Art. Harvard University, which holds much of Corita's personal archive, mounted the exhibition *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*, curated by art historian Susan Dackerman and on display at the Harvard Art Museums in 2015 and the San Antonio Museum of Art in 2016.

Today, Corita's work is held in the collections of major institutions, locally, nationally and internationally including but not limited to New York MoMA, San Francisco MoMA, Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Hammer Museum, Harvard Art Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, Whitney Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Centre Pompidou, MUMOK, and Ludwig Museum.

²⁶ Levin, Kim. "Where Are the Great Women Pop Artists?" *ARTnews.com*, ARTnews.com, 18 Nov. 2019, www.artnews.com/art-news/news/where-are-the-great-women-pop-artists-348/.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Stief, Angela, et al. *Power up: Female Pop Art*. Kunsthalle, 2010.

Role of 5518 Franklin Avenue in the Production of Corita's Art

As with so many artists' studios, it is not readily apparent that this humble building was the site of such significant artistic and creative production. In fact, this simple concrete block structure at 5518 Franklin Avenue (previously 5514 Franklin Avenue) in its very modest nature is embedded with the conceptual practice and teachings of Corita during the 1960's. "Make the ordinary, extraordinary," Corita once said. The property served as a vital printmaking studio and annex to the Immaculate Heart College's noted Art Department. It is the location where Corita made some of her most recognized artworks, representing the defining period of her artistic career. As poet and activist, Daniel Berrigan declared:

"The joy in her work, its riotous color, was her gift to a good gray world. It seemed as though in her art the juices of the world were running over; inundating the world, bursting the rotten wineskins of semblance, tore and rot. It should in plain justice be set down, all that she was offering at the time (and continued to offer, despite it all) on behalf of the church.

One emotion seemed denied to Catholics; the lack might be thought of as biological, environmental, genetic a matter of deficient diet or dour instruction, unrelieved by lively session or good sense. Alas, how plumb the heart of that plodding set-jawed lock stepping bemired leadership, and the flock that doddered and tottered behind? The needed Joy, joy, joy!

*Corita Kent had it in abundance. She gave it, pressed down, flowing over. Her art poured out; she was a very witch of invention, holding aloft her cornucopia. The serigraphs hung on the clotheslines drying, in the back shed where she worked, across the street from the campus of Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, where she talked things through, planned, sketched with her students. It was like a mixing room of hues of creation, colors in combat, contrast, harmony; enough and more for a century of sunrises. Or the room was like the wardrobe of a master clown, if God were a clown - a heresy she seemed secretly, bemusedly more than lightly inclined toward. Confounding thereby colorless cardinals."*²⁹

In the 1960s, the motherhouse was both the chapel and residence for the IHM sisters. Academic courses took place across the vast Immaculate Heart College campus, which extended up Western Avenue as it turned into Los Feliz, against what is now Griffith Park. The IHC administration building (now occupied by American Film Institute) was located near the top of the hill and also housed various courses. The Art Department was located in the lower level of the motherhouse with an entrance that faces Franklin Avenue.

Expanded space for the Immaculate Heart College was needed as the notoriety of the college and population in Los Angeles grew. In particular, the rise in popularity and interest in the Art Department attracted large numbers of new students. The work of the IHM sisters had a broad base of academic specialties that went beyond Film, Poetry, Music, and Visual Art. It is no wonder that the head of the Immaculate Heart Art Department at the time, Sister Magdalen Mary, needed more physical space. Sister Magdalen Mary was a luminary in her own right, immensely talented and swift-witted. She was also Corita's predecessor, mentor, travel companion and by many accounts, her agent.

²⁹ Berrigan, Daniel. "The Colors of Corita Kent Essay." *Come Alive!: The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*, by Julie Ault. Four Corners Books, 2006. Page 116.

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With the printmaking of the IHM sisters and students drawing so much public attention, a dedicated space that was not part of the main IHC campus was an opportunity for increased visibility. An expanded printmaking studio was also the most logical choice for reasons of health and safety. The chemicals used in the process of cleaning and burning silkscreens during this period are well documented for their toxicity.³⁰ Conveniently located across the street, 5518 Franklin Avenue was the obvious choice for establishing a dedicated space for printmaking and an annex to the Art Department. While the majority of art classes were held at the motherhouse convent, Corita's serigraphic production happened exclusively at 5518 Franklin Avenue.



Figure 3 : Corita preparing a silkscreen. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

Described by students in greater detail in section 5, the 5518 Franklin Avenue space is noted as amorphous, a singular open room to allow for creativity to stir, and large enough to move the screens, inks and stacks of paper. At the northside of the building were large windows and a storefront like setting on Franklin Avenue. Attracted by the large, colorful prints pinned in the window, passerbys might stop and peer in to marvel at the work being created and would be invited to assist in the process, especially in the late-summer months. If their creative confidence was lacking, they were still met with a communal welcome to return for an art sale or event hosted by the Immaculate Heart community.

This building, an all-purpose utilitarian space, was typical of storefronts in urban post-World War II Los Angeles. Art lived side-by-side with commerce, particularly in Hollywood. Thanks to the convergence of progressive ideals and availability of the film industry, one might suggest that California's greatest export in the 1960's was, in fact, its culture.

³⁰ Novick, Rachel M., et al. "Analysis of Historical Exposures of Pressmen to Airborne Benzene (1938–2006)." *OUP Academic*, Oxford University Press, 12 Jan. 2013, academic.oup.com/annweh/article/57/6/705/148815.

“The decade marked the expansion of the city’s art scene, and 1962 was a particularly momentous year for the production of pioneering forms of art and the presentation of trailblazing exhibitions. Questions of what constituted art were in the air; begetting new styles in the thriving urban center. Artists turned away from abstract expressionism, instead representing ordinary objects in a straightforward figurative manner. Similar trends were emerging among New York artists, but some of the earliest exhibitions — and the first American museum presentation — of the style that has come to be termed “pop” occurred on the West Coast, where Kent and her students encountered them on their field trips.”³¹

The commercial building held a box-like open room, set up with two storefronts and twin bathrooms in the rear. It consisted of teachers desks arranged in facing rows, end to end from the back of the building to the front of the building. Each student would often have an additional table top to which mix paint. Shelves and drying racks (clothing pins nailed to strips of wood) lined the walls. The equipment that Corita used for making her own serigraphs was the very same used by the students of Immaculate Heart College. It is at this location that students would have an opportunity to watch, learn and participate as instructed when Corita was creating. A select group of students given the responsibility of hanging serigraphs and cleaning screens, a messy business. Burlingham describes the production in relationship to other artists working at this time as:

“While collaborative workshops dominated, her collaborations remained in the classroom. She never worked at any well-known workshops in Los Angeles, and until 1968 editioned her own prints...she would produce hundreds of screenprints in the studio at Immaculate Heart, pulling most of the large number of impressions herself. In maintaining herself as an independent printmaker who produced her own editions and essentially her own publisher...”³²



Figure 4 : Immaculate Heart College art sale flyer, referencing 5514 Franklin Avenue (now 5518 Franklin Avenue) as the serigraphy room. Flyer is undated. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

³¹ Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

³² Burlingham, Cynthia. “A Very Democratic Form: Corita Kent as a Printmaker Essay.” *Someday Is Now: the Art of Corita Kent: Someday Is Now: The Art of Corita Kent, Curated and authored by Ian Berry and Michael Duncan, The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, January 19-July 28, 2013, and Three Other Institutions at Later Dates*. The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, 2013.

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During the exhilarating and politically charged decade of the 1960s, Corita created powerful images that addressed poverty, racism, injustice and war, using bold texts, bright colors and a captivating style that was intended to appeal to all people. Inspired by her everyday surroundings, she incorporated advertisements, newspapers and pop lyrics into her singular artworks and soon became known as the “Pop Art Nun.”

Drawing inspiration from the everyday, Corita would take her students on field trips around Los Angeles to closely observe and take stock of details they might have otherwise overlooked. Through these viewing sessions she would use street and business signage as well as other urban details to draw inspiration, as seen in the short film titled “We Have No Art” by artist, friend and filmmaker, Baylis Glascock (1967)³³

“Until Kent left Immaculate Heart College, the majority of her prints were created in the college’s screenprint workshop, where the help of other nuns, students, and volunteers enabled factory-like mass production. The collaborative atmosphere of Kent’s classroom mirrors cooperative art-making environments emerging in the wake of the isolationism of abstract expressionism, such as the formation of Warhol’s Factory in 1964.”³⁴

The physical proximity of the Market Basket grocery store to 5518 Franklin Avenue was not lost on Corita. In a video³⁵ filmed by filmmaker and friend, Thomas Conrad, we can see Corita walking out of the Market Basket with a student directly into the space at 5518 Franklin to begin discussing her own practice. Describing the relationship of the physical studio space on Franklin and Western, Dackerman continues:

“The opening of the Market Basket in 1963, on the corner of Western and Franklin Avenues directly across the street from Immaculate Heart College, was an epiphany for Kent. As she once exclaimed to a reporter: “Groceries became a revelation; the people coming out with bundles of food. It’s all like a great ceremony, and the whole drudgery of shopping has become my inspiration.”³⁶ The store also served as a rich source of project materials for her and the students, with the grocery store staff saving sales circulars, window posters, and packing boxes — embellished with brand logos and slogans — for use in their work.”³⁷

³³ Glascock, Baylis, director. *We Have No Art . Two Excerpts from “We Have No Art,” Baylis Glascock, 1967.*, 2019, www.facebook.com/watch/?v=797631190742675.

³⁴ Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.p.21

³⁵ Conrad, Thomas, director. *Alleluia. “Alleluia” by Thomas Conrad (1967) - Excerpt 1*, 2020, youtu.be/j4MMR0ZZppA.

³⁶ Kent, quoted in Bill Cunningham, “Nun Startles N.Y. with Her Graphic Art,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 1965.

³⁷ Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

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Figure 5: Portrait of Corita holding a serigraph screen at 5518 Franklin Avenue studio. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

The off-site studio played a pivotal role in connecting Corita and Immaculate Heart students to the world around them. As an extension of the hillside campus, the building drew the students into the community. Ault unpacks the studio in the larger fascination with the everyday Los Angeles visual dialect:

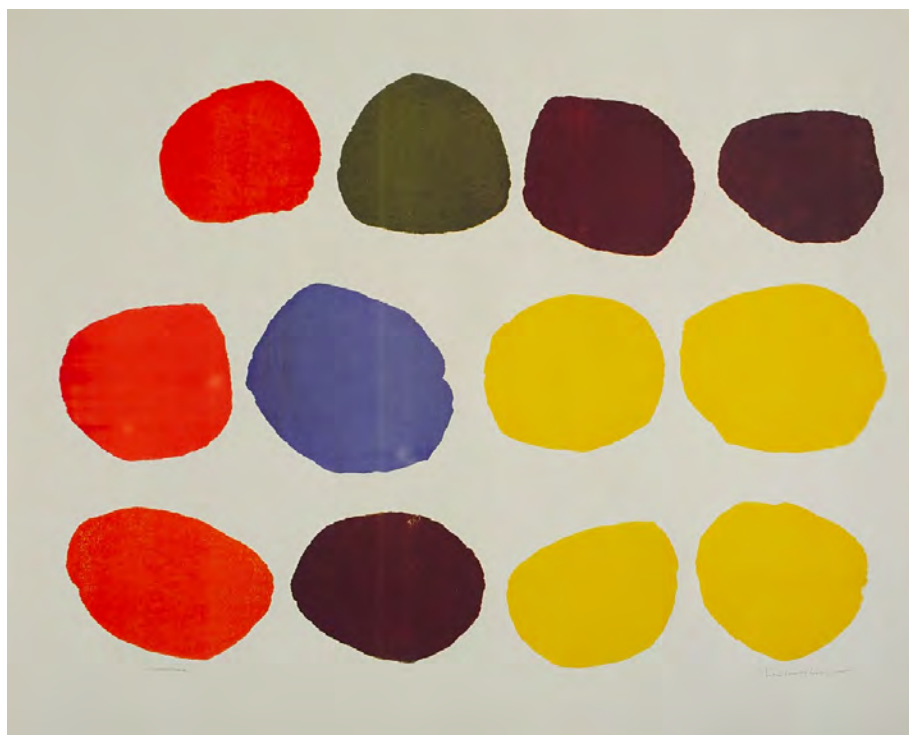
“Although one does not usually associate the religious principles of the Catholic Church with supermarkets and the signage environment of city streets, for Corita, such vernacular culture was a source of inspiration and raw material. Corita’s fascination with advertisements and the languages of commercial culture extended into a fascination with the vernacular landscape which the city of Los Angeles offered.”³⁸

5518 Franklin Avenue served as internationally renowned artist Corita Kent (Sister Mary Corita, IHM)’s primary studio space throughout most of the 1960s. The building is significant under City of Los Angeles Criterion 2 for its association with 20th century artist Corita (Sister Mary Corita) during the 1960s. It is during this period, the most defining of her artistic career in Los Angeles, that she produces the body of work that establishes her as a major, and uniquely significant, figure of the Pop art movement.. Moreover, the studio is the only extant property of primary significance in the City of Los Angeles associated with Corita’s artistic production. Sister Corita, as she was known during her years teaching and working at Immaculate Heart College, used the building as her primary studio space from circa 1962 until 1968 while residing at the Immaculate Heart Motherhouse across the street (demolished). The prosaic nature of the building made it a viable production space, as well as a canvas for the art created within its walls. While altered, the building retains sufficient integrity to continue to strongly convey its associations with this prominent artist.

³⁸ Ault, Julie. *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*. Four Corners Books, 2006. p.20

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Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



wonderbread
1962
25 ½ x 30 ½ inches

“Kent’s perception of the process of transformation is apparent throughout her work, but it is most obvious in her repeated depictions of and references to bread. In her prints, even processed bread embodies the possibility of converting the ordinary into the wondrous, as is visually evident in round wonder (cat. 45), where the Wonder Bread logo is located within a white circle resembling a communion wafer. As Kent remarked in 1966, “Any bread means communion.”³⁹ This view informed her Happenings and other celebrations of the mid-1960s, in which she passed around store-bought bread.⁴⁰ In a 1966 lecture at Palomar College, Kent aligned Christ at the Last Supper with avant-garde art practice, proclaiming, “By taking bread out of its ordinary form, and presenting it as his body, He originated pop art.”⁴¹

The above text from Dackerman examines this artwork as a bridge between works from her earlier period. *wonderbread*, is her first incorporation and appropriation of popular culture through packaging. Featuring twelve colored spots inspired by the packaging of Wonderbread—whose slogan at the time was “build strong bodies twelve ways”—in Corita’s work, the twelve spots doubled as a representation of the twelve apostles. The theme of bread as a symbolic representation of the eucharist is found within several of her artworks from this time period.

³⁹ Kent, “Choose LIFE,” n.p. Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

⁴⁰ For a detailed account of the passing of bread at a public Happening, see Thomas M. Gannon, “Sorceress at Work,” *America* 118 (14) (April 6, 1968): 434–36. Kent was aware of the liturgical significance of such a gesture and recounted the response of traditional Catholics to a 1967 event, “An Evening with God,” at the Boston Tea Party, a nightclub in Boston. She said: “Some of the older Botolph [Gallery] board members got a little disturbed because they thought we were having communion — which indeed we were. But we were not trying to usurp the powers of the church. We were just eating and drinking together”; Kent, interviewed by Galm, transcript, 1977, 40–41. The event is also described in a Boston College newspaper: Mike Peterson, “Botolph Is Back,” *The Heights*, November 17, 1967. For more on Kent’s depictions of bread, see cats. 45–48. Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

⁴¹ Related by Kathy Phillips, in her unpublished “Report on Palomar College Fine Arts Festival, April 14–16, 1966”; Corita Art Center Archive, Los Angeles. Cited in Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

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Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



mary does laugh

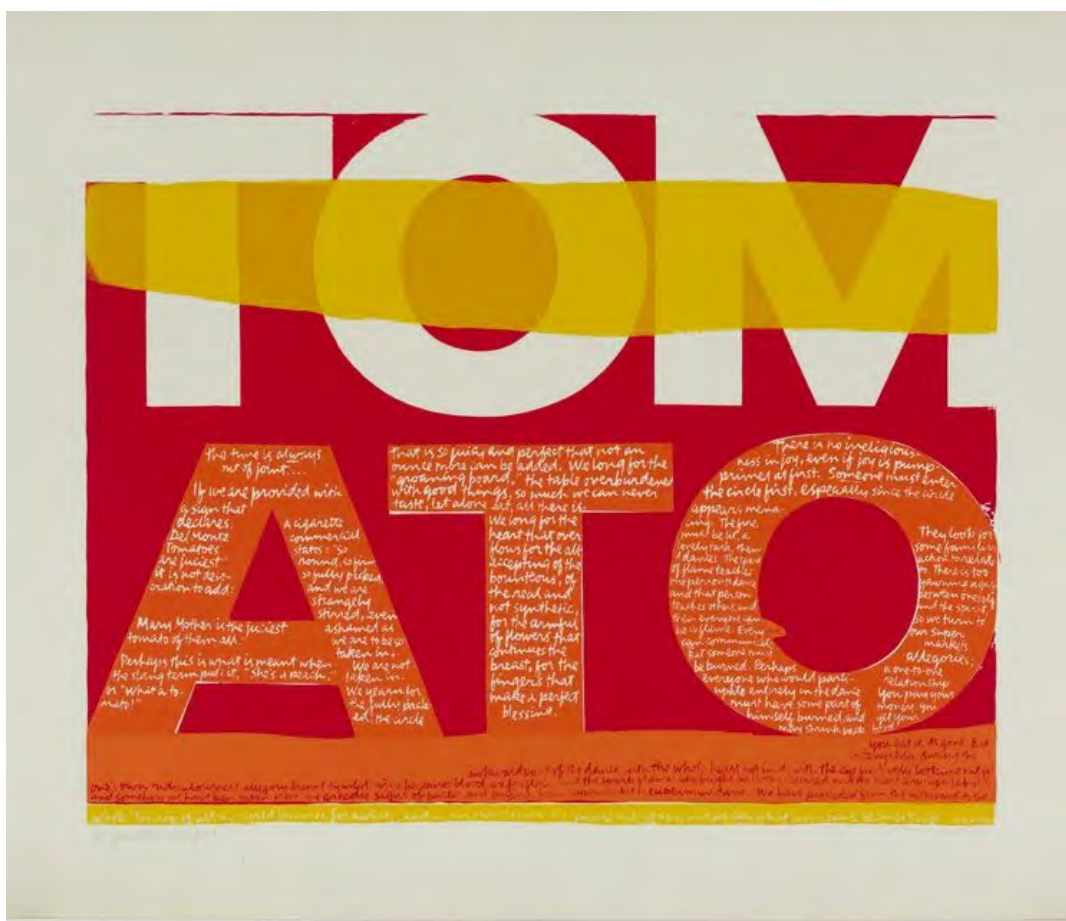
1964

39 1/4 x 29 3/4 inches

Made shortly after the 1963 opening of the Market Basket, which was located directly behind the 5518 Franklin Avenue studio, *mary does laugh* features a cropped version of the store's swirly logo at the center of the print, framed by a border of textual fragments that, upon close inspection, read, "Hamburger" and "Tomato." Much of Corita's work was inspired by the colorful packaging and marketing signage of consumer products and the Market Basket was a rich and continued source of artistic inspiration for both Corita and her students.

The additional text featured on the gold banners at the center of the print reads, "Mary does laugh; and she sings and runs and wears bright orange today she'd probably do her shopping at the Market Basket." Written by IHC student, Marcia Petty in response to the IHC's annual Mary's Day celebration, the full essay was published in the May 22, 1964 issue of the magazine *The Comment*.

Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



the juiciest tomato of all

1964

29 ¾ x 36 inches

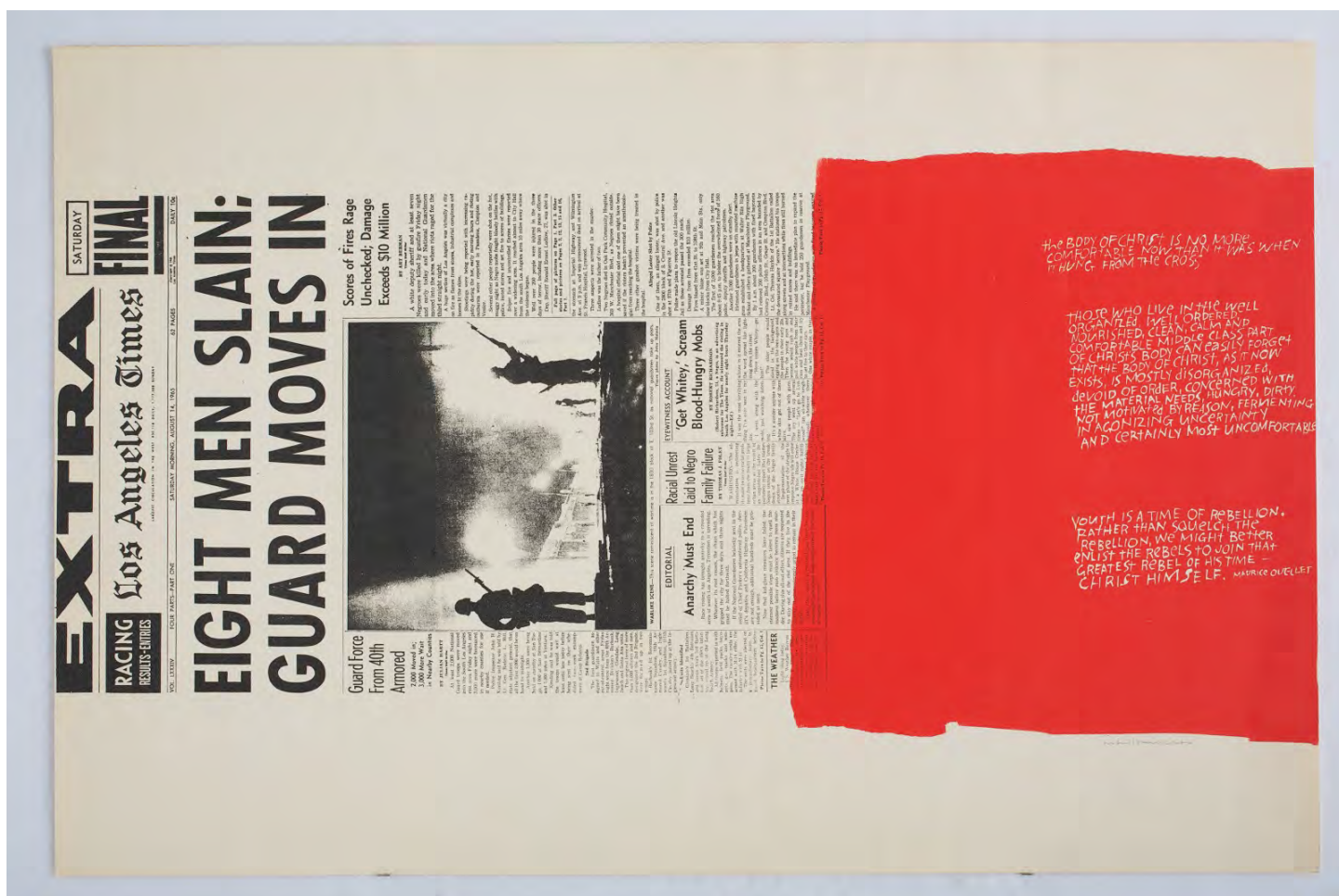
The phrase, “juiciest tomato of all” was taken from a letter written by Samuel Eisenstein, professor at Los Angeles City College, who suggested that “If we are provided with a sign that declares ‘Del Monte tomatoes are the juiciest,’ it is not desecration to add: ‘Mary Mother is the juiciest of them all.’” Dackerman summarizes the complexity of this artwork below:

“Corita Kent’s 1964 screenprint, *the juiciest tomato of all* established her reputation as a renegade. Using red, yellow, and orange ink, she represented the Virgin Mary by spelling out the word “TOMATO,” along with the inscription “Mary Mother is the juiciest tomato of them all.” An iconoclastic gesture that dismisses the long history of figurative depictions of the Virgin, the phrase is derived from a Del Monte tomato sauce slogan. Although the provocation of the juiciest tomato was interpreted as a challenge to church authority, for the Roman Catholic artist-nun the print was, to the contrary, an expression of the promised revitalization of church forms and functions by the Second Vatican Council (commonly known as Vatican II). Her depiction of Mary offered an updated conception of female divinity, one rooted in contemporary life and described in current parlance. Kent’s choice of a Del Monte jingle also signaled her affiliation with radical developments in the art world, especially the emergence of pop art.”⁴²

⁴² Dackerman, Susan, et al. *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*. Harvard Art Museums, 2015.

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Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



my people
1965
23 x 35 inches

In 1965, when the Watts uprising broke out in L.A., Corita made a print called *my people*, which juxtaposed the front page of the Los Angeles Times (with the headline: “Eight Men Slain, Guard Moves in”) alongside the words of Maurice Ouellet, a white priest and civil rights activist in Selma, Alabama. “Rather than squelch the rebellion,” he wrote, “we might better enlist the rebels to join the greatest rebel of his time—Christ himself.”⁴³

Meanwhile, “McIntyre at the time was denouncing the people taking to the street in Watts as “inhuman, almost bestial.”⁴⁴ *my people* emphasizes the historical significance of the civil rights movement and Corita’s commitment to work both within and outside conventional means to underscore more nuanced perspectives on the social uprising and the role of the media in the portrayal of the event. The black and right text on the left hand side includes additional headlines that read “‘Get Whitey,’ Scream Blood-Hungry Mobs” and “Anarchy Must End.” Corita’s delicate handwriting can be found in white in a swash of red with words from Oullet’s sermon given after Alabama state Troopers attacked civil rights peaceful marchers on Edmund Pettis Bridge, also known as “Bloody Sunday.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. Verso, 2018.

⁴⁴ Howell, Robert. “45 Years after March, Selma Priest Remembers Bloody Sunday.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 8 Mar. 2010, www.cnn.com/2010/US/03/07/selma.march.anniversary/index.html.

Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



power up and Life magazines installed at altar c. 1966

1965

28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 inches, four parts

In the same year, Dan Berrigan would be censured by the Church for “conducting illegitimate services” and his brother Phillip would be banned from the Los Angeles diocese after their sermon at the IHM high school called for a new kind of activist faith. Berrigan’s writings, poetry, and political radicalism found their way into many of Corita’s works including the four-part piece, *power up*, which features his sermon on spiritual belief and the importance of social justice and equity, placed below the slogan for Richfield gas. A seemingly antithetical pairing, Corita reappropriates the ad copy for more activist ends, framing it in the context of an inspiring call to action.

power up continues to be a great source of inspiration and serves as a platform for community engagement.⁴⁵ In his essay on visiting her Harvard exhibition, Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Parkman Professor of Divinity, Professor of Comparative Theology, and director of the Center for the Study of World Religions writes:

“Pope Francis was right to mention Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, and (during his birth centenary) Thomas Merton, in his speech before Congress; had he another moment, though, he could have added Corita Kent, who helped a generation and more to see the world afresh, and hear and read it with newly opened ears, all by her silkscreens, so simple, bright and colorful and much more too, at home in pop culture, bountiful in some of our best words and tired mundane words made better—finding at every turn some small glimpse of God near our every sense.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Murawski, Mike. “Power Up: A Story of How One Artwork Sparked Love & Connection.” *Art Museum Teaching*, 17 Feb. 2018, artmuseumteaching.com/2017/03

⁴⁶ “Seeing Corita Kent at Harvard.” Center for the Study of World Religions, 26 Oct. 2015, cswr.hds.harvard.edu/news/seeing-corita-kent-harvard.

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Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



new hope

1966

36 x 30 inches

new hope is Corita's love letter to the Lovings, the historic interracial couple Richard and Mildred Loving, who fought to end Virginia's ban on interracial marriage. This artwork addresses an impending landmark case that was set to be brought forth as *Loving vs. Virginia*, 388 US 1 to the Supreme Court. The case invalidated anti-miscegenation laws, statutes prohibiting interracial marriage, federally. Mildred Loving, a black woman, and Richard Loving who was white were sentenced to one year in prison for violating the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 in the commonwealth of Virginia.⁴⁷ In this work, Corita directly addresses the couple, prominently featuring the text, "To the Lovings," at the center of the print, with the message "NEW HOPE" placed beside it as well as a longer excerpt from a poem by E.E. Cummings scribed in her own small cursive. It reads:

"i love you much (most beautiful darling) more than anyone on earth and i like you better than everything in the sky--sunlight and singing welcome your coming although winter may be everywhere with such a silence and such a darkness no one can quite begin to guess (except my life) the true time of the year-- and if what calls itself a world should have the luck to hear singing (or glimpse such sunlight as will leap higher than high through gayer than gayest someone's heart at your each nearness) everyone certainly would (my most beautiful darling) believe in nothing but love."

We now celebrate June 12th as "Loving Day."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ "Exchange: New Hope." *Ummawhitefade*, exchange.umma.umich.edu/resources

⁴⁸ "Black Lives Matter." *Black Lives Matter | Loving Day*, www.lovingday.org/.

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Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



highly prized

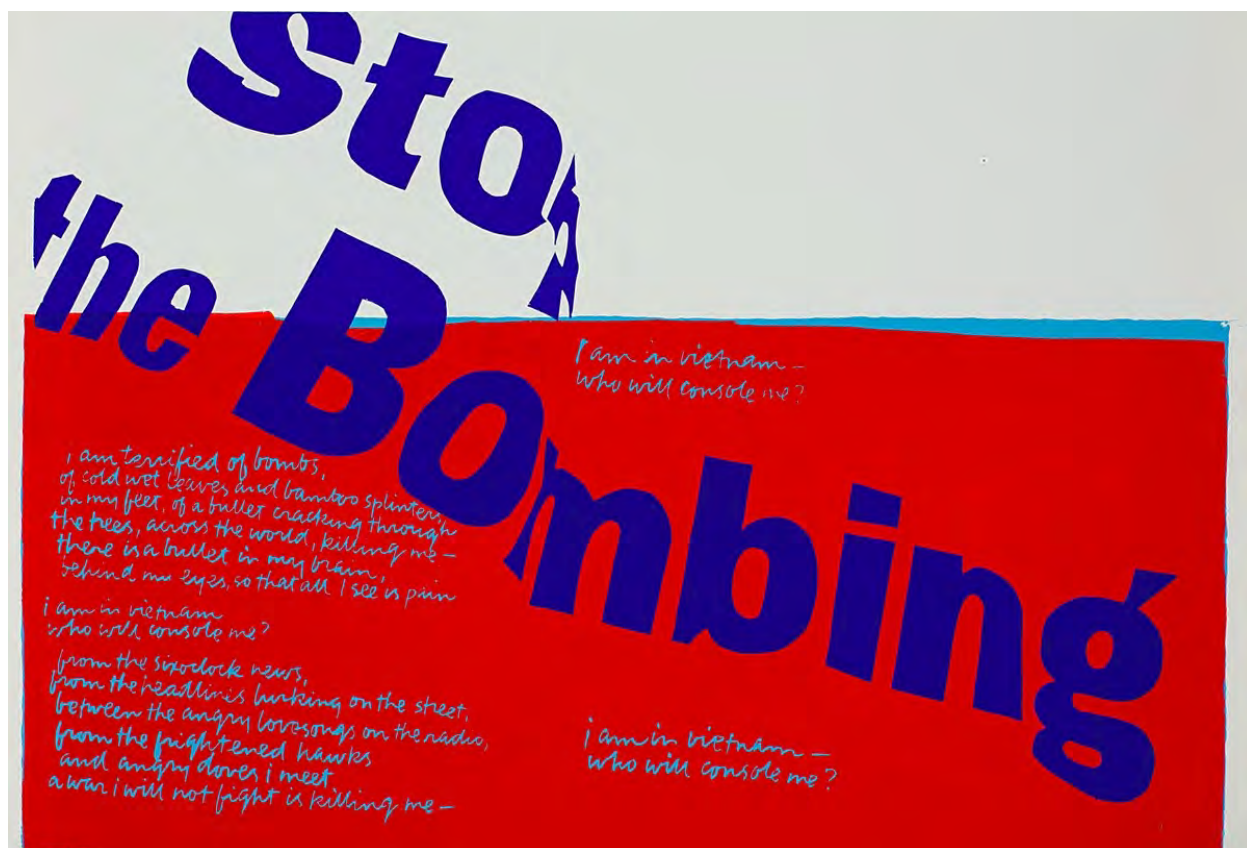
1967

36 x 30 inches

Photography was an important part of Corita's artistic practice and technical process. Corita's works incorporated images of street signs and billboard advertisements as well as magazine and newspaper headlines, reflecting the changing urban environment and rapidly evolving media landscape. The camera lens inspired Corita to re-frame and examine the smaller, unnoticed details of a larger landscape. She often had her students use "viewfinders"—empty 35mm slide holders—as tools to "take things out of context," allowing them to "see for the sake of seeing."

In works such as *stop the bombing* (1967) and *highly prized* (1967), Corita employed an innovative stencil technique that consisted of projecting images of manipulated text and imagery onto large sheets of paper, then tracing and cutting the forms to use as stencils in her screens. The dynamic movement of the letterforms and abstract shapes in many of these prints was achieved through the confluence of Corita's physical manipulations to the source imagery and her unique photographic perspective on the world around her.

Notable artworks created at 5518 Franklin Avenue



stop the bombing

1967

23 x 18 inches

Featuring a text by Gerald Huckaby, an English Professor at Immaculate Heart College, alongside a newspaper headline Corita cut out and integrated into the print, stop the bombing reveals Corita's increasing social awareness of the decade's anti-war and nuclear disarmament sentiments. This turn to more explicit, politically charged subject matter was not only the result of the IHM Sisters' interpretation of Vatican II's call to be more engaged with the modern world but also the direct influence of figures such as Daniel and Phil Berrigan.

The scribed handwriting reads: "I am in Vietnam--who will console me? I am terrified of bombs, of cold wet leaves and bamboo splinters in my feet, of a bullet cracking through the trees, across the world, killing me--there is a bullet in my brain, behind my eyes, so that all I see is pain I am in vietnam--who will console me? from the sixoclock news, from the headlines lurking on the street, between the angry love songs on the radio, from the frightened hawks and angry doves I meet a war I will not fight is killing me--I am in vietnam, who will console me?"

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two primary photos of
exterior/main facade



North Facade



Northeast Facade

primary/secondary documentation

Corita as an educator



Figure 1: Corita in classroom with students. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

In her book entitled, *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*, author Julie Ault discusses the impact of a very special educator in the life of a student:

“Corita’s teaching is not only apparent from the artists who emerged from her classroom, but in the fact that many of the women and men who studied with her and other like-minded faculty at the college, have since incorporated the educational principles that fueled those classrooms, gone on to become teachers, and apply and extend such methods in various capacities and settings. In 1972, Sister Karen Bocalero, for whom Corita had been both teacher and mentor, founded Self Help Graphics, the grassroots East Los Angeles visual arts institution which, since 1972, has been dedicated to producing, supporting and exhibiting printmaking and art by Chicano artists. As a teacher, Corita seemed to generate an empowerment of movement of sorts, profoundly changing people’s way of seeing, thinking and doing. “She taught with the pull of a strong tide.” Many former students cite Corita’s teachings as life changing in so far as she attuned their attention to the aesthetics of everyday life and their actions within that, no matter what their activity or profession. This makes sense, given that the art department’s motto was, “We have no art, we do everything as well as we can.””¹

¹ Ault. *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita* . Four Corners Books, 2006. pp 47.

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Corita as an educator



Figure 2: Immaculate Heart Department Rules, lettering by David Mekelburg.
Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

What students of Corita say about 5518 Franklin Avenue in 2020

*"...Corita's best medium is people."*²

We asked a group of students and faculty from IHC in the 1960's to participate in a survey of the building in August 2020. Below questions and responses are a sampling of letters received and communication from IHM, IHC alumni and faculty. They have been reduced due to quantity and to reduce any repetitiveness.

- Those surveyed identified this building as the same building in which Corita made her serigraphs and as an annex of the Immaculate Heart College.
- Those surveyed could locate this building in relation to Franklin and Western and its position and relationship to the larger lot.

I. Can you describe any specifics of the layout or equipment inside the building? (in the 1960's)

"When it was in use as a studio, the space was "open concept" with tables clustered in the middle and hanging lines around the periphery."

"Adaptable"

² Ault. *Come Alive!: The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*. Four Corners Books, 2006. p.86

A digital reproduction of archival materials are included as part of this nomination for purposes of illustrating the style and content that is characteristic of Sister Mary Corita (Corita Kent) body of work and accomplishments during the period of significance proposed for 5518 Franklin Avenue. It is intended for use in relation to this application or other fair use for educational purposes. All IP properties, image rights, photographs, artwork copyrights and personage to remain owned by Immaculate Heart Community / Corita Art Center or associated 3rd party.

Corita as an educator

"Racks with clothespins for hanging prints...Large tables for screening. Center of room- large table (like 4 pushed together). Around sides were racks with clothes pins to hang the prints on."

"When I was a student in the art department, this building was basically an empty box that had been designed to be 2 storefronts. Thus there were twin front doors and picture windows, twin restrooms at the back of the room, and not much else. The art department equipment consisted of teachers' desks arranged in facing rows, end to end from the back of the building to the front of the building. Each student had an additional table like a metal file on which to mix paint, shelves for storing mixed paint and drying racks (clothes pins nailed to strips of wood.) The arrangement got shuffled slightly when Corita printed there in the summer, mostly by moving some of the tables and creating more room for movement. But otherwise the equipment Corita used was the equipment the students used."

2. How was this studio space different or used differently, then the art class rooms on the main campus?

"The art rooms on the main campus were "open concept," with white walls filled with student and faculty art that shifted and muted as assignments were presented. Or the white walls would be used to screen film footage by Corita's "Great Men" guests (Charles Eames, Bucky Fuller, etc.) and students placed chairs in rows or circles for film viewing and discussion. Across the street was the silkscreen studio, also open concept, where serigraphy was taught and produced by both students and Corita."

"less restrictive"

"I did take a silk-screening class from Detta Lange in the space...but to me it was and always will be where Corita created all those wonderful prints."

"This was the place where Corita realized and printed her own art. It was an intense yet joyful process assisted by several devoted friends and /or students. It was both Corita's time for realizing her own ideas and creating art for sale to collectors and galleries thereby producing income crucial to the art department and the IHM community."

3. Do you recognize the building now? How do you know it is the same building?

"The block-like shape, its modesty, but especially its location, would be instantly recognizable..."

"same location"

"Location....on corner in parking lot"

"By location on corner of street by driveway to parking lot"

"Yes, I have been in the area for a long time."

4. Could you find and identify this building quickly if standing on Franklin and Western?

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Corita as an educator

“Yes on the NW corner of the parking lot of Rite Aid, & SW of the school campus”

“Easily.”

“Definitely. It was not located at the corner, but about four or five car lengths to the west.”

“Immediately. Without a doubt.”

Highlighted IHC student memories at 5518 Franklin Avenue:

“It was amazing. I went to my first Mary's Day and saw Arlene Weiss and her family dressed in Bolivian costumes. And Barbara had her legs drawn on, and I was at home forever. I would walk into the dept, into the collection, and there would be Corita having lunch with Marshall McLuhan, and also Aldous Huxley's wife. Henry Miller would be there, or sometimes Yosi Anaya and I would take materials to Henry's house. You wouldn't expect him to live in a French provincial house. He had us sign his bathroom wall. And then there was Kate Steinitz, a famous arts leader from Munich, who called me cattie. She was an expert on DaVinci. I would drive her to work downtown. Corita was mystical, and beautiful, and fabulous. And she let me be me. Outspoken rebellious, and somewhat of the enfant terrible. What you learned at ihc is how to learn. I have lived in dozens of places, and have constantly taught. Went into special ed and was a reading specialist. All of the things that corita taught seemed to mesh with everything I did...The thought of losing the building actually made me cry. Even the building itself seems alive to me.” - excerpt, Cathy Gatley



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Corita as an educator

Figure 3: “In 1964, for example, she transformed Immaculate Heart College’s staid religious festival, Mary’s Day, into a religious happening. With black-robed nuns parading in flower necklaces, poets declaiming from platforms and painted students dancing in the grass, Mary’s Day became the prototype for the ‘hippies’ 1967 be-in in San Francisco.”³. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.

“Corita’s studio was a cultural gathering spot for Corita’s fans and hundreds of students who over the years volunteered to back up Corita while she was silkscreening. With clothespins on lines, we hung the prints that Corita energetically pulled, one by one, even in the heat of her Summer work days...Corita’s cinder block studio on the corner of Franklin and Western Avenues, was a cultural lighthouse in an urban seascape, and a valuable part of LA’s artist-centered history.” Excerpt, Barbara Loste, PhD, IHC, Art, 1968

“It was amazing to watch her work (especially her double jointed fingers gluing those long quotes so adeptly). Being given such responsibility while helping her made me more secure in my own work. I continued silk-screening until I had a reaction to the paint thinner to clean screens. So I stopped screening in the 80’s. I continue to do my art on limited edition calendars. This year will be my 41st calendar. I am never bored!” - Susie Reneau

³ Ault. *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita* . Four Corners Books, 2006. p.40.

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Additional Resources

Extended Resources

For a full CV, please visit [here](#)

For more information on the Corita Art Center, please visit [here](#)

For an excerpt on the history of The Immaculate Heart Community, please visit [here](#)

CV highlights

- 1964-65 Vatican Pavilion Mural for the New York World's Fair - "beatitude banner"
- 1966 Barnsdall Park "retrospective"



Figure 1: 35mm slide, Corita Art Center photographic collection. Exhibition of Kent's serigraphs, installed at Municipal Art Gallery, Barnsdall Park, 1966.

- Los Angeles County Museum Quarterly (vol. 16, no. 3), cover art, 1960
- Los Angeles City Planning Department, Goals Discussion Paper: Planning Goals for the Los Angeles Metropolis, cover art, 1967
- Footnotes and headlines ("prayers that read like a grocery list")
- "Peace on Earth" IBM Headquarters, New York City, 1965
- "Survival with Style" 1967



Additional Resources



Figure 2: In 1967, “survival with style” was an installation in collaboration with Corita’s students from Immaculate Heart College. When installed at the World Council of Churches in Uppsala, American folk singer, Pete Seeger sang while people danced in and out of the installation “where have all the flowers gone?”¹

Corita’s handwriting reads “the world council of churches exhibit at Uppsala Castle - the first exhibit held there. The exhibit was then shown at the council building in Geneva and other parts of Europe”
Image is courtesy of papers of Corita, Schlesinger Library.

¹ Pacatte, Rose. *Corita Kent: Gentle Revolutionary of the Heart*. Liturgical Press, 2017.

Additional Resources

Notable Exhibitions featuring artworks from the 1960's (Please see full CV)

- From Camelot to Kent State: Pop Art, 1960-1975, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI
- Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965-1975, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
- Nine Moments for Now, Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African and African American Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- Half the Picture: A Feminist Look at the Collection, Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY
- Still I Rise: feminisms, gender, resistance, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK
- Get with the Action: Political Poster from the 1960 to Now, SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA
- Hippy Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia, Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA
- Corita Kent and the Language of Pop, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA
- California Design, 1930 – 1965: Living in a Modern Way, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
- The Personal is Political: Women Artists from the Collection, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- Civic Virtue: The Impact of the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery and the Watts Towers Arts Center, Municipal Gallery at Barnsdall Art Park and the Watts Towers Arts Center, Los Angeles, CA
- Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles 1945 – 1980, ONE Archives Gallery and Museum, West Hollywood, CA
- Power Up, Sister Corita and Donald Moffett, Interlocking, Armand Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA



Figure 3: someday is now: the art of corita kent, 2013. Installation view, Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga Springs, New York.
Photo courtesy of Tang Teaching Museum.



Additional Resources

Highlighted commendations and acknowledgements

2019 - City of Los Angeles, Corita Kent Day
 2019 - County of Los Angeles, Corita Kent Day
 2016 - AIGA Medalist, Lifetime Achievement in design
 2016 - California Museum, California Hall of Fame
 2011 - Tallin Print Triennial, Award
 1986 - City of Santa Barbara Proclamation, Corita Kent Week (Nov. 16-22, 1986)
 1981 - Massachusetts College of Art, Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts
 1974 - Massachusetts Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, Special Award for Achievements in Visual Arts,
 1966 - Los Angeles Times, one of nine Women of the Year
 1966 - Harper's Bazaar, 100 Women Women of Accomplishment
 1964 - American Association of University Women, Artist of the Month
 1963 - Rossmoor Center Exhibition, First Prize
 1962 - California State Fair, Popular Vote Prize
 1956 - Bay Printmakers' Society Second National Exhibition, Purchase Award
 1953 - International Graphic Arts Society, Print of the Year
 1952 - Sacramento State Fair, First Prize in Art
 1952 - Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Purchase Award in Prints



Figure 4: Harper's Bazaar Cites 100 Women. LA Herald- Examiner, August 27, 1967. Image courtesy of Corita Art Center / Immaculate Heart Community.



Integrity Assessment: 5518 Franklin Avenue

The National Park Service provides guidance on evaluating the significance and integrity of properties associated with historically significant individuals (National Register Criterion B, the federal equivalent to City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument Criterion 2). This guidance is outlined in two primary documents: *National Register Bulletin 15: How To Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* and *National Register Bulletin 32: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons*.

The City's Guidelines for Evaluating Resources Associated with Significant Persons in Los Angeles, developed as part of the SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement, notes that while the City's criteria do not include a discussion of integrity; resources may be eligible under local criteria with more alterations than may be acceptable for the National Register and/or California Register.¹

This assessment was prepared by Kathryn Wollan, an architectural historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in Architectural History and History, and follows the NPS guidance as outlined in NR Bulletins 15 and 32.

Several steps are involved in determining whether a property is significant for its associative values under Criterion B.

- First, determine the importance of the individual.
- Second, ascertain the length and nature of his/her association with the property under study and identify the other properties associated with the individual.
- Third, consider the property under Criterion B.

Applying Criterion B: Person

- The person associated with the property must be *individually* significant within a historic context.
- Properties eligible under Criterion B are usually those associated with a person's *productive* life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance. Properties that pre-or post-date an individual's significant accomplishments are usually not eligible. The individuals' association with the property must be documented by accepted methods of historical research, including written or oral history.

Summary statement of significance

5518 Franklin Avenue, constructed in 1960, is a vernacular storefront building, that served as Corita Kent (Sister Mary Corita IHM)'s primary studio space throughout most of the 1960s. The building is significant, under City of Los Angeles Criterion 2, for its association with internationally renowned, 20th century artist Corita Kent during the 1960s. This era represents most defining period of her artistic career in which she emerged as a major figure in the Pop Art Movement and an influential artist in Los

¹ City of Los Angeles Department of Planning Office of Historic Resources. *SurveyLA Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Guidelines for Evaluating Resources Associated with Significant Persons in Los Angeles*. November, 2018.

https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/b6560d8e-cbcc-4d66-a1bb-a78cc85218fe/GuidelinesForEvaluatingResourcesAssociatedwithSignificantPersons_0.pdf

Angeles and beyond. It is the property of primary significance in the City of Los Angeles associated with Corita's productive life. Sister Corita, as she was known during her years teaching and working at Immaculate Heart College, used the building as her primary studio and teaching space from circa 1962 until 1968.

Determining the Relevant Aspects of Integrity²

Each type of property depends on certain aspects of integrity, more than others, to express its historic significance. Determining which of the aspects is the most important to a particular property requires an understanding of the property's significance and its essential physical features.

A property important for association with an event, historical pattern, or significant person(s) ideally might retain *some* features of all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Each of the seven aspects of integrity are described below:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historic role. It involves *how*, not just *where*, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space.

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The choice and combination of materials reveal the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form of a property. It results from the conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property (or its significant alteration).... Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportions, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object or site.

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property historic character.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it *is* the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently

² National Park Service. National Register Bulletin 15, p. 48

intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.

Assessing Integrity in Properties³

Integrity is based on significance: why where and when a property is important. Only after significance is fully established can you proceed to the issue of integrity. Eligibility, even at the National Register level, does not require that a property retain ALL features of the seven aspects of integrity; rather it requires only that retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

The steps in assessing integrity are:

- 1) Define the **essential physical features** that must be present for a property to represent their significance.

5518 Franklin Avenue's essential physical features include: original location, setting at Franklin and Western Avenues, and storefront design.

This property's location expresses the relationship between the storefront studio, the Immaculate Heart community and campus, and the Hollywood community beyond its walls. The setting on a busy thoroughfare, car culture, adjacent buildings, parking lot, market, relationship with the street.

Its original location and setting clearly conveys the nexus of conceptual and visual influences—intellectual, liturgical, graphic, and commercial-- that inform Corita's work during this period. It demonstrates the relationship between the studio and Immaculate Heart during this period, as it was mediated by interactions with a broader community.

The vernacular commercial form of the storefront building, and its modest design, houses the space in which Corita created and produced her artwork during the time period when she achieved significance.

- 2) Determine whether the **essential physical features are visible** enough to convey their significance.

- Location at 5518 Franklin Avenue
- Setting at corner of Franklin and Western
- Spatial relationship to Immaculate Heart to the north
- Spatial relationship to surrounding parking lot and supermarket building to the south
- Spatial relationship to adjacent residences on west
- Relationship of storefront to Franklin Avenue sidewalk and street
- Storefront design
 - Basic one-story box form
 - Flat roof
 - Concrete block walls on west, south (full), and east (partial) facades

³ National Park Service. National Register Bulletin 15, p. 45

- Storefront—while altered, these bays remain sufficiently visible, recessed beneath overhang, to convey the essential form and function of the design
- Stucco central wall and projecting overhang on main facade
- Stepped parapet on the west wall
- Original placement of storefront lighting (ceiling and sconce)
- Open concept original interior space, combining both original store spaces

3) Determine whether the property needs to be **compared with similar properties**.

Comparable properties within the City of Los Angeles:

6616 DeLongpre Avenue—childhood home—This property, a secondary rear dwelling to a single family residence, appears to retain much of its original design and materials. Corita Kent presumably lived in this home with her family from 1920 (age 2) until she entered Immaculate Heart. The property, while it retains its integrity, is not associated with her productive life and therefore would not be eligible for designation as it does not convey her significance.

Immaculate Heart College—this property does not clearly convey Corita’s significance for her contributions as an artist. The main Art Department was housed in the basement Motherhouse (which also includes the residential quarters for the IHM Sisters). The Motherhouse was razed in 1973, as a result of damages sustained during the San Fernando earthquake in February 1971. This property did not house the space where Corita created the body of work in the 1960s for which she is best known. In addition, the building is no longer extant and, therefore, can no longer convey any association with Corita’s productive life.

5126 Vineland—location of the Corita Print Gallery. This shop was opened in 1969, after Corita left IHM/IHC and Los Angeles, to provide a location for the continued sale of her prints. The site was located near her sister’s home and was likely chosen for its proximity. One half of a one-story double storefront, this property is somewhat similar to 5518 Franklin in that it is a vernacular storefront building, although its slightly more traditional design reflects its earlier construction date of 1945. Because Corita did not work here and it was opened after her permanent departure to Boston, it does not hold a direct association with her productive life in Los Angeles.

Properties outside the City of Los Angeles

Harry Hambly studio— 941 George St, Santa Clara, CA 95054; unverified. Beginning in 1967, Corita began experimenting with using Hambly to produce her prints. The *Heroes and Sheroes* series, for example, and subsequent works created after leaving Immaculate Heart were printed by Hambly’s studio based on Corita’s designs. This property does not hold a direct association with Corita’s productive life.

Cape Cod—believed to be located at 236 Hubbard Street, town unknown. This property reflects a transitional period in Corita’s artistic career. Her brief tenure while on sabbatical from teaching at IHC, and its unverifiable location, make it unlikely to retain its association with her productive life.

Boston Apartment—136 Marlborough Ave, Boston, MA 02116. Corita never had a dedicated studio after moving to Boston, instead working on designs at her kitchen table while Hambly continued to produce the prints at his studio. This property is not associated with the most defining and influential period of her artistic career, nor with her productive life in Los Angeles.

- 4) And, determine, based on the significance and essential physical features, **which aspects of integrity** are particularly vital to the property being nominated and if they are present.

Location, Setting, Feeling and Association are the most vital aspects of integrity for properties associated with significant individuals, particularly when they are associated with underrepresented and/or underpropertied individuals. These four aspects of integrity are retained in full.

Essential features of the remaining aspects of integrity, are sufficient to support and complement, and do not negate, the most vital aspects of integrity.

- Design—While altered, the property retains its essential box-like form, flat roof, and the visible recessed storefront bays that convey the recognizable character of a mid-century storefront in Los Angeles.
- Materials—Common materials, including concrete block, wood frame, and stucco, are characteristic of vernacular design in the mid-20th century, intact and partially visible. For this particular property, therefore, this aspect of integrity is commensurate with design integrity.
- Workmanship— Workmanship is little evidenced in vernacular mid-20th century commercial storefronts and, therefore not a relevant aspect of integrity. For this particular property, therefore, this aspect of integrity is commensurate with design integrity.

Ultimately, the question of integrity is answered by whether or not the property retains the **identity** for which it is significant.

A basic integrity test for a property associated with an important event or person is whether a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.

Historical contemporaries, former students of Corita, were surveyed as part of the preparation of this nomination. They were asked: “Do you recognize the building now? How do you know it is the same building”. All respondents answered affirmatively. Specific responses included: “The block-like shape, its modesty, but especially its location, would be instantly recognizable...”; and “By location on corner of street by driveway to parking lot”.

Conclusion:

5518 Franklin Avenue is the only extant property within the City of Los Angeles that is directly associated with the productive life of Corita Kent and, therefore, best conveys her historic significance as an artist in Los Angeles and beyond. The property retains some features of all seven aspects of integrity, as ideally required for association with a historically significant person under National Park Service guidance. While altered, it retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance and, therefore, it appears eligible for listing under Criterion 2, as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita

Julie Ault

Four Corners Books

The Spirited Art of Sister Corita

by Julie Ault

In August of 1968 Sister Corita made a bold move, surprising everyone, apparently even herself.¹ While on sabbatical from her position as chair of the art department at the Immaculate Heart College, after two months of staying with her friend Celia Hubbard in Massachusetts, she announced she was leaving Los Angeles, her life there, and her religious community altogether. She did not offer much explanation, at least not to the press: "My reasons are very personal and very hard to explain. It seems to be the right thing for me to do now."²

Immaculate Heart

What exactly was Corita leaving? She was parting from the sisterhood and the religious order that provided the spiritual, living, and working structure of her adult life as well as the vows that compose a sister's life – obedience, celibacy, and poverty. The cloistered, collective environment of the Immaculate Heart Community, in which Corita had lived since 1936, from the age of eighteen, was a singular milieu – renowned for its liberal orientation that she had helped generate. That community had in turn nurtured the prominent "modern nun,"³ and radically influenced the path of her art.

Corita was also leaving the Immaculate Heart College, where she taught for over twenty years and headed its art department during the last four. Since the 1950s the college had been both celebrated and criticized for its progressive educative environment. By the 1960s, the college's art department had become legendary – characterized as inspirational not only by Catholics and students, but by illustrious figures including Buckminster Fuller, who declared, "Amongst the most fundamentally inspiring experiences of my life have been my visits to the art department at Immaculate Heart College." Charles and Ray Eames, other luminary supporters, whom Corita counted as primary influences on her creative process, teaching, and art making, opened their house and studio to the sisters and their students annually in the 1950s and 1960s. Both Fuller and Charles Eames had participated in the Great Men lecture series that long-time art department chair Sister Magdalen Mary initiated and which Corita directed for some years. The series included James Elliot, Leonard Stein, John Cage, Alfred Hitchcock, Saul Bass, Herbert Bayer, Jean Renoir, and Virgil Thompson.⁴ Today, this list reads like a cultural who's who, but at the time they were

← Left to right: IHC student, IHC teacher Sister Helen Cary, Corita, Mary's Day, ✓ Buckminster Fuller visiting the IHC art department, with C



fairly accessible: Corita organized the lectures by simply writing to these men, inviting them to visit and talk about their lives, their thinking and working methods, and engage in Q&A with the students.⁵

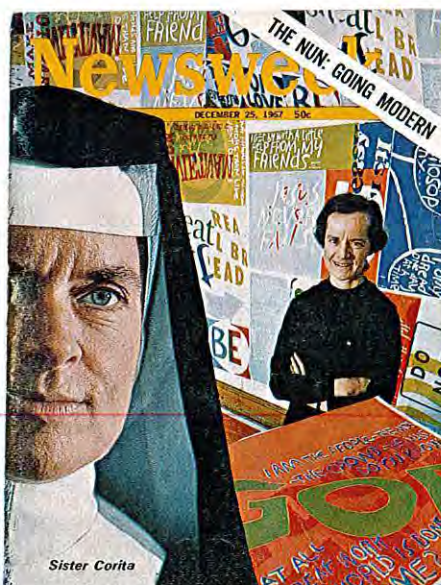
Corita's celebrity seemed to run on a parallel track with the college's. "Many nuns are caught between the traditional idea that they should be humble and not exalt their work and a contemporary culture that elevates the cult of the individual."⁶ Some say Corita was similarly conflicted, at least in the early years of her career, before she gained self-confidence.⁷ However, judging by contemporary accounts, she was not the kind of person to suppress the fullness of her character for long, or to marginalize her ideas – certainly not for the sake of adhering to traditions she found problematic. Corita was charismatic and she was fearless. She spoke and acted with conviction and verve, exuding good energy as she beckoned people to graciously sidestep oppressive cultural conventions in favor of a celebrational (perhaps subversive) interrogation of society through creativity and everyday actions. Likewise, her art was bold and aesthetically joyful in its offering of spiritual renewal, social critique, and political efficacy. The mix of disarming personality and daring art brought Corita into the public eye, and kept her in demand in the college, in Catholic communities, and in both local and national press.⁸ Barbara Losey claims, "By the mid-1960s, as a result of her growing recognition as an artist and teacher, Sister Corita began to experience

almost rock-star status among her students and some art collectors."⁹ Speaking about how fame affected her classroom, Corita explained:

I was a big old taskmaster and gave fantastic assignments. I don't suppose they ever screamed at me but they'd complain lots. One of the reasons I stopped teaching, I say it laughingly, was that I became a kind of celebrity and it started getting in the way. There would be visitors, very well intentioned, who just wanted to meet me – this sort of thing. Some of this was interesting because it brought interesting projects for the students to work on... But I think the students resented my fame because whenever they would do something they would be labeled as my students. I didn't give two hoots but they did. Some felt I was taking the credit for their work as well.¹⁰

With her resignation, Corita was saying goodbye to a relentless schedule filled with teaching, traveling, lecturing, and exhibiting, "I taught for about thirty-two years, and then I really felt that I had finished with that. I was very happy to drop it. The same with speaking. That was the thing I dropped most easily."¹¹ Corita and her mentor and unofficial manager until 1964, Sister Magdalen Mary (Margaret "Maggie" Martin), were both "demons for work."¹² Sister Mag, as she was known at the IHC, was the "impossible nourishment behind the blooming of the art department."¹³ She had scheduled travels for their collaborative slide talks visiting a different U.S. city every second day

← IHC art department
Mickey Myers in pur
suit, 1966
✓ *Newsweek*, Decer
25, 1967
✎ Corita working on
serigraphs
→ Prints hanging to



during one month, and that was typical in 1959, even before Corita's marquee appeal had burgeoned.¹⁴

Corita Kent was leaving behind her over-scheduled insomniac life of teaching, running the art department, lecturing, exhibiting, fulfilling commissions, conducting workshops, and acting as spokesperson for the IHC, as well as icon for the rebellious "modern nun." She was taking leave of being "involved in too many things and constantly trying to remember stacks of deadlines,"¹⁵ within which art making – her primary passion – had from all accounts become confined to a frenzied period in the three-week summer vacation between semesters, taking place in the basement of the college or in the one-room cinder block workshop across from Immaculate Heart College.¹⁶ Despite Corita's seemingly relaxed attitude toward the in-between, speedy character of those work sessions, clearly the arrangement was less than ideal. "This year I did thirty or thirty-five [serigraphs], and printed about a hundred of each. I work very fast, and others help me mix paint and clean up. It's a standing joke that anyone who drops in in August helps."¹⁷ She reflected many years later on the period precipitating her transition:

Other people could see the pace at which I was going, which was really insane toward the end, and I don't think I quite realized it. I was young and healthy, and I said no to so many things that I thought I was saying no to as much as possible. But apparently I wasn't. So when

*I found out how simple life was staying with one person and making prints for a whole summer, it began to dawn on me what I had been doing, and I just couldn't do it anymore.*¹⁸

Corita had been living with the Immaculate Heart women her entire adult life: she was with people all the time, and the volume had been steadily increasing. The lure to design her own life, to compose a quieter, more self-directed existence, which would provide ample time for making her art, was powerful.¹⁹

Call for Renewal

While Corita's ever increasing workload was formidable enough, it coincided with changing circumstances in the Catholic Church in the 1960s: these brought certain institutional problems to the foreground, and brought tensions within Corita's immediate environment – and within her – to a crisis point.

In 1962, Pope John XXIII's Vatican II decree on the "Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life" called for movement towards modern values. "Post-Vatican II liturgy was to include the use of the vernacular – as opposed to Latin – in holy services such as the celebration of the Mass. The altar was turned to face participants so that they would 'really be at the table,' and the communion wafer was handed to the person receiving it instead of being placed by the priest on the communicant's tongue."²⁰ For nuns, who had been subject to traditionally gendered roles,



modernization meant a loosening of those functions, fewer restrictions on their daily lives, and a new focusing on social action and service.

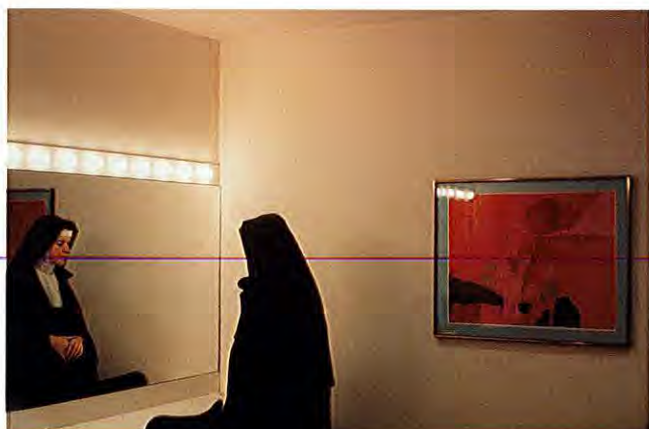
The Immaculate Heart Community and College, like many Catholic institutions, were thrown into conflict over how previously accepted traditions were to be revised *in practice*. The role of the sisterhood was service; traditionally sisters were not individuated or permitted to draw attention to themselves, hence the habit, or uniform, and the refutation of birth names.²¹ Many nuns were teachers and educational traditions dictated by standardized methods were in place. Corita and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) nuns largely favored a progressive reading of Vatican II, which included not only modifying personal appearance and seeking more individuation, but taking seriously the Vatican's call for critical examination of their governance and the call to air their objections and propositions – even if these were at odds with the local church hierarchy to which they were supposed to be obedient. Corita and the IHM sisters questioned the notion of apparently absolute obedience that the Los Angeles archdiocese, and Cardinal James Francis McIntyre in particular, demanded – which in itself contrasted with the message of the decree on Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life. The sisters sought to contemporize their community work, their teaching methods and educational content, and connect more to people's lived experience, particularly through cultural practices. The symbolism invoked by some of those cultural practices,

notably by Sister Corita, was at times regarded by the Cardinal as sacrilegious. Dramatic disputes over the decree's interpretation – amply publicized in the media – ensued between the IHMs and the archdiocese.

From Corita's point of view, "...there was an extreme rigidity on the part of the hierarchy. So that what should have been very normal growing changes were not allowed to be organic because everything that changed created such a big sensation..." People outside the community thought the nuns should continue wearing their habits, and didn't understand how it separated them from the people they worked with.²² Celia Hubbard recalls that after shedding the habit "Corita chose to wear stylish Marimekko dresses..." Corita's fashion sense was very much in keeping with her preference for bold shapes and primary colors in her art, and she loved to dress in a beautiful way."²³

It was a fateful irony that such a progressive community was located in what seemed to be the country's most conservative archdiocese, with Cardinal McIntyre at the helm.²⁴ Although the conflict applied pressure primarily on the mother superior and the college president,²⁵ Cardinal McIntyre's "displeasure was often personalized in Sister Corita,"²⁶ perhaps because she was so vibrantly in the public eye. Corita had been invited to make a wall mural for the Vatican Pavilion in the 1964 World's Fair that took place in New York, a more prominent venue did not exist.²⁷ *Newsweek* magazine reported that:

← Corita with very
edition for Hilton I
New York, 1961
✓ Corita, c. 1968
→ News clipping, *Los Angeles Times*, Mar
1968



*Through her infectious vitality, Corita joyfully subverts the church's neat divisions between secular and sacred. "She merely steps outside the rules and does her dance," says Jesuit poet Daniel Berrigan... "But she is not frivolous, except to those who see life as a problem. She introduces the intuitive, the unpredictable into religion, and thereby threatens the essentially masculine, terribly efficient, chancery-ridden, law-abiding, file-cabinet church."*²⁸

Corita was frequently targeted for criticism by conservative Catholics,²⁹ including alumni and patrons whose financial support was considered essential, for her outspoken and engaging style of expressing her views on faith, art, and society. Beleaguered by frequent censure, upon leaving Los Angeles, she was escaping the restrictive judgment of authority that had ordered her life for so long.

Helen Kelley, president of the college between 1963 and 1977, wrote: "That Pope Paul VI had himself called for such review and revision mattered little at the local level. The incumbent archbishop...opposed everything the majority of the sisters proposed, ordered the removal of all Immaculate Heart Sisters teaching in the Los Angeles diocesan schools, and finally presented the community with an ultimatum: either conform with his wishes or seek dispensation from vows."³⁰

Cardinal McIntyre did in fact succeed in preventing the reform-minded sisters from teaching in his schools, but was unable to stop their programs and revisions altogether. He asked the Vatican's Congregation of the Religious for

ruling on their disobedience. The initial response: "the sisters must curb their experiments and submit to the authority of Cardinal McIntyre." Undeterred, they asked Pope Paul VI to clarify his directive on religious renewal – and, in effect, overturn the congregation's ruling.³¹ Ultimately, Rome deemed the IHC's renewal to be too far-reaching. This decision prompted the ensuing split. By 1970, many had left community life entirely, and then came the splintering of the organization. Ninety percent of the remaining IHM members chose to seek dispensation from their vows and reorganize as a voluntary community inspired by religious ideals.³² The group removed themselves from Catholic Church supervision.³³ Corita's departure had pre-dated the courageous action of the IHM sisters who sought freedom by two years.

A Democratic Form

Frances Elizabeth Kent was born in 1918 to an Irish Catholic family with six children living in Iowa. Five years later they moved to the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. Upon completing her Catholic education, Frances entered the Immaculate Heart of Mary Religious Community and took the name Sister Mary Corita. Religion was important in the Kent family; Corita's sister Ruth and her brother Mark also chose to enter religious orders.

Corita earned her Bachelor's degree from the Immaculate Heart College in 1941 and a Masters in Art History from the University of Southern



California in 1951. That same year she learned serigraphy from the wife of the artist Alfredo Martinez and began working primarily in silk-screen. At that time, serigraphy was considered a sign painter's medium and was not respected or accepted into some juried exhibitions.³⁴ A watershed moment that gave the artist a much-needed confidence boost was in 1952 when, unknown to Corita, Sister Mag entered one of her prints, *the lord is with thee*, into a Los Angeles County competition.³⁵ In the print division, her work won first prize, which was to be the first of many.

For Corita, wide distribution was a populist and Christian principle that determined her choice of artistic medium. "I'm a printmaker... a very democratic form, since it enables me to produce a quantity of original art for those who cannot afford to purchase high-priced art... the distribution of these prints to everyday places of work pleases me, and I hope they will give people a lift... more fun out of life."³⁶ She rejected what she perceived as an elitist distribution system and deliberately priced her large unnumbered editions of serigraphs inexpensively. Corita's choice of medium was in part influenced by Sister Mag's speculation that they would make more money at Friday night sales held by the department if they offered many inexpensive pieces rather than a few paintings.³⁷ The various forms Corita would utilize – serigraphs, greeting cards, publications, posters, events, disposable exhibits, murals, and billboards – and the venues through which she was to disseminate her work – churches, community

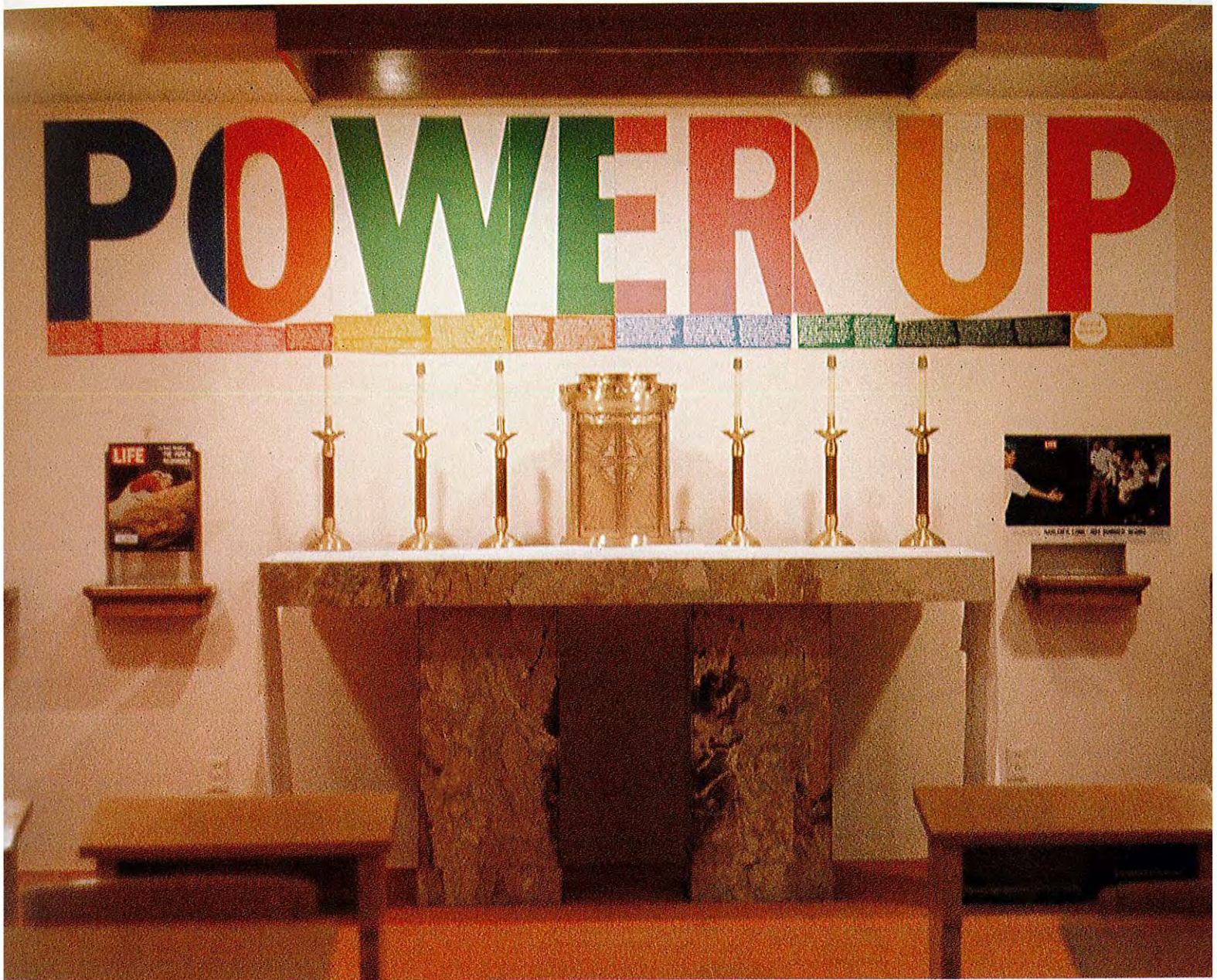
centers, galleries, fairs, corporations, and vans driven to gatherings – made her art available to a broad range of viewers.

In the 1950s Corita's richly colored prints were painterly, typically referring to religious figures or themes from the Bible, such as the madonna, the nativity scene, and various psalms. Corita has cited art historian Dr. Alois Schardt – who taught at the Immaculate Heart College – Ben Shahn, abstract expressionism, and Simon Rodia's Watts Towers as early influences but she discovered her greatest source of inspiration later. "I had already finished school when I met my real teacher, Charles Eames. He was not an art teacher; he was an artist who taught by words, films, exhibits, buildings, classes, visits, phone conversations, and furniture."³⁸

Corita introduced words into her pictures in 1955; words infiltrate the pictorial in her prints throughout the late 1950s. *Word picture: gift of tongues*, from 1955, distinguishes text and image in its title, as does *word picture: christ calming the storm*, of 1956, indicating her reliance at that time on figurative subject matter. The former features figures amidst a sea of hot pink and red tones in the bottom section of the print while text fills the relatively neutral color field in the upper two thirds: "When the day of Pentecost came around, while they were all gathered together in a purpose of unity, all at once a sound came from Heaven like that of a strong wind." The serif classical type style predates Corita's individualistic handwriting. The subject matter points to Corita's interest in

← Exhibition of prints, 1966
 ✓ Storefront of Corita prints a screen studio, during the Friday sales held at the department, 1966
 ↗ power up art magazines inside altar, c. 1966
 ↘ and next page collaboratively by Corita and the department store in Los Angeles





the power of words stemming from religious belief and alludes to their sacredness, the word coming down from on high.

The artist also took notice of “posters...I got ideas of there being different possibilities of using letter forms. And I always think of the letter forms as much as objects as people or flowers or other subject matter.”³⁹ By 1960, Corita’s figurative style is replaced by a growing use of abstract color fields and shapes, many with psalms written out to form the central focus. By 1961, words primarily compose her prints. Over the following years, Corita increased their usage and scale until word became image.⁴⁰

The escalating size and quantity of words in Corita’s prints in the early 1960s can be linked to her growing interest in her immediate urban environment and its signage systems, which was also developing speedily and exerting visual force. The U.S. post-WWII financial boom produced new degrees and levels of consumer culture that registered in everyday life through media multiplication, including advertising on billboards. Hollywood must have felt like the pinnacle of that proliferation, a veritable explosion of images, slogans, textures, and colors.

Corita’s prints in the mid-1950s display rich though muted colors, distinct from the clear intense colors she began using a few years later. Sister Mary William (Helen Kelley) explained, “Our colors are the colors of the marketplace, the colors of life-giving foods, and our sounds are the sounds of the here and now.”⁴¹

Although one does not usually associate the religious principles of the Catholic Church with supermarkets and the signage environment of city streets, for Corita, such vernacular culture was a source of inspiration and raw material. Corita’s fascination with advertisements and the languages of commercial culture extended to a fascination with the vernacular landscape which the city of Los Angeles offered. Whereas billboards and “decorated sheds” were indications for architectural critic Peter Blake that the contemporary city of the 1960s resembled “God’s Own Junkyard,”⁴² Corita welcomed the “clang and clatter” of what she called “marvelously unfinished Los Angeles.”⁴³ She elevated the commonplace through her methods of “snitching” symbols to expand their meaning. Harvey Cox has written that,

*Corita won my heart because she had an urban sensibility. She loved the city. The world of signs and sales slogans and plastic containers was not, for her, an empty wasteland. It was the dough out of which she baked the bread of life. Like a priest, a shaman, a magician, she could pass her hands over the commonest of the everyday, the superficial, the oh-so-ordinary, and make it a vehicle of the luminous, the only, and the hope-filled.*⁴⁴

At the end of 1962, Corita began adopting package design motifs and quoting advertising slogans. A pivotal work of that year, *wonderbread*, consists only of red, yellow and blue polka dots, inspired by the bread company’s packaging. “As

← left, 1961
↙ to all of
your name,
↗ Mobil gas
signage, L
↘ Street si
Angeles



the dots from the wrapper moved over into the picture...some people began a conversation and discovered them to be in the shape of hosts, though this was not in the mind of the bread maker or the picture maker.”⁴⁵ Corita appropriated the colors of the marketplace and the aesthetics of promotional culture to situate her messages in contemporary popular language. She crossed over to advertising communication to adopt poetic slogans and imbue them with spiritual and social meanings. In *for eleanor*, 1964, “The big G (of General Mills) stands for Goodness.” In *someday is now*, 1964, “the part of the print filled with fragmentary block letters spells SAFEWAY supermarket; SAFEWAY makes its presence felt regardless of whether the words can be read.”⁴⁶ The title of the four-part print, *power up*, 1965, derives from a gasoline ad. *Handle with care*, 1967, urges: “see the man who can save you the most” – the man is your Chevrolet car dealer and what he can save you is money. In *somebody had to break the rules*, 1967, the title, appearing in jumbled-up form in the print, is taken from a Dash laundry detergent campaign. “Come alive, you’re in the Pepsi generation!” becomes simply “come alive” in several prints from 1967. Humble Oil is the company “who cares” and claims, “the handling is in your hands.” And of course, *things go better with Coke*.⁴⁷ According to the *New York Times*, Sister Corita...did for bread and wine what Andy Warhol did for tomato soup.⁴⁸

By 1964 her iconography was derived predominantly from the booming media environment and urban surroundings.

↓ Wonderbread
billboard, Los Angeles,
1961
↘ *for eleanor*, 1964
↘↘ *wonderbread*, 1962
→ *someday is now*, 1964



The sign language is almost infinitely rich.... Up and down the highways (good symbols too) we see words like "Cold, clear, well-water," "The best to you each morning," "Have a happy day," "Sunkist," "Del Monte's catsup makes meatballs sing," that read almost like contemporary translations of the psalms for us to be singing on our way. The game is endless, which makes it a good symbol of eternity which will be a great endless game.⁴⁹

The free flow between discourses – scripture and advertising – in Corita's imagination and experience, was evident in her philosophy and in her artistic output.

Maybe you can't understand the psalms without understanding the newspaper and the other way around. Maybe that's why it sounds so good when a line from the newspaper is inserted after each line of a psalm – any lines – and read aloud. Maybe they were never meant to be separated.... 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 card...⁵⁰

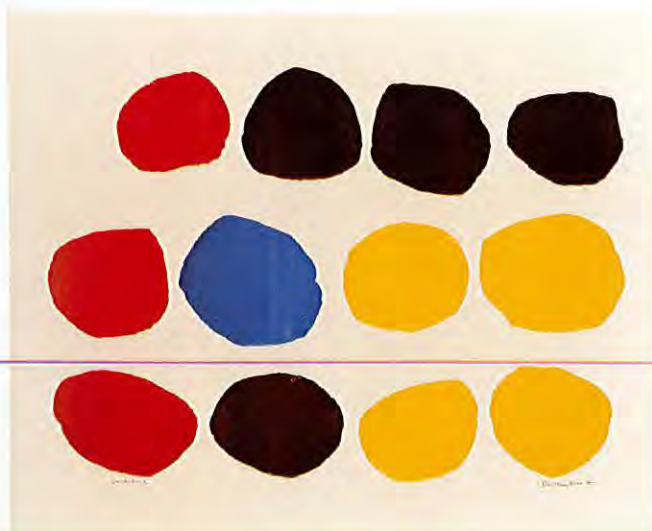
In 1964, English professor and writer, Samuel Eisenstein was moved by his visit to the IHC Mary's Day celebration that Corita had orchestrated. He sent her a letter about his experience; including in it something he had written on Mary, which inspired her to make the print, *the juiciest tomato of all*, 1964. The print is an emblematic

expression of that free flow between the religious and the commonplace, between systems of symbols, which Corita embraced. Using Eisenstein's words, it begins:

The time is always out of joint... If we are provided with a sign that declares "Del Monte tomatoes are juiciest" it is not desecration to add: "Mary Mother is the juiciest tomato of them all." Perhaps this is what is meant when the slang term puts it, "She's a peach," or "What a tomato!" A cigarette commercial states: "So round, so firm, so fully packed" and we are strangely stirred, even ashamed as we are to be so taken in. We are not taken in. We yearn for the fully packed, the circle that is so juicy and perfect that not an ounce more can be added....

The piece caused a stir as it was regarded by some as an irreverent desecration of a sacred symbol: Cardinal McIntyre prohibited it from being displayed. In protest, the *National Catholic Reporter* ran a version of it as their Christmas insert. Corita seemed unfazed by the "offense" and explained, "A word like tomato, which has been distorted in some circles, is interesting to restore to a place of beauty – a lovely fruit to look at." With quick wit, she added, "After all, Mary, Mother of Christ, has had her name on buildings, bridges, and so forth."⁵¹ Recently reading his text, which appeared on the print, Eisenstein reflected,

...I really wonder whether it could ever have been written without the inspiring breath of Corita



above and behind. She so piquantly exemplified daring to leave the rigid confined circle of orthodoxy and step into an area not defined and clearly dangerous. She stood to lose a great deal – in fact her entire committed life. She made her moves with such insouciance, with such a smiling air of: “look, it’s nothing much, try it,” that she gave numerous students and friends their freedom.⁵²

Corita’s compositions made between 1964 and 1966 are primarily silkscreened on a material called pellow, which was commonly used for lining clothes. These 1964 and 1965 works use the white of the cloth-like paper as a background for brightly colored phrases and letterforms that broadcast appropriated messages in a centralized compositional fashion – some neatly fitting into the perimeter of the print, and others featuring enlarged textual fragments that give the impression of bursting beyond the paper’s edge. In her 1966 works, slogans and sayings seem to float and interlock, which in conjunction with distorting and spatializing techniques, create a sense of motion. A single print, for instance *we care*, or *let’s talk*, appears to capture an active arrangement of slogans and references, as if glimpsing an abundantly mediated environment, perhaps while walking or driving.

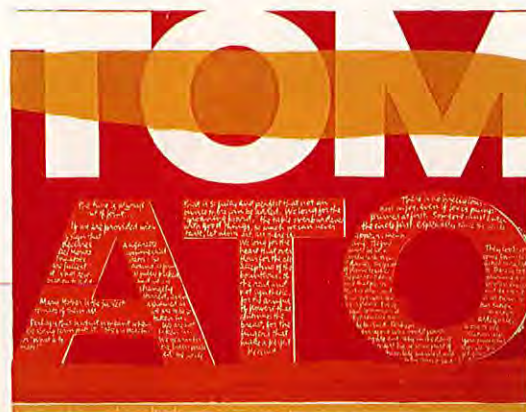
Between 1965 and 1969, Corita’s work composed pictorial space as a forum in which a carefully orchestrated dialogue between texts is typographically expressed. The work quotes, combines,

extracts, highlights and layers elements from a wide array of cultural sources including advertising slogans, street and grocery store signage, poetry, scripture, newspapers and magazines, theological criticism, and song lyrics. Writings by Langston Hughes, Walt Whitman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jefferson Airplane, Albert Camus, Rainer Maria Rilke, the Beatles, Maurice Ouellet, Gerald Huckaby, Robert Frost, Alan Watts, and Leonard Cohen are quoted; Daniel Berrigan, Gertrude Stein, and E.E. Cummings being favorites.

Although authority is conferred on certain kinds of speech that are readily preserved in public records and historical archives, vernacular speech such as ad phraseology arrives and disappears from circulation swiftly. In Corita’s art, the fugitive elements of ephemeral culture are given permanence. In 1977, when questioned about how the legibility of phrases such as “a tiger in your tank” would fare over time, the artist responded: “I don’t think I ever worry about something I do lasting forever. I think at that time, those were very meaningful to some people, and it was a kind of contagious, fun thing that I got into.” She believed her prints would stand up visually. Corita did not subscribe to the notion that art is timeless, or that things that last longer are better than things that come from, and contribute to, a period.⁵³

In the culture of protest, which typified the late 1960s, posters and graphic materials were important tools that carried information and galvanized people. Declaring in 1967: “I admire people who march. I admire people who go to jail. I don’t have

← *let’s talk*, 1964
✓ *the juiciest*
of all, 1964
→ *we care*, 1965
→ *stop the bus*



the guts to do that. So I do what I can,” Corita turned her attention to racism and poverty, U.S. military brutalities in Vietnam – brought to the foreground of her awareness by Daniel Berrigan – and the conflicts between radical and conservative positions in the Catholic Church. *Stop the bombing*, of 1967, is a red, white, and blue print with words by Gerald Huckaby, that begins: “I am in Vietnam – who will console me? I am terrified of bombs, of cold wet leaves and bamboo splinters in my feet, of a bullet cracking through the trees, across the world, killing me...” “Stop the bombing” is superimposed over the color ground of the print, its letterforms unfurling as if dropped from the sky. *Let the sun shine*, a nearly fluorescent yellow print from 1968, consists of an image of Pope Paul VI – degenerated nearly to the border of abstraction, and the words “let the sun shine in” followed by a quote by Rabbi Arthur Waskow. Corita regarded exercising her voice for social commentary as a right and requirement:

*If we separate ourselves from the great arts of our time, we cannot be leaven enriching our society from within. We may well be peripheral to our society – unaware of its pains and joys, unable to communicate with it, to benefit from it or to help it. We will be refusing to care about the fight to free man that James Baldwin speaks of: “The war of an artist with his society is a lover’s war. And he does at his best, what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself, and with that revelation, make freedom real.”*⁵⁴

Art as Social Process

Corita Kent’s art practice originated, formed, and developed within the milieu of the Immaculate Heart situated in Los Angeles. Upon leaving that environment, a dramatic shift occurred in her work. Formal differences and content variances between serigraphs made in 1969 and those made in 1970, are sudden, even shocking. Deprived of her influential contexts of many years, much of the complex spirit, formal innovation, and critical force of her prior work vanished.

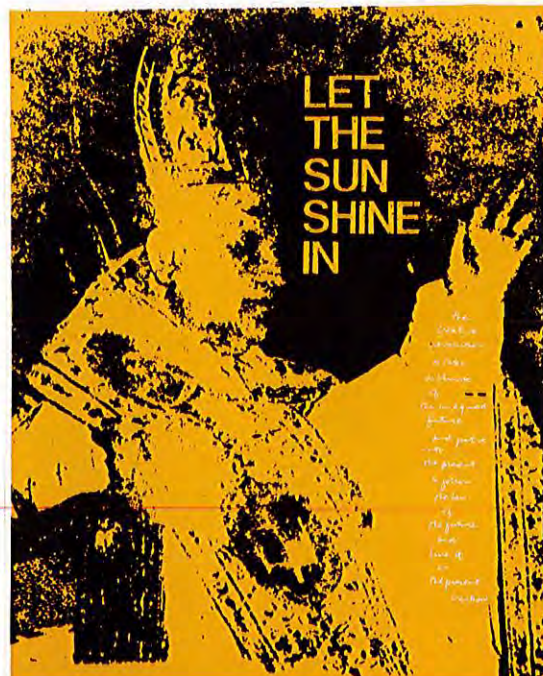
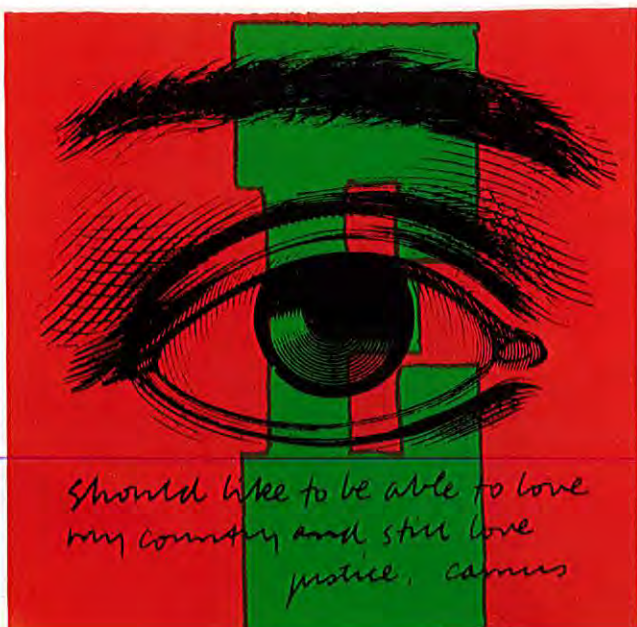
In 1969, Corita made a series of small-scale prints titled “Heroes and Sheroes”⁵⁵ that layer documentary material, including images from *Life*, *Newsweek* and *Time*, which she considered “contemporary manuals of contemplation,”⁵⁶ with textual fragments, resulting in compelling statements about the then-current political landscape. The times were marked by cultural and political activism in the form of the anti-Vietnam war movement, the civil rights movement and struggles for racial equality, feminism, and a generalized conflict between those who sought to challenge, revise, and overturn existing authority structures in society and those who sought to hang on to and further reproduce the status quo. Corita’s “Heroes and Sheroes” includes *phil and dan*, which consists of a news photo of Philip and Daniel Berrigan burning draft records with napalm in protest of their country’s crimes in Vietnam at a Selective Service office in Catonsville, Maryland on May 17, 1968. The two were part of what became known as the Catonsville Nine, a group



of clergy and laypeople peace activists. They were arrested and Father Philip Berrigan became the first Catholic priest in the history of the United States to serve sentence as a political prisoner.⁵⁷ Father Daniel Berrigan was sentenced to three years in prison, but refused to serve the time and went into hiding. The FBI apprehended him after several months and he served sentence until 1972. Another print, *if i*, highlights a picture of Coretta Scott King at her husband, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s funeral, alongside a quotation from her and a text about the "creative power of the female, of the negative, of empty space, and of death," by theologian and writer Alan Watts. "Heroes and Sheroes" juxtapose fluorescent colors to elicit dynamic effects, as did some of Corita's prints of 1967 and 1968, and have a visual affinity with both political graphics and psychedelic concert posters from the time.

Then, beginning in 1970, Corita's art grew increasingly reliant on color splashes and platitudes. Compositions are often made using a single quotation or maxim, handwritten, rather than transforming word into image through typographic experimentation; color splotches and shapes typically form the background. *Rest* consists of a few strokes of color surrounding the words, "today is the first day of the rest of your life." *Very* is composed of multi-colored circles, oddly reminiscent of the round shapes in *wonderbread*, 1962, and reads: "I love you very." In 1971 she began making watercolors, with similarly sentimental results. After 1969, Corita rarely used

- ↓ *E eye love*, 1968
- ↘ *let the sun shine*, 1968
- ↙ *phil and dan*, 1969
- *rest*, 1971



critical juxtaposition, layering, and montage as methods. Except for her distinctive handwriting, and allegiance to quotations and intense colors, one could misread her 1960s work and post-1970 work as being done by two different artists. Speaking about this aesthetic shift, Corita observed, "The serigraphs were bold, are bold, and they make statement. The watercolors, on the other hand, make conversation...I feel that the time for physically tearing things down is over. It is over because as we stand and listen we can hear it crumbling from within."⁵⁸ Corita was not alone in her "activism exhaustion." Many cultural protagonists of the sixties suffered similarly, and at the close of the decade, withdrew from public participation into privacy.

Although the divergence between the 1960s work and that which followed is extreme, compositionally and conceptually there is a strong resonance between the latter and the prints Corita was making between 1959 and 1963, though with fewer biblical references. Her palette is simplified and consists of clearer colors, but the marriage of inspirational phrase and color shape or field is congruent. In the scheme of Corita's oeuvre, it is the bodies of work made between 1962 and 1969 that remarkably contrast with what came before and after.

The dissimilarity between Corita's 1960s work and that which followed, suggests that the former was due not only to the larger perspective of 1960s cultural and political movements, but to the vibrant context of her creative community within

which nuns, teachers, students, visitors, and even the media participated, and contributed to. Although Corita was singled out as the guiding force and spokesperson for the college's art department, and the signature on the prints was hers alone, deeper inquiry shows that the department's achievements as well as her artworks were the results of social processes. When reading the *Irregular Bulletin*, written and edited by Sister Magdalen ("Mag") Mary and inventively designed and produced by "industrious students and dedicated professors" of the art department, and in reviewing the public record about Immaculate Heart activities and Corita's work specifically, intricate layers of collaboration are revealed. Large-scale disposable exhibitions and the Mary's Day events that Corita initiated (discussed from p. 35) are indicative of the collaborative framework and spirit at the IHC.⁵⁹

The reputation of the art department, though often associated primarily with Corita, was largely due to the efforts of Sister Magdalen Mary, who from 1936–1964 headed the department, taught in it, and organized its programs. It was under her influence that the secular and the sacred were redefined according to her engagement with vernacular culture as creative terrain. Sister Mag, a strong-willed, ambitious, and vigorous force by all accounts, figures into Corita's story prominently as the key person who encouraged her to overcome anxiety and self-doubt and become a teacher. A radical and innovative educator herself, Sister Mag influenced Corita profoundly.⁶⁰ She



tirelessly supported and promoted Corita and her work, and frequently advised her about all kinds of issues, including aesthetic ones. She was known to tell Corita what she should add, omit, or change in a given composition – and Corita was known to follow her lead. The two traveled together throughout the U.S., Europe and the Near East, in the 1950s and early 1960s, with Corita obsessively snapping photographs. This began an ongoing interest in photography, which would become integral to her artistic practice. During their travels Sister Mag and Corita built up the vernacular and folk art collection for the college that Sister Mag had started, the Gloria Folk Art Collection, because they believed: "...the students should be surrounded by real art.... But we really had practically no budget at that time. So we started collecting very simple things, like Japanese paper things, objects that were beautifully made and were part of somebody's tradition."⁶¹ According to some, the sisters' relationship gradually became afflicted: Sister Mag felt Corita did not give her due respect once she became renowned, and Corita reportedly felt over managed and increasingly pressured to make good for the college, in part by producing saleable work and going on the road relentlessly.⁶² Partially due to those differences, in 1964, Sister Mag went to England to focus on collecting and studying and Corita was promoted to head of the art department.

Corita engendered devotion from many a student inspired by her presence and manner of

teaching. Many aimed to please her in whatever ways they could, including contributing physical and intellectual labor to her art. But this didn't prevent resentments from developing in some around the fact that their tangible and intangible contributions to Corita's work, her celebrity, and to the college went unacknowledged, and by some accounts, unappreciated.⁶³

Corita demanded a lot from herself and from her students. Rule Two of the art department rules states: "General duties of a student: pull everything out of your teacher. Pull everything out of your fellow students." Rule Three: "General duties of a teacher: Pull everything out of your students."⁶⁴ Answering the question to what degree her students influenced her work, she replied:

*I think there was a great exchange between us. First of all, we saw the same things, because we usually went to exhibits together. And then I think there was a great interchange as far as the classwork was concerned, as to assignments I would give them and ways they would interpret those assignments. I think we probably, from working so close together, had a very similar way of looking at things and probably similar tastes... I think it was really a mutual kind of influence...*⁶⁵

Corita's charisma and notoriety drew students to her, but it also got in the way: "It was a very difficult time for the students because I was away a lot more than they thought I should be away.... I thought that was good for them because I would

← Photo of Magdalen M Corita, publ *Irregular Bu* ✓ *Survival* ✓ the making ↗ Serigraph at IHC (Cori from left)



leave them with a lot of work to do.... So the fame sort of got in the way.... And they were just angry. But as I say, students were angry in those days.”⁶⁶

Beyond general cross-influences that can happen in any close-knit setting, Corita relied on and received help from students, colleagues, and friends who assisted in printing her serigraphs. Furthermore, “...in those days, I was surrounded by very literate people. That community had some of the best women you could ever meet, and there were people in all different fields. So sometimes people would point things out to me or send things to me.”⁶⁷ One can readily speculate that engaging in Corita’s participatory environment involved not only contributing labor and technical assistance, and supplying references, but was bound to include aiding design, aesthetic, and content discussions and decisions. Many hands and minds may well have contributed to any given artwork, series of prints, or turn of method.

The fundamental creative and educative principles as well as the spirit identified with Corita’s person and art were communally derived and shared. Corita did not hide that, but press coverage typically focused on her, and tended to omit the texture of the community’s many generative individuals and collaborative methods. It would be difficult to ascertain definitively who, specifically, originated particular ideas. Corita was undeniably a catalyst and a force, however, it is vital to register the fact that informal processes of collaboration were at the heart of the IHC, its art department, and Corita’s printmaking while there.⁶⁸

Somebody had to break the rules⁶⁹

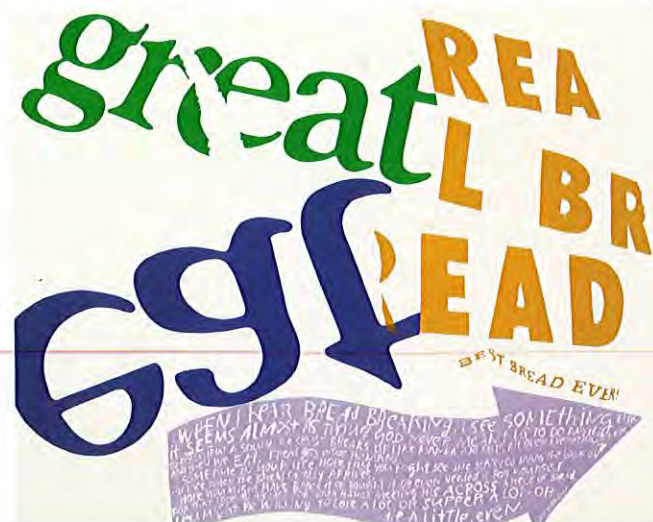
Although Corita was committed to making her work accessible, she did not define accessibility based on an imagined lowest common level of visual literacy – quite the opposite. Her prints from the 1960s embodied broad knowledge, visual complexity, and sophistication, and thereby expressed deep respect for viewers. Corita’s work of that decade proposes a symbolic template for blurring the boundaries between art and design, aesthetics and politics, and for decentralizing authority – be it monolithic or monologic – within the larger context of then-current struggles over restructuring society.

Many rules of legibility central to the formalism of modernist design principles are broken in Corita’s 1960s work. Language is excerpted, disassembled, reassembled, recontextualized. Typography is distorted, turned upside down, and reversed. Letterforms are ungrounded, float, and interlock. The graphic space in some prints is layered with handwritten quotes integrated into individual letters.⁷⁰ Handwriting done “in the spirit of” Corita’s became a typographic blueprint for laying out bible verses in church posters; her style was often quoted in banners and printed material, thereafter identified as “nun art.”

Corita’s visual processes were in part informed by a distinction between contents and aesthetics. (Rule Eight “Don’t try to create and analyze at the same time. They’re different processes.”) She encouraged students to “look at everything” in order to find a visual, or material, starting point,

← Sign at dealership 1967

↙ greeting
↘ Magazir bent, and
Corita, 196
→ Grocery cut-up and
by Corita,



and then work with it – play with it – “eventually you’ll get somewhere, and stumble upon content in the process.” Although Corita’s serigraphs seem to exemplify a more integrated approach to form and content, some of the conceptual tools she used to generate them illustrate how decontextualizing, recasting, and juxtaposition function as productive forces in her art making.

A simple device Corita called a “finder,” a “looking tool” that “helps take things out of context, allows us to see for the sake of seeing, and enhances our quick-looking and decision-making skills,”⁷¹ was key to her process of decontextualization.⁷² A finder could be an empty slide frame, a cut-up piece of cardboard, or a camera. As a viewing and cropping apparatus, a finder excludes everything around it, and, in Corita’s words, allows for “[viewing] life without being distracted by content. You can make visual decisions – in fact, they are made for you.”⁷³

Corita often took her students to busy intersections and instructed them to look through finders, close up as well as from a distance, declaring that at a single intersection there was enough raw material for at least sixteen hours of scrutiny. Speaking about such excursions, Corita said:

I remember at that time I was very excited about billboards. I guess it was the whole era of pop art. And I also got very excited about sections of the city that I would have called ugly before. I took the students to...two Mark C. Bloome tire companies... we just went there, either with cameras or with

little finders.... And we just spent the afternoon, two afternoons, one at one place and one at the other, just looking. And of course, taking off small pieces, little rectangles, that are like taking a picture, you can take a section, or maybe a section of a letter [where] not the whole word shows and certainly not the whole gas station.⁷⁴

Corita was an avid photographer who shot thousands of slides documenting her travels, students’ work, teaching references, exhibits, Mary’s Day processions and other IHC events. She was inspired by the Eameses’ photographic documentation of the everyday. Her slide archive includes the following categories: cookies, toys, presents, flowers, seeds, puppets, trade fairs, mountains, textiles, artists’ work, theater, coke bottles, cards, icons, and boxes, and as a whole, formed a visual cache for presentations, teaching, as well as for illustrating the *Irregular Bulletin*. Corita also photographed magazine ads, billboards, hand-painted signage, street signs, and other references, which were primarily raw material for her printmaking process. She isolated fragments, and – in the process of framing an image through the camera’s viewfinder – highlighted a particular shape, part of a slogan, or portion of an image.⁷⁵

Photography was the tool that allowed Corita to mediate between the multi-dimensional experience of looking at the visual world and the two-dimensional possibilities of a serigraph. For example, she noticed that, through a viewfinder from a particular angle, type on a flat page or



billboard appears three-dimensional and suggests a quasi-architectural space. She captured dynamically distorted type and translated it into the two-dimensional surface of the photograph. Pushing this distortion process further, she crumpled, cropped, tore, and reformed advertisements and then rephotographed them. She then isolated the distorted type and transferred it to stencils used to produce individual layers in an overall composition. Pieces made using this method include *ha* and *now you can*, both 1966, and *fresh bread* and *that man loves*, from 1967.

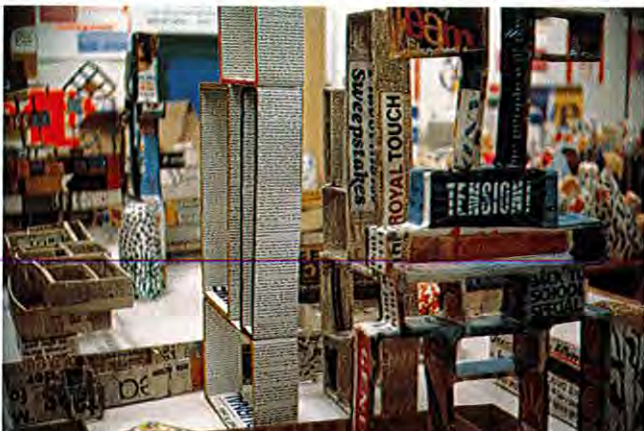
Psychedelic concert posters of that era typically feature distorting type treatments, which look as though words have been poured into a shape, for instance a butterfly or a thought balloon. In those posters, type gets rounded, misshapen, and reshaped to suggest fluidity. Corita's typographic distortions differ in that they are not fashioned to fit inside another form. Instead, type itself dictates shape and composes central imagery, pictorial space, foreground and background. Using Corita's technique described above, manipulated and layered type is made to suggest a graphic three-dimensional space with an architectural sensibility, distinct from existing typographic possibilities of the 1960s. The results of Corita's low-tech type manipulations have since become defining features of many computer applications. Corita recalled her impetus for distorting letterforms:

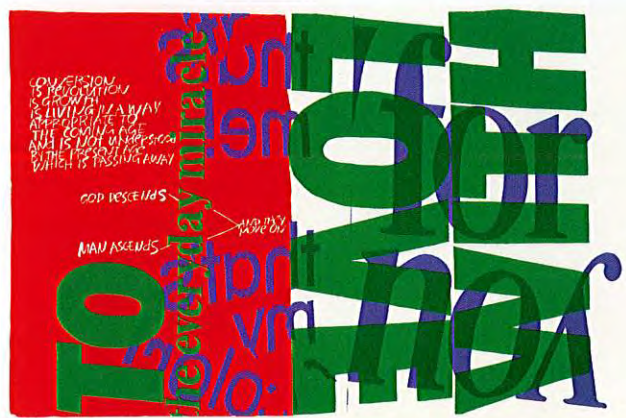
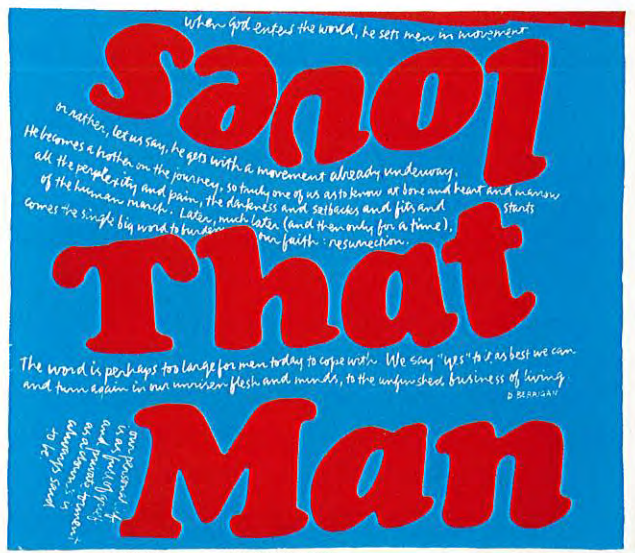
I was taking photographs...for one of these Mary's days, we decided to cover every door of the

administration building with one big poster that was the size of a door. So every student made about five. I was taking photographs of them one time and taking sections of some because they were very beautiful. One of them was curved, as I was taking the slide, and I thought, "Oh, that would be a nifty idea." So that year, I think almost in all of my prints, I took pictures from magazines and combined them the way I wanted and then I would curl the paper to go the way I wanted it to and shoot the photograph, the slide, and then enlarge that and cut the stencil from that.⁷⁶

Another important design strategy for Corita is her use of cut-and-paste techniques, predating punk graphics by well over fifteen years. This strategy developed in her lettering and layout classes that involved collaboratively making placards and printed matter composited from various lettering styles and methods of individuals. Corita was clearly inspired by the layout of the Immaculate Heart College's art department newsletter, the *Irregular Bulletin*, published intermittently from 1956–1963,⁷⁷ which relied heavily on collage of cutout type and recycled material. The Bulletin editor, Sister Mag, was also the mastermind of its layout, in which headlines are pasted together from newspaper clippings in ransom-note style; typewritten essays are cut up into individual words, phrases and paragraphs, and scattered across pages – interconnecting and overlapping with images. Some flyers for Corita's "one-nun exhibitions" use similar techniques,

← Class
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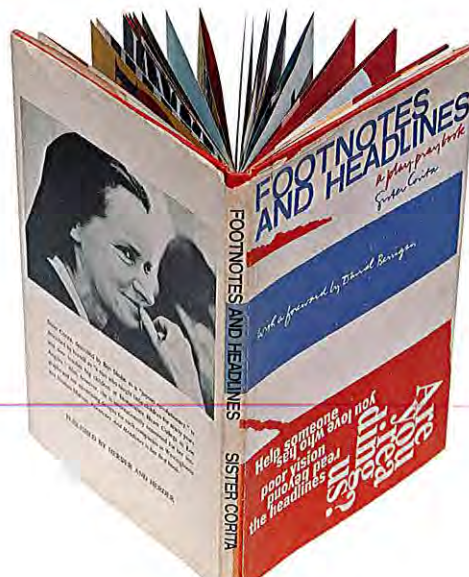


predicting Jamie Reid's design for the Sex Pistols' album cover *Never Mind the Bollocks*, in 1977.

Collage played an important conceptual role in Corita's image making. The viewfinder is essential to her investment in formal decontextualization, and critical juxtaposition, as a method, is important in her recasting processes, and to the new content that results. Although her imaginative use of collage factors into many of her silkscreen prints, it is not immediately legible, due to their seamless quality. Consider for instance, *handle with care*, 1967, which layers an image derived from a photo of a button that reads, "handle with care" screened in equivalent tones of green letters on orange, and an advertisement for a Chevrolet car dealership photographed from crumpled newspaper that reads, "see the man who can save you the most." The latter "phrase as image," printed in transparent bright red ink, is superimposed onto the above-mentioned. A complex optical effect is created by the overlay, producing different alternating colors, depending on whether green or orange lies underneath. The overall effect of this specially colored collage is that the two slogans combine and intertwine in a seemingly reconciled manner.

How juxtapositions produce new contexts and generate content is also vividly demonstrated in Corita's 1967 book, *Footnotes and Headlines*.⁷⁸ The fifty-two page "play-pray book" is a tableau of typographic experimentation combining brightly colored type collages with Corita's writing – "prayers that read like a grocery list." The collages

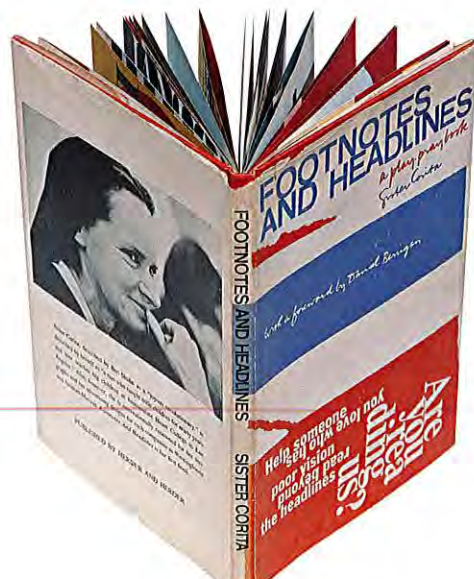
Footnotes and
Headlines: a play-pray
book, 1967
Spread from
Footnotes and Headlines
read from
Footnotes and Headlines



The church has sometimes exhibited a naive view, the kind of naivete which we find in the story of the blind men and an elephant. In the story each person touches a part of the elephant and makes a conclusion on the basis of that part. One person touches the side and says it is like a wall, another touches the leg and says it is like a pillar, another touches the ear and says it is like a fan, and so on. In the church, sometimes people touch a part of the church and make a conclusion about the whole church. Sometimes people touch the head and say it is like a head, and so on. In the church, sometimes people touch the head and say it is like a head, and so on.

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- *Footnotes and Headlines: a play-pray book*, 1967
- *Spread from Footnotes and Headlines*
- ➔ *Spread from Footnotes and Headlines*



turn fragments of letterforms into backgrounds, on top of which advertising slogans in various configurations, sizes and typefaces are laid out. The volume explores and challenges the conventions of reading. Marshall McLuhan, in a cover blurb, called it "a new form of book...an X-ray of human thought and social situations." Each page in *Footnotes and Headlines* is apportioned with a section for Corita's written text, which lies on top in the initial page spreads, and the montaged slogans and text fragments are in the bottom section. After a few page spreads, the order is reversed – found fragments or "text as image" fills the top part of the page, and her writing rests in the bottom. The book as a whole, and every page in itself, plays with Corita's concept of "how a footnote almost became a headline."

By pushing the boundaries of cutting and pasting as a graphic strategy, Corita turned decontextualization and recontextualization into emblems for her production of meaning, and, in the process, resolved the distinctions she professed allegiance to, between form and content and between creative and analytic thinking.

Temporary Art

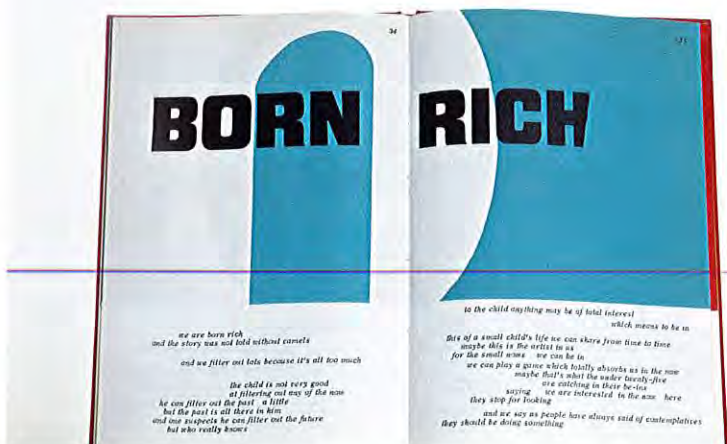
Though certainly they are the most lasting and coherent of the mediums she employed, Corita's serigraphs and works on paper are only part of her artistic output. In addition to prints and other publication formats, Corita focused her creative intelligence, design principles, and organizational

skills on producing large temporary exhibitions – such as the collapsible cardboard-box exhibit, *Survival With Style*, 1966, and on choreographing extensive events – such as the annual Mary's Day celebrations held at the college, all of which stemmed from her art classes and collaborations with her students.

In the case of Mary's Day, starting in 1964, Immaculate Heart College president Helen Kelley invited Corita to take over its planning.⁷⁹ The art department therefore became primarily responsible for making the event, although Corita attempted to involve the other departments, given that Mary's Day celebrations were labor intensive and involved hundreds of participants and visitors.

Mary's Day was a tradition at Immaculate Heart. The school was dedicated to her. The day had originated in another time, and the circumstances of that time had formed it. There was a solemn procession with students dressed in black academic caps and gowns – only the faculty looked festive in colors from many universities. There was a quiet Mass and sacred music.... There were speeches and awards and a sit-down meal.... I was commissioned to make the day new.

As with any commission in those days, I started it going and the students did immense amounts of work and shared much of the responsibility.... I think celebrations are always meant to instruct and inspire, to empower people to use their own creative skills through images and ritual to action.... Our celebration grew out of a desire to



*make Mary more relevant to our time – to dust off the habitual and update the content and form.*⁸⁰

The 1964 Mary's Day expressed Corita and company's foray into supermarket and billboard culture and celebrated the everyday through food: "We lift the common stuff – groceries and signs about groceries – out of the everyday and give it a place in our celebration."⁸¹ The food theme was invoked to celebrate abundance, but also to make people aware that much of the world's population did not have enough to eat. Vatican II had impelled the IHM sisters to attune themselves to examining the problems that affected the constituencies they sought to aid and countering injustices in current society. So issues such as hunger and poverty, as well as finding joy, color, and inspiration in supermarkets and in the relatively new language of advertising, were articulated in the name of Mary, bringing her "down to earth." In Corita's serigraph, *mary does laugh*, of 1964, the central text fragment reads: "mary does laugh, and if she were alive today, she would shop at the market basket." The Market Basket supermarket chain had a gigantic store across the street from the IHC, where Corita collected discarded signage to be used as class material, classroom decorations, and specifically for the '64 Mary's Day. Cropped billboards with Kodacolor pictures of Del Monte juicy-looking canned fruit, whole raw chickens, and supermarket weekly-sale signs adorned the fence on the driveway to the college. Hundreds of signs were made using fragments of supermarket posters

featuring pictures of hamburgers with Hunt's catsup, Campbell's soups, and giant cans of coffee, which became placards carried by nuns, students, and visitors in the procession. Other placards read: "Come to the feast," "Free Eggs," "I like God," "God Likes Me." Colorful pictorial advertising sections hung in the windows of the school. Jan Steward describes how the theme extended to the interior design atmosphere:

*Five hundred loaves of bread and five hundred baskets of fruit were stacked on tables before the altar. People processed to the stage, bringing more food. Newspaper galleys, with their messages of disaster, hung down the walls, grim reminder that our work, to make changes, was heavy....our tables were cardboard cartons that had been painted and collaged with the words of the day – the words of Kennedy, King, Gandhi, Pope John XXIII, and others. These same boxes had also been used in parts of the ceremony as walls or structures to walk through.*⁸²

As with most Corita steered projects, reading, researching and gathering quotations was an important aspect of the work. In preparation for Mary's Day, "the students would collect gobs of quotations."⁸³ All art majors at the college were required to be English minors.⁸⁴

Preparations begin in February or March with student-faculty brainstorming sessions to determine a theme and ideas for the verbal-visual expression

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1964
➤ Pep
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1964



of that theme....students and faculty consider important events and trends of the world they live in. Out of such considerations have come the themes "Food for Peace," "Challenge to Change," and "Revolving." Once a general theme is decided, students begin formulating questions and researching the writings of great philosophers, politicians, theologians, and poets. Then they organize the results of their research into a visually and verbally impact-full presentation.⁸⁵

Though it was unlikely their agenda, the 1964 Mary's Day celebration could not have been a more effective campaign for the explosion of advertising into people's daily environment. In subsequent years, Mary's Day continued its popularity and attracted media attention, including national coverage. *Newsweek* magazine declared that: "...Corita's best medium is people. In 1964, for example, she transformed Immaculate Heart College's staid religious festival, Mary's Day, into a religious happening. With black-robed nuns parading in flowered necklaces, poets declaiming from platforms and painted students dancing in the grass, Mary's Day became a prototype for the hippies' 1967 be-in in San Francisco."⁸⁶ Not everyone, however, was enamored; some community members were offended by the disavowal of traditions, such as somber garb and saying the rosary. Criticisms from patrons and the archdiocese reached Helen Kelley.

While 1964 seems to have been the most spectacular, and certainly hard to beat, the following

- ↓ Interior view at IHC on Mary's Day, 1964
- ↘ Exterior of IHC, Mary's Day, 1964
- ↗ Box signs, Mary's Day, 1964
- IHM sisters and art department students visiting Charles and Ray Eames in Pacific Palisades, 1958



years were also organized by Corita and the department, and thematized around social issues. Constant features, embellished and implemented differently each year, included the use of cardboard boxes as building blocks for setting the scene, the production of placards and signs then carried by participants, banners made by art students, and colorful patterned cloth and clothing worn by participants. Corita explains the impetus for the use of boxes:

We went out to Charles Eames' house one time on a field trip. He had had his grandchildren visiting him, and to entertain them, he had bought them a hundred cartons of about twelve inches square and made marvelous blocks. And then he had a rope hanging from the ceiling with a noose down toward the floor, and you could put your feet in it and swing, pile them up, and knock them all down. But when we brought this class, they all used them to sit on. We were doing boxes for quite a while after that in different ways.⁸⁷

Corita and her students produced a number of large-scale disposable exhibitions that used cardboard boxes as a structuring device – *Peace on Earth*, 1965, and *Survival With Style*, 1966, being the most prominent examples. In the middle of teaching a class one day, Corita received a phone call inviting her to make a Christmas exhibition for the IBM Product Display Center at Madison Avenue and 57th Street in New York. She responded, “we don’t have the time – but we’ll do

it.” There were no strings attached by the company.⁸⁸ The Eameses had by this time done several commissions for IBM, including films beginning in 1957 and exhibitions beginning in 1961.⁸⁹ Corita turned the invitation into the main work of the semester and the final exam for her lettering and display class. “She divided the class in half to work under two student directors, Mickey Myers and Paula McGowan, ‘who are most able to hold up under the strain. It was up to them to create the project and portion out the work,’ Sister Corita explained.”⁹⁰ *Peace on Earth* was one hundred and thirty-three feet long, ten feet high, and six feet deep and was constructed from seven hundred and twenty-five corrugated packing boxes.⁹¹ “We thought: Christmas – peace – peace-making is up to us – how is it made? – how do we do it? – who has already made some? We chose five men – John XXIII, John Kennedy, Nehru, Hammarskjöld, and Stevenson. Each student found sixty statements from the writings of these men that showed how they tried to make peace.”⁹²

The avant-garde exhibit opened but was abruptly closed by the company until modifications were made to “satisfy IBM officials who thought the original design was not ‘Christmas-y’ enough and ‘might be interpreted as some sort of demonstration about Vietnam.’” “We did some re-arranging and deleting of the material that looked like placard pickets carried in those marches,” curator, Robert Monahon said. “One panel that came down was a red, white and blue one, with white stars, that had the word ‘Peace’



at the bottom.”⁹³ Myers and McGowan, who had installed the exhibit, made the changes, and Corita, who responded to press queries while traveling elsewhere, rejected the idea that the show was censored, saying she didn’t want to make a fuss. “It just goes to show the power of words, though doesn’t it? I didn’t think the messages were that strong, but apparently they are.”⁹⁴

Although technically not a corporate commission, the *Peace on Earth* situation, with its zone of compromise encompassing the multiple agendas of Corita, her students, and IBM employees, paved the way for, and predicted, the many corporate commissions Corita was to take on in the following decades. Arguably, corporate sponsorship for art did not have the same inferences of blatant co-optation that it does now. As a willing participant in such exchanges, Corita was in good company alongside artists such as Jim Dine and designers such as the Eameses and George Nelson, who accepted corporate commissions optimistically in order to utilize resources and mass communication venues, and to promote their versions of social responsibility and utopian philosophy. It is interesting to look at Corita’s responses to compromise and censorship in context. Though she was certainly beleaguered by, and aggravated with, the repeated censure pressed upon her by the Los Angeles archdiocese in the mid- and late-1960s, her documented response to IBM was lighthearted, as was her approach working elsewhere in the wider world after leaving the Immaculate Heart.

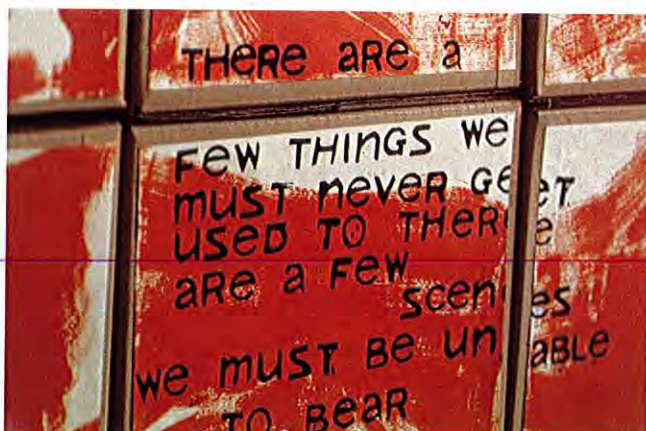
Extending from the *Peace on Earth* project, *Survival With Style*, created the following year, was a disposable exhibition produced over one semester by about thirty-five students for the college, and later shown at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden and the International Congress on Religion, Architecture and the Visual Arts in New York. The exhibition was made from over fifteen hundred cardboard boxes, stacked in configurations to form temporary architectural structures. The boxes composed walls and islands that ultimately produced a maze for viewers to wander through. The boxes cum walls were adorned with bright colored paint, hand-lettered quotations, clippings from newspapers and magazines, graphics, and slogans, resulting in a media-infused and visually dynamic environment.⁹⁵

The Ecstatic Classroom

Corita had a talent for galvanizing students’ creative forces and for channeling their energies into ambitious projects requiring tremendous amounts of planning, research, labor, and organization. How did she engender such industriousness? By what means did she stimulate eyes and minds and activate the creative impulse in so many, from young women in daytime courses to men and women of all ages in the extension classes? What educative philosophy and teaching methods did Corita employ? What was the culture of her classroom like?

In her capacity as teacher, and chair of the college’s art department from 1964–1968, Corita

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expressed a spirit in step with the widespread critique of authority structures that personified America in the paradigm shift of the 1960s. Corita's classroom, where she taught lettering and layout, image finding, drawing, and art structure,⁹⁶ was renowned for its lively interdisciplinary environment, in which multiple films were screened simultaneously, pop music played on the stereo, and large-scale collaborative projects were usually in process.

*The art department at Immaculate Heart is a place full of questions, a place whose only answer is really an attitude of openness to and celebration of life. It is part of Sister Corita's teaching method to keep her students constantly struggling with the kind of questions that make them open up to all their experience, sifting it for possible answers. Students live with such questions as "What is a revolution?" "How are food and peace related?"*⁹⁷

Corita preached meticulous ways of looking and doing. "Save everything – it might come in handy later." "Look at everything." "Pretend you are a microscope." "Make a movie with your eyes." "Look hard." "Always be around. Come or go to everything. Always go to classes. Read everything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully, often." "Don't blink when you're watching a movie or a cut-up page, you may miss some frames which is like missing whole pages from a book." The rules of the IHC art department also reflected Corita's philosophy. Rule Four: "Consider

everything an experiment." Rule Six: "Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail. There's only make. Anything that comes your way, including the work of artists, is a place for starting."⁹⁸

Corita's proposal that *everything* is potentially motivating must have been tremendously refreshing, liberating students from academic traditions of what art can be, and its accepted forms. The following student, after participating in a workshop with Corita, testifies:

With our textbook ideas about art, we came together this summer, 1958, to find ourselves thrust into a whole new schema of thought. The "lights went out" in all the corridors that were thought to lead to ART and we have been left groping in what we may fear to be the wrong direction....

*Our explorations into this new world through creative thinking, coupled with creative doing, in such projects as collages, wall books, posters, and contour drawings left us wondering (in that uncomfortable darkness!). We have been dug out of our complacent, neat little ruts and have been challenged to go beyond the narrow confines of our Puritanical heritage – to plunge – and into a whole wonderful new world of sensitive perceptions.*⁹⁹

Corita's philosophy, presence, and style were crucial factors in producing a permissive atmosphere in which people would relax, and gauge their own finding processes and visual fascinations. This environment made space for embracing new ideas and developing creative fluency, independently and

← Surviv
the mak
✓ Class
IHC, 196
→ Corita
classroom



in groups. "In a non-directive teaching method as spontaneous as her style of art, she presents her students with stimuli – records, tapes, photographs, films – without any kind of introduction. In this way she flings them into an exercise of their own judgment, which is what very few people ever learn to do in the visual arts."¹⁰⁰ Attendance was required: "You aren't needed to be there to get grades or pass the course – you are needed to help make the class."¹⁰¹ Students learned to understand the stakes of self-discipline, that they were responsible not only for their experience and learning, but for the class itself and the caliber of its collective effect.

Corita was a believer in high-volume assignments, what Jan Steward termed "red-eye-specials,"¹⁰² geared to developing observational consciousness and analytic skills. For example, she asked students to select a photograph and then write twenty-five ways the photograph differed from what it recorded. As an exercise, a class, each person with a Coke bottle in front of them, might sit in a circle for an hour, and look at it. Another assignment asked students to list one hundred reasons why they are taking art in a liberal arts college; this "immediately releases the student from the crushing responsibility to produce something great."¹⁰³

...one of the assignments I gave them was when Charles [Eames] first gave us the India film on the exhibit that Alexander Girard did at the Museum of Modern Art. [Textiles and Ornamental

*Arts of India] I showed them the film, and then afterward I said, "Now, go home and come back tomorrow with two hundred questions about the film." And you find that these things are very difficult to do. The first ten or twenty questions are painful. But after that you get very slaphappy, and you start opening up and expanding. A lot of the questions were worthless, but out of that whole batch, you would get some marvelous things; and, again, the whole process, I think, was a good stretching exercise.*¹⁰⁴

Corita was also an advocate and practitioner of formal experimentation. In Baylis Glascock's vivid documentary film, *Corita Kent: On Teaching and Celebration*, she advises her students never to start a project with a content-driven idea, but to focus first on shapes, colors, or whatever interests them visually, which in the process of engagement, she assures them, will naturally produce content. Work and play were not regarded as mutually exclusive in this set-up. Rule Nine: "Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think."

Corita considered herself more of a teacher than an artist; "I really did art on the side."¹⁰⁵ In fact, the two seem to have been inseparable in her practice. The mutual stimulation and influence flowing between Corita and her students is palpable in their collective artistic output. Many of the projects produced by class groups extend from the sources and methods Corita applied in making her own work. She activated the apprentice system



as an educative structure; therefore it is natural that the artistic manifestations produced remind viewers of Corita's style. However, the giant disposable exhibits and Mary's Day celebrations were the creative work of many; the collaborative process is mirrored in the ambitious, complex results. Of course, not everything in the department was done collectively. Students also conducted independent investigations and made visual art in various media, which Corita consistently documented.

The art department's influence was inspiring in various ways. For years, classes made banners, which in the wider culture were termed "church-style" or "nun-art." The art department staged several banner exhibitions, the most spectacular being in the hall of the National Gallery in Washington, DC, and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Corita commented, "I think the banners really did have a great - well, I would say they had a wide influence, not a great influence. I picked up a little Hallmark book the other day - in fact, somebody sent it to me because they were laughing over it - and as you turn page after page, it looked like stuff that had been thrown away in the art department. It was a very bad copy of almost everything we had ever thought of doing. And I think with the banners, the same thing happened. People have started making banners, but they're dead. They have a kind of nonenthusiasm to them."¹⁰⁶

Another common activity in the culture of Corita's classroom was making walls and other

structures that functioned as scaffolding for students to articulate and contribute parts to.¹⁰⁷ "...a wall was any wall-sized picture, combining images and sometimes using words. The size of the wall was determined by the last fraction of available space. Projects at IHC included murals on buildings, Corita's commissions (often done as class projects), theatrical back-drops and time-lines - the wonderful device perfected by Charles and Ray Eames to present a rich accumulation of data in the context of time. Corita used the term *time-line* for any project whose purpose was to show layers of relationships."¹⁰⁸

When Corita stopped teaching at Immaculate Heart College, she wanted to pass on some of the educative philosophy of the art department, in which "a gifted faculty shone the light of poetry on basic skills and daily living,"¹⁰⁹ and impart ways of working that students had found useful. After ten years went by, she asked her friend and former student, Jan Steward, to collaborate on doing that in book form. The resulting volume, *Learning By Heart. Teaching to Free the Creative Spirit*, is a vibrant textual and pictorial resource that reflects their experiences on how creative impulses are catalyzed, not only for making art, but also in daily life. Divided into sections including Looking, Sources, Structure, Tools and Techniques and Work Play, it is a loaded resource, at once informative, rousing, and playful.

The forms and styles propagated by Corita and the college's art department students do not engender reproductions, copies, and "in the spirit

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IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1** FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2** GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER. PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3** GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4** CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5** BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM. TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY. TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6** NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7** The only rule is work. IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING. IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8** DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYZE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9** BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10** "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
- HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING. IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER. THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

of" versions as they once did. But the legacy of Corita's teaching is not only apparent from the artists who emerged from her classroom, but in the fact that many of the women and men who studied with her and other like-minded faculty at the college, have since incorporated the educational principles that fueled those classrooms, gone on to become teachers, and apply and extend such methods in various capacities and settings. In 1972, artist Sister Karen Bocalero, for whom Corita had been both teacher and mentor, founded Self Help Graphics, the grassroots East Los Angeles visual arts institution which, since 1972, has been dedicated to producing, supporting, and exhibiting printmaking and art by Chicano artists.¹¹⁰ As teacher, Corita seemed to generate an empowerment movement of sorts, profoundly changing people's ways of seeing, thinking, and doing. Steward has said, "She taught with the pull of a strong tide."¹¹¹ Many former students cite Corita's teachings as life changing in so far as she attuned their attention to the aesthetics of everyday life and their actions within that, no matter what their activity or profession. This makes sense, given that the art department's motto was, "We have no art, we do everything as well as we can."¹¹²

After moving to Boston, Corita was invited to teach at Harvard, but declined in favor of a quieter life than she had experienced for the past decade.

Corita had scores of admirers throughout her life, and since her death. Despite such notoriety, her legacy is somewhat marginalized in cultural

history. Corita was resolutely unconventional: in the Church her voice was deemed radical, and in the broader contexts of social and political conflicts of the 1960s she was individualistic and unclassifiable. Corita created her own distinct visual language. Still, her work does not fit easily into categories although it has resonance in both art and graphic design. Lorraine Wild has speculated that the term graphic design was not in common use during Corita's era, "...It also may be that her vision of art and design was so inclusive, and focused on that creative process over the final product, that she did not see a need to define what she did as a subset of a general design practice."¹¹³ A number of well-known designers, including Wild and Jeffrey Keedy, as well as artists, including Ed Ruscha and Mike Kelley,¹¹⁴ express evidence of Corita's influence. However, as a Catholic woman populist printmaker, Corita was rendered secondary status in the art world and her prints have never achieved "fine art" status in the eyes of many curators, art critics and historians. It may well be that the popularity and sentimental currency of Corita's 1970s and 1980s work has undermined her previous work of the 1960s from being properly evaluated and registered as seminal within the canons of pop art.

How did Corita fare on a personal level during the latter part of her life, after leaving the IHC? Did she fashion her life anew? Did she get to work on her art exclusively, as she had desired? Speaking about the changes and joys that came from leaving Los Angeles and moving to Boston,



she said, "I make my home which I think of as a large piece of sculpture."¹¹⁵ And:

I'm learning to sleep now. I just sleep at different times – whenever I feel like it.¹¹⁶ ...I think I have a calmer life, and a chance for more inner development, which I think is not only different but also normal for a person. As you know, as you finish the extreme active part of your life, the part that is outward, you tend then to want to develop what hasn't had a chance yet. And I think I'm having that chance to develop more inwardly than I had before.¹¹⁷

Corita's family was very important to her during this period, and her sister, Mary Catherine, largely supplied her support system after she left the convent. Mary founded Corita Prints, located in Los Angeles, and became Corita's manager, as Corita had to make a living for the first time in her life.¹¹⁸ Although a shift occurred in her art upon relocating to New England, Corita's political convictions as well as her optimism about society carried through her entire life. She contributed prints and designs to numerous political causes, including the George McGovern presidential campaign, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers, the Washington March on Poverty, the Michael Harrington Campaign, and Project Hope. Commissions from various companies and organizations had been a strong component of her career for some time as had designing book jackets for Daniel Berrigan; magazine covers and

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inserts for *Psychology Today* and the *Saturday Evening Post* among others; greeting cards; logos, including that of the World Council of Churches; and other commercial items including a Christmas pattern of Neiman Marcus wrapping paper, a holiday card for Revlon, and the design for a line of Samsonite luggage. After her move, Corita increased the volume of corporate commissions, mystifying some of her friends.¹¹⁹ She considered the companies she worked with powerful sites for communication and the commissions as opportunities to promote social justice and celebration. From 1966 through the early 1980s she designed ads for Group W (Westinghouse Broadcasting Company), who also published a series of her prints based on a quotation each, used by the company as advertising to spell out their credo, beliefs and practices. She designed computer desk panels and wall hangings for the Digital Equipment Corporation in 1978. Distribution to broad audiences continued to be important for Corita and she remained a popular artist. Corita made several widely circulated books and continued to create between ten and thirty serigraph designs and watercolors each year. Her post-1970 art is perhaps her most well liked, and most purchased. Corita is renowned in the area for adorning the Boston Gas Company's natural gas tank with a hundred and fifty foot rainbow, which quickly became a local icon. And in 1985 the U.S. Postal Authority published her *Love* stamp in an edition of seven hundred million. Corita Kent died the year after.

With enthusiasm and a celebratory position on life, through her teaching and through her art, Corita opened the way for various forms of liberation in the many individuals and institutions she affected over time. Heightened awareness, analytic consciousness, aesthetic innovation, political activism, collaborative spirit, collective experience, visual pleasure, intellectual empowerment, and serious fun are just a few of those forms.

Work was Corita's wellspring. Rule Seven: "The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all the time who eventually catch on to things." Corita herself is testament to this adage.

Endnotes begin on page 122.





Fig. 1. Kent, *the juiciest tomato of all* (cat. 37).

CORITA KENT *and the* LANGUAGE *of* POP

Susan Dackerman

Corita Kent's 1964 screenprint *the juiciest tomato of all* (fig. 1) established her reputation as a renegade. Using red, yellow, and orange ink, she represented the Virgin Mary by spelling out the word “TOMATO,” along with the inscription “Mary Mother is the juiciest tomato of them all.”¹ An iconoclastic gesture that dismisses the long history of figurative depictions of the Virgin, the phrase is derived from a Del Monte tomato sauce slogan. Although the provocation of *the juiciest tomato* was interpreted as a challenge to church authority, for the Roman Catholic artist-nun the print was, to the contrary, an expression of the promised revitalization of church forms and functions by the Second Vatican Council (commonly known as Vatican II). Her depiction of Mary offered an updated conception of female divinity, one rooted in contemporary life and described in current parlance.

Kent's choice of a Del Monte jingle also signaled her affiliation with radical developments in the art world, especially the emergence of pop art. Two years prior, Andy Warhol had made canned goods—including Campbell's Tomato Soup—a much-discussed subject of representation. By making artworks that reference consumerism, Kent not only aligned herself with the mandates of Vatican II, but joined the fray of artists critiquing the ubiquity of commodity culture. While Kent never chose inflammatory language such as “Mary Mother is the juiciest tomato” again, she continued to mine advertising and other popular sources for her work. Although she participated in two heady cultural undertakings—the reformation of religion and art—during the 1960s, she was an outlier in both movements, seemingly, and paradoxically, because of her association with the other.

Kent lived an extraordinary life. She was born in 1918, moved with her family to Los Angeles when she was five years old, and in 1936 entered the Roman Catholic order of nuns of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (I.H.M.) in Hollywood, where she lived, studied, and taught until 1968. Up to the end of her life in 1986, she made nearly 700 screenprints, undertook commissions for public artworks and advertising

1. Composed by Samuel Eisenstein, an English professor at Los Angeles City College, the inscription was gleaned from a letter he wrote to Kent, responding to the 1964 Mary's Day celebration at Immaculate Heart College. For the print's full inscription and more on the event, see cat. 37.



Fig. 2. Cover of Newsweek, December 25, 1967.

campaigns, wrote and designed books, produced films, orchestrated Happenings, and created a mural for the Vatican Pavilion of the 1964–65 New York World’s Fair.² In 1966, she was one of the *Los Angeles Times*’ “Women of the Year”; the following year she was profiled in *Harper’s Bazaar*’s “100 American Women of Accomplishment” and featured on the cover of *Newsweek* as the exemplar of “the modern nun” (fig. 2). Much that has been written about Kent has focused on the exceptionalism of her life and work, including her innovative teaching methods at Immaculate Heart College.³ *Corita Kent and the Language of Pop* looks beyond her remarkable life and pedagogy to examine instead the body of artwork she and her students created between 1964 and 1969, a period of intense engagement with prevailing artistic, social, and religious movements. It focuses on a selection of screenprints, films, installations, and Happenings, as well as Kent’s 1971 design for a roadside landmark in Boston, locating these works within their multifaceted art-historical and cultural contexts.

While her work coincides with the inception and ascendancy of the “pop art” style, and was labeled as such by the contemporary press, it was not shown at any of the seminal pop art galleries, nor in any of the early group shows presented by museums in California and New York. This is in part a consequence of the position of women within the movement. Pop was a style of making and being in the world that naturalized its exclusion of women – the artists who showed at the premier Los Angeles pop outlet, the Ferus Gallery, were hailed as the “Ferus Studs.”⁴ Not only were women discounted as producers of pop, they were often hypersexualized as the represented objects of pop art.⁵ Kent’s status as a pop artist was obfuscated still further because for most of the period under examination she lived and worked as a nun, which sidelined her even beyond other women artists working in the idiom.⁶ Although she employed many of pop’s strategies, and her work was exhibited frequently and often acclaimed, Kent’s prints did not receive the curatorial or critical attention awarded her contemporaries.⁷ Some early descriptions of pop art characterized it as cold and without affect, traits incompatible with her work’s buoyant disposition.⁸ Instead, her prints were called

2. Images of Kent’s screenprints, with complete inscriptions, are available on a database maintained by the Corita Art Center in Los Angeles (corita.org/pdf/catalog.pdf). Kent is the author of several significant books and essays that provide insight into her ambitions for her work, as well as the context in which the work emerged. Each is worthy of study in its own right, including Sister Mary Corita I.H.M., “Choose LIFE or Assign a Sign or Begin a Conversation,” *Living Light* 3 (1) (Spring 1966); Sister Corita, *Footnotes and Headlines: A Play-Pray Book* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967); and Sister M. Corita Kent, I.H.M., “Art and Beauty in the Life of the Sister,” originally published in *The Changing Sister*, ed. Sister M. Charles Borromeo Muckenhirn (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1965), and later in Sister Mary Corita, Harvey Cox, and Samuel A. Eisenstein, *Sister Corita* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1968), 7–26. These publications appear in the bibliography and notes in this volume under the surname Kent.

3. In recent years, two significant studies of Kent have been published: Julie Ault, *Come Alive! The Spirited Art of Sister Corita* (London: Four Corners Books, 2006); and Ian Berry and Michael Duncan, eds., *Someday Is Now: The Art of Corita Kent* (Saratoga Springs, NY: Frances Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College; Munich: DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2013). Both provide comprehensive biographical sketches. Baylis Glascock’s film *We Have No Art* (cat. 66) and Thomas Conrad’s film *Alleluia* (cat. 22), both 1967, offer views of Kent’s pedagogy. And in 1992, Jan Steward, a former student of Kent’s, published a book of Kent’s writings on her teaching methods: Corita Kent and Jan Steward, *Learning by Heart: Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992).

4. In recent years, there have been several exhibitions featuring the pop work of women artists. See, for instance, those at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, and the Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, documented in Sid Sachs and Kalliopi Minioudaki, eds., *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists, 1958–1968* (Philadelphia: University of the Arts; New York: Abbeville Press, 2010), and Angela Stief, ed., *Power Up: Female Pop Art* (Cologne: DuMont, 2011), respectively.

5. “The vast historical writings on Pop make one thing clear: the roster of artists generally considered members of the Pop camp barely included the mention of women. While history marks the ’60s as the era of liberation, you would hardly know it from the case study of Pop”; Steven Henry Madoff, “Wham! Bam! How Pop Stormed the High-Art Citadel and What the Critics Said,” in *Pop Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xviii. Hal Foster accounts for the exclusion in his own study of pop art by saying, “To be sure, there were female artists involved in Pop (for example, Pauline Boty, Vija Celmins, Niki de Saint Phalle, Rosalyn Drexler, Lee Lozano); yet, finally, women could not act as its principal subjects in large part because they were conscripted as its primary objects, even its primary fetishes.” See Foster, *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012), 14–15.

6. I’m grateful to Cindy Burlingham for pointing out to me that Kent’s work was marginalized further because she was trained in a university-based print workshop, identified primarily as a printmaker, and participated in exhibitions that were mostly medium-specific. In the 1960s, new commercial publishers such as Gemini G.E.L. in L.A. bridged the gap between contemporary art practice and printmaking, bringing well-known painters to printmaking rather than focusing on artists who were specifically printmakers.

7. Kent’s work did appear in a 1968 exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, alongside that of Warhol, Rauschenberg, Johns, Oldenburg, Marisol, Lichtenstein, Riley, and others. See Edgar J. Driscoll, Jr., “Prints of the ’60s,” *The Boston Globe*, December 13, 1968.

8. The critic Dore Ashton stated: “The attitude of the pop artist is diffident. He doesn’t aspire to interpret or re-present, but only to present”; from “Symposium on Pop Art Held at the Museum of Modern Art on December 13, 1962,” *Arts* 37 (7) (April 1963); reprinted in *Pop Art*, ed. Madoff, 70. G. R. Swenson claimed that pop artists “point quite coolly to things quite close at hand”; Swenson, “The New American Sign Painters,” *ARTnews* 61 (5) (September 1962); reprinted in *Pop Art*, ed. Madoff, 38.

affirmative and celebratory, qualities that didn’t suit the critical conversation. As one magazine writer observed:

Long before those young men in New York invented pop art, a small nun in Los Angeles was showing her students at Immaculate Heart College how to discover the novel and beautiful in popular magazines and packages from the Supermarket. But Sister Mary Corita is a different kind of pop artist. Whereas the New York boys deal in a certain brittle archness (they are chic), Sister Corita and her students unabashedly affirm and celebrate the here-and-now glories of God’s world – the words of Beatles’ songs, the pictures on cereal boxes, the sheen of stamps, the typography in movie magazines.⁹

Against such claims of exceptionalism, which have cordoned off the reception of Kent’s work from that of her peers, this exhibition and catalogue situate Kent’s approach to pop within the art-historical discourses of 1960s art-making practices. The project also considers the proceedings and reception of Vatican II, which gave voice to a momentous religious and societal shift that profoundly influenced the artist’s work. Certainly, Kent’s Catholicism has fostered the ubiquitous readings of her work that spotlight its uniqueness; but what this exhibition reveals is that it is her reform-minded religiosity that finally grounds her in pop art’s operations, and conversely, it is the strategies of pop art that provide her with the means to express the aspirations of Vatican II. By looking at Kent’s work as both aligned with and cutting across the grain of other pop art, this investigation aspires to broaden the parameters of the idiom’s discourse.

c. 1962

The year 1962 was a significant one for both the art world and the Catholic universe, heralding profound transformations to come in each, as well as to the lives of Kent and others at Immaculate Heart in Los Angeles. Three years earlier, Pope John XXIII had announced the formation of the Second Vatican Council – which was to begin meeting in 1962 – to make recommendations for *aggiornamento*, the updating of Catholic liturgy for the modern world. The progressive I.H.M. nuns welcomed the impending church reform and revitalization, and began deliberating the renewal of their own mission, rules, and lifestyle.¹⁰ Knowledge of the proceedings of the Vatican Council was not limited to Catholics. Major national news outlets reported frequently on Vatican II deliberations and their effects, with the *Los Angeles Times* pronouncing in a 1965 editorial: “Not since the Council of Trent in the 16th Century has the Roman Catholic hierarchy undertaken so great a rejuvenation of the church. Although the Vatican II council has concluded, the reforms it initiated will have a profound effect upon Catholics – and non-Catholics – for an indefinite period.”¹¹ The Vatican Council issued sixteen

9. George B. Leonard, “The Turned-On People,” *Look*, June 26, 1966, 36.

10. The order had been founded in Spain in 1848 to serve the poor through schools and orphanages, and in 1871 established an outpost in L.A., where the nuns taught the city’s growing Catholic population. In 1905, the well-educated and resourceful sisters founded Immaculate Heart College alongside a new motherhouse in Hollywood to carry out their ministry both at the college and in the city’s parochial schools; by the late 1950s, the I.H.M. sisters were renowned for the enlightened and innovative education offered at the women’s college and its coeducational extension school. The history of the order, from its founding through its members’ disavowal of church supervision in 1969–70, is well documented in Mark Stephen Massa, *The American Catholic Revolution: How the ’60s Changed the Church Forever* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 75–102. A description of the order in the 1960s is also given in Colleen McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 119–49. For a more general account of the proceedings and effects of Vatican II, see John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

11. “Vatican II—An Ending and a Beginning,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1965. Newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* also provided readers with detailed accounts of doctrinal debates, such as the granting of indulgences (Dan L. Thrapp, “Indulgences Document Rapped as Frightening,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 10, 1965) and ecumenism (Milton Bracker, “Church Reforms Taking Shape,” *The New York Times*, December 1, 1963). *The New York Times* published translations of the full texts of the Vatican Council’s decrees as they were issued, such as the one that was focused on ecumenism (in the November 22, 1964, edition).

Fig. 3. Kent, *wonderbread*, screenprint, 1962. Corita Art Center.



documents between December 1963 and December 1965, the most consequential for the I.H.M. sisters being the October 1965 *Perfectae Caritatis*, or *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*, which called for the reform of work and lifestyle among male and female religious communities.¹² The decree seemed to speak to the order’s modernizing ambitions, most importantly recommending a reevaluation of the order’s work at the convent and in public. In its wake, some I.H.M. nuns began wearing updated habits or modest street clothes better suited to their work and the Los Angeles climate. It was hoped that these, and other changes, such as dropping “Sister” from their titles, would lessen their distinctiveness and invite closer connections with the communities they served. The proposals made by the Second Vatican Council rhymed in many ways with the updated pedagogy already underway at the college, especially in the art and theater departments. Art projects and theatrical performances at Immaculate Heart College engaged contemporary themes, such as world hunger, and utilized forms and practices common to avant-garde artists and progressive educational theorists. For Kent and many of the I.H.M. nuns, the decree affirmed their inclination to ally their religious order and its work with the outside world.

In 1962, Kent was already an admired teacher in the art department of the college, as well as a nationally recognized artist, with her prints (fig. 3) appearing in exhibitions across the country, including New York’s Morris Gallery, which presented an annual winter exhibition of her work throughout the 1960s.¹³ After traveling to New York with Kent for one of her exhibition openings at the Morris Gallery in the early 1960s, fellow I.H.M. nun Sister Fleurette (Elizabeth Bugental) reported: “The opening is crowded with her fans. Andy Warhol is there. (He *would* be captivated by the idea of an artist-nun, especially one who uses Wonder bread

wrapping as a symbol for the Eucharist.)”¹⁴ An exhibition of Kent’s prints held in 1962 in Los Angeles at the Comara Gallery was reviewed in *Artforum*, an art journal that had recently been founded in San Francisco, and the following year one of her prints entered the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.¹⁵ Kent traveled widely to give lectures about her teaching at Immaculate Heart and slide talks about her artwork, and in 1960 visited Europe and the Middle East with another sister. Yearly trips to New York kept her abreast of current trends in the art world, as did the weekly field trips she made with students in her native Los Angeles. She claimed the visits to local museums and galleries had a profound influence on her work.¹⁶

The bishop of the Los Angeles archdiocese, however, did not support the magnitude of the I.H.M. sisters’ aspirations for living and working in the modern world, and hampered their realization of Vatican II goals.¹⁷ In 1968, for reasons never fully articulated, Kent left the order, her teaching post at Immaculate Heart College, Catholicism, and all forms of organized religion. Two years later, in 1970, the majority of I.H.M. nuns chose exclaustation – the dispensation of their vows – and reconstituted themselves as the lay Immaculate Heart Community. This horizon, however, was not visible to Kent and her colleagues in 1962 when the Vatican II talks began. Instead, they imagined they were being invited to adapt their lives and practices to the world around them: Los Angeles in the midst of a modernizing boom.

The 1960s was a time of pronounced revitalization and evolution of Los Angeles’ cultural life.¹⁸ The decade marked the expansion of the city’s art scene, and 1962 was a particularly momentous year for the production of pioneering forms of art and the presentation of trailblazing exhibitions. Questions of what constituted art were in the air, begetting new styles in the thriving urban center. Artists turned away from abstract expressionism, instead representing ordinary objects in a straightforward figurative manner. Similar trends were emerging among New York artists, but some of the earliest exhibitions – and the first American museum presentation – of the style that has come to be termed “pop” occurred on the West Coast, where Kent and her students encountered them on their field trips.¹⁹ Later in her life she recalled: “We of course always found good shows at the County Museum or the Pasadena Museum or galleries. We used to spend a lot of afternoons at La Cienega when that got organized into the gallery district; we’d just go up and down.”²⁰

^{14.} Elizabeth Bugental, “Corita: Connecting to Change,” in “A Pride of Women: A Life Full of Female Power,” 1990, unpublished manuscript, 84; Corita Art Center Archives, Los Angeles.

^{15.} Doug McClellan, “Sister Mary Corita, Serigraphs, Comara Gallery,” *Artforum* 1 (6) (November 1962): 48. At least two other presentations of Kent’s work, at the Laguna Beach Art Association and Roberts Gallery, Encino, were reviewed in the journal as well, by H. G. Weeks and Fidel A. Danieli; see, respectively, *Artforum* 3 (3) (December 1964): 45, and *Artforum* 4 (6) (February 1966): 18.

^{16.} In tape-recorded interview by Paul Laporte, late May 1979, transcript handwritten by Kent, 1, 9–10; Corita Papers, 1936–1992, MC 583, folder 2.9; Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

^{17.} At the I.H.M.’s October 1967 General Chapter meeting, two years after the promulgation of the *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*, the sisters elected to take up the call for renewal and enhanced corporate responsibility in defining their identity and mission by experimenting with modifications to their communal life and work. They proposed temporarily enacting such radical changes as altering common prayer and giving the sisters the freedom to choose professions other than teaching, to determine how they would be addressed and whether to wear the traditional habit, a modified version, or no habit at all. In June 1968, in response to the proposals of the I.H.M. sisters’ General Chapter meeting, a committee formed by the Vatican’s Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes decided to permit those who wanted to experiment with the customs of the order to proceed, and those who did not, to carry on as before. The sisters of I.H.M. and the Vatican and local church authorities, however, never came to see eye-to-eye on the sisters’ aspirations for renewal. While 50 of the I.H.M. sisters chose to remain committed to the Church, 350 sought and were granted dispensation from their vows and in 1970 formed a lay community; close to 150 I.H.M. sisters chose to leave religious life altogether. See Massa, *American Catholic Revolution*, 80–82. The account of the conflict as told by the Archdiocese archivist can be found in Monsignor Francis J. Weber, *His Eminence of Los Angeles: James Francis Cardinal McIntyre* (Mission Hills, Calif.: Saint Francis Historical Society, 1997), 22416–43. See also Ann Carey, *Sisters in Crisis: The Tragic Unraveling of Women’s Religious Communities* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1997), 184–91.

^{18.} For a history of the emergence of L.A. as an art center and progenitor of pop, see Cécile Whiting, *Pop L.A.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Ken D. Allan, Lucy Bradnock, and Lisa Turvey, “For People Who Know the Difference,” in *Pacific Standard Time*, ed. Rebecca Peabody et al. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute and J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 124–85.

^{19.} For an early account of the style in L.A., see Nancy Marmar, “Pop Art in California,” in Lucy R. Lippard, *Pop Art* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

^{20.} Kent, interviewed by Bernard Galm, April 6–20, 1976, Oral History Program, University of California, Los Angeles, “Los Angeles Art Community: Group Portrait, Corita Kent,” transcript, 1977, 29, archive.org/stream/coritakentoralhiocori#page/n85/mode/2up.



Fig. 4. Andy Warhol, *Soup Cans*, 1962, synthetic polymer paint on canvas. The Museum of Modern Art.

What could be seen in Los Angeles in 1962 was indeed groundbreaking. In July, the Ferus Gallery on La Cienega presented the first exhibition of work by Andy Warhol, then a little-known commercial artist from New York.²¹ The show comprised thirty-two paintings of Campbell's Soup cans, each depicting a different variety of the product (fig. 4). *New Painting of Common Objects*, which opened at the Pasadena Art Museum (now the Norton Simon Museum) in September, also included work by Warhol as well as his New York-based contemporaries Roy Lichtenstein and Jim Dine, and California residents Ed Ruscha and Wayne Thiebaud. As the title of the exhibition suggests, curator Walter Hopps deemed depictions of unremarkable objects acceptable subject matter for artwork shown in a museum.²² In November, *My Country 'Tis of Thee* opened at Brentwood's Dwan Gallery. The catalogue text by Gerald Nordland describes the innovative vision of contemporary American artists: "They are able to see formal values in beer can emblems, in the fractured marvels of the cropped photograph, the innumerable visual flashes of billboards, TV, pinball machines, comic strips, and supermarket stands of endless and standardized NUPRODUCTS."²³ Kent, according to one of her students from the time, assigned her class a visit to "the first Pop art exhibition any of us had ever seen at the Dwan Gallery near UCLA, of work by Warhol and Oldenburg and Johns."²⁴ Exhibitions across the city demonstrated that artists from Los Angeles and elsewhere were redefining the parameters of art, offering

21. For an account of Warhol's early work and introduction to the art world, see Kirk Varnedoe, "Campbell's Soup Cans, 1962," in *Andy Warhol: Retrospective*, ed. Heiner Bastian (London: Tate Publishing; Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002); and Branden W. Joseph, "1962," *October* 132 (Spring 2010): 114–34.

22. See a review by John Coplans, "The New Painting of Common Objects," *Artforum* 1 (6) (November 1962): 26–29. An exhibition of Kent's screenprints is reviewed in the same issue (p. 48).

23. Gerald Nordland, *My Country 'Tis of Thee* (Los Angeles: Dwan Gallery, 1962). The show was held November 18 to December 15, 1962.

24. Mickey Myers, remarks during the panel discussion "The Corita Kent Gas Tank," Savin Hill Yacht Club, October 27, 2007. A video by Matt Walczak is available at vimeo.com/22526855.

Kent and her students a fresh artistic vision to incorporate into Immaculate Heart College's inventive pedagogy and practice.²⁵

In October of the following year, the Pasadena Art Museum staged a retrospective of the work of French artist Marcel Duchamp, providing a historical underpinning for pop art's concerns with everyday objects.²⁶ Although the pre-eminence of pop art in Los Angeles lasted only through the end of the decade, the city, by then the third largest in the country, had garnered a reputation as an international art capital. With the 1966 closing of the Ferus Gallery, the 1967 closing of Dwan Gallery, and the departure from Los Angeles of Hopps, one of the founders of Ferus as well as the curator of numerous groundbreaking exhibitions at the Pasadena Art Museum, the face of the city's art scene changed.²⁷ In 1968, Kent left Immaculate Heart College and relocated to Boston, thus bracketing the short but fertile intersection of Kent, the order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and its college, and avant-garde art practice in Los Angeles.

Kent, Pop Art, and Vatican II

During the decade that pop art emerged in Los Angeles and New York, Kent produced over 400 prints that fit the prevailing (and sometimes nebulous) definition of pop art. Like the artists whose work defined the style, she co-opted mass-produced forms and texts, combined figural and abstract pictorial modes, used production techniques derived from consumer culture, and integrated handmade with mechanical methods of making.²⁸ Screenprinting, the standard mode of reproduction within commodity culture, was the only technique Kent used. For decades, manufacturers had been employing screenprinting for the production of billboards, as well as product announcements and packaging.²⁹ Until Kent left Immaculate Heart College, the majority of her prints were created in the college's screenprint workshop, where the help of other nuns, students, and volunteers enabled factory-like mass production.³⁰ The collaborative atmosphere of Kent's classroom mirrors cooperative art-making environments emerging in the wake of the isolationism of abstract expressionism, such as the formation of Warhol's Factory in 1964.³¹ Kent's prints from these years conspicuously reveal their methods of making—they show registration slipups, color inaccuracies, and dripped and smeared ink. Yet the traces of the handcrafted accompany sophisticated compositional arrangements.

Words and phrases are the principal elements of Kent's compositions, often coupled with abstract forms or product logos. Her prints from 1964 through 1967 typically combine two linguistic registers, one drawn from the visual environment of consumer culture or the urban landscape, and the second derived from literature, philosophy, theology, scripture, music, lectures, performances, or historical

25. In his "Los Angeles Letter," Jules Langsner comments on exhibitions at various L.A. museums and galleries, including *New Painting of Common Objects* at the Pasadena Art Museum, Albers's work at the Ferus Gallery, and Kent's prints at the Comara Gallery; Langsner, "Los Angeles Letter, September 1962," *Art International* 1 (7) (September 1962): 49–52. The establishment of pop art in New York followed later that same year. Reviewing the exhibition *New Realists* at the Sidney Janis Gallery, art critic Brian Doherty declared, "With this show, 'pop' is officially here"; Doherty, "Art: Avant-Garde Revolt," *The New York Times*, October 31, 1962. In December 1962, the Museum of Modern Art held a symposium on pop art, and from March through June 1963, the Guggenheim Museum presented the first group show of pop art in New York, *Six Painters and the Object*.

26. The exhibition was titled *By or of Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy*. See Ken D. Allan, "Duchamp in Pasadena," in *Pacific Standard Time*, ed. Peabody et al., 135. The June–July 1965 class notes of Kent's student Mary Anne Karia (née Mikulka) refer to Duchamp and the Armory Show, where the "phenomenon of pop art was invented," suggesting Kent's assessment of Duchamp's pivotal role in relation to the formation of pop art.

27. In addition to *New Painting of Common Objects* and the Duchamp retrospective, Hopps was responsible for the first American presentation of Kurt Schwitters's work in 1962, a Jasper Johns exhibition in 1965, and Joseph Cornell and Frank Stella shows in 1966.

28. For a general overview of pop art, see Mark Francis, ed., *Pop*, with a survey by Hal Foster (London: Phaidon, 2005). See also Foster, *First Pop Age*.

29. See Guido Lengwiler, *A History of Screen Printing* (Cincinnati: ST Media Group International, 2013).

30. For a description of the practices and atmosphere of the workshop, see Kent, interviewed by Galm, transcript, 1977: 40–41.

31. Thanks to Taylor Walsh for sharing this observation.



Fig. 5. Kent, *(give the gang) and (our best)* (cat. 21).

commentary.³² Beginning in the prints of the mid-1960s, the first register of text typically dominates the visual field, with the second register tailored to augment the overall composition. Borrowing the primary text or logo from a recognizable source, Kent almost always maintains its graphic identity, as in her 1964 *for eleanor* (cat. 33) and 1965 *enriched bread* (cat. 45), which co-opt the typography, palette, and logos of General Mills and Wonder Bread (in the manner of Warhol’s 1962 depictions of Campbell’s and Coca-Cola’s trademarked product designs).³³ Similarly, in her depictions of city street signs, she faithfully maintained the visual appearance of traffic signs and their terse messages, as in her 1967 *dip* (cat. 55). She faithfully reproduced those “trademarked” elements through photographic means – taking slides of advertisements and road signs, and then projecting enlarged images of them onto sheets of paper for tracing. The slogans and logos were then cut out of the paper, which became the stencil that she affixed to the silkscreen. Stencils act as physical barriers to the ink pressed through the screens, which permeates only the excised areas. Kent applied secondary texts directly to the screens in her distinctive script using a glue-based resist, which, like a stencil, blocked the ink from passing through the matrix. Consequently, it is the area of color around the handwritten texts that is printed on the sheet. Thus, the primary texts usually are printed as positive images and the handwritten texts in the negative, rendered white within a colored field.

This approach is evident in the two prints that comprise the 1966 diptych *(give the gang) the clue is in the signs* and *(our best) reality proves very little* (fig. 5). The beverage maker Canada Dry promoted the genial potential of its Tom Collins mix, ginger ale, quinine water, and club soda with the slogan “Give the gang our best.” Printed in large black letters stacked to fill the space, the linguistic forms have been manipulated so that the letters and graphic identity of the brand name are legible but misshapen. Kent accomplished this by cutting and distorting the printed text she culled from a magazine advertisement before photographing it for the stencil. This technique altered the visual appearance of the words, giving them dimensionality and physical presence on the sheet. Manipulating the text enabled Kent to present “the” and “our” upside down, forcing an alternating right-to-left, left-to-right reading of the phrase.

An emphatic red “NOW!” on the left balances quotations from activist priest Daniel Berrigan on the right, located within a mustard-colored rectangle and blue circle; an eclipsed view of Pete Seeger’s lyric “turn turn” in yellow provides an underlying architecture to the composition. Even with its verbal twists, the declarative advertising refrain is easily read from a distance, whereas the Berrigan citations are indecipherable except at close range. Kent creates for the viewer/reader a dual relationship to the print: one from afar that conveys the impact of the bold forms, and another that requires proximity for reading the hand-scrawled texts. This dichotomy recalls the experience of seeing large-scale images on church walls while reading a hand-held prayer book. The larger, mechanically transferred texts convey familiar public statements, while the smaller handwritten ones are more personal, requiring an intimate rapport of extended duration for their content to be absorbed. The print’s multiple orientations and difficult-to-decipher script slow the viewer/reader and encourage increased attention to its multivalent meanings. The tactic has a precedent in early devotional prints, where scriptural text is presented in intricate, intertwining patterns that make it difficult to decode (fig. 6). Likewise, Kent configures assorted visual information to create new connotations, assembling disparate words and forms into coherent wholes that assert their own logic.

32. After 1968, when Kent’s work became more politicized, the pattern shifted. In the *Heroes and Sheroes* series of 1969, she often replaced the found language of ads and street signs with images drawn from popular media.

33. It is worth noting that Ruscha made a preparatory drawing in 1962 for an unrealized large-scale painting of a loaf of Wonder Bread in its packaging. The drawing is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Kent’s interest in the avant-garde art of the 1960s, as exemplified by her prints, is linked to her commitment to the recommendations of Vatican II. The principal goal of the Vatican Council was to address the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world, finding ways to make the Church more germane to the lives of present-day Catholics. Consequently, the Council endorsed making the liturgy more accessible during Mass, most notably by turning the altar to face the congregation, sanctioning the use of vernacular languages, interjecting music (often modern) into the service, and encouraging greater exchange between clergy and congregation.³⁴ More pointedly for the sisters of I.H.M., the *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life* stipulated the modernization of their work:

Religious communities should continue to maintain and fulfill the ministries proper to them. . . . They should adapt them to the requirements of time and place, employing appropriate and even new programs and abandoning those works, which today are less relevant to the spirit and authentic nature of the community . . . so that the preaching of the Gospel may be carried out more effectively in every nation.³⁵

Kent’s printmaking practice responds to the spirit of the decree. Her early prints had included biblical texts – psalms and other scriptural excerpts – but in adapting her work to “the requirements of time and place,” she chose texts “relevant to the spirit and authentic nature of the community,” such as product slogans, magazine headlines, images from the media, and local traffic signage. Kent found in these contemporary phrases a modern gospel, one familiar and relevant to Americans during a time of radical social and cultural change. Her 1967 *handle with care* (cat. 23) reads “See the man who can save you the most.” The intended subject of Chevrolet’s counsel is a local car dealer, but Kent saw updated scripture in the readymade text. Similarly, in *for eleanor*, Kent identified General Mills’ slogan “the big G stands for goodness” as having significance beyond the quality of the company’s breakfast cereal. In a 1966 essay, Kent described this strategy: “When someone drew a picture of Pope John wearing an Avis ‘we try harder’ button, those words no longer meant which car rental to patronize, and yet some of the overtones from its original meaning are there and make a contribution to the new situation.”³⁶

Conversant with the techniques and styles of her pop art contemporaries, Kent adjusted her work to serve the context of 1960s Los Angeles, “so that the preaching of the Gospel might be carried out more effectively.”³⁷ Like Warhol, Ruscha, or Lichtenstein, and as recommended by the Second Vatican Council, Kent turned to the familiar – ordinary objects and texts – for artistic fodder. In a 1964 essay, she defended her contemporaries’ subject matter, and by extension her own: “They [artists] know about the past and traditionally work with the same stuff artists have always worked with, the stuff that is around them. In the eighteenth century, it was ladies and gentlemen and swings in a garden; today it may be Campbell’s soup cans or highway signs. There is no real difference. The artist still takes his everyday world and tries to make something out of it.”³⁸

34. See Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven’s Door: American Religion in the Age of Counterculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 62–94.

35. *Perfectae Caritatis* or *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*, para. 20, vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_perfectae-caritatis_en.html.

36. Kent, “Choose LIFE,” n.p. This essay, in which Kent describes her philosophy of signs and signifying texts, can be understood as a prelude to her 1967 book *Footnotes and Headlines* (cat. 12).

37. For Kent, artists had a particular responsibility to the project of revitalization of the Church and its customs. She repeatedly referred to Pope Paul VI’s plea to artists: “He started out by saying, you know, we need you and we are unable to communicate the Christian message without you. Because you make it tangible, understandable, to people in a way that we never do.” See Marj Shippey, “Art Is To Be Enjoyed,” interview with Corita Kent, *Lamp: A Catholic Family Journal* (November 1965): 7.

38. Kent, untitled text, *The Critic* 22 (4) (February–March 1964): 61.

Fig. 7. Andy Warhol, *Yellow Brillo Box*; Heinz Tomato Ketchup Box; White Brillo Box; Mott's Apple Juice Box; Del Monte Peach Halves Box; Campbell's Tomato Juice Box; Kellogg's Corn Flakes Box, 1964, synthetic polymer paint and screenprint on wood. Walker Art Center.



Using a dialect recognizable from the mass media, commerce, and the urban environment enabled Kent to make the work of the Church more accessible to an expanded audience.

Food, as well as its promotion and packaging, was a favorite subject of Kent's from 1964 through 1967, likely for a variety of reasons. Its possibilities may have emerged for her from Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can* paintings presented at the Ferus Gallery in 1962, as well as his *Brillo* and *Heinz Tomato Ketchup* boxes (fig. 7), first shown at the Dwan Gallery in February 1964.³⁹ Groceries had also appeared in *New Painting of Common Objects* in the form of a milk bottle Joe Goode placed in front of one of his canvases, and Ruscha's painted portrayals of Spam and Sun-Maid Raisin packages; in addition, Oldenburg's *The Store* and its handcrafted commodities were well known in the art world by this time.⁴⁰ Like Warhol, Kent often had her camera in hand, and her familiarity with her contemporaries' portrayals of food seems obvious in the hundreds of Kodachrome slides she took at a local Market Basket supermarket, which include shots of stacked Brillo boxes (fig. 8) and bread wrappers. These slides, of both the exterior and interior of the store, show its windows (fig. 9), parking lot, laden shelves, and promotional materials (fig. 10). They demonstrate not only her fluency with current pop art trends, but also her interest in pictorial structure, as she carefully composed long views of aisles and close-ups of graphic elements on signage (fig. 11). The content and composition of these slides fed her printmaking practice through the mid-1960s.

³⁹ Warhol first exhibited three *Brillo (3¢ Off)* boxes and one *Heinz Tomato Ketchup* box at the Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, in *Boxes*, February 2 to 29, 1964. Two months later, the Factory produced editions of the *Brillo (3¢ Off)*, *Mott's Apple Juice*, *Del Monte Peach Halves*, *Kellogg's Corn Flakes*, *Heinz Tomato Ketchup*, *Brillo*, and *Campbell's Tomato Juice* boxes to be shown at the Stable Gallery, New York, April 21 to May 9, 1964.

⁴⁰ Claes Oldenburg, too, introduced food into the representational realm, in both drawings and sculpture. From December 1, 1961, to January 31, 1962, he staged handcrafted commodities, including cake, ice cream, bread, and eggs, at his *The Store*, which occupied a storefront on New York's Lower East Side (see cat. 3). Although it is not known whether Kent visited *The Store*, she was in New York during its presentation: "And then yearly, around Christmastime, we would go to New York. . . . This was in the middle fifties to the middle sixties, before art from New York got out here so fast. . . . So we would go to see what was going on at the Museum of Modern Art and at the galleries"; Kent, interviewed by Galm, transcript, 1977, 23. She could also have seen Oldenburg's latest innovations in L.A. in October 1963, when the Dwan Gallery presented an exhibition of his vinyl sculptures, including *Floor Cone*, a soft, large-scale depiction of an ice cream cone. Kent's familiarity with Oldenburg's work is referenced in the June-July 1965 class notes of her student Mary Anne Karia (née Mikulka), which include mention of a gallery show that presented "mass production of food sculpture."



The opening of the Market Basket in 1963, on the corner of Western and Franklin Avenues directly across the street from Immaculate Heart College, was an epiphany for Kent. As she once exclaimed to a reporter: "Groceries became a revelation; the people coming out with bundles of food. It's all like a great ceremony, and the whole drudgery of shopping has become my inspiration."⁴¹ The store also served as a rich source of project materials for her and the students, with the grocery store staff saving sales circulars, window posters, and packing boxes—embellished with brand logos and slogans—for use in their work.

Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* (*Peace on Earth*), a 1963 dispatch addressed to Catholic clergy on establishing universal peace, also motivated the incorporation of food in Kent's Vatican II-era art production. Under the section titled "Rights," the Pope wrote: "We must speak of man's rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food."⁴² Kent deduced from the Pope's words that in order for peace on earth to be possible, world hunger had to be alleviated. In light of the availability of food at the new supermarket across the street and its ubiquity in the galleries and museums in Los Angeles and New York, the papal declaration of the right to food pointed Kent toward a new idiom for her prints. For instance, Pepsi-Cola's motto "Come alive!" became the focal point of a number of her prints (cat. 50), its message speaking not only to the boost of caffeine, but also the reanimation of the human spirit, and even the Resurrection. Kent's unique take on pop art's food fixation revealed new meanings in commercial jingles, while providing a means to promulgate gospel in language relevant to modern-day Americans.

Fig. 8. Slide of Brillo boxes, from Kent archive. Corita Art Center.

Fig. 9. Slide of Market Basket exterior window, from Kent archive. Corita Art Center.

Fig. 10. Slide of Market Basket produce aisle, from Kent archive. Corita Art Center.

Fig. 11. Slide of supermarket announcement, from Kent archive. Corita Art Center.

⁴¹ Kent, quoted in Bill Cunningham, "Nun Startles N.Y. with Her Graphic Art," *Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 1965.

⁴² See Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963, sec. 1, para. 11, w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

Surprising as it may seem, Vatican II-inspired religious renewal shared certain ambitions and strategies with pop art. One of the primary objectives of Vatican II was to reconnect the Church with a wider congregation, which is akin to pop's bringing art to a more popular audience. In a 1967 interview, Warhol, in many ways the figurehead of the style, said: "Pop art is for everyone. I don't think art should be only for the select few, I think it should be for the mass of American people."⁴³ As described by Colleen McDannell, the Vatican Council debates and documents also advocated greater ecumenism, privileging the following ideals: "reform, relevancy, experimentation, collaboration, youthfulness, intentionality, openness, humor, protest, and the vernacular."⁴⁴ Artist Richard Hamilton laid out a similar roster of principles for pop art, calling it "Popular (designed for mass production), Transient (short-term solution), Expendable (easily-forgotten), Low cost, Mass produced, Young (aimed at youth), Witty, Sexy, Gimmicky, Glamorous, Big business."⁴⁵ Although not all of Hamilton's stated characteristics of pop art are aligned with issues taken up by the Vatican Council, the tenor of the times pervades both. Both the religious and artistic movements were inclined toward greater access and immediacy, especially among youthful audiences.

Kent intuited the parallelism of the two tracks and merged them in her work. The 1964 print *song about the greatness* (fig. 12a) depicts a cropped Del Monte tomato sauce jingle, "Makes meatballs sing!" (fig. 12b), against a red background, with the words of Psalm 98:7–9 overlaid on the word "sing." The comical coupling of God's word and a sales pitch—an experimental and gimmicky gesture—would have appealed to young, reform-minded viewers familiar with the advertising campaigns of the day. A low-cost, mass-produced print that used the vernacular to make a biblical passage relevant, thought provoking, and accessible in 1964 was tapping into both art world tactics and Vatican II concerns in a novel way. And Kent wasn't the only artist to sense how the goals of pop art dovetailed with Christianity. Robert Indiana announced in 1963: "Pop is Instant Art. . . . Its comprehension can be as immediate as a Crucifixion. Its appeal may be as broad as its range; it is the wide-screen of the Late Show. It is not the Latin of the hierarchy, it is vulgar."⁴⁶ The pop art shift to "common objects," a perceived

downgrade from a "high art" idiom, coincided with the proposals of Vatican II to transition from Latin to the vernacular, also understood by some as a devaluation of the language of Mass. Both trends, however, invited broader participation by making art and the Catholic Mass seemingly more intelligible.

Kent's conception of the possibilities that pop art offered may have derived from her encounters with its early presentations in Los Angeles, as well as from Marcel Duchamp's first American retrospective in Pasadena. Duchamp served as an important precedent for many pop artists because of his response to the avant-garde challenge of reconciling the relationship between art and life, demonstrated most explicitly in his readymades. In 1917, Duchamp notoriously submitted an inverted urinal to the first annual exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York. The motto of the exhibition, "No jury, no prizes," ostensibly meant that "anything" could be art, and Duchamp, under a pseudonym, tested the premise. The ultimate fate of the first public readymade was ambiguous—it was neither exhibited nor rejected—but what the experiment established was profound. It was clear that art, far from having a secure ontological status, was defined by convention and institutional consensus. What Kent appears to have absorbed from Duchamp's work is twofold. On the one hand, the transformation of found objects into "art" through their display within the sanctified space of a museum or gallery laid the foundation for Kent to subject found words to the same aestheticizing, and ultimately elevating, process. But Kent's understanding of the readymade may have had more to do with transubstantiation: if the everyday object's value can be shifted through context and faith, it can be seen as analogous to the host in the Catholic Mass. Duchamp's work affirmed a notion that was well known to Kent from Catholic liturgy, that institutions and their congregations are necessary to authenticate the transformation of everyday objects, whether that object is an overturned urinal or a transubstantiated bit of bread. Duchamp's practice bolstered her faith that the status of objects could be changed through intention and shared conviction. The process was described in 1962 by gallerist Sidney Janis, an early proponent of pop art: "Rediscovered by the artist and lifted out of its commonplace milieu, the daily object, unembellished and without 'artistic' pretensions is revealed and intensified and becomes through the awareness it evokes a new aesthetic experience. In the unplanned transformation the ordinary becomes extraordinary, the common, uncommon."⁴⁷

Kent's perception of the process of transformation is apparent throughout her work, but it is most obvious in her repeated depictions of and references to bread. In her prints, even processed bread embodies the possibility of converting the ordinary into the wondrous, as is visually evident in *round wonder* (cat. 45), where the Wonder Bread logo is located within a white circle resembling a communion wafer. As Kent remarked in 1966, "Any bread means communion."⁴⁸ This view informed her Happenings and other celebrations of the mid-1960s, in which she passed around store-bought bread.⁴⁹ In a 1966 lecture at Palomar College, Kent aligned Christ at the Last Supper with avant-garde art practice, proclaiming, "By taking bread out of its ordinary form, and presenting it as his body, He originated pop art."⁵⁰ Harvard Divinity School

Fig. 12a. Kent, *song about the greatness* (cat. 42).

Fig. 12b. Slide of Del Monte Tomato Sauce advertisement, from Kent archive. Corita Art Center.



⁴³. Quoted in Andy Warhol and Gretchen Berg, "Andy: My True Story," *Los Angeles Free Press*, March 17, 1967.

⁴⁴. McDannell, *The Spirit of Vatican II*, 135.

⁴⁵. Letter from Hamilton to Peter and Alison Smithson, January 16, 1957; reprinted in *Pop Art*, ed. Madoff, 5–6.

⁴⁶. Indiana, interviewed in G. R. Swenson, "What Is Pop Art? Answers from Eight Painters, Part I," *ARTnews* 62 (7) (November 1963): 24–27; reprinted in *Pop Art*, ed. Madoff, 106.

⁴⁷. Sidney Janis, "On the Theme of the Exhibition," in *The New Realists* (New York: Sidney Janis Gallery, 1962), n.p.

⁴⁸. Kent, "Choose LIFE," n.p.

⁴⁹. For a detailed account of the passing of bread at a public Happening, see Thomas M. Gannon, "Sorceress at Work," *America* 118 (14) (April 6, 1968): 434–36. Kent was aware of the liturgical significance of such a gesture and recounted the response of traditional Catholics to a 1967 event, "An Evening with God," at the Boston Tea Party, a nightclub in Boston. She said: "Some of the older Botolph [Gallery] board members got a little disturbed because they thought we were having communion—which indeed we were. But we were not trying to usurp the powers of the church. We were just eating and drinking together"; Kent, interviewed by Galm, transcript, 1977, 40–41. The event is also described in a Boston College newspaper: Mike Peterson, "Botolph Is Back," *The Heights*, November 17, 1967. For more on Kent's depictions of bread, see cats. 45–48.

⁵⁰. Related by Kathy Phillips, in her unpublished "Report on Palomar College Fine Arts Festival, April 14–16, 1966"; Corita Art Center Archive, Los Angeles.

professor Harvey Cox elaborated on the idea: “I once suggested to Marshall McLuhan that the sacrament was the first form of pop art. You take a piece of bread, or a cup, and you put it in a very unusual setting, namely the High Mass. You lift it up and look at it. And from then on you never see bread and wine in quite the same way again.” Cox continued: “That’s the whole thing about the reproduction of the tomato soup can in pop art. It is put in a new context. You see it in a new way.”⁵¹ Through the representational methods and underlying philosophies of contemporary art, Kent found an artistic mode with which to disseminate a renewed understanding of Catholicism that appealed to those attuned to the contemporary world around them.

The Word and the Language of Reform

The most powerful, and ultimately productive, lesson that Kent took from the Vatican II proposals and the procedures of pop art was the turn to a vernacular idiom. When in 1964 the Vatican Council authorized the use of modern, local language during Mass, Kent also recognized its potential as the predominant dialect for her prints. Although prior to that time she had included non-biblical texts in her prints, in 1964 she turned decisively to the language of popular and commodity culture. Kent’s use of current parlance corresponds to the historian John O’Malley’s description of Vatican II as a “language event”: a new style of “thinking, speaking, and behaving” that signified “a change from a more authoritarian and unidirectional style to a more reciprocal and responsive model.”⁵² In Kent’s prints, this new, more casual style of communication coaxes faith and moral responsibility rather than demands obedience. In her choice of texts, she exemplified the Vatican Council’s new style to entice viewers to engage with a revitalized Catholicism.

Kent describes her approach in her 1967 book *Footnotes and Headlines: A Play-Pray Book* (cat. 12), an illustrated prose poem that serves, in an unstated way, as a handbook to her pictorial and linguistic strategies: “In a way all the words we need are in the ads, they can be endlessly re-sorted and reassembled / it is a huge game / it is a way of confronting mystery, unless you are so poor, you think you need all the things they say you need, and take them on a single meaning level.”⁵³ While she acknowledges the fluency of ads for communicating messages about the products they endorse, she puts that fluency to other uses. As she says: “Playing around with words, taking them out of one context and putting them in another, is a way of preserving or restoring their life. . . . The most noble words can become ineffective cliché, but clichés when put into a new context can become unclichéd.”⁵⁴

Kent’s incorporation of words into the pictorial field accords to some degree with related practices undertaken by her contemporaries. Many of the best-known examples of pop art conspicuously feature language, such as Warhol’s soup cans (cat. 1) and Lichtenstein’s comic strips, yet Kent’s use of language differs from their more literal deployment. Slides that Kent took at the 1965 Jasper Johns exhibition at the Pasadena Art Museum reveal her interest in the depiction of words stripped of their usual meaning. Close-ups of Johns’s 1959 *False Start* (fig. 13) show the words “orange,” “blue,” “red,” “white,” and “green” applied to the painting via stencils, mostly in colors other than those designated by each color’s name. In 1962–63, Johns again employed this strategy in a monochromatic lithograph, *Red, Yellow, Blue* (cat. 4). The color names, divested of their customary meaning, can be read as marks or objects, and are therefore available as ciphers for new



Fig. 13. Slide of a detail of Jasper Johns, *False Start*, 1959, from Kent archive. Corita Art Center.

meaning. The procedure, however, is not only about how context shifts meaning, but how meaning itself comes into being. In the work of Kent, like that of Johns, meaning emerges through representation. By stripping advertising slogans of their intended purpose, she not only reinvests them with new significance, but also creates a vehicle for engendering and communicating faith.

In a 1962 essay, the critic Gene Swenson discusses the use of words in art, detailing in particular the work of Jim Dine: “We find Dine mocking the meanings we conventionally invest in words and images. Both the word and the image in his work may refer to something well-known, like hair; in combining the two Dine has changed them both and revealed our arbitrary ideas of them.”⁵⁵ Dine illustrates (and upends) this practice in his 1969 print series *Vegetables* (cat. 40), in which eight sheets are collaged with photographic images of vegetables: tomatoes, onions, lettuce, carrots, and eggplant, among others. Alongside the vegetables, he adds lithographically printed labels that both enable and confound their identification—some words accurately name the corresponding vegetables, while others, like the word “eggplant” beside an onion, do not. By “naming” vegetables with alternate words, Dine exaggerates the arbitrary relationship between word and meaning, pointing out what Swenson called the “deadness of definitions.”⁵⁶ Such “deadness” can be likened to Kent’s idea of cliché, whereby the repetition and consequent overuse of words drains and devalues them. Unlike Dine, however, Kent is not interested in the void created by the arbitrariness of meaning. Her project is one of resurrection, rehabilitating exhausted language to enable the

51. Harvey Cox, “Corita,” in Kent, Cox, and Eisenstein, *Sister Corita*, 104.

52. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 11–12.

53. Kent, *Footnotes and Headlines* (cat. 12), 29.

54. *Ibid.*, 40–41.

55. Swenson, “The New American Sign Painters,” in *Pop Art*, ed. Madoff, 35.

56. *Ibid.*

emergence of the spiritual and political concerns inspired by Vatican II. Thus, when Kent adapts the Del Monte tomato sauce jingle “Makes meatballs sing!,” she is not only contemplating the availability of the words for investment with fresh meaning, but also bringing the revolutionary ambitions of Vatican II into being and locating them in the presence of the print’s viewers through language.

Kent endowed her depicted texts with the semblance of materiality by twisting, crimping, and tearing the advertising slogans that she photographed for use as stencils, thus giving the words a physical presence on the printed sheets. Ruscha also engaged in this practice (cats. 6, 15): “Some say that Ruscha’s interest in the materiality of the word may stem, however unconsciously, from his Catholic upbringing, from years of catechism classes on how ‘the Word became flesh.’”⁵⁷ The “word becoming flesh” must have resonated for Kent as well, inspiring a sense of words’ potential for animation and enlivenment. With this in mind, Chevrolet’s “See the man who can save you the most” becomes a commandment to bring God into one’s daily sight, perhaps to perceive the divine every time one passes a car dealership. Kent’s print *handle with care* (cat. 23) enables us to visualize “the man who can save you the most” dressed as a car salesman, wearing a smart 1960s suit, a man among the people. Accordingly, words have the power to make the heavenly present on earth, to bring God into being before us. Just as Kent invokes a God rehabilitated for ’60s culture, she materializes the Virgin as “the juiciest tomato”—an attractive, modern woman full of verve. Kent capitalizes on Catholicism’s conviction in the word becoming flesh by engaging the language of a purveyor of canned goods. Mary’s sauciness empowers her to enact the tenets of Christianity in the modern world. Thus, Kent’s prints, while cleverly reinvesting commodity culture’s language with renewed meaning, more importantly utilize that language to animate the charge of Christianity for contemporary American society.

Although Kent’s semantic and formal linguistic innovations rhyme with contemporary artistic practice and the goals of Vatican II, they also correspond to historical modes of church reform, including the reevaluation of its image regime. The Reformation of the Church, as initiated by Martin Luther in 1517, was intended to redirect the attention of the devout to the basic tenets of Christianity. According to reformers, the faith had wandered too far from its scriptural basis. The reformers sought to focus religious practice on scripture rather than imagery, so that the word of God would powerfully materialize his presence for believers. To combat the abuses that images provoked, some reformers discouraged the production of figural imagery. Kent’s prints emerge during a time of similar reformation of religious life and devotional practices, and likewise rejected the pictorial in favor of “the word.”⁵⁸

One of the outcomes of the reassessment of images in the sixteenth century was their elimination. Acts of iconoclasm broke out across northern Europe in the wake of the reformers’ call to reconsider the function and validity of religious icons. Finally, paintings and sculpture were purged from reformed churches, with scriptural texts taking their place on church walls. By the mid-1960s, Kent had rejected the religious iconography she had previously employed and substituted outsized textual statements, not unlike the replacement of religious images in churches.⁵⁹

⁵⁷. The quote continues, “Although Ruscha equated his move to California in 1956 with his abandonment of the church, he has acknowledged the influence”: Lisa Pasquariello, “Ed Ruscha and the Language that He Used,” *October* (111) (Winter 2005): 85 n10.

⁵⁸. The resonance of Kent’s prints with the goals of Luther’s reformation was publicly recognized. For the 450th anniversary of Luther’s nailing of the 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral, Kent was commissioned to assemble an exhibition of her work, because “her prints not only reflected the spirit of the Reformation of 450 years past, but also the deep ecumenical spirit of our time. . . . Corita is an artist of the ‘word.’” See Connie Parvey, “Look at Life All the Time: The Art of Sister Mary Corita,” *Lutheran Forum*, October 1967, 11.

⁵⁹. Kent maintained this strategy through 1967, when, instead of product slogans, many of her prints began to feature urban street signage, with sayings such as “Keep right,” “Highway entrance,” and “Wrong way” (cat. 55). Her almost exclusive reliance on text diminished in 1968, the year she left Immaculate Heart. Working with a professional printer, she began assimilating images into her prints, using photographic techniques that weren’t easily available to her in Immaculate Heart College’s print workshop. Mostly from the media, many of the images she employed were political and spoke of her activist impulse in relation to civil rights (cat. 80) and the Vietnam War (cat. 73).

In 1964, she voiced her latter-day iconoclasm in a critique of church decoration, condemning places of worship where “figures stand distant and removed and posed in attitudes and styles of another age’s set of circumstances. . . . The music and words and forms are in a foreign language. . . . To [the congregants] the pages of *Time* for January 3 with its Martin Luther King story enlarged to fill a wall of the church for a few weeks might make for a more uplifting heart action.”⁶⁰

The legacy of reform and iconoclasm also underlies the conception of one of the most iconic pop images of the 1960s, Robert Indiana’s 1965 *LOVE* (cat. 19). The design for this ubiquitous image emerged out of the artist’s religious upbringing: “It all started with my being exposed to Christian Science as a child. At one point I was even a member of the Church. ‘Love’ is the key word—it’s the only word that ever appears in a Christian Science church. No crucifixes, no baby Jesuses, no saints. Nothing except one word: ‘L-O-V-E.’”⁶¹ The reformation impulse that shaped the decorative program of Christian Science churches seems also to have informed Indiana’s practice of limiting the visual field to the depiction of words, such as “LOVE,” “EAT,” and “DIE,” which pointedly echo religious notions of God, communion, and resurrection. Indiana and Kent’s shared language points to artists’ engagement, whether stated or unstated, conscious or unconscious, in mediating larger “values” and “truths” in an increasingly secularized society.

Usurping slogans invented by Madison Avenue’s advertising agencies to heighten the appeal of commercial products, Kent crafted a modern language of spiritual and cultural reform. Irving Sussman argued in 1967 that “ad men” knowingly co-opted the language of scripture to facilitate the sale of goods. He cites the adoption of the Old Testament dove of peace as a sales pitch for Dove soap and the Three-in-One oil company slogan “the best oil to anoint your electric motor with” as examples of Madison Avenue’s “encroaching upon and perverting Christian symbolism.”⁶² Kent’s co-optation of advertising refrains is, for Sussman, a principled taking back of “the word.” By doing so, she reendows words with their traditional meaning, while taking advantage of their contemporary resonance. For instance, in Kent’s hands, “A man you can lean on” (see cat. 14) is not an entreaty to buy Klopman sewing patterns, even as it relies on viewers’ recognition that salvation can be found in the conveniences of the modern world.⁶³ In 1970, Kent implicitly affirmed Sussman’s insights: “You can enjoy the quality of the ad and not let them pressure you to buy what you don’t really need. I have had fun taking back superlatives and just ordinary good words and phrases from ads and trying to restore some of their life to them. Words have life and must be cared for. If they are stolen for ugly uses or careless slang or false promotion work, they need to be brought back to their original meaning—back to their roots.”⁶⁴

While peers such as Warhol, Ruscha, and Dine made images of products, Kent iconoclastically returned to “the word” in order to convey current social conditions as well as to undermine the significance of language’s commercial use.⁶⁵

⁶⁰. Kent, untitled text, *The Critic* 22 (4) (February–March 1964), 61.

⁶¹. This recent statement by Indiana is from an interview by Rachel Wolff, “What the World Needs Now Is . . . Love,” *Departures*, September 2013, 198. It reiterates a comment he made at the height of the artwork’s popularity: “Know the reason that I became so involved with LOVE is that it is so much a part of the peculiar American environment, particularly in my own background, which was Christian Scientist. ‘God is Love’ is spelled out in every church”; Indiana, quoted in Vivien Raynor, “The Man Who Invented Love,” *ARTnews* 72 (2) (February 1973): 60.

⁶². Irving Sussman, “Man Cannot Live by Wonderbread Alone,” *Ave Maria*, November 18, 1967, 25.

⁶³. “A Man You Can Lean On/That’s Klopman!” is the text for a 1960 ad by Altman-Stoller Advertising, reproduced on a Klopman pattern package in 1965.

⁶⁴. Kent, interviewed in Pamela Rotheron, “A Conversation with Corita Kent,” *The American Way* 3 (11) (November 1970): 7–14.

⁶⁵. While Kent was undertaking her subtle and subversive form of iconoclasm, some of the critical dialogue emerging around pop art also was steeped in language reminiscent of the early reformers’ call for a reevaluation of imagery. In a 1963 appraisal of the developing pop art movement, art critic Barbara Rose disparagingly comments on practitioners’ choice of subject matter, condemning it as materialistic and idolatrous. She writes that the pop artist “embraces what he probably hates the most, exalting into icons the consumer products (what Rilke called the ‘life-decoys from America’). The soup cans, the money, the movie stars, the Good Humors (in your choice of six delicious artificial flavors), the beer cans, are the altarpieces of our religion. The artist, after a century of abstaining from painting the saints, once again turns to religious subjects.” See Rose, “Dada, Then and Now,” *Art International* 7 (1) (January 1963): 23–28; reprinted in *Pop Art*, ed. Madoff, 62.

Yet she also supported her fellow artists' critical position regarding the depiction of commodities and ambitions for cultural, if not spiritual, reform. By the mid-1960s, most artists and critics perceived pop as a critique of consumer culture. In describing Warhol's seeming embrace of consumerism, Hal Foster remarks, "If you can't beat it, Warhol implies, join it; more, if you enter it totally, you might expose it; you might reveal its enforced automatism through your own excessive example."⁶⁶ When questioned in 1965 about her attitude toward pop art, Kent replied: "The idea is to beat the system of advertising at its own game. Signs are good looking for the most part. Pop artists use these signs and do something else to them. The idea is to oppose crass realism, crass materialism, with religious values, or at least with real values."⁶⁷

As imagined by Kent, her work and that of her contemporaries was an attempt to convert the coercion of consumer culture into an active search for meaning. In her prints, she deployed the language of the marketplace in order to reinvest it with meaning other than "Buy this." Using this common idiom enabled a visualization of the divine suited to the contemporary world. The alternative to a straightforward critique of consumerism that Kent offered demonstrates that it's possible to accede to the language of commerce while directing its persuasive capacity to purposes that are, oddly enough, complementary. So when she inscribed her most notorious print with the phrase "Mary Mother is the juiciest tomato of them all," she was imbuing the holy figure with the potency of words, relying on the efficacy of language to bring her to life; and through the vernacular, making the divine legible to the artistically, spiritually, and politically reforming world of the 1960s. Although best known as a visual artist, Kent was an artist of the word.

⁶⁶ Hal Foster, "Survey," in *Pop*, ed. Francis, 30.

⁶⁷ Kent, quoted in Rev. Don Ranly, "Sister Corita: Tomatoes and Happy Beatitudes," *National Catholic Reporter*, December 22, 1965, 2.

Susan Dackerman served as the Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Curator of Prints at the Harvard Art Museums from 2005 to 2014.

A large, stylized graphic of a tomato, rendered in a textured, yellowish-brown color. The tomato is shown in cross-section, revealing a white interior. The words "Round" and "WONDER" are printed in a bold, sans-serif font on the white interior. "Round" is in a smaller font size and is positioned above "WONDER", which is in a larger font size. The text is a dark, muted yellow color. The tomato is set against a plain white background.

building permits for major alterations

Building Permits

Date	Permit No.	Document Type	Work	Owner	Architect/ Engineer/ Contractor
10/16/1959	1959LA44894	BLDG-NEW	Construction of new 40' x 38' 8" 1 story building on corner lot	Flower Street Corporation	Engineer J.P. Anderson; Contractor Robt. Genofile
3/23/1960	1959LA44894	Certificate of Occupancy	"1 story, type V, 39' x 40' store building. G-1 occupancy"	Flower Street Corporation	N/A
7/18/1972	1972LA54512	BLDG-ADDITION	"addition and alteration change occupancy from store G-1 to G-2 health food store; 7'4" x 28' 8" addition to south elevation of building; new entrance on east elevation"	Ralphs Grocery Co.	Architect Robert Ewing; Engineer Kermit D. Ferguson; Contractor Jack Malven
9/12/1972	1972LA54512	Certificate of Occupancy	"One story type IIIB, 7'4"x28'8" addition to an existing 38'x40' store. Change of occupancy from store G-1 to health food G-2 occupancy."	Ralphs Grocery Co.	N/A
5/13/1983	1983LA63870	SIGN	New work: "Pole Sign"	Flairs Cleaners	Architect David Erlich; Installer Gen. Ind. DBA Best Signs
5/13/1983	1983LA63871	SIGN	New work: "Roof Pole Sign"	Flairs Cleaners	Architect David Erlich; Installer Gen. Ind. DBA Best Signs
5/17/1983	1983LA63956	BLDG-ALTER/REP AIR	"Remove existing roof and parapet and install new roof system on top of existing walls "	Don Fazio	Architect Lawrence H. Boyd; Engineer Anwar Cassim
8/4/1983	1983LA69708	BLDG-ALTER/REP AIR	"New addition to existing first story cleaners"	Flair Inc.	Architect Paul A. Goldstein; Contractor NS

Source: Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety

1

APPLICATION TO CONSTRUCT NEW BUILDING AND FOR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

Form B-1

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.
2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.

1. LEGAL LOT 51	BLK. 	TRACT Hollywood Terrace	DIST. MAP 150-193
JOB ADDRESS 5518 Franklin Ave		APPROVED JE	ZONE O-2-2
2. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS Western Ave AND Garfield Place			FIRE DIST. II 76/80
3. PURPOSE OF BUILDING Retail Sales			INSIDE X
4. OWNER Flower St Corp.	PHONE MA 35531		COR. LOT X
5. OWNER'S ADDRESS 812 W. 8th St	P.O. 	ZONE 	REV. COR.
6. CERT. ARCH.	STATE LICENSE 	PHONE 	LOT SIZE 100x70
7. LIC. ENGR. J. P. Anderson	STATE LICENSE CE 8972	PHONE CI 30780	REAR ALLEY X
8. CONTRACTOR Robt. Genofile	STATE LICENSE 	PHONE 	SIDE ALLEY X
9. CONTRACTOR'S ADDRESS 3712 Park Place	P.O. 	ZONE 	BLOG. LINE —
10. SIZE OF NEW BLDG. STORIES HEIGHT 40 x 38'8" 1			AFFIDAVITS —
NO. OF EXISTING BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE 1- retail sales			

1 5518 Franklin Ave

DISTRICT OFFICE

L.A.

11. MATERIAL EXT. WALLS: <input type="checkbox"/> WOOD <input type="checkbox"/> METAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONC. BLOCK <input type="checkbox"/> STUCCO <input type="checkbox"/> BRICK <input type="checkbox"/> CONCRETE	ROOF CONST. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WOOD <input type="checkbox"/> STEEL <input type="checkbox"/> CONC. <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	ROOFING comp	SPRINKLERS REQ'D. SPECIFIED NO
12. VALUATION: TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED BUILDING. \$ 13,000.00		BLDG. AREA 1500	DWELL. UNITS —
Approval of driveway location must be obtained from the Department of Public Works before securing Building Permit.		APPLICATION CHECKED Robert	PARKING SPACES 3
no new driveways to be built		PLANS CHECKED Robert	GUEST ROOMS —
I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.		CORRECTIONS VERIFIED Robert	FILE WITH —
J. P. Anderson <i>J. P. Anderson</i> SIGNED		PLANS APPROVED Robert	CONT. INSP. —
This Form When Properly Validated is a Permit to Do the Work Described.		APPLICATION APPROVED Robert	INSPECTOR —

TYPE 1	GROUP 1	MAX. OCC. 	P.C. 21.00	S.P.C. 6	B.P. 54	I.F. 	O.S. NOGPE	C/O
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VALIDATION

CASHIER'S USE ONLY

—	LA44891	SEP-16-59	61220	B — 2 CK	21.00
—		OCT-16-59	68244	C — 1 CK	54.00
—		OCT-16-59	68245	C — 2 CK	6.00
—	N-9548		GRADING	CRIT SOIL	

sewer available
Harbeck per Holly
9-16-59

WESTERN AVE



170'

EXISTING PARKING

EXISTING BUILDING

11' DRIVE

FRANKLIN AVE

3 CAR SPACES

24' x 18'

100'

PROPOSED

BUILDING

TYPE V

GROUP A-1

40'

39'

ON LOT PLAN SHOW ALL BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE OF EACH

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Certificate of Occupancy

NOTE: Any change of use or occupancy must be approved
by the Department of Building and Safety.

Issued:

Address of
Building

Permit No.
and Year

March 23, 1960
5518 Franklin Ave.
LA 44894/59

This certifies that, so far as ascertained by or made known to the undersigned, the building at above address complies with the applicable requirements of the Municipal Code, as follows: Ch. 1, as to permitted uses; Ch. 9, Arts. 1, 3, 4, and 5; and with applicable requirements of State Housing Act,—for following occupancies:

1 story, type V, 39' x 40' store building.
G-1 occupancy.



Flower Street Corp.
812 W. 8th Street
Los Angeles, Calif.

G. E. MORRIS,
Superintendent of Building

By.....

L. L. THAYNE **ad**

3

APPLICATION TO ADD-ALTER-REPAIR-DEMOLISH
AND FOR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

B&S B-3-R12-70

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

INSTRUCTIONS: Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.

1. LEGAL DESCR	LOT	BLK.	TRACT	CENSUS TRACT	
	51		Hollywood Terr	1903.01	
2. PRESENT USE OF BUILDING		NEW USE OF BUILDING		DIST. MAP	
(16 Vacant Store		(16 healthfood Store		150-193	
3. JOB ADDRESS				ZONE	
5518 Franklin Avenue				C2-2	
4. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS				FIRE DIST. Franklin 76'	
Garfield AND Western				two	
5. OWNER'S NAME				LOT (TYPE)	
Ralphs Grocery Co.				corner	
6. OWNER'S ADDRESS				LOT SIZE	
3410 West 3rd St. LA				100x170	
7. ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER				STATE LICENSE No. PHONE	
Robert Ewing C2696				3801505	
8. ENGINEER				STATE LICENSE No. PHONE	
Kermit D. Ferguson SE801					
9. CONTRACTOR				STATE LICENSE No. PHONE	
Jack Malven 156477				678-5133	
10. LENDER				AFFIDAVITS	
none				aff 30207	
11. SIZE OF EXISTING BLDG.		STORIES	HEIGHT	NO. OF EXISTING BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE	
LENGTH	WIDTH				
110	38.8	1	10	1	
12. MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION OF EXISTING BLDG.		EXT. WALLS	ROOF	FLOOR	
		cone block	com p	cone	
13. JOB ADDRESS				DISTRICT OFFICE	
5518 Franklin				TA	
14. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED BUILDING				GRADING	
\$ 4,000				yes	
15. NEW WORK: (Describe)				CRIT. SOIL	
Addition and alteration change occ				yes	
from G1 to B2				HIGHWAY DE	
				yes Both	
NEW USE OF BUILDING		SIZE OF ADDITION	STORIES	HEIGHT	FLOOD
health food store			1		/
TYPE	GROUP	SPRINKLERS REQ'D SPECIFIED	INSPECTION ACTIVITY		CONS.
IIIB	G2		COMB	GEN X MAJ. S. CONS	/
BLDG. AREA	MAX. OCC	TOTAL	PLANS CHECKED		ZONED BY
+249/1740		26			flores
DWELL. UNITS	GUEST ROOMS	PARKING REQ'D PROVIDED	PLANS APPROVED		FILE WITH
NGO	0	NC			
P.C. No.	CONT. INSP.	APPLICATION APPROVED		INSPECTOR	
V 9120					
R.C.	S.P.C.	G.P.I.	B.P.	I.F.	O.S.
17.22		8.00	26.50	/	
C/O					
TYPIST					
sas					

PLAN CHECK EXPIRES SIX MONTHS AFTER FEE IS PAID. PERMIT EXPIRES ONE YEAR AFTER FEE IS PAID OR SIX MONTHS AFTER FEE IS PAID IF CONSTRUCTION IS NOT COMMENCED.

CASHIER'S USE ONLY	JUN-18-72	4 0 9 0 9	5	54512	V = 6 CK	18.00
	JUL-18-72	4 0 9 0 9	5	54512	V - 1 CK	26.50

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.

"This permit is an application for inspection, the issuance of which is not an approval or an authorization of the work specified herein. This permit does not authorize or permit, nor shall it be construed as authorizing or permitting the violation or failure to comply with any applicable law. Neither the City of Los Angeles, nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed." (See Sec. 91.0202 L.A.M.C.)

Signed	William J. Sutton	Name	Date
	(Owner or Agent)		
Bureau of Engineering	ADDRESS APPROVED	D. Jaramillo	6-27-72
	SEWERS AVAILABLE	sfc due 20.61 sewer	avail. Volpe
	NOT AVAILABLE	SFC Pd. H 21.53	7/17/72
	DRIVEWAY APPROVED	no new	Volpe 6-27-72
	HIGHWAY DEDICATION REQUIRED	COMPLETED	NOT APPLICABLE
	FLOOD CLEARANCE APPROVED		
Conservation	APPROVED FOR ISSUE		
Plumbing	FILE #		
Planning	PRIVATE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM APPROVED		
Fire	APPROVED UNDER CASE #		
Traffic	APPROVED (TITLE 19) (L.A.M.C.-S700)		
	APPROVED FOR		

WESTERN AVE

100.00'

17 CARS

EXISTING RESTAURANT

28'

3'

5 CARS

EXISTING WALL

EXISTING PARKING

RAIPHS
MKT
PARKING

170.00'

PROPERTY LINE

14 CARS

EXISTING
BLOCK WALL 6'6" →

TRASH STORAGE

ADDITION

EXISTING BLDG

47'4"

38'-8"

PROPERTY LINE

FRANKLIN AVE

170.00'

ON LOT IT IS SHOWN ALL DIMENSIONS ON LOT AND DIST. OF EACH

Address of
Building

5518 Franklin Avenue
CITY OF LOS ANGELES



CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

NOTE: Any change of use or occupancy must be approved by the Department of Building and Safety. This certifies that, so far as ascertained by or made known to the undersigned, the building at the above address complies with the applicable requirements of the Municipal Code, as follows: Ch. 1, as to permitted uses, Ch. 9, Arts. 1, 3, 4, and 5; and with applicable requirements of State Housing Law—for following occupancies:

Issued

9-12-72

Permit No. and Year LA 54512/72

One story type IIIB, 7'4" X 28'8" addition to an existing 38' X 40' store. Change of occupancy from store G-1 to health food G-2 occupancy. No additional parking spaces required.

Owner Ralphs Grocery Co.
Owner's Address 3410 West 3rd Street
Los Angeles, California

D. McNICHOLS va

By

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only. 2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.

1. LEGAL DESCR.	LOT 51	BLOCK -	TRACT Hollywood Ter	COUNCIL DISTRICT NO. 13	DIST. MAP 150-B-193 CENSUS TRACT 1903.01
2. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK (19) Pole Sign					<input type="checkbox"/> RESIDENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL ZONE C2-2
3. JOB ADDRESS 5518 Franklin Ave					FIRE DIST. two
4. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS Western Ave AND Garfield Pl					LOT (TYPE) cor
5. OWNER'S NAME Flairs Cleaners					LOT SIZE 100x170
6. OWNER'S ADDRESS same					
7. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER Daviderlich					PHONE -
8. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER ADDRESS 5949 Fairhaven St					CITY WH
9. QUALIFIED INSTALLER Gen Ind dba Bestsigns					BUS. LIC. NO. 390315
10. INSTALLER'S ADDRESS 8575 Conoga Ave					ACTIVE STATE LIC. NO. 709-5527
11. SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING TYPE: _____ STORIES: _____ NO. OF EXISTING BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE: _____					
12. SIZE OF SIGN 5x12+5x9+4x7					TOTAL COPY AREA 260
13. JOB ADDRESS 5518 Franklin Ave					STREET GUIDE 34
14. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED SIGN \$ 7,800					HIGHWAY DED. yes
15. MATERIAL OF SIGN CONSTRUCTION: _____					SUPPORTING FRAME metal
16. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK Pole Sign					FRAME OF COPY metal
17. ILLUMINATION <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INTERNAL <input type="checkbox"/> EXTERNAL					SURFACE OF SIGN plastic
18. NO. OF SIGNS OR GAS TUBE SYSTEMS: 1					CONS. -
19. NO. OF ADDITIONAL BRANCH CIRCUITS: 1					ZONED BY Calabrese
20. NO. OF CONTROL DEVICES: 0					FREEWAY CLEARANCE 40' 5' 3"
21. PERMIT FEES					CONT. INSP. 40' 5' 3"
22. FREEWAY CLEARANCE					FILED WITH
23. PLANS CHECKED					TYPIST dg
24. APPLICATION APPROVED					
25. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
26. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
27. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
28. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
29. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
30. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
31. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
32. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
33. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
34. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
35. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
36. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
37. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
38. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
39. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
40. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
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42. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
43. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
44. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
45. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
46. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					
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100. CASHIER'S USE ONLY					

DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

LICENSED CONTRACTORS DECLARATION

19. I hereby affirm that I am licensed under the provisions of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and my license is in full force and effect.
Date 5/13/83 Lic. Class C-41 Lic. No. 390315 Contractor's Signature [Signature]
Contractor's Mailing Address 8575 Conoga Ave Canoga Park

OWNER-BUILDER DECLARATION

20. I hereby affirm that I am exempt from the Contractor's License Law for the following reason (Sec. 7031.5, Business and Professions Code: Any city or county which requires a permit to construct, alter, improve, demolish, or repair any structure, prior to its issuance, also requires the applicant for such permit to file a signed statement that he is licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Contractor's License Law (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code) or that he is exempt therefrom and the basis for the alleged exemption. Any violation of Section 7031.5 by any applicant for a permit subjects the applicant to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).):
☐ I, as owner of the property, or my employees with wages as their sole compensation, will do the work, and the structure is not intended or offered for sale (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who does such work himself or through his own employees, provided that such improvements are not intended or offered for sale. If, however, the building or improvement is sold within one year of completion, the owner-builder will have the burden of proving that he did not build or improve for the purpose of sale.).
☐ I, as owner of the property, am exclusively contracting with licensed contractors to construct the project (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who contracts for such projects with a contractor(s) licensed pursuant to the Contractor's License Law.).
☐ I am exempt under Sec. _____, B. & P. C. for this reason _____
Date _____ Owner's Signature _____

WORKERS' COMPENSATION DECLARATION

21. I hereby affirm that I have a certificate of consent to self-insure, or a certificate of Worker's Compensation Insurance, or a certified copy thereof (Sec. 3900, Lab. C.).
Policy No. 575783-82 Insurance Company State Fund
☐ Certified copy is hereby furnished.
☐ Certified copy is filed with the Los Angeles City Dept. of Bldg. & Safety.
Date 5/13/83 Applicant's Signature [Signature]
Applicant's Mailing Address _____

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

22. I certify that in the performance of the work for which this permit is issued, I shall not employ any person in any manner so as to become subject to the Workers' Compensation Laws of California.
Date _____ Applicant's Signature _____
NOTICE TO APPLICANT: If, after making this Certificate of Exemption, you should become subject to the Workers' Compensation provisions of the Labor Code, you must forthwith comply with such provisions or this permit shall be deemed revoked.

CONSTRUCTION LENDING AGENCY

23. I hereby affirm that there is a construction lending agency for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued (Sec. 3097, Civ. C.).
Lender's Name _____
Lender's Address _____

24. I certify that I have read this application and state that the above information is correct. I agree to comply with all city and county ordinances and state laws relating to building construction, and hereby authorize representatives of this city to enter upon the above-mentioned property for inspection purposes.
I realize that this permit is an application for inspection, that it does not approve or authorize the work specified herein, that it does not authorize or permit any violation or failure to comply with any applicable law, that neither the city of Los Angeles nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed. (See Sec. 91.0202 LAMC)
Signed [Signature] Agent 5/13/83
(Owner or agent having property owner's consent) Position Date

S

APPLICATION
FOR
INSPECTION

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

0 2 4 0 - 0 2 0 0 1 2 1

OF SIGNS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only. 2. Plot Plan Required on Back of Original.

1. LOT 51	BLOCK	TRACT Hollywood Ter.	COUNCIL DISTRICT NO. 13	DIST. MAP 150-B-193 CENSUS TRACT 1903.01
2. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK 49) Roof Pole Sign				ZONE C2-2
3. JOB ADDRESS 5518 Franklin Ave.				FIRE DIST. two
4. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS Western Ave. AND Garfield Pl				LOT (TYPE) COR
5. OWNER'S NAME Flairs Cleaners				LOT SIZE 100x170
6. OWNER'S ADDRESS same				
7. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER David Erlich				ALLEY -
8. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER ADDRESS 5949 Fairhaven St.				BLDG. LINE -
9. QUALIFIED INSTALLER Gen. Ind. DBA Best Signs				AFFIDAVITS -
10. INSTALLER'S ADDRESS 8575 Canoga Ave.				
11. SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING WIDTH LENGTH				
12. SIZE OF SIGN 5x12+5x9+4.5x7				
13. JOB ADDRESS 5518 Franklin Ave.				
14. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED SIGN \$ 7,800				
15. MATERIAL OF SIGN CONSTRUCTION				
16. TYPE OF SIGN OR NEW WORK Roof Pole Sign				
17. ILLUMINATION NONE INTERNAL EXTERNAL				
18. NO. OF SIGNS OR GAS TUBE SYSTEMS				
PERMIT FEES				
SIGN/G. T. SYSTEMS				
ADDITIONAL CIRCUITS				
ELECTRICAL SERVICE				
CONTROL DEVICES				
ISSUING FEE				
BLDG. PERMIT				
P.C.				
S.P.C.				
I.F.				
DISTRICT OFFICE				
PLAN CHECK EXPIRES ONE YEAR AFTER FEE IS PAID. PERMIT TWO YEARS AFTER OR 180 DAYS IF WORK IS NOT BEGUN.				

DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

LICENSED CONTRACTORS DECLARATION

19. I hereby affirm that I am licensed under the provisions of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and my license is in full force and effect.

Date 5-13-83 Lic. Class C-45 Lic. No. 390315 Contractor's Signature Jim Bacamante
Contractor's Mailing Address 8575 Canoga Ave. Canoga Park

OWNER-BUILDER DECLARATION

20. I hereby affirm that I am exempt from the Contractor's License Law for the following reason (Sec. 7031.5, Business and Professions Code: Any city or county which requires a permit to construct, alter, improve, demolish, or repair any structure, prior to its issuance, also requires the applicant for such permit to file a signed statement that he is licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Contractor's License Law (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code) or that he is exempt therefrom and the basis for the alleged exemption. Any violation of Section 7031.5 by any applicant for a permit subjects the applicant to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).):

I, as owner of the property, or my employees with wages as their sole compensation, will do the work, and the structure is not intended or offered for sale (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who does such work himself or through his own employees, provided that such improvements are not intended or offered for sale. If, however, the building or improvement is sold within one year of completion, the owner-builder will have the burden of proving that he did not build or improve for the purpose of sale.).

I, as owner of the property, am exclusively contracting with licensed contractors to construct the project (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who contracts for such projects with a contractor(s) licensed pursuant to the Contractor's License Law.).

I am exempt under Sec. B. & P. C. for this reason.

Date Owner's Signature

WORKERS' COMPENSATION DECLARATION

21. I hereby affirm that I have a certificate of consent to self-insure, or a certificate of Worker's Compensation Insurance, or a certified copy thereof (Sec. 3800, Lab. C.).

Policy No. 579753-82 Insurance Company STATE FUND

Certified copy is hereby furnished.

Certified copy is filed with the Los Angeles City Dept. of Bldg. & Safety.

Date 5/13/83 Applicant's Signature Best Signet Jim Bacamante

Applicant's Mailing Address

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

22. I certify that in the performance of the work for which this permit is issued, I shall not employ any person in any manner so as to become subject to the Workers' Compensation Laws of California.

Date Applicant's Signature

NOTICE TO APPLICANT: If, after making this Certificate of Exemption, you should become subject to the Workers' Compensation provisions of the Labor Code, you must forthwith comply with such provisions or this permit shall be deemed revoked.

CONSTRUCTION LENDING AGENCY

23. I hereby affirm that there is a construction lending agency for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued (Sec. 3097, Civ. C.).

Lender's Name

Lender's Address

24. I certify that I have read this application and state that the above information is correct. I agree to comply with all city and county ordinances and state laws relating to building construction, and hereby authorize representatives of this city to enter upon the above-mentioned property for inspection purposes.

I realize that this permit is an application for inspection, that it does not approve or authorize the work specified herein, that it does not authorize or permit any violation or failure to comply with any applicable law, that neither the city of Los Angeles nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed. (See Sec. 91.0202 LAMC)

Signed Jim Bacamante Agent 5/13/83
(Owner or agent having property owner's consent) Position Date

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Fuller 5/13/83

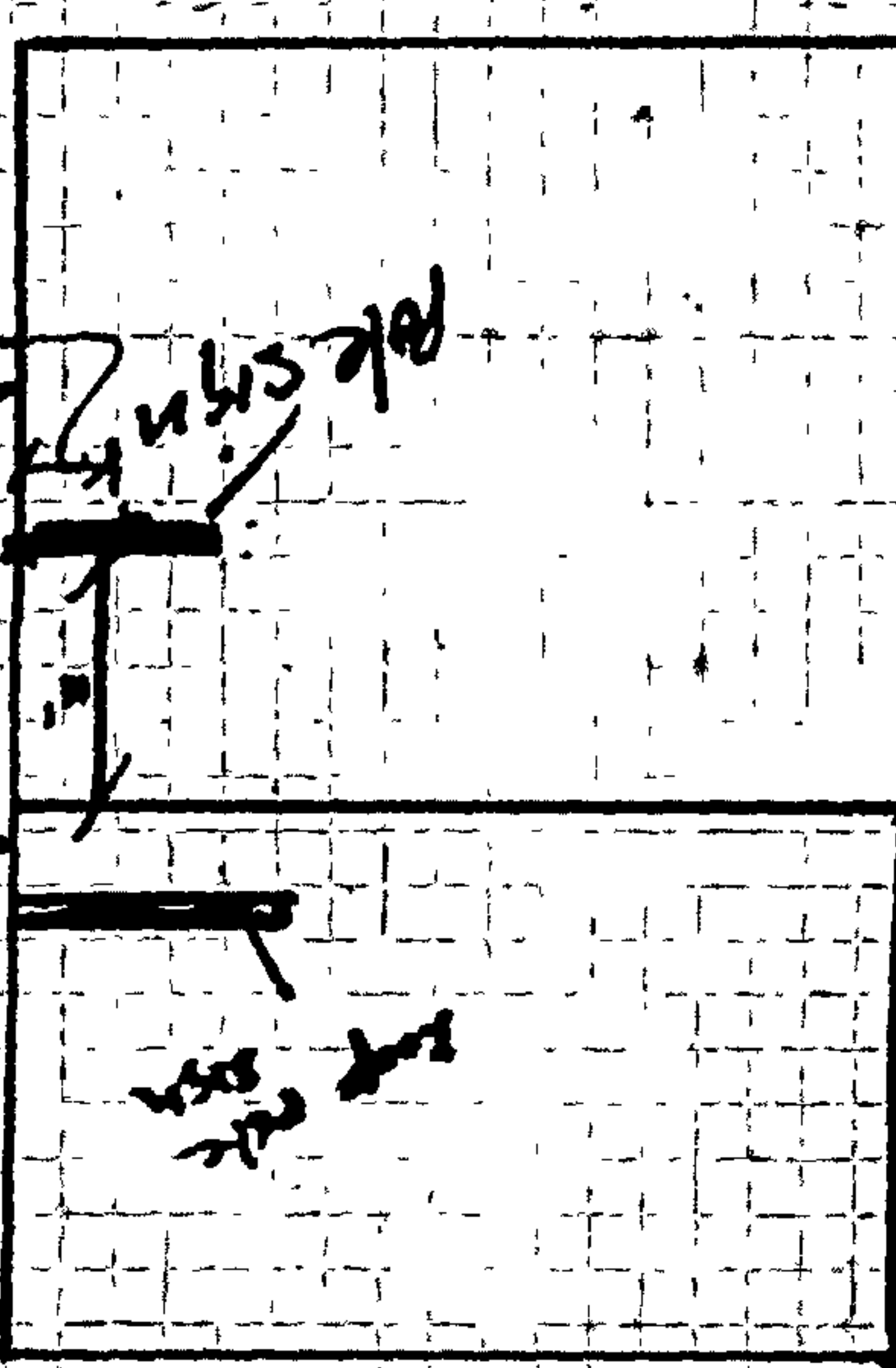
ON PLOT PLAN SHOW ALL BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE OF EACH

WESTERN AVE

MAX 10 PLOTS

FRANKLIN AVE

SIDEWALK



ATTACHED PLOT PLANS SHALL NOT EXTEND BEYOND THIS LINE

ON PLOT PLAN SHOW ALL BUILDINGS ON LOT AND LOT OF EACH

Western Ave

Perimeter

Side wall

Roof

Roof

ATTACHED PLOT PLANS SHALL NOT EXTEND ABOVE THIS LINE

3

APPLICATION

FOR 2

INSPECTION

CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

TO ADD-ALTER-
REPAIR-DEMOLISH
AND FOR CERTIFICATE
OF OCCUPANCY

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.

1. LEGAL DESCR.	LOT	BLOCK	TRACT	COUNCIL DISTRICT NO	DIET MAP
	51		Hollywood Terrace	13	150-193
2. PRESENT USE OF BUILDING	NEW USE OF BUILDING		ZONE		
() Retail Shop	() Cleaning Shop		C2-2		
3. JOB ADDRESS	5518 Franklin Hollywood				FIRE DIST. TWO
4. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS	Garfield AND Western				LOT TYPE Cor
5. OWNER'S NAME	885-8125 PHONE				LOT SIZE 100x170
6. OWNER'S ADDRESS	8827 Shirley Ave. Northridge				
7. ENGINEER	BUS. LIC. NO.	ACTIVE STATE LIC. NO.	PHONE		
Anwar Cassim	R.C.E. 24603	855-0148			
8. ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER	BUS. LIC. NO.	ACTIVE STATE LIC. NO.	PHONE		
Lawrence H. Boyd	C2216	391-8175			
9. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER'S ADDRESS	CITY ZIP				AFFIDAVITS
11296 Rudman Dr.	Culver City, CA 92030				
10. CONTRACTOR	BUS. LIC. NO.	ACTIVE STATE LIC. NO.	PHONE		
Owner-Builder N/S					
11. SIZE OF EXISTING BLDG.	STORIES	HEIGHT	NO. OF EXISTING BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE		
WIDTH 39'0" LENGTH 47'0"	1	13'6"	2-1 Retail; 1 Bank		
12. CONST. MATERIAL OF EXISTING BLDG.	EXT. WALLS	ROOF	FLOOR		
	conc blk	frame/comp conc			
13. JOB ADDRESS	STREET GUIDE				DISTRICT OFFICE
5518 Franklin					LA
14. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED BUILDING	\$10,000				SEISMIC STUDY ZONE
15. NEW WORK (Describe)	remove existing roof and parapet install new roof system on top of existing walls				GRADING Yes FLOOD --
NEW USE OF BUILDING	SIZE OF ADDITION		STORIES	HEIGHT	ZONED BY Meyer
TYPE	GROUP OCC.	FLOOR AREA	PLANS CHECKED		
	NC	NC	Hala Bant		
DWELL UNITS	MAX OCC.	TOTAL	APPLICATION APPROVED		
	NC		Hala Bant		
GUEST ROOMS	PARKING REQ'D	PARKING PROVIDED	INSPECTION ACTIVITY		
	NC	STD. COMP.	COMB GEN MAJ. S. CONS.		
P.C.	G.P.I.	CONT INSP	B & SB-3 (R 1.83)		
56.95		GLB			
S.P.C.	P.M.				
51.00					
B.P.	E.I.				
127.00	1.40				
I.F.	O.S.S.				
	1.14				
O/S	O.S.S.				
	3.59				
DIST OFFICE	C/O	SPRINKLERS REQ'D SPEC.			
LA					
P.C. NO.	Y3864	ENERGY			
PLAN CHECK EXPIRES ONE YEAR AFTER FEE IS PAID. PERMIT EXPIRES TWO YEARS AFTER FEE IS PAID OR 180 DAYS AFTER FEE IS PAID IF CONSTRUCTION IS NOT COMMENCED					

DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

LICENSED CONTRACTORS DECLARATION

16. I hereby affirm that I am licensed under the provisions of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and my license is in full force and effect.

Date _____ Lic. Class _____ Lic. Number _____ Contractor _____ (Signature)

OWNER-BUILDER DECLARATION

17. I hereby affirm that I am exempt from the Contractor's License Law for the following reason (Sec. 7031.5, Business and Professions Code: Any city or county which requires a permit to construct, alter, improve, demolish, or repair any structure, prior to its issuance, also requires the applicant for such permit to file a signed statement that he is licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Contractor's License Law (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code) or that he is exempt therefrom and the basis for the alleged exemption. Any violation of Section 7031.5 by any applicant for a permit subjects the applicant to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).):

☐ I, as owner of the property, or my employees with wages as their sole compensation, will do the work, and the structure is not intended or offered for sale (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who does such work himself or through his own employees, provided that such improvements are not intended or offered for sale. If, however, the building or improvement is sold within one year of completion, the owner-builder will have the burden of proving that he did not build or improve for the purpose of sale.).

☒ I, as owner of the property, am exclusively contracting with licensed contractors to construct the project (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who contracts for such projects with a contractor(s) licensed pursuant to the Contractor's License Law.).

☐ I am exempt under Sec. _____, B. & P. C. for this reason _____

Date 5-16-83 Owner's Signature _____

WORKERS' COMPENSATION DECLARATION

18. I hereby affirm that I have a certificate of consent to self-insure, or a certificate of Worker's Compensation Insurance, or a certified copy thereof (Sec. 3800, Lab. C.).

Policy No. _____ Insurance Company _____

☐ Certified copy is hereby furnished.

☐ Certified copy is filed with the Los Angeles City Dept. of Bldg. & Safety.

Date _____ Applicant's Signature _____

Applicant's Mailing Address _____

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

19. I certify that in the performance of the work for which this permit is issued, I shall not employ any person in any manner so as to become subject to the Workers' Compensation Laws of California.

Date 5-16-83 Applicant's Signature _____

NOTICE TO APPLICANT: If, after making this Certificate of Exemption, you should become subject to the Workers' Compensation provisions of the Labor Code, you must forthwith comply with such provisions or this permit shall be deemed revoked.

CONSTRUCTION LENDING AGENCY

20. I hereby affirm that there is a construction lending agency for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued (Sec. 3097, Civ. C.).

Lender's Name _____ Lender's Address _____

21. I certify that I have read this application and state that the above information is correct. I agree to comply with all city and county ordinances and state laws relating to building construction, and hereby authorize representatives of this city to enter upon the above-mentioned property for inspection purposes.



I realize that this permit is an application for inspection, that it does not approve or authorize the work specified herein, that it does not authorize or permit any violation or failure to comply with any applicable law, that neither the city of Los Angeles nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed. (See Sec. 91.0202 LAMC)

Signed _____ OWNER _____ 5-16-83

(Owner or agent having property owner's consent)

Position

Date

No Hwy Del Reg. on this
permit only (Int. Rem.)  
J. Jazis 4/18/83

BUTHER 4/19/83

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.

1. LEGAL DESCR.	LOT 51	BLOCK	TRACT Hollywood Terr.	COUNCIL DISTRICT NO 13	DIST. MAP 150-B193 CENSUS TRACT 1903.01
2. PRESENT USE OF BUILDING () Laundry Cleaners	NEW USE OF BUILDING () LAundry Cleaners				ZONE C2-2
3. JOB ADDRESS	5518 Franklin Ave.				FIRE DIST. two
4. BETWEEN CROSS STREETS Western	AND Garfield				LOT TYPE cor
5. OWNER'S NAME	Flair Inc.				LOT SIZE 100x170
6. OWNER'S ADDRESS	8827 Shirley Ave. Northridge				ALLEY
7. ENGINEER	none				BLDG. LINE
8. ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER	Paul A. Goldstein BP836 8931-4688				AFFIDAVITS
9. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER'S ADDRESS	7407 Beverly Blvd. LA				
10. CONTRACTOR	NS				
11. SIZE OF EXISTING BLDG.	WIDTH 39	LENGTH 35	STORIES 1	HEIGHT 14	NO OF EXISTING BUILDINGS ON LOT AND USE exist. cleaners/bank
12. CONST. MATERIAL OF EXISTING BLDG.	EXT. WALLS conc blk		ROOF bltup comp	FLOOR conc	
13. JOB ADDRESS	5518 Franklin Ave.				DISTRICT OFFICE LA
14. VALUATION TO INCLUDE ALL FIXED EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO OPERATE AND USE PROPOSED BUILDING	\$3,500 - \$6,000				SEISMIC STUDY ZONE
15. NEW WORK (Describe)	New additions to existing 1st story cleaners				GRADING yes HWY. DED. CONS.
NEW USE OF BUILDING	LAUNDRY - Cleaners		SIZE OF ADDITION	34' x 17' x 34' x 38' 8	STORIES 1
TYPE	GROUP	FLOOR AREA	PLANS CHECKED	ZONED BY Calabrese	
DWELL UNITS	MAX OCC.	TOTAL	APPLICATION APPROVED	FILE WITH	
GUEST ROOMS	PARKING REQ'D	PARKING PROVIDED	INSPECTION ACTIVITY	TYPIST	
PC	SPC	B.P.	IF	O/S	DIST OFFICE
PC NO	CONT INSP	CLAIMS FOR REFUND OF FEES PAID ON PERMITS MUST BE FILED. 1 Within one year from date of payment of fee, or 2 Within one year from date of expiration of extension for building or grading permits granted by the Dept. of B & S SECTIONS 22.12 & 22.13 LAMC			
PLAN CHECK EXPIRES ONE YEAR AFTER FEE IS PAID - PERMIT EXPIRES TWO YEARS AFTER FEE IS PAID OR 180 DAYS AFTER FEE IS PAID IF CONSTRUCTION IS NOT COMMENCED.		CASHIER'S USE ONLY			

DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

LICENSED CONTRACTORS DECLARATION

16. I hereby affirm that I am licensed under the provisions of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and my license is in full force and effect.

Date Lic. Class Lic. Number Contractor (Signature)

OWNER-BUILDER DECLARATION

17. I hereby affirm that I am exempt from the Contractor's License Law for the following reason (Sec. 7031.5, Business and Professions Code: Any city or county which requires a permit to construct, alter, improve, demolish, or repair any structure, prior to its issuance, also requires the applicant for such permit to file a signed statement that he is licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Contractor's License Law (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code) or that he is exempt therefrom and the basis for the alleged exemption. Any violation of Section 7031.5 by any applicant for a permit subjects the applicant to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).):

I, as owner of the property, or my employees with wages as their sole compensation, will do the work, and the structure is not intended or offered for sale (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon; and who does such work himself or through his own employees, provided that such improvements are not intended or offered for sale. If, however, the building or improvement is sold within one year of completion, the owner-builder will have the burden of proving that he did not build or improve for the purpose of sale).

I, as owner of the property, am exclusively contracting with licensed contractors to construct the project (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code: The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who contracts for such projects with a contractor(s) licensed pursuant to the Contractor's License Law.).

I am exempt under Sec. B. & P. C. for this reason.

Date 8/4/83 Owner's Signature

WORKERS' COMPENSATION DECLARATION

18. I hereby affirm that I have a certificate of consent to self-insure, or a certificate of Workers' Compensation Insurance, or a certified copy thereof (Sec. 3800, Lab. C).

Policy No. Insurance Company

Certified copy is hereby furnished.

Certified copy is filed with the Los Angeles City Dept. of Bldg. & Safety.

Date Applicant's Signature

Applicant's Mailing Address

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

19. I certify that in the performance of the work for which this permit is issued I shall not employ any person in any manner so as to become subject to the Workers' Compensation Laws of California.

Date 8/4/83 Applicant's Signature

NOTICE TO APPLICANT: If, after making this Certificate of Exemption, you should become subject to the Workers' Compensation provisions of the Labor Code, you must forthwith comply with such provisions or this permit shall be deemed revoked.

CONSTRUCTION LENDING AGENCY

20. I hereby affirm that there is a construction lending agency for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued (Sec. 3097, Civ. C).

Lender's Name Lender's Address

21. I certify that I have read this application and state that the above information is correct. I agree to comply with all city and county ordinances and state laws relating to building construction, and hereby authorize representatives of this city to enter upon the above-mentioned property for inspection purposes.

I realize that this permit is an application for inspection, that it does not approve or authorize the work specified herein, that it does not authorize or permit any violation or failure to comply with any applicable law, that neither the city of Los Angeles nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed. (See Sec. 91.0202 LAMC)

Signed (Owner or agent having property owner's consent) Position Date 8/4/83

G-83420905

- OWNER OR AGENT

Plot 10A

WESTERN AVENUE

FRANKLIN AVE

NEW ADVERTISERS

EXIT
BUTTER
WATER

LA#-63956/23

001

१०१३-१
१५१२३

contemporary photos

Contemporary Photos



East elevation, view west 9/8/20 (Greene, 9/8/20)



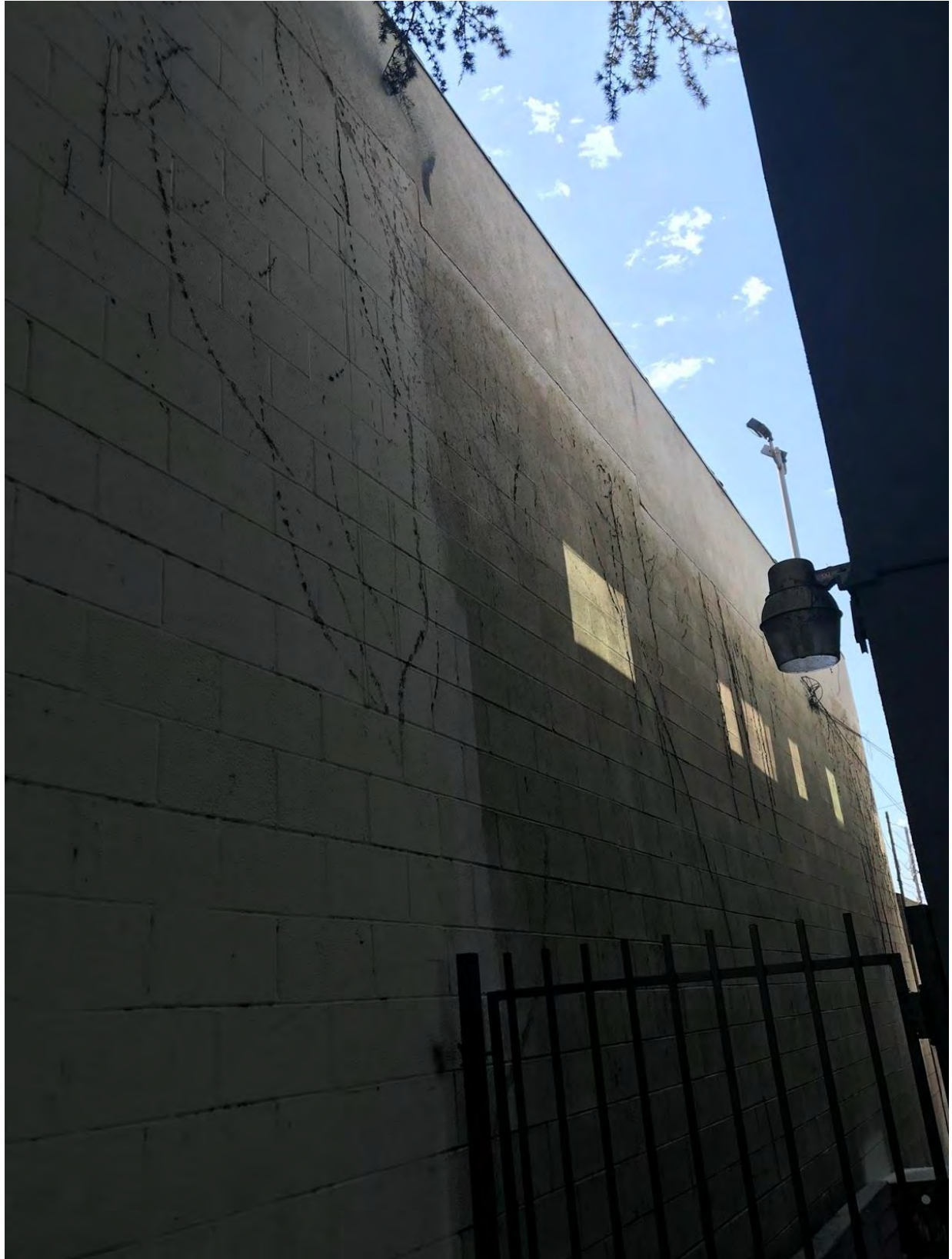
South and east elevation, view northwest (Greene, 9/8/20)



South elevation, view north (Greene, 9/8/20)



West elevation, view southeast: angle 1 (Mulcahy, 9/11/20)



West elevation, view southeast: angle 2 (Greene, 9/4/20)



Context view, view northwest (Greene, 9/4/20)



Context view, view south (Greene, 9/4/20)



Interior, view northwest (Greene, 9/4/20)



historical photos

Historical Photos



North elevation, view southeast (Corita Art Center, c. 1960s)



A digital reproduction of archival materials are included as part of this nomination for purposes of illustrating the style and content that is characteristic of Sister Mary Corita (Corita Kent) body of work and accomplishments during the period of significance proposed for 5518 Franklin Avenue. It is intended for use in relation to this application or other fair use for educational purposes. All IP properties, image rights, photographs, artwork copyrights and personage to remain owned by Immaculate Heart Community / Corita Art Center or associated 3rd party.



East elevation, view southwest (Corita Art Center, c. 1960s)



A digital reproduction of archival materials are included as part of this nomination for purposes of illustrating the style and content that is characteristic of Sister Mary Corita (Corita Kent) body of work and accomplishments during the period of significance proposed for 5518 Franklin Avenue. It is intended for use in relation to this application or other fair use for educational purposes. All IP properties, image rights, photographs, artwork copyrights and personage to remain owned by Immaculate Heart Community / Corita Art Center or associated 3rd party.



East elevation, facing west (Conrad, 1967)



A digital reproduction of archival materials are included as part of this nomination for purposes of illustrating the style and content that is characteristic of Sister Mary Corita (Corita Kent) body of work and accomplishments during the period of significance proposed for 5518 Franklin Avenue. It is intended for use in relation to this application or other fair use for educational purposes. All IP properties, image rights, photographs, artwork copyrights and personage to remain owned by Immaculate Heart Community / Corita Art Center or associated 3rd party.



East elevation, facing west (Conrad, 1967)



A digital reproduction of archival materials are included as part of this nomination for purposes of illustrating the style and content that is characteristic of Sister Mary Corita (Corita Kent) body of work and accomplishments during the period of significance proposed for 5518 Franklin Avenue. It is intended for use in relation to this application or other fair use for educational purposes. All IP properties, image rights, photographs, artwork copyrights and personage to remain owned by Immaculate Heart Community / Corita Art Center or associated 3rd party.



Context view, view south (Corita Art Center, c. 1960s)



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Context view, view northwest (Corita Art Center, c. 1960s)



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my stepfather
& little sister

SUSIE ENTZ



visitors



MARY
KATHARINE



SR.
MARY
CLAUDE →
& HOBART



corita
art
center

Interior (Corita Art Center, c. 1960s)



Interior (Corita Art Center, c. 1960s)



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zimas parcel report



City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

9/24/2020 PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

PROPERTY ADDRESSES

5516 W FRANKLIN AVE
5518 W FRANKLIN AVE
1863 N WESTERN AVE
1861 N WESTERN AVE
1859 N WESTERN AVE
5510 W FRANKLIN AVE
5512 W FRANKLIN AVE
5514 W FRANKLIN AVE
5500 W FRANKLIN AVE

ZIP CODES

90027
90028

RECENT ACTIVITY

CHC-2020-5630-HCM
ENV-2020-5631-CE
PAR-2019-3358-CM
ZA-2019-6570-CUB-SPP-SPPA

CASE NUMBERS

CPC-2016-1450-CPU
CPC-2014-669-CPU
CPC-2005-6082
CPC-2000-1976-SP
CPC-1997-43-CPU
CPC-1986-831-GPC
CPC-1984-1-HD
ORD-61989
ORD-184888
ORD-184414
ORD-184385
ORD-184271
ORD-182960
ORD-182173-SA8
ORD-173799
ORD-173749
ORD-164701
ORD-161116-SA14
ORD-129279
ZA-2019-6570-CUB-SPP-SPPA
ENV-2019-6571-CE
ENV-2016-1451-EIR
ENV-2014-670-SE
ENV-2005-2158-EIR
ENV-2000-1978-ND

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	150A193 167
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	17,004.5 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 593 - GRID H3
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5544004025
Tract	HOLLYWOOD TERRACE TRACT
Map Reference	M B 3-98
Block	None
Lot	51
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	None
Map Sheet	150A193

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Hollywood
Area Planning Commission	Central
Neighborhood Council	Hollywood United
Council District	CD 13 - Mitch O'Farrell
Census Tract #	1903.01
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	C4-1D
Zoning Information (ZI)	ZI-2441 Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone ZI-2433 Revised Hollywood Injunction ZI-2452 Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles ZI-2286 Specific Plan: Vermont/Western Station Neighborhood Area Plan ZI-2441 Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone ZI-2374 State Enterprise Zone: Los Angeles Neighborhood Office Commercial
General Plan Land Use	None
General Plan Note(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Specific Plan Area	VERMONT / WESTERN STATION NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN
Subarea	B: Mixed Use Boulevards
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Other Historic Survey Information	None
Mills Act Contract	None
CDO: Community Design Overlay	None
CPIO: Community Plan Imp. Overlay	None
Subarea	None
CUGU: Clean Up-Green Up	None
HCR: Hillside Construction Regulation	No
NSO: Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No
POD: Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
RFA: Residential Floor Area District	None
RIO: River Implementation Overlay	No

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(*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

SN: Sign District	No
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
Affordable Housing Linkage Fee	
Residential Market Area	Medium-High
Non-Residential Market Area	High
Transit Oriented Communities (TOC)	Tier 3
RPA: Redevelopment Project Area	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No
Assessor Information	
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5544004025
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	FRANKLIN WESTERN PARTNERS LLC VICTORY INV CO INC LESSORS
Owner2	RALPHS GROCERY COMPANY SUBLESSEE
Address	585 UNIQUE LN SIMI VALLEY CA 93065
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)	
Owner	FRANKLIN WESTERN PARTNERS, LLC (ET AL) (2/3)
Address	585 UNIQUE LANE SIMI VALLEY CA 93065
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.390 (ac)
Use Code	1200 - Commercial - Store Combination - Store and Office Combination - One Story
Assessed Land Val.	\$1,273,184
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$149,129
Last Owner Change	11/22/2013
Last Sale Amount	\$9
Tax Rate Area	13
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	6-144
	592191
	3413
	3277
	1843244
	1664127
	1641022
	1641019
Building 1	
Year Built	1959
Building Class	C55A
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	1,600.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	
Year Built	1953
Building Class	CXA
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	1,200.0 (sq ft)

Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5544004025]

Additional Information

Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone	YES
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	Outside Flood Zone
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	None
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	Yes
Wells	None

Seismic Hazards

Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	0.64456056
Nearest Fault (Name)	Hollywood Fault
Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.00000000
Slip Geometry	Left Lateral - Reverse - Oblique
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	14.00000000
Rupture Top	0.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	70.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.40000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	Yes
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No

Economic Development Areas

Business Improvement District	None
Hubzone	Redesignated until Dec 2021
Opportunity Zone	No
Promise Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone	LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE

Housing

Direct all Inquiries to	Housing+Community Investment Department
Telephone	(866) 557-7368
Website	http://hcidla.lacity.org
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5544004025]
Ellis Act Property	No

Public Safety

Police Information	
Bureau	West
Division / Station	Hollywood
Reporting District	638

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Fire Information

Bureau	West
Battalion	5
District / Fire Station	82
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

Case Number:	CPC-2016-1450-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	UPDATE TO THE HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN
Case Number:	CPC-2014-669-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	CPC-2005-6082
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Case Number:	CPC-2000-1976-SP
Required Action(s):	SP-SPECIFIC PLAN (INCLUDING AMENDMENTS)
Project Descriptions(s):	A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE PROPOSED VERMONT/WESTERN TRANSIT ORIENTED DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD AND SPECIFIC PLAN ORDINANCE.
Case Number:	CPC-1997-43-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT
Case Number:	CPC-1986-831-GPC
Required Action(s):	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN REVISION/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY PLAN AMENDMENT, ZONE CHANGES AND HEIGHT DISTRICT CHANGES
Case Number:	CPC-1984-1-HD
Required Action(s):	HD-HEIGHT DISTRICT
Project Descriptions(s):	CHANGE OF HEIGHT DISTRICT WITHIN THE "CORE AREA OF L.A."- GENERAL PLAN ZONE CONSISTENCY PROGRAM.
Case Number:	ZA-2019-6570-CUB-SPP-SPPA
Required Action(s):	CUB-CONDITIONAL USE BEVERAGE-ALCOHOL SPP-SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE SPPA-SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT PERMIT ADJUSTMENT
Project Descriptions(s):	PER LAMC SECTION 11.5.7 REQUEST FOR SPECIFIC PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE IN THE WESTERN/VERMONT SNAP AREA FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM RITE-AID PHARMACY, YOGA FITNESS GYM AND REAR BUILDING TO LAZY ACRES SUPERMARKET WITH NEW CONSTRUCTION THAT INVOLVES EXTENSIVE REMODEL. PER LAMC SECTION 11.5.7 E.2 REQUEST FOR PROJECT PERMIT ADJUSTMENT FOR AN INCREASE IN PARKING, LANDSCAPE BUFFER AND TRANSPARENCY. PER LAMC 12.24 W.1, A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR OFF SITE CONSUMPTION IN RELATION TO A SUPERMARKET.
Case Number:	ENV-2019-6571-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	PER LAMC SECTION 11.5.7 REQUEST FOR SPECIFIC PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE IN THE WESTERN/VERMONT SNAP AREA FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM RITE-AID PHARMACY, YOGA FITNESS GYM AND REAR BUILDING TO LAZY ACRES SUPERMARKET WITH NEW CONSTRUCTION THAT INVOLVES EXTENSIVE REMODEL. PER LAMC SECTION 11.5.7 E.2 REQUEST FOR PROJECT PERMIT ADJUSTMENT FOR AN INCREASE IN PARKING, LANDSCAPE BUFFER AND TRANSPARENCY. PER LAMC 12.24 W.1, A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR OFF SITE CONSUMPTION IN RELATION TO A SUPERMARKET.
Case Number:	ENV-2016-1451-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Project Descriptions(s):	UPDATE TO THE HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN
Case Number:	ENV-2014-670-SE
Required Action(s):	SE-STATUTORY EXEMPTIONS
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	ENV-2005-2158-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT
Case Number:	ENV-2000-1978-ND
Required Action(s):	ND-NEGATIVE DECLARATION

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Project Descriptions(s): A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE PROPOSED VERMONT/WESTERN TRANSIT ORIENTED DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD AND SPECIFIC PLAN ORDINANCE.

DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-61989

ORD-184888

ORD-184414

ORD-184385

ORD-184271

ORD-182960

ORD-182173-SA8

ORD-173799

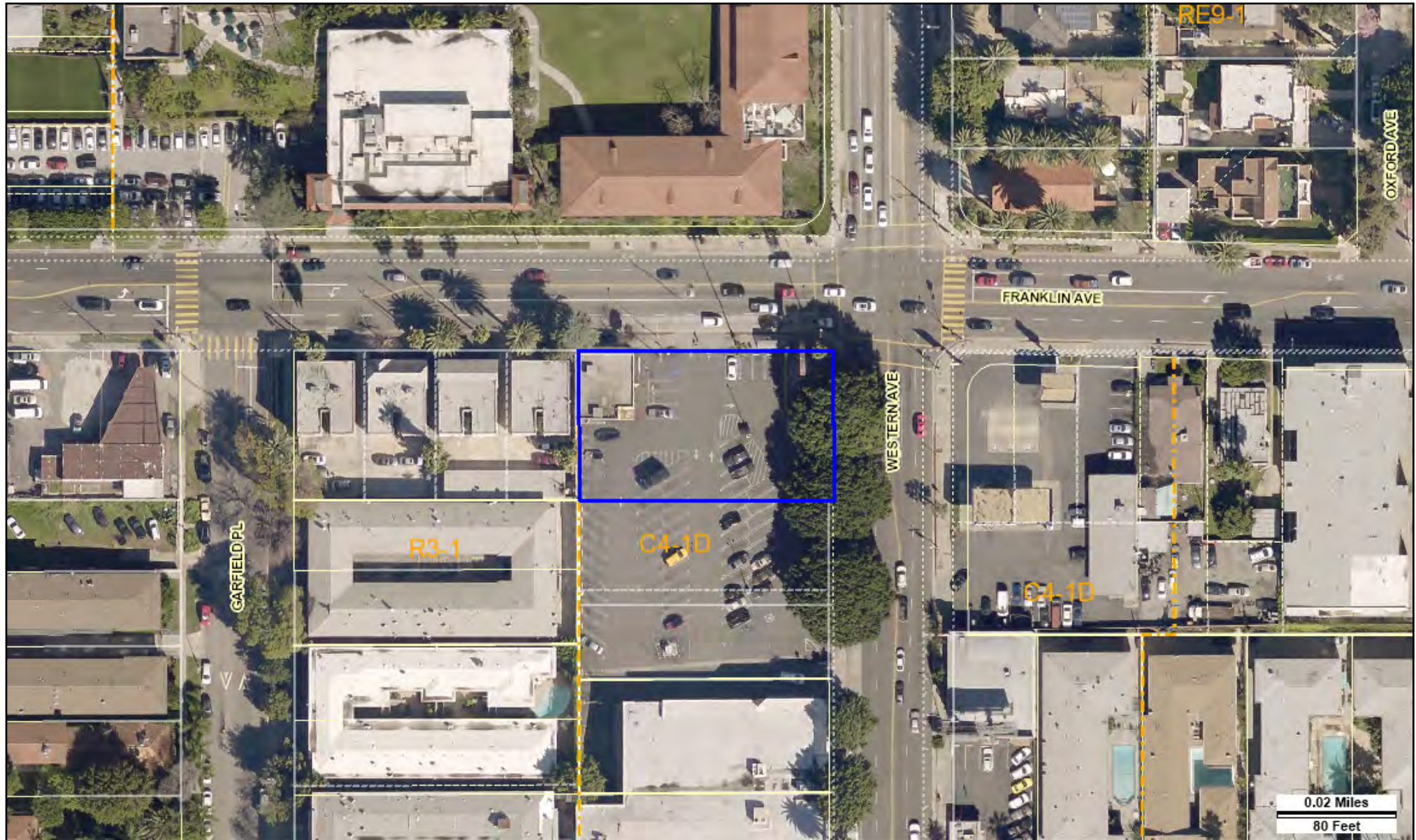
ORD-173749

ORD-164701

ORD-161116-SA14

ORD-129279

ND-2000-1978



Address: 5516 W FRANKLIN AVE

Tract: HOLLYWOOD TERRACE
TRACT

Zoning: C4-1D

APN: 5544004025

Block: None

General Plan: Neighborhood Office Commercial

PIN #: 150A193 167

Lot: 51

Arb: None

