

Corita Kent

Works from the 1960s

April 26 – June 15

Opening Reception: Friday, May 3, 6-8pm

55 Walker Street

"It is a huge danger to pretend awful things do not happen. But you need enough hope to keep on going. I am trying to make hope. And you have to grab it where you can." – Corita Kent

Andrew Kreps Gallery and kaufmann repetto, New York are pleased to announce an exhibition of works by **Corita Kent** (b. 1918, Fort Dodge, Iowa, d. 1986, Boston) at 55 Walker Street.

Corita Kent was an artist, educator, and advocate for social justice. In 1936, Corita joined the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, taking the name Sister Mary Corita. She began teaching in the Immaculate Heart College art department by 1947 and produced her first serigraphs in the early 50s. While her first prints consisted of dense, figurative compositions with religious themes and iconography, by 1962—after seeing Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans* at Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles—her work evolved into a singular mode of Pop art. Reflecting a wide breadth of disciplinary interests, her bright compositions were not limited to the staple imagery and language of consumer and mass culture but also integrated philosophy, literature, street signage, scripture, and song lyrics in bold text and abstract forms.

The presentation at 55 Walker focuses on the years following 1962, displaying works that combine themes of faith, acceptance, and politics. Taking a celebratory approach to the everyday, Corita combined texts from newspapers, supermarkets, and advertising, alongside passages from figures such as Daniel Berrigan, e.e. cummings, Martin Luther King Jr., and others. These vibrant calls to arms encouraged the viewer to work towards mutual respect and dignity for all people. As tensions surrounding the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War escalated in the late 60s, so did Corita's response to current events as she asked: "*Why not give a damn about your fellow man?*" Following mounting pressure from the conservative Archdiocese of Los Angeles, as well as exhaustion from her increasingly public profile, Corita ultimately left the order in 1968 and moved to Boston where she continued to pursue her work.

Corita Kent's work is held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; and others. Notable exhibitions include: '*Corita Kent: Get With The Action*,' Ditchling Museum of Art+Craft, Ditchling, England (2019); '*Corita Kent and the Language of Pop*,' Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA (2015); '*Someday is Now*,' Tang Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY (2013); '*People Like Us: Prints from the 1960s by Sister Corita*,' Museum Ludwig, Ludwig, Germany (2007).