



# THE ART NEWSPAPER

## *Estate of Corita Kent, Pop artist, activist and former nun, finds new home in Arts District*

The Corita Art Center will include a dedicated space for exhibitions

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Corita Kent left the Catholic order to focus on her activist art and teaching  
Courtesy of the Corita Art Center

Los Angeles has many important cultural legacies—legacies often crowded out by the loud blare of Hollywood. The story of Corita Kent, also called Sister Mary Corita (1918-86), is one of them.

A teacher and artist, Kent used art to promote messages of peace, hope and social justice in the 1960s and 70s. On 8 March, after years of operating out of a small space, the Corita Art Center (CAC) opens its own home in the Arts District. It will have offices and storage, plus, for the first time, a dedicated space for exhibitions.

“Groundbreaking” is how Nellie Scott, the executive director of the CAC, describes Kent’s work. “We have the great privilege of being caretakers of her estate,” she tells *The Art Newspaper*. The centre houses Kent’s art, archives and related materials, totalling more than 30,000 objects. “Not only was she an artist and educator, but also a social-justice advocate, and for part of her life, she was known as Sister Mary Corita,” Scott says.

At the age of 18, Kent joined the Roman Catholic order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for many years, she taught art at the Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles. Mostly self-taught, she was drawn to the bold graphics of Pop art, focusing on serigraphs so that her work would be affordable and more widely distributed. Over time, she became increasingly political, creating works in support of the antiwar movement, racial equality and women's rights. Such themes ultimately put her at odds with the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and she left the order in 1968 and moved to Boston. Many of her fellow sisters also left and formed the Immaculate Heart Community.

Kent's influence extends beyond those she taught or who bought her work, including artists who never met her. They include Lauren Halsey, who says Kent is "central to my beginnings as an artist", and Alexandra Grant, who says that Kent "is still an inspiration and a breath of fresh air".

The first show at CAC will be *Heroes & Sheroes*, with 29 prints Kent made after she moved to Boston. In the series, Scott says, Kent is "including the news and the media, and in a way, she's reporting it, too". Among those featured in the works are Martin Luther King Jr, Coretta Scott King and Robert F. Kennedy.