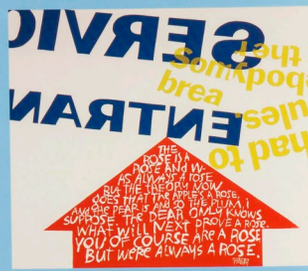
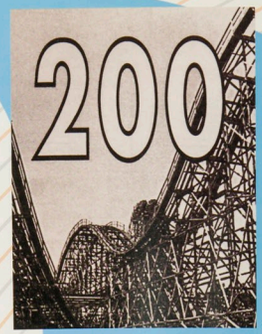




Power Up:

Sister Corita and Donald Moffett, Interlocking

organized by Julie Ault

UCLA **HAMMER** MUSEUM
Los Angeles
February 6 – April 2, 2000

For the exhibition **Power Up: Sister Corita and Donald Moffett, Interlocking**, organizer Julie Ault has drawn together works by two artists active almost three decades apart, Corita Kent (1918-86) and Donald Moffett (b. 1955). Art created by Sister Corita includes works made between 1959 and 1969 in Los Angeles, while Moffett's works were made between 1989 and 1992 in New York. Though their works differ notably in style and subject matter, both artists employ words and images to create powerful statements about political and social issues, and both use multiple forms of distribution for their works.

Ault's curatorial presence is not limited to selecting the artists and works for the exhibition. By presenting the works in a context that includes contemporary ephemeral materials as well as her own graphics, colored walls, and modular furniture, Ault has created a new work of art—the exhibition itself. In creating such an exhibition, she reinterprets the traditional curatorial role as artistic practice. As she has noted, curating is a political process as well as an aesthetic act and involves issues of inclusion and exclusion. Her openly subjective approach raises questions about curatorial objectivity and the institutional validation of art and artists through the design and presentation of exhibitions. By extension, Ault also asks questions about the act and meaning of collecting.

Certainly the issue of collecting had much to do with our initial enthusiasm about presenting this exhibition at the Hammer, since the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts holds an extensive collection of works by Corita Kent. Corita made provisions for the bequest to the center of her personal archive of her own work, which includes more than nine hundred limited-edition serigraphs and related drawings and sketchbooks. As both a college teacher and a political activist, she was concerned that this nearly complete representation of thirty years of work be preserved intact within an extensive university art collection available to faculty, students, and the public for research purposes. Corita also recorded an extensive oral history through the UCLA Oral History Program which included a discussion of the intersecting concerns of her life and work: art, education, religion, ethics, and politics. She left her personal papers, photo archive, and remaining inventory of prints to the Immaculate Heart Community, which established the Corita Art Center in 1997.

One of Corita's "rules" for her students was "save everything." In considering the role of a university museum collection such as the Grunwald Center, this admonition seems an appropriate point of departure for a brief discussion of the nature of institutional art collecting. Institutions cannot, in fact, save everything, and their forced selections determine to a certain extent how successive generations view and value art and cultural history. Thus, in making art, collecting art, and presenting exhibitions, we are confronted with a similar range of issues involving personal responsibility, guesses about the nature of the past and future needs, and, inevitably, limitations of time and space.

The Grunwald Center collection comprises more than forty thousand prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books, primarily by European, American, and Japanese artists from the sixteenth century to the present. With medium—paper—as the primary principle of selection, graphic arts collections such as the Grunwald Center often contain a wide variety of materials. As with other "special collections" in research libraries and archives, only a fraction of the holdings comes to public view in exhibitions. These collections typically range in date and place of origin from early Renaissance Italy to present-day Los Angeles or Mexico City and in type from one-of-a-kind drawings to mass-produced prints. The latter works might take the form of sixteenth-century "posters" intended to be pasted on city walls, eighteenth-century broadsheets, or illustrations for modern journals and newspapers. Their ephemeral nature and often-inexpensive materials ensure that what was once plentiful, and hardly "collectible," is now rare. The growing interest—in both academic and museum circles—in what is often referred to as "visual culture" has also enhanced the intellectual and monetary value of such materials. But the question of what to collect—given limitations of time, space, and funds—remains a complex one. What most accurately represents a culture: a modest book of illustrated homilies, a broadsheet about a notorious trial or treaty, a sketch for a connoisseur, or an engraving by Albrecht Dürer?

Included in the Grunwald collection are a large number of works by artists who created political and social satire, most notably the nineteenth-century satirists Honoré Daumier and George Cruikshank. The Corita Kent archive is part of this tumultuous tradition of social and political art. This area of collecting is a particular strength of the Grunwald Center and is especially appropriate to a collection belonging to a university where history, politics, and culture are examined in detail from a variety of perspectives.

In the study of art history the print medium offers perhaps the most direct information about social and political circumstances. Such works were often produced for a popular audience familiar with the social and political events of their time. Once available in great numbers and widely distributed, they are today relatively scarce, but their meaning, so enmeshed in the contemporary, is perhaps even more elusive. The biting social commentary embodied in such works is often transitory, based as it is upon ever-evolving current events. The elaborate caricatures that satirized the unfolding events of the French Revolution, for example, portray persons and incidents well known to every French citizen in the 1790s. The biting specificity of those prints, however, presents an enormous challenge for those trying to understand those events today. Similarly, the works of Kent and Moffett will one day be less comprehensible to the average viewer than they are to those of us who are familiar with the historical and cultural milieu in which they were created. Both artists employ a kind of vernacular, often derived from the mass media, which makes their work accessible to a broad audience. But this also "dates" the work, clouding its meanings for later audiences unfamiliar with this shorthand language. Thus, our role as an institution involves not only collecting, preserving, and exhibiting but also undertaking the research and documentation that enable us to respond to a constantly shifting demand for sophisticated historical context.

What to collect, and how to present and interpret it, remains the challenge and the question for institutions. Some, usually libraries or archives, strive to cast as wide a net as possible. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, for example, collects one impression of every print published in France as well as all newspaper photographs. Smaller collections, such as the Grunwald Center, cannot be so comprehensive, as the limitations of space and funding demand selectivity. In the case of large gifts, the works have often been preselected. The donation of an individual's collection may represent a lifetime of idiosyncratic searching and selecting. Or an institution may acquire an artist's personal collection of her own work.

The accessibility of a collection allows it to be viewed by individuals or, as in the case of **Power Up**, juxtaposed with the work of another artist of equal passion but different sensibility. We welcome this opportunity to reconsider our assumptions about our collections and our responsibilities and to recontextualize the works in our care so that they remain an active part of today's cultural and artistic dialogue.

— Cynthia Burlingham
Senior Curator, Grunwald
Center for the Graphic Arts

Exhibition checklist

Works by Donald Moffett

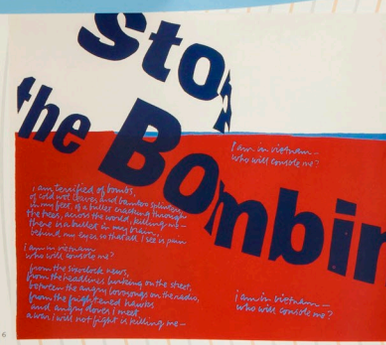
He Kills Me, 1987, offset lithography poster, 23 1/2" x 37 1/2"; **Kiss me long and deep and hard until I forget what's been going on around here**, 1989, Plexiglas, fluorescent light, and Cibatransparency, 24 1/4" x 29 3/4"; **The New York Crimes**, March 28, 1989, in collaboration with Gran Fury for ACT UP, Target City Hall demonstrations, offset lithography on newsprint, 23" x 30" folded to 23" x 15"; **Welcome**, 1989, Paint on brochure, framed, 14" x 11"; **Call the White House**, 1990, Plexiglas, fluorescent light, and Cibatransparency, 40" x 60"; **I spoke with your god. He commands me to cut out your mouth**, 1990, Plexiglas, fluorescent light, and Cibatransparency, 14" diameter each, 13 parts; **You and your kind are not wanted here**, 1990, Plexiglas, fluorescent light, and Cibatransparency, 14" diameter each, 8 parts; **Mercy**, 1991, Plexiglas, fluorescent light, and Cibatransparency, 14" diameter each, 4 parts, 34" x 34" installed, Collection of The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York City; **You and your kind are not wanted here**, 1994, in collaboration with Bureau, ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project street poster, visibility campaign, offset lithography, 58" X 40"; **In Memory of Allen R. Schindler**, 1993, in collaboration with Bureau, street poster, offset lithography, two parts, each 37" x 24"; **Check Out Your Violence of Opinion**, 1989/97, 19" x 14"; **Come Out Come Out**, 1989/97, 19" x 14"; Examine the Blindness of Your Science, 1989/97, 13" x 19"; **I Am a Female Impersonator**, 1989/97, 19" x 14"; **Imagine Hope**, 1989/97, 19" x 24," Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund; **I Was Kind of Hoping**, 1989/97, 13" x 19"; **Knock. Knock.**, 1991/97, 13" x 19," Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund; **Meet Me at the Vortex**, 1989/97, 13" x 19"; **Poof, You Just Disappeared**, 1989/97, 13" x 19"; **Practice Saying Sodomy Without Flinching**, 1989/97, 13" x 19"; **You Are The Power and the Glory**, 1989/97, 14 1/2" x 14 1/2"; **You Get These Weird Ideas**, 1989/97, 13" x 19"; **You Tease Me to Death**, 1989/97, 19" x 24"; **If We're the 1000 Points of Light**, 1990/97, 13" x 19"; **There's a Season for Defiance**, 1990/97, 14 1/2" x 14 1/2"; **Wolf**, 1990/97, 19" x 24," Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. Alexander A. Goldfarb Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund; **Doctor Doctor**, 1991/97, 13" x 19"; **Evil Circus**, 1991/97, 13" x 19"; **Still Our Man**, 1991/97, 14 1/2" x 14 1/2"; **200**, 1991/97, 19" x 14"; **What Now My Love?**, 1992/97, 14 1/2" x 14 1/2".

Unless otherwise noted all works are Iris prints, framed. All Iris prints are derived from images initially made for *The Village Voice* newspaper, New York City, at the invitation of Richard Goldstein. Unless otherwise noted all works are collection of the artist.

Works by Corita Kent

Red Sea, 1959, 24" x 33"; **Wonderbread**, 1962, 30 3/4" x 25 5/8"; **That they may have life**, 1964, 24" x 36"; **To All of My Calling Your Name**, 1963, 25 5/8" x 30 3/4"; **A Piece of Good News**, 1963, 30 3/4" x 24 3/4"; **I See God, #1**, 1963, 25 5/8" x 30 3/4"; **As A Witness To The Light For John 23 And J.F.K.**, 1964, 39 3/4" x 36"; **F is for Food**, 1964, 29 3/4" x 36"; **For Eleanor**, 1964, 29 3/4" x 36"; **In**, 1964, 24" X 36"; **Mary Does Laugh**, 1964, 29 3/4" x 36"; **Someday is Now**, 1964, 24" x 36"; **The Juiciest Tomato of All**, 1964, 29 3/4" x 36"; **Enriched Bread**, 1965, 29 3/4" x 36 3/8"; **If**, 1965, 23" x 35 1/4"; **My people**, 1965, 23" x 35"; **Power Up**, 1965, 28 3/4" x 35" each, 4 parts; **Yes People Like Us**, 1965, 35" x 28 7/8"; **I Wanna Hold Your Hand**, 1965, 14 3/8" x 35"; **About Dragons**, 1965, 30" x 36"; **December 25**, 1965, 9 5/8" x 18 1/8"; **Describing Signs**, 1965, 23" x 18 1/4"; **Life**, 1965, 17 1/2" x 14 1/4"; **Love Is Here To Stay**, 1965, 17 1/2" x 14 1/4"; **Place All Around Us**, 1965, 14 3/8" x 17 1/2"; **The Crusty Loaf**, 1965, 20" x 23"; **Workpower, Air Conditioner**, 1965, 17" x 23"; **To 93.**, 1965, 17" x 13 1/2"; **We Care**, 1966, 30" x 36"; **Who Came Out of the Water**, 1966, 36" x 30"; **Ha**, 1966, 29 3/4" x 36 1/4"; **Come Off It**, 1966, 36" x 30"; **Tomorrow the Stars**, 1966, 30" x 36"; **Give The Gang Our Best**, 1966, 36" x 29 3/4"; **For Emergency Use Soft Shoulder**, 1966, 30" x 36"; **Help The Big Bird**, 1966, 30" x 36"; **Where There's Life There's Mud**, 1966, 15" x 29 3/4"; **Let's Talk**, 1966, 15" x 36"; **Jesus Never Fails**, 1967, 30" x 36"; **Somebody Had To Break The Rules**, 1967, 30" x 36"; **Handle With Care**, 1967, 23" x 35"; **Thirsty Better With**, 1967, 23" x 35"; **With Love To The Everyday Miracle**, 1967, 23" x 35"; **Stop The Bombing**, 1967, 15 1/2" x 23"; **That Man Loves**, 1967, 19 1/2" x 23"; **Come Alive**, 1967, 18" x 23"; **I Am the People**, 1967, 17 3/4" x 23"; **Wet and Wild**, 1967, 18" x 23"; **O Is For O My God**, 1968, 17 1/2" X 23"; **Let The Sun Shine**, 1968, 29" x 23"; **The Cry That Will Be Heard**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **News of the Week**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **American Sampler**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **Christy**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **Moonflowers**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **Manflowers**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **Phil and Dan**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **A Breath of Fresh Air**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **If I**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **Chavez**, 1969, 23" x 12"; **It Can Be Said Of Them**, 1969, 23" x 12".

Unless otherwise noted all works are Serigraphs. All works are Collection of the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, UCLA. Corita Kent Bequest. Copyright Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community, Los Angeles.



Ephemeral materials

Videotapes: **Corita Kent On Teaching and Celebration**, 1986, Baylis Glascock Films; **Target City Hall**, 1989, DIVA TV; selected *Newsweek*, *Life* magazines; selected publications including **Irregular Bulletin --The Gloria Issue** from the IHC, **Divine Disobedience: Profiles in Catholic Radicalism**, by Francine du Plessix Gray, (Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, New York 1971), **Footnotes and Headlines**, by Corita Kent (Herder & Herder, New York: 1967), **AIDSDEMOGRAPHICS**, by Douglas Crimp and Adam Rolston (Bay Press, Seattle: 1990). HIV prevention booklets and pamphlets designed by Bureau for GMHC; tear sheets from *The Village Voice* "Age of AIDS" columns 1989-92; ACT UP Fact sheets from the Stop the Church demonstration; newspaper articles about the Stop the Church demonstration organized by ACT UP and WHAM at St. Patrick's Cathedral, December 10, 1989; postcards by Donald Moffett; greeting cards, book jackets, stickers by Corita Kent; photocopied articles; photographs and quotations by Donald Moffett and Corita Kent.

5. Power Up **exhibition, 1997, at the Wadsworth Atheneum. 6.** Stop the Bombing, **Corita Kent, 1967, photo by Robert Wedemeyer. 7.** Wolf, **Donald Moffett, 1990/97, as it appeared in** *The Village Voice* **newspaper. 8.** He Kills Me, **Donald Moffett, 1987, street poster campaign. 9.** Every Friday in July, **1964, photo by Corita Kent; storefront sale of her prints.**

Cover images
Left: Come Out Come Out, **Donald Moffett, 1989/97. Right:** Mary Does Laugh, **Corita Kent, 1964, photo by Robert Wedemeyer; the central text fragment in this image refers to the Market Basket supermarket, a source of inspiration and materials for Corita.**

All photos by Corita Kent reproduced with permission from the Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community.

Donald Moffett (b.1955) is an artist who began exhibiting extensively at the height of the Reagan/Bush era. Conceptually driven, his work fans out across media including photography, paintings, sculpture, postcards and posters. As activist, artist and designer Moffett has broadly contributed to the gay liberation and AIDS-activist movements. Moffett was a founding member of the collective Gran Fury (active between 1987 and 1993) and is a partner in Bureau, a studio he co-founded in 1989 with Marlene McCarty. Moffett's work has been exhibited widely in the US and in Europe. He lives and works in New York City.

Sister Corita Kent (1918–1986), later known as Corita, was a celebrated artist of international fame whose artistic career spanned over three decades. Her primary medium was serigraphy. Corita was art professor at Immaculate Heart College from 1952 to 1968, and chaired the College's Art Department from 1964 to 1968 during which time she transformed it into a center for the art of learning as well as the learning of art. Corita left Immaculate Heart College in 1968 and moved to Boston to devote herself to her art. Corita Kent was dedicated to peace and social justice.

Julie Ault (b. 1957) is an artist who organizes exhibitions and projects both independently and in collaborative constellations. Ault views exhibition-making as a medium and frequently assumes a curatorial role as a form of artistic practice. In 1979 she co-founded Group Material, the New York City-based collaborative which until 1996 produced installations and public projects exploring interrelationships between aesthetics and politics. Ault has taught at numerous schools on a visiting basis. She lives in New York City and Los Angeles.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the many people who have supported the making of this project. Several dialogues have been particularly influential and defining. My interest in Donald Moffett's artistic voice and in fashioning a context in which to re-present his montages made for *The Village Voice* was the initial motivation for **Power Up**. Moffett's collaboration has been crucial, his voice frequently illuminated the process and sharpened the project. Andrea Miller-Keller embraced the proposed exhibition from its start and provided thoughtful care in guiding its realization in Hartford. Similarly, Ann Philbin, Director of the UCLA Hammer Museum, David Rodes, Director, and Cynthia Burlingham, Senior Curator of the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts have embraced **Power Up** with remarkable commitment and enthusiasm. My ongoing dialogue with Martin Beck about every aspect of the project has transformed it incalculably. Beck's informed collaboration on the exhibition design as well as his graphic design for this brochure evidence his intelligent and passionate engagement with the ideas which form the subject of **Power Up**. Although I never met Corita Kent, her spirit is such a tangible force at the Immaculate Heart Community that I feel as though I had. Peggy Kayser, Director of the Corita Art Center at the IHC, welcomed my research and gave me unrestricted access to Corita's archive. She has contributed to the project in numerous ways. My many visits to the IHC and the informal encounters with women there have likewise been fortifying. I am grateful to Annette Kosack for her engagement with **Power Up** in the framework of her curatorial studies. Our dialogue generated many insights into the practice of exhibition making as well as ideas for this version of the show. Russell Ferguson's sensitive, final hour feedback is greatly appreciated. Last but not least, I am thankful to Jim Hodges for intuiting my affinity to Corita's work and for giving me one of her prints. That print provided a glimpse into the "wet and wild" world of Corita Kent and eventually ricocheted to Donald Moffett's work, subsequently resulting in the pairing.

— Julie Ault

Power Up: Sister Corita and Donald Moffett, Interlocking is an expanded version of a project organized in 1997 for the Matrix Series at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut.

This exhibition brochure is made possible by a generous grant from Joan Palevsky.