

STENCIL * ILLUSTRATIONS

Topics: Writing, illustration, stencils, silkscreen, positive & negative space

Supplies:

- scissors
- paint
- paintbrush
- markers or crayons
- thin cardboard (cereal box or similar)
- paper
- tape

Take a look around your home. How many places can you spot letters and words? On packaging, signs, books, and magnets- words are everywhere!

Maira Kalman and **Corita Kent** are two artists who use words in their artwork.



Maira Kalman



Corita Kent

MAIRA KALMAN

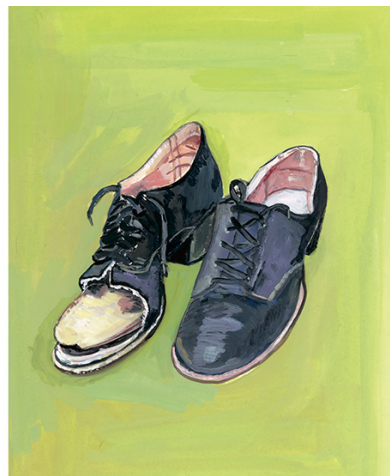
Maira Kalman was born in Tel Aviv, but grew up in New York City. She is a writer, illustrator and designer, which means she makes a lot of different things—books, magazine covers, fabric, costumes and sets for dancers, and even umbrellas. She is most famous for her paintings and illustrations that include handwritten text.



My dream is to walk around the world.
A smallish backpack, all essentials neatly
in place. A camera. A notebook. A
traveling paint set. A hat. Good shoes.
A nice pleated (green?) skirt for the
occasional seaside hotel afternoon dance.



There are the
discarded items—
chairs, sofas,
tables, umbrellas,
shoes—
also heroic for
having lived life
in happy (or unhappy)
homes.



All images copyright Maira Kalman

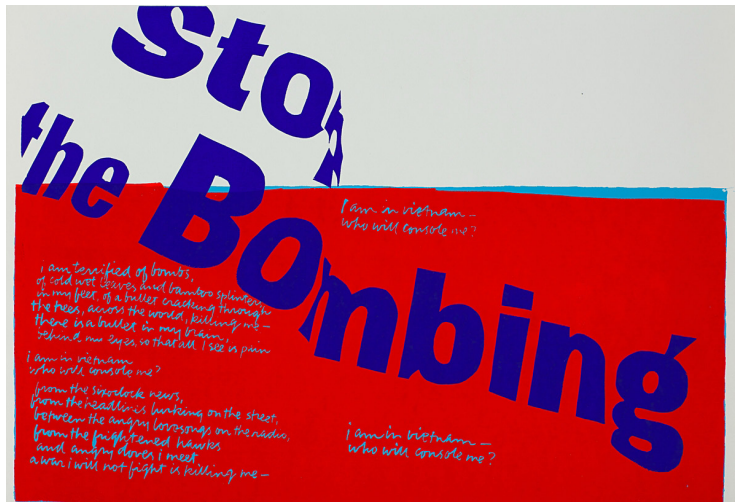


Maira uses words to comment on why she thinks the everyday objects, meals, and people in her paintings are interesting or special. How do Maira's words make you feel about the subjects in her paintings? How do you think her paintings would be different without her words?

CORITA KENT

Corita Kent grew up in California, but later moved to Massachusetts as an adult. During her lifetime, Corita was a nun, a teacher, an artist, and an advocate for social justice. Corita's work often included her own words, quotes from other people, or portions of text from advertisements. Corita used words to create images that celebrated hope and love or called attention to the problems she saw in the world.

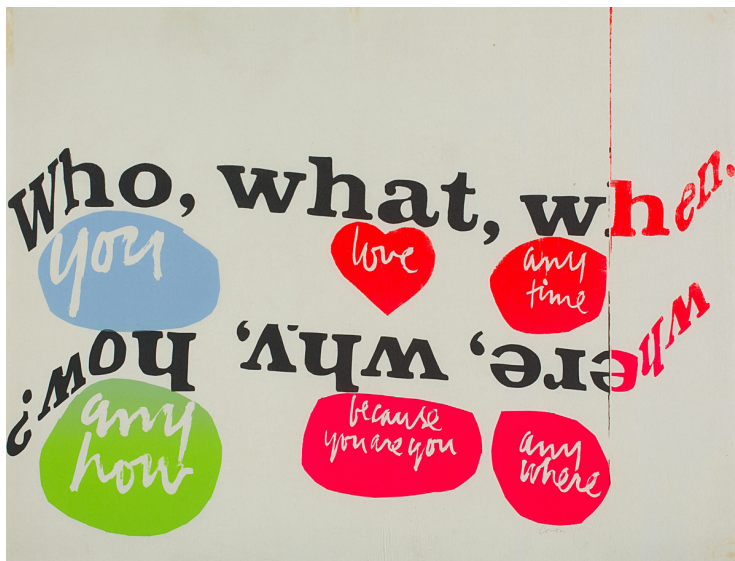
All images courtesy Corita Art Center



"stop the bombing" 1967



"look" 1965



"questions and answers" 1966



"luke 2.14, 51" 1963

By using others' words, Corita asked her viewers to look at things they saw every day with a new perspective. Why do you think Corita chose to use words in her artwork? Where else have you seen words that are meant to help others or bring about positive change?

SILKSCREEN PRINTING

Corita made watercolor paintings as well as silkscreen prints. **Silkscreening** is a printmaking technique for creating images that allows the artist to make multiple copies of the same image. The artist presses ink through a screen, similar to a **stencil**, to make an image. Watch a [video](#) of Corita in her studio!

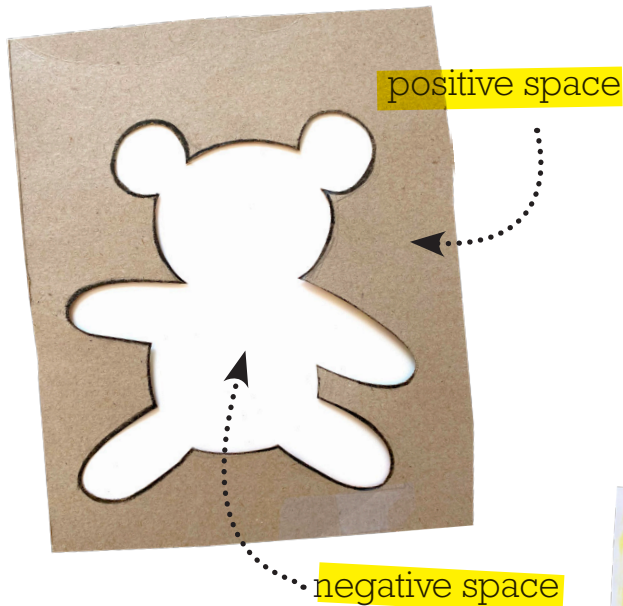


On a silkscreen, the part that is filled in to block the ink is called the **positive space** and the part that is left open is called the **negative space**. On the finished artwork, the positive and negative space flip! The areas that were left open on the screen become the areas that are filled in on the print.



Let's make a stencil illustration!

- 1** Start by thinking of an object that holds special meaning for you. Maybe it is a teddy bear you sleep with every night or a hat that belongs to an important family member. Look closely at your object if you are able to, or picture it in your head. What are the details of your object? What do you think makes it special?

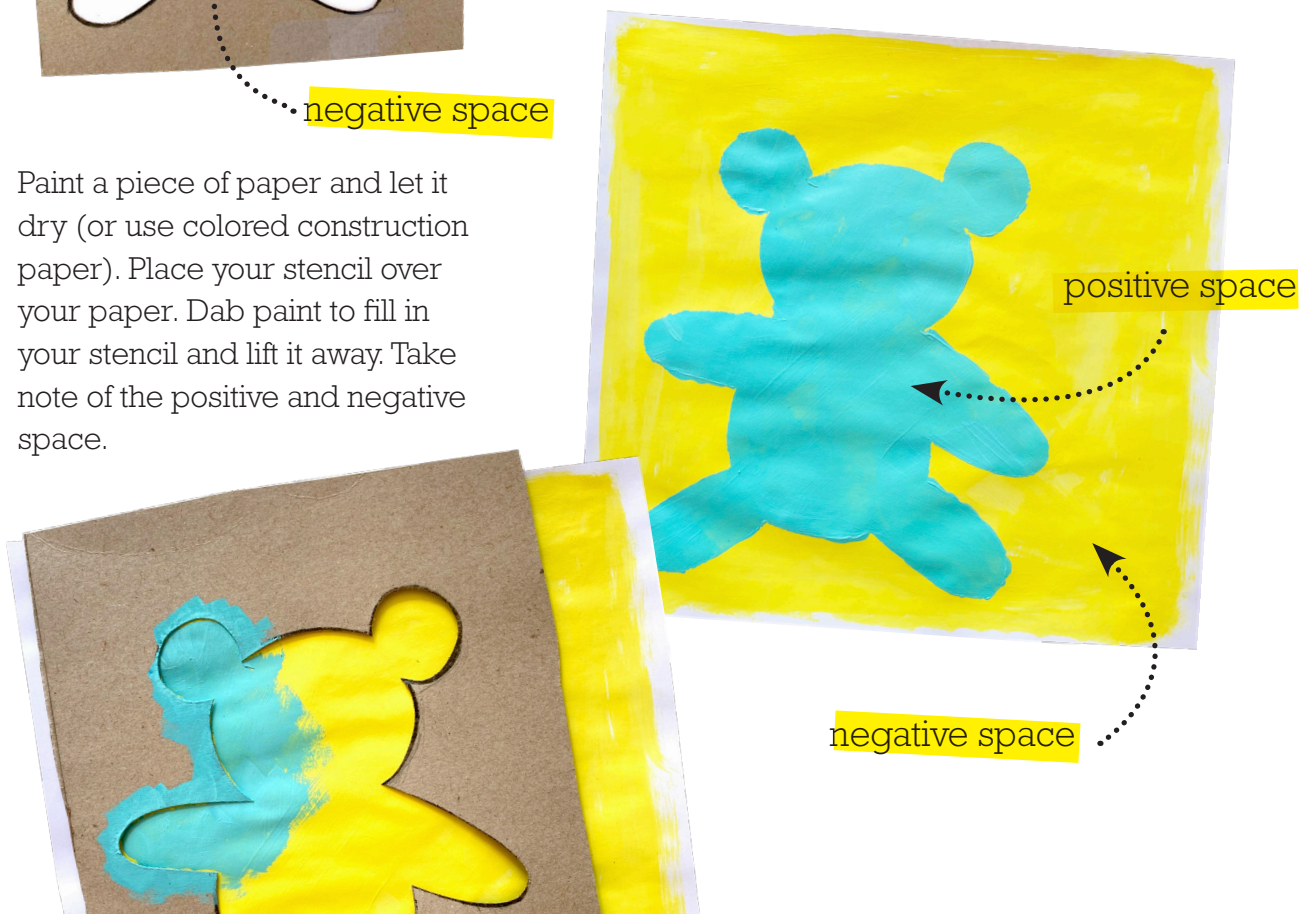


- 2** On a piece of thin cardboard, draw an outline of your object.



- 3** Use scissors to carefully cut along the edges of your drawing to create a stencil. Use tape to repair any extra cuts. Notice the positive and negative space of your stencil.

- 4** Paint a piece of paper and let it dry (or use colored construction paper). Place your stencil over your paper. Dab paint to fill in your stencil and lift it away. Take note of the positive and negative space.



Let's make a stencil illustration!

5 Once dry, add details to your artwork using markers or crayons.



6 In the negative space of your artwork, write what makes your object special. Is your object special because of how it looks or because of something else?



7 Use your stencil to make more copies, called **editions**, of your artwork!



REFLECTION

Corita Kent said:

“The most noble words can become ineffective cliché, but clichés when put into a new context can become unclichéd.”

What do you think she meant by that?



Take a look at your illustration. How would it be different without any words? What if it was just words? Did this project make you think differently about your object? If you started over, what might you do differently?

RESOURCES & SOURCES

Resources

Visit the Corita Art Center's [website](#) to learn more about Corita Kent. Check out their ongoing arts education initiative [Corita 101!](#)

Visit Maira Kalman's [website](#) to see more of her work. Support your [local bookstore](#) and maybe order a copy of one of her books!

Corita Kent was inspired by the Pop Art movement. Watch a [video](#) about Pop Art on the website for the Tate Modern Museum in London.

Other famous artists who make silkscreen prints: Andy Warhol, Shepard Fairey, Joohee Yoon, Blexbolex, Keith Haring

Sources

Kalman, Maira. *Maira Kalman*, www.mairakalman.com/.

Corita.org, Corita Art Center, Corita.org/.