

WOODCUT PRINTS



Guten Morgen, 1971,
woodcut on paper,
22 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ "
Collection of Joe and
Susie Rosenzweig

At Notre Dame she had been exposed to all forms of printmaking, but unlike etching or lithography, pulling prints off carved wood blocks required little space or special equipment, and yet each block allowed a number of images to be produced. She created her prints by hand, without the benefit of a press, in editions of ten to fifty.

While she made paintings in the early phase of her career, she did not see painting and color as the appropriate means to her ends; communication was better effected by large-scale sculpture and bold graphic forms like woodcut prints. It may be true as well that Sister Mary Charles viewed painting in post-

war America as an intellectual playground somewhat removed from service to a broad public. In that sentiment she would align herself with American social realist art and one of its foremost practitioners, Ben Shahn (1898-1969). Shahn favored humanistic themes, and his work often featured, as did hers, figures caught in introspective moments.

A variety of American artists had made woodcut prints their primary medium. Some of the closest parallels in subject and style are found in works by African-American artists like Elizabeth Catlett, Margaret Burroughs, Alan Crite, James L. Wells, and David Driskell, and others like Will Barnett and the aforementioned Irving Amen. Ben Shahn's influence can be seen in *Why?* with its scratchy graphic quality, text, and strong social message. In other cases, like her designs for publications or banners, similarities to the bold, graphic qualities of Sister Mary Corita Kent's art are evident.



Why?, 1967, silkscreen, paint,
newspaper collage on rice paper,
31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 23" *Collection of Tweed*
Museum of Art, University of
Minnesota Duluth, Gift of Henry
and Mary M. "Terry" Roberts