

Frida Kahlo

Born:

July 6th 1907

Died:

July 13th 1954

Real Name:

Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón



Frida Kahlo was born in a village just outside of Mexico City called Coyoacán. Her parents were Guillermo Kahlo, a German photographer, and Matilde Calderón y González. She had three sisters, along with two half-sisters from her father's first marriage.

'I paint self-portraits because I am so often alone, because I am the person I know best.'

Frida Kahlo

When Frida was just six years old, she contracted polio. Polio is a viral disease passed from one person to another. Frida was left with a right leg that was shorter and thinner than her left leg. She spent many months recovering, resulting in a delayed start to school. During this period, she spent a lot of time with her father, who taught her about photography.

Frida went to several schools as a child, including a brief period of homeschooling. She was accepted to the National Preparatory School in 1922. This was a huge honor. At this time in history, the National Preparatory School had only just begun letting females into their school. While attending the National Preparatory School, Frida had dreams of becoming a doctor.

On September 17th 1925, Frida and her boyfriend were involved in a horrible accident. The wooden bus they were riding in collided with a streetcar. Frida suffered severe injuries that left her bedridden. It was during this time Frida began painting. She had a special easel that could be used while she laid in bed. Frida mainly painted portraits of herself and family.

Upon her recovery, Frida began spending time with friends and was introduced to the Mexican Communist Party, also known as PCM. Soon after, Frida met the successful Mexican artist Diego Rivera. Even though Diego was twenty years older than Frida, they married on August 21st 1929.

Frida was very proud of her Mexican heritage. This pride showed in the way she dressed, as well as her art. She often dressed in clothes of native Mexican peasants, while her art was greatly influenced by 'mexicanidad', which roughly translates to Mexican-ness. Mexicanidad was a movement to revive indigenous Mexican culture. Frida's painting also often showed pain and suffering.

Frida traveled across Europe and the United States to showcase her paintings. The Louvre in Paris purchased one of Frida's paintings and made her the first Mexican artist to have art purchased by a world-renowned museum. Even with this success, Frida did not really become a famous artist until after her death.

Throughout her career, Frida was often thought of as 'Diego's wife', although her relationship with her husband was often strained. They even divorced and later remarried.

In 1950, Frida's health drastically declined. She spent a long time in the hospital. During this time, she focused on still-life painting and kept up an interest in politics. Frida died at her home on July 13th 1954.

Today, there is a museum dedicated to Frida Kahlo at the house where she was born and grew up. This home is often referred to as the 'Blue House' or 'La Casa Azul'. The museum features art from Frida, her husband Diego and other Mexican artists.

'I never paint dreams or nightmares. I paint my own reality.'

Frida Kahlo

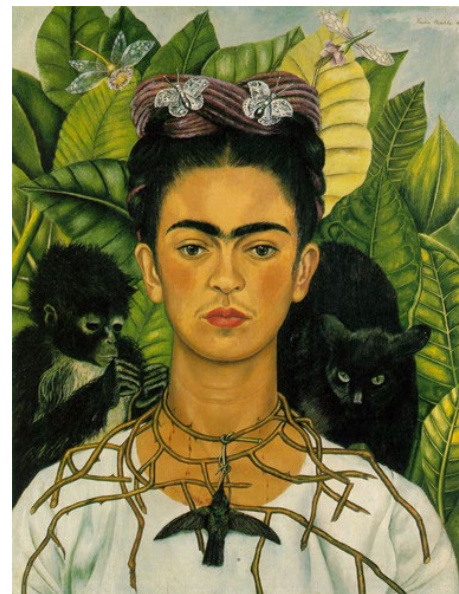


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