
Life Path of Frida Kahlo

Her life can be described as that of a suffering female, a childless woman, and a mistreated wife.

During the course of her life she painted many portraits reflecting her inner emotions. Many people said that she lived dying.

Without a doubt, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was one of the most influential artists of Mexico in the middle twentieth century. Using self-portraiture to announce herself and explore the tangled realm of her feelings, Kahlo's unworldly art teaches much about the nature of pain and suffering, as well as the impact of a biracial backgrounds. But beyond the classic interpretations of her work lie a more mysterious phenomenon, for Kahlo has become a cult figure in pop culture and feminism.

Born on July 6, (in Coyoacan, Mexico) Frida became a member of a family composed of Germans and Mexicans and began a life that she would have not by any means thought of having. Her father, Guillermo Kahlo of German descent, was indifferent to religion and allowed his wife, Matilde Calder n, to proceed with his daughter's education in the dominant religion of Mexico: Roman Catholicism. Despite her mother's control over her other sisters, Frida began to show signs of rebellion in life and religion. Perhaps this rebellion emerged from the feeling that Frida was distant from her mother's warmth due to Matilde's strict attitude and her decision to ban her older sister for running away, and not allowing her to come back after twelve years. As her rebellious attitude developed, she began to call her mother "mi Jefe" (My Boss).

At the age of six, Frida became bed ridden as she had contracted the most deadly disease to the children of the time: polio. When Frida had recovered after nine months, her right leg was shorter and thinner, and she acquired a forcefully pronounced limp. Frida, although rebellious, was a smart student and was soon enrolled in the National Preparatory School of Mexico. At the age of fourteen she pursued a carrier in the medical field and had decided to attend to make her way out of her home. It was in this school that she became a member of the Cachuchas. This was a group of seven boys and two girls which were intellectually gifted and were also trouble makers. It was also with this crowd that she began teasing Diego Rivera (a famous muralist who was to paint in the schools auditorium in 1922). With time, Frida became involved with Diego and his work. She would sit for hours watching him to perhaps get his attention. It is at this time when she began to paint, to show Rivera her art work which he approved by telling her that she had the talent.

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On September 17, 1925, Frida was on her way to a bus that would take her to her doom. As she boarded, full of life and a desire to graduate so that she may continue with her career (as she was in her senior year,) she was taken through the tracks of a trolley and her life changed forever. A trolley hit the bus. At that moment, she was pierced by a metal rod that went through her chest and out one of her legs. As a result of the accident, her spinal column was fractured in three places, her pelvis was crushed, and she broke one foot. Frida was not expected to live but instead managed to survive. For her remaining years, she would have to endure tremendous pain due to her fractured spinal column. Unable to move her back for several months, Frida began to paint. As her technique improved, she began to interpret both her feelings and ideologies through her extravagant paintings.

Ever since her accident, Frida would draw portraits of herself and other things. One day, when she was all better she went to see Diego Rivera. She knew that he was a very respectable artist. She told him that she wanted to know if her paintings were good enough to make a career out of them. From then on, they continued to see each other. Diego Rivera was forty-one years old when Frida came to know him. But although he was undeniably ugly, he drew women very easily to him. His greatest attraction was his personality because he was full of brilliant humor, vitality, and charm. They finally got married on August 21, 1929. During her first year of marriage, Frida became pregnant. She had to have an abortion because of problems during her pregnancy. This wasn't the only bad thing that happened to her. She found out that Diego had an affair with one of his younger sisters. During the later years of her life Frida suffered two more miscarriages and found out that Diego had other affairs. So, she finally decided to divorce him in 1939. But that didn't last for long because in 1940 they remarried. Despite Diego's affairs with other women (one was with Frida's sister), he helped in many ways. He suggested to Frida that she should begin wearing the traditional Mexican clothing, which consisted of long, colorful dresses and exotic jewelry. This, along with Frida's thick, connecting eyebrows, became her trademark. He also loved her work and was her greatest admirer. Frida, in turn, was Diego's most trusted critic, and the love of his life.

Frida, despite all of the hurt in her life, was an outgoing person whose vocabulary was filled with 4 letter words. She loved to drink tequila and sing off color songs to guests at the crazy parties she hosted. She loved telling dirty jokes and shocking everyone around her. Frida amazed people with her beauty and everywhere she went, people stopped in their tracks to stare in wonder. Men were fascinated with her, and because of this Frida had numerous, scandal filled affairs.

Frida only had one exhibition in Mexico and it was in the spring of 1953. Frida's health was very bad at this time and doctors told her not to attend. Minutes after guests were allowed into the gallery, sirens were heard outside. The crowd went crazy for outside there was an ambulance accompanied by a motorcycle escort. Frida Kahlo was being carried from it into her exhibition

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on a hospital stretcher! The photographers and reporters were shocked. She was placed in her bed in the middle of the gallery. The mob of people went to greet her. Frida told jokes, entertained the crowd, sang, and drank the whole evening. The exhibition was an amazing success. During the same year as her exhibition, Frida had to have her right leg amputated below the knee due to a gangrene infection. This caused her to become deeply depressed and suicidal. She attempted suicide a couple of times. On July 13, 1954, Frida died. No official autopsy was done. Suicide is rumored. Her last words in her diary read "I hope the leaving is joyful and I hope never to return".

Like Rivera, she wanted her paintings to affirm her Mexican identity, and she frequently used technical devices and subject matter from Mexican archaeology and folk art. The impact of her work is enhanced by techniques such as the inclusion of fantastic elements, a free use of space. Kahlo primarily depicted her personal experience. She frequently focused on the painful aspects of her life, using graphic imagery to convey her meaning. The turbulence of her marriage is shown in the weeping and physically injured self-portraits she painted when she felt rejected by Rivera. Since Frida was never able to have children, she always had pets. She would often say that these were her children. In her self portraits, Frida often painted animals with her.

Like many artists in the decade after the Mexican Revolution of 1917, Frida Kahlo's art was influenced by the surge of nationalism known as Mexicanidad. She, herself, often wore traditional costumes and elaborately braided her hair with ribbons, bows, combs, and fresh flowers to express her identification with Mexico's indigenous culture.

Frida Kahlo's psychological probings and fantastic imagery have often been linked to the Surrealist movement. She was more a Surrealist discovery than an actual Surrealist. Her work, like Rivera's, was part of Mexico's new, socially progressive.

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