

LIFE AND WORK OF
**FRIDA
KAHLO**

AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE BY



Life and Work of Frida Kahlo

The immersive experience to discover Frida Kahlo

ACCIONA Cultura presents *Life and Work of Frida Kahlo*, an immersive and multisensory exhibition about the life and artistic trajectory of one of the most celebrated Mexican artists of all times. By turning the surface of the exhibition space into a symphony of color and sound, the exhibition displays more than a hundred images of paintings, photographs, videos, and writings of Frida Kahlo.

The exhibition departs from popular perceptions of Frida Kahlo's story, and focuses instead on her intellectual talents, cultural knowledge, and political involvement, as well her strength and resilience in life. It invites the audience to discover some of the painter's famous masterpieces, including her self-portraits, *The Wounded Deer* or *The portrait of Doctor Eloesser*. It also opens up to other lesser-known artworks, such as *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale*, or *What the Water Gave Me*. At the same time, it contextualizes Kahlo's persona and highlights her multiple facets – as a woman, as an artist, and as a historical figure.

Each scene of the immersive audiovisual interprets and deepens on one or several of her paintings, extending the perception of the artworks and iconography. The narration forms the backbone of the exhibition: it is entirely based on the words that Frida wrote in her diary. An original soundtrack inspired by her European and Mexican origins embellishes the narrative.

THE TEAM



Creation and direction:
The immersive exhibition *Life and Work of Frida Kahlo* has been designed, produced and promoted by **ACCIONA Cultura**.



Roxana Velásquez and **Deidré Guevara** developed **the curatorial script** that has been the basis and starting point of the exhibition. **Roxana** was director of the Palacio de Bellas Artes Museum, where she organized the largest Frida Kahlo retrospective to date. **Deidré Guevara** was curator of the exhibition *Frida and Me* at the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris.



The **audiovisual creativity** has been carried out by the creative studio **Tigrelab**. Composed of a team of creative artists, visual artists, illustrators, creative coders, 2D animators and 3D artists, Tigrelab worked to establish a relationship between the content and the images to translate the curatorial script to a spatial, audiovisual, sensorial and exhibition experience.



Arturo Cardelús, a Goya Award nominee composer, has developed the **original soundtrack of the exhibition**, recorded with the *Budapest Art Orchestra* under the direction of conductor Peter Pejtsik.



A TOTEM AS TRIBUTE TO FRIDA KAHLO

The creative intent was to conserve the authenticity of the object and avoid placing the visitor in a 100% digital space. Hence, we designed a central structure as an artistic installation tribute to Frida Kahlo. A white totem that created visual rhythms and encouraged movement amongst the visitors, yet a reference to a day of the death Mexican altar, with a selection of pre-Hispanic objects that paid an homage to her life.



INTERPRETING NATURE

We collaborated with the French designer Clementine Henrion, who specializes in textile pattern design, to create contemporary patterns and scenes that paid tribute to Kahlo's natural world and his passion for fashion.



FRIDA'S PERSONAL DIARY

Frida's diary is a fascinating testament to the artist's creative power. Her thoughts, poems, dreams and descriptions inspired 70 watercolour illustrations and inspired the exhibition narrative. We sought to bring to life the characters and sketches in her diary. The creative team focused on the texture and style of these sketches. 40 characters in her diary were brought through traditional animation techniques.



THE BLUE HOUSE

In order to recreate the unique and serene atmosphere of Kahlo's Blue House, illustrations mixing photos and drawings have been created, combining sketches with collages in a symbolic and surreal interpretation of Frida's incomparable house.



MUSIC

When creating the soundtrack, the intention was to create a musical universe that would bring visitors closer to Frida's juxtaposing and contrasting worlds: that of tragedy and celebration. For it, we used different styles: classical music, traditional Mexican music, electronic and sound effects. Cinematographic techniques were employed in order to establish emotional rhythms and enhance the visual narrative.

NARRATION

Across the immersive experience, another key element has been the texts that Kahlo wrote in her diverse letters and diary. Seeking to give Frida a voice, a selection of her texts and poems has been developed to create a narration that guides the whole experience.



VOICEOVER

In order to accentuate the documentary and poetic dimensions of the piece, a voiceover with two female Mexican voices was created. Highlighting the richness of her writings yet offering a window to her personality and life. By serving the double purpose of inviting the audience to the feeling of being inside Frida's creative mind yet offering the emotional moment where the music and the voices blend harmonically.

4m3a
Frida

Arturo Cardelus
Orch: Tomás Peire-Serrate

♩ = 120

4

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

p dolce

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31 32 33



Life and Work of Frida Kahlo Exhibition has been awarded a Red Dot Award: **Brands & Communication Design 2022/2023**

The *Red Dot Design Award* is one of the world's largest design competitions. The Red Dot Label has become established internationally as one of the most sought-after marks of quality for good design. In order to appraise the diversity in this field in a professional manner, the Red Dot Design Award breaks down into three disciplines. Competitions for each of these disciplines are held once every year.



This exhibition has been awarded in **Fast Company's 2022 Innovation** by Design Awards, in the category of **Experience Design**:

The *2022 Innovation by Design Awards* honor the designers and businesses solving the most crucial problems of today and anticipating the pressing issues of tomorrow. The competition, now in its 11th year, features a range of blue-chip companies, emerging startups, and hungry young talents. It is one of the most sought-after design awards in the industry. There are 46 categories that capture every facet of design. Entries are judged on the key ingredients of innovation: functionality, originality, beauty, sustainability, user insight, cultural impact, and business impact.



Awarded in **Eventoplus Awards 2022**, in the category of **Best Technical Assembly**:

The *Best Technical Assembly Category* honor the conception, assembly and use of technical elements (audiovisuals, lighting, sound, multimedia, special effects, marquees and structures...) in an event, as tools for ambience, communication, visual impact, interactivity, etc.

EXHIBITION PROGRAM & VISITOR FLOW

Zoning

With a total surface area of about 1.000 square meters, the exhibition is divided into multiple galleries that conform an environment where the visitor will engage with diverse emotions through its senses.



DISCOVERING THE DIARY

Diary, poetry book, calligraphy notebook and drawing sketchbook, the visitor will get close to Frida Kahlo's Diary, one of the artist's most intimate legacies.



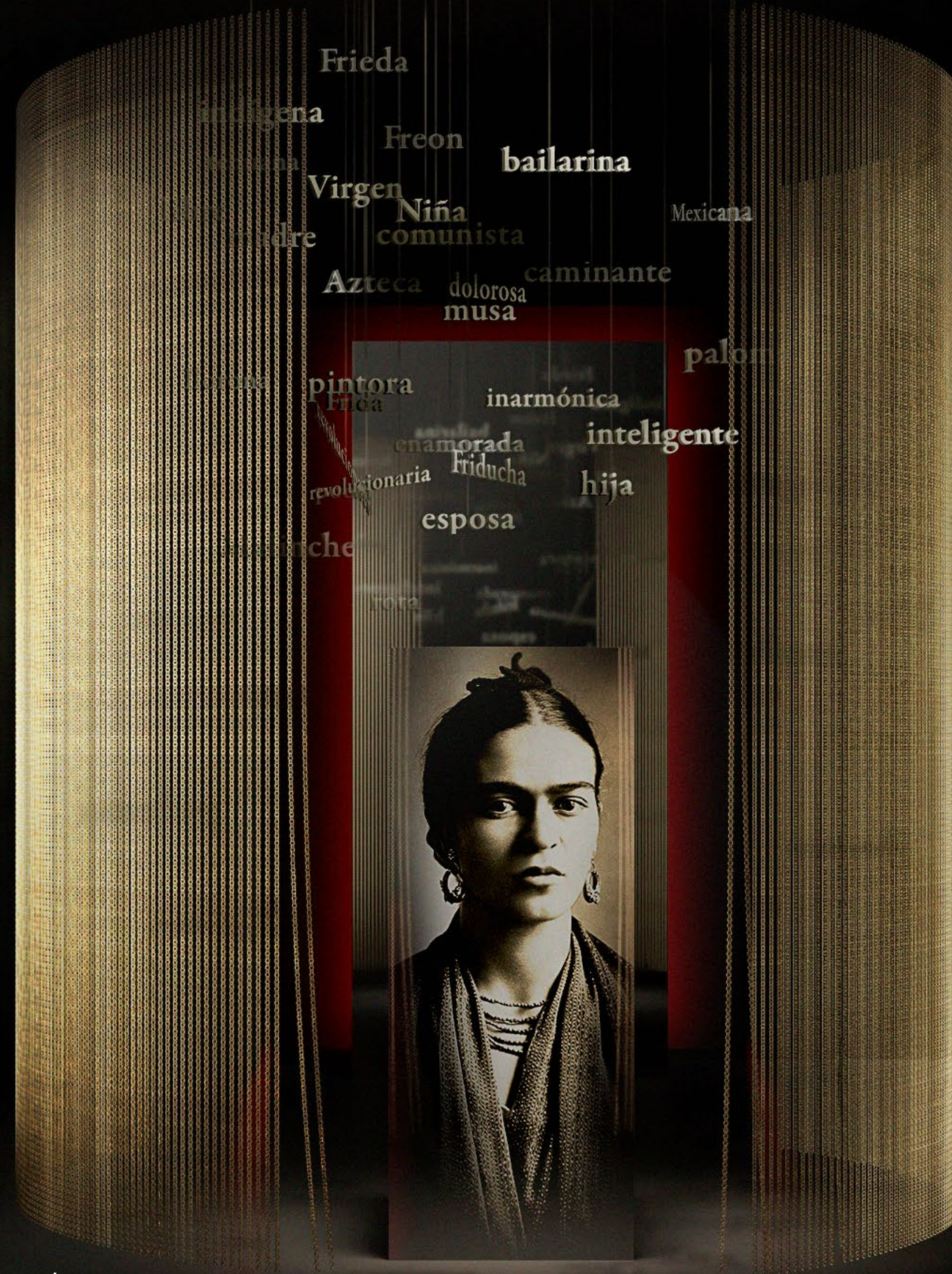
Amarillo

Locura, enfermedad,
miedo, parte del sol
y de la alegría.

THRESHOLD

Frida wrote in her diary a color theory.
Yellow speaks of fear and joy.

FRIDA'S INFLUENCES



Frida was born into a family of artists and was inspired by Mexico to create her character. The gallery explores, in an experimental way, Frida's diverse and eclectic references.

Rojo

THRESHOLD

¿Sangre?, pues
¡quién sabe!.

The red threshold helps us
reach the instant that changed
her life, Frida's accident.

THE ACCIDENT



After the accident, Frida is left lying in bed and finds in her face the subject of her work. Painting becomes her means of communication with the world.

ARTWORKS



Frida's artworks are hanging, almost ethereally, across the gallery. By being able to walk among them, the visitor will get to know Frida's work closely.

Azul

Electricidad y
pureza, amor.



A video with unique images
transports the visitor to a moment
of happiness between Frida and
Diego in their home in Coyoacán.

IMMERSIVE GALLERY



With 360° projections, the visitor will be positioned inside Frida's creative universe.

IMMERSIVE GALLERY STORYTELLING

The aim of the exhibition *Life and Work of Frida Kahlo* is to honour and celebrate the great Mexican artist by inviting visitors to discover her multiple facets – as a woman, as an artist, and as a historical figure – through a multisensory experience.

The immersive gallery narrative structure is divided into three main acts:

FIRST ACT | A parallel between Frida's work and her contemporaries' testimonies

The first act presents a thriving and international artist, creating a parallel between her work and testimonies of her contemporaries. The purpose is to convey a sense of the relevance of Frida to fellow artists and intellectuals of the time.



SECOND ACT | Family and friends

The second act introduces the visitor to Frida's most intimate and affectionate side. It presents Frida's family and friends, and refers to the occurrence of an important event in the life of the artist.



THIRD ACT | The Blue House

The third and final act invites the visitor to travel to Mexico and into the Blue House, the family home where Kahlo lived, painted, and died.



Frames of the exhibition

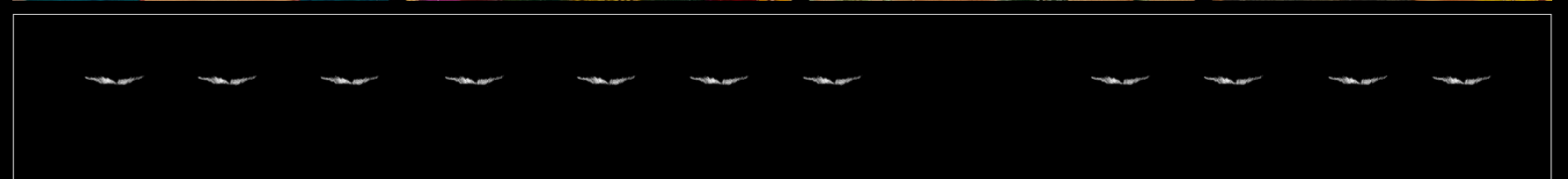
Selected works from each act

First Act

A parallel between Frida's work and her contemporaries' testimonies

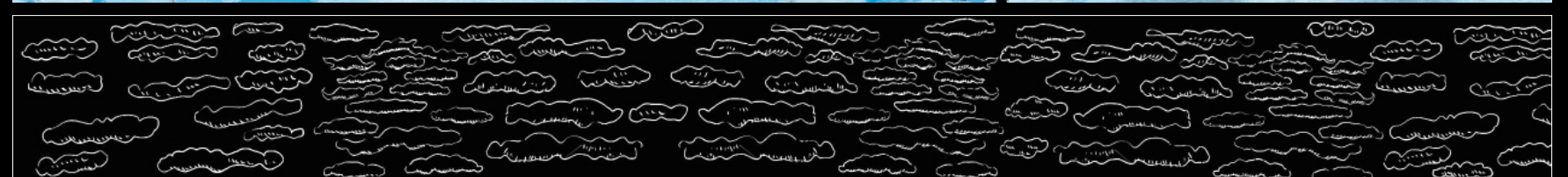
1. The exhibition begins with a visual introduction to the artist through her most characteristic works, the self-portraits. Due to a large number of self-portraits Frida produced and the different circumstances reflected in them, it is possible to approach her story and have a concise reading of the the artist through them. No two self-portraits are the same, although several have similar elements: the tehuana shirt, the penetrating gaze, the animals, and nature...

Frida Kahlo
Self Portrait with monkey and parrot, 1942
Oil on masonite
54,6 x 43,2 cm
Buenos Aires, Malba Foundation, 2003.34



2. We fly over Frida's creative universe, and we do so dramatically and in free fall through a blue sky full of clouds, very characteristic of the painter's work. Using *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale* as the basis of the scene, the clouds and the dreamlike dream serves as the beginning of the journey: a walk through life and work of Frida Kahlo. Dorothy Hale, a theatre actress is giving her last performance, and is majestically portrayed by Kahlo. She is accompanied by other characters from Frida Kahlo's work.

Frida Kahlo
The Suicide of Dorothy Hale, 1938-39
Oil on masonite with painted frame
59,7 x 49,5 cm
Phoenix, Phoenix Art Museum,
Gift of an anonymous donor, 1960.20

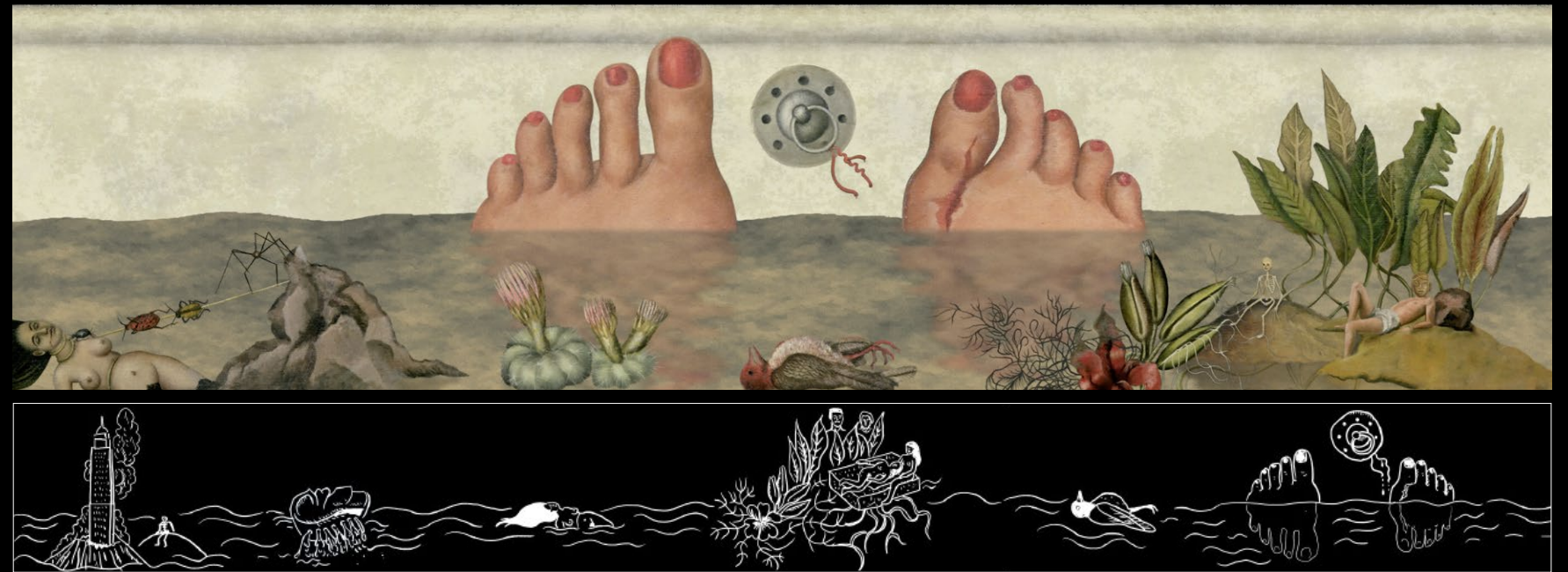


First Act

A parallel between Frida's work and her contemporaries' testimonies

3. The spirit of Surrealism in the arts was revolutionary in nature, seeking to eliminate traditional forms and representations of art. André Breton, leader of the movement, traveled to Mexico where he met Frida Kahlo and saw first-hand her self-portrait *What the Water Gave Me*. Breton called Frida's painting surrealism, which she replied, "I paint my reality". In the immersive exhibition, Frida and the viewer are placed inside a bathtub, observing experiences from the artist's life floating in the water, on her outstretched legs and with her feet sticking out of the water.

Frida Kahlo
What water gave me, 1938/39
Oil on canvas
69 x 88 cm
Paris, private collection



4. Frida Kahlo had a great passion for the pre-Hispanic world and her understanding of the universe. Under this premise, the balance of the universe is guaranteed by the strength of dualities understood from a point of view of equals and at the same time opposites. The work *El abrazo de amor del universo, mi tierra (Mexico), Diego, yo y el señor Xólotl* serves as the basis for recreating a lunar eclipse; darkness invades the spectator, but then the light arrives, everything is balanced again.

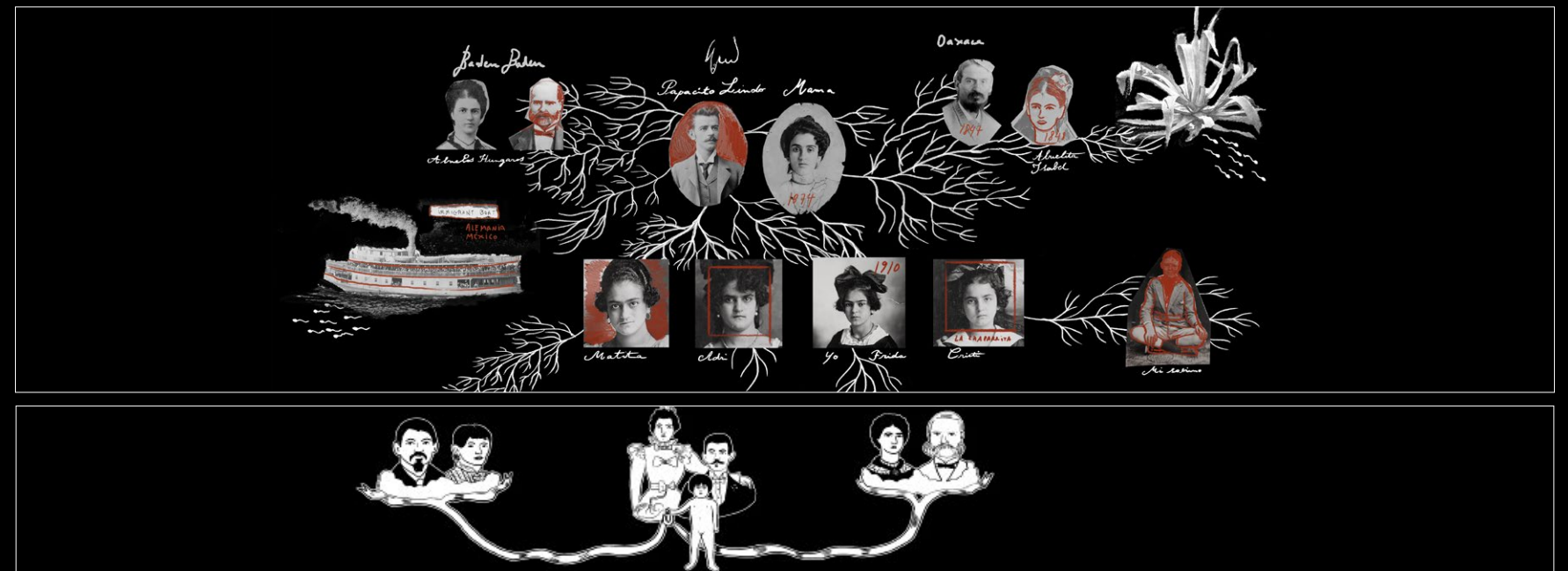
Frida Kahlo
The Embrace of Love between the Universe, the Earth, Myself and Diego, 1949
Oil on canvas
70 x 60,5 cm
Mexico, Jacques and Natasha Gelman/
The Vergel Foundation collection of 20th century
Mexican artGift of an anonymous donor, 1960.20



Second Act**Family and Friends**

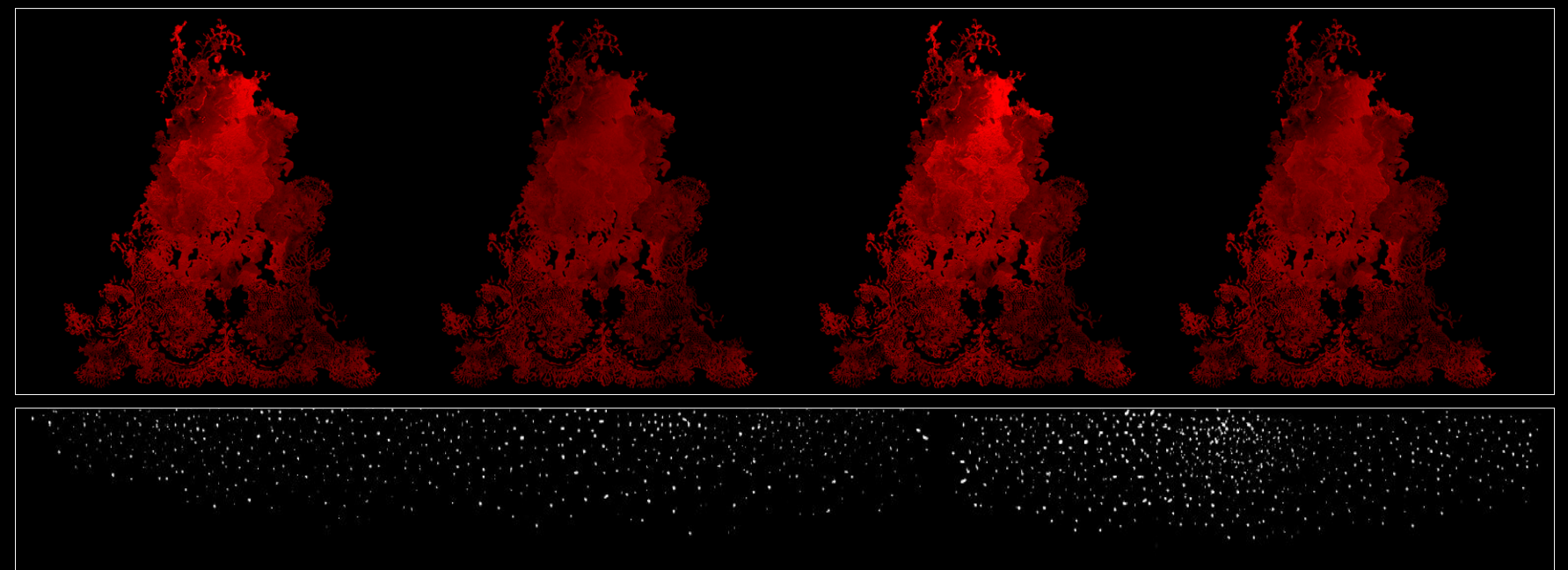
- 5.** Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo Calderón was born on 6 July 1907 in Mexico City, in the house that her parents owned and is today known as La Casa Azul. The exhibition shows the viewer biographical aspects of Frida's family and her close and a loving relationship with her parents. The exhibiton explores Frida's family biography and her close and loving relationship with her parents, highlighting her European and indigenous origins and the influence that her father, the photographer Guillermo Kahlo, exercised on Frida's work.

Matilde, Adriana, Frida and Cristina Kahlo, 1916
Gelatin-silver bromide on paper
Album / Frida Kahlo Museum



- 6.** One of the best-known aspects of the artist's life is perhaps that of her accident, when the bus where she was traveling in was hit by a tram. The exhibition seeks to present such a dramatic moment in the artist's life in a different way. It uses an anecdote that Frida wrote about that moment, explaining how a passenger next to her on the bus was carrying a bag of gold dust in his hand. Frida was wearing a schoolgirl's skirt and at the moment of the collision, and the gold dust flew out and became impregnated in Frida's blood-stained skirt. When people saw the gold glittering on Frida's clothes, they shouted "La bailarina, la bailarina" ("the dancer, the dancer").

Frida Kahlo
Accident, 1926
Pencil on paper
20 x 27 cm
Cuernavaca, Rafael Coronel Collection

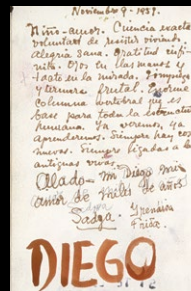


Second Act

Family and Friends

7. As a result of the terrible accident, Frida begins to paint. She decides to consult Diego Rivera for his opinion on whether or not she holds a future as a painter. From that moment on, Diego Rivera became her main admirer, promoter, friend, and lover. The couple married twice and lived a tortuous and loving relationship simultaneously. Frida dedicates several texts and poems to him in her Diary and depicts him in many of her works in different forms: as a miniature, as a child, in her thoughts, as her son and as a third eye.

Frida Kahlo
Diego, November 9-1951
Diary of Frida Kahlo, p. 102

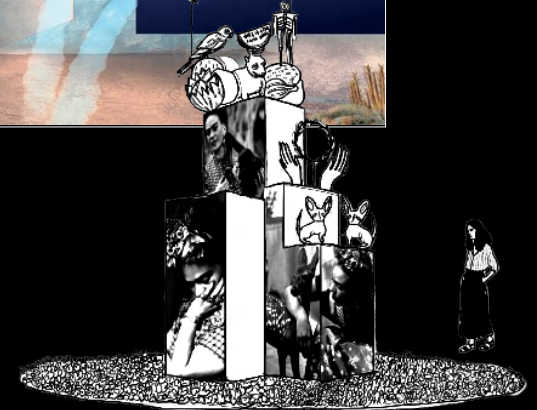


Third Act

The Blue House

8. The Blue House is Frida Kahlo's most intimate and personal space, the place where she was born, lived, painted, and died. The house contains her best memories of her youth and childhood, as well as the symbolic presence of her parents. The space represents refuge and a reflection of herself and the challenges she endured. In the exhibition, the visitor is transported to her personal space and discovers everyday scenes, as well as recurring iconographies in her work, such as her animals or the garden.

Photo of the Blue House
Andres Ernesto Blaisten Bolognini/
Blaisten Collection



9. Mexico, its native animals, colors, traditional clothing, nature, flowers, and fruits are the elements that compose part of Kahlo's work. These organic elements fill the exhibition space and transport us to a creative universe full of the everyday life that accompanied Frida. Her pets are a fundamental part of her work and she represented them with anthropomorphic characteristics.

Frida Kahlo
Self-Portrait (Dedicated to Dr. Leo Eloesser), 1940
Oil on masonite
59.7 x 40 cm
Los Angeles, Lucas Museum of Narrative Art



Third Act

The Blue House

- 10.** One of Frida Kahlo's favourite representational themes were stilllives; she enjoyed anthropomorphising fruit, as well as finding the erotic similarities in their shapes. She found the colours attractive and the titles of the works sometimes refer to riddles and jokes, as in *The Bride who is frightened to see life open*, or *Coconut Tears*, which alludes to false tears

Frida Kahlo
Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird, 1940
 Oil on canvas mounted on wood
 62,5 x 48 cm
 Austin, Texas, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas,
 Nickolas Muray Collection of Mexican Art, inv. 66.6



- 11.** Frida's admiration for Mexico is undeniable. She studies and praises Mexican traditions, but at the same time chooses to present a different concept of Mexico in her own persona and character. Frida has a deep respect for her country and embraces the sense of cultural hybridity and pre-hispanic art and Mexican traditions in her daily life, clothing, customs and gastronomy. Within the exhibition, Frida speaks of Mexico and pays tribute to her land and people through her work.

Frida Kahlo
Survivor, 1938
 Oil on metal
 16.5 x 12 cm
 Pérez Simón Collection, Mexico



Third Act

The Blue House

- 12.** In *The Two Fridas*, Frida is divided into two personas, the Mexican and the traditional one. The blood of the aorta makes patterns on the white dress, while the heart of the tehuana beats strongly and one of her veins is connected to the miniature image of Diego Rivera. Once again the clouds form part of this enigmatic painting and surround the visitor in the exhibition space, almost to a mystical place.

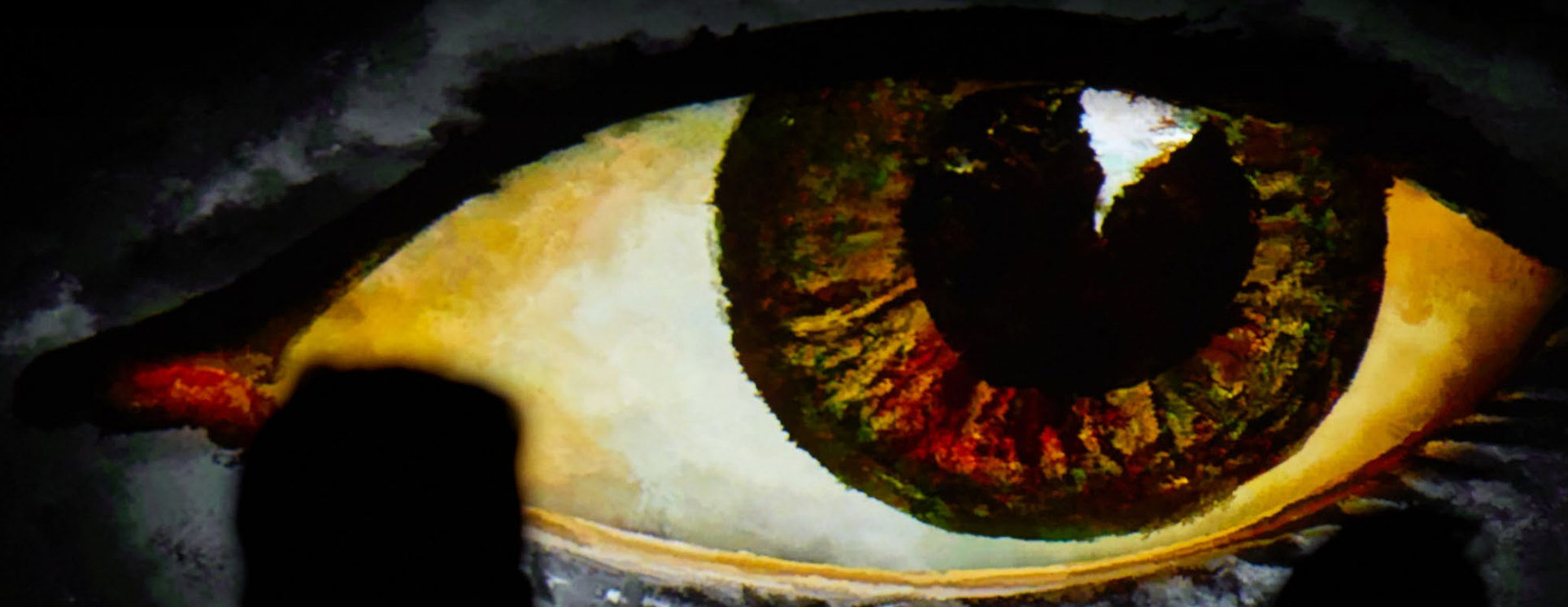
Frida Kahlo
The Two Fridas, 1939
Oil on canvas
173.5 x 173 cm

Mexico City, Secretaría de Cultura, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, Museo de Arte Moderno.



- 13.** As a tribute to the artist, the exhibition concludes with an offering of the dead to her. Paying tribute to her, this is the only moment in the exhibition where we see her in movement, and it is at that moment that the legend begins: the woman dies, but the painter triumphs and goes down in history.





IMMERSIVE GALLERY



Books, notebooks, Mexican products and Frida Kahlo's merchandising will make an unmissable store.

TRAILER



MAKING OF





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