Diego y yo: Frida Kahlo's Final Self-Portrait Bust

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Abstract

Frida Kahlo's 1949 painting *Diego y yo* is the Mexican artist's final self-portrait bust. This thesis argues for the recognition of the self-portrait as definitive to, what I call, Kahlo's "early-late style" and as one reason for her shift to still-lifes. The context of the painting revolves around Kahlo's relationship with her husband Diego Rivera. Their mentor-student relationship is an important facet to understanding motifs in the self-portrait and across Kahlo's oeuvre as a whole. The artist's self-portrait includes a superimposed, miniature portrait of Rivera with a third eye in Kahlo's third eye position. The self-portrait is a culmination of iconography that was only seen in separate contexts previously. My thesis applies a psychoanalytic approach to understand Kahlo's interactions with herself and the "self" of the portrait. As part of Kahlo's early-late style, *Diego y yo* represents a change in her artistic style that is of a new energy of technicality and self-analysis.

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Introduction

Paintings were not solely a product of Frida Kahlo, Frida Kahlo was a product of her paintings, they were her reality. Her feelings and thoughts became physical translations through her art, making her one with her paintings. The Mexican artist, with 47 years of life, was and is a woman known throughout the country and now the artistic world for her breaking down the wall of vulnerability and being a figure people could empathize with. Her life was a combination of difficulties and triumphs that are reflected in and provoked the content of her paintings. Born in 1907 in Coyoacán, Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón grew up during the time of the Mexican Revolution. This would be a later point of inspiration for herself and her art. In unfortunate infamy, Kahlo's 1925 bus accident has been a signifier for the beginning of the artist's declining health but also her artistic journey. It was out of an accident so crippling that Frida took to the easel and released herself onto the medium. The self-analysis Kahlo imposed upon herself while confined to a plaster cast in bed became translated into a newfound artistic expression.[1] Kahlo's works became characterized by introspection of herself and her reality.

With the name Frida Kahlo, the name Diego Rivera quickly follows suit. The public nature of their relationship was a result of their esteem but also of their own doing, their private life was not actively chosen to remain private. Their lives, their art, and their relationship was put on display for the masses to comment on and participate in. As an artistic couple, their mentor-student relationship is one that falls into traditional power dynamics of such couples but with a greater intensity and sense of varying tensions. Their differences in artistry is barely the beginning of a host of opposing features between the two. Rivera was already a well known

[1] Claudia Schaefer, *Frida Kahlo: A Biography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2009), 19-20.

Mexican artist at the onset of his relationship with Kahlo. He painted for the people and for the politics of the indigenous and social culture of Mexico after the Revolution. Kahlo was a painter of herself, for herself, the sense of intimacy within her art is potent. And her art is often a mechanism to convey the emotion behind significant events of her life or to Diego. Even though their relationship was one of constant betrayal from one or the other, their shared Mexican temperament for art and for each other will continually fuse discussions of themselves and their art together.

Within her oeuvre, 55 of those paintings were self-portraits. Frida's self-portraits serve as moments of emotional reactions and records of herself and her life at specific points in time. Despite every self-portrait being different, there are characteristic features to a Kahlo portrait that make these paintings, and Kahlo, recognizable. The attention to keeping to a pattern while creating a distinct scene and tone around her person makes a viewer feel and see what she feels and sees. Frida's final self-portrait bust before her death in 1954 was her 1949 *Diego y yo* (Fig. 1). This is an oil on masonite painting that marks the beginning of her early-late style. The self-portrait has Kahlo at the focal point of the composition and her husband, Rivera, situated above her eyebrows. Diego is in the locale of Frida's third eye and bears a third eye himself, setting the foundation for a series of tensions found within the work. The painting was commissioned by Kahlo's friends, a married couple Florence Arquin and Sam Williams.[2] *Diego y yo* was painted in light of one of the more troubling times for the couple. Rivera's affair with Mexican film star and close friend of the two, María Felix, became public the year the painting was made.[3] The painting, *Diego y yo*, became an outlet for the emotional distress Kahlo

[2] Andrea Kettenmann, *Frida Kahlo: 1907-1954 - Pain and Passion* (Germany: Taschen, 1992), 79.
[3] Kettenmann, *Frida Kahlo*: *1907-1954 - Pain and Passion,* 79.

experienced from this publicized affair. The emotion of the self-portrait with the intensity of the motifs creates a striking, raw aura to Frida.

In Rivera being a frequent catalyst for Kahlo's subject matter and in *Diego y yo* being her last self-portrait, the richness of the iconography cannot be understated. Motifs have become a means of implication for Diego with a miniature portraiture situated alongside. The subject matter is a hub for passionate technique, Christian influence and Hindu spirituality. The context of Kahlo's life ultimately influenced the Mexican artist's content for this self-portrait, but likewise did her other paintings. *Diego y yo* is impressive in its feat of portraying a coming together of iconography. Kahlo's work comes to fruition as a piece of varying visual and emotional tensions.

To begin to grasp Kahlo's work is to take a theoretical approach and apply a psychoanalysis methodology to *Diego y yo*. The complexity of the self-portrait allows for interpretations regarding Freud's the 'double' and Lacan's mirror image to be applied. Where the 'double' throws into question the true self of Frida with a juxtaposition of a self that is encompassing of her and of Diego intertwined. The mirror image likewise troubles the true self and an interaction with such is an interaction with Frida's perceived identity. Building upon this, the theory of "allo-portraits" by Mieke Bal is where Kahlo's true person is not visible. The self proclaimed in the painting is only one of appearance but is one still identifiable with the artist.

Kahlo's late style is traditionally understood as her still-lifes, paintings that are meant to be alternative versions of her self-portraits. Her final self-portrait bust, *Diego y yo*, as a piece of physical self-portraiture is evidence of artistic change in Frida's work. There was a new energy seen in *Diego y yo* that is a reflection of her early-late style but also is a reason for her shift to still-lifes after this self-portrait bust. This is what Edward Said describes as her episodic

character being formed through the realization of her soon-to-be death. Kahlo's episodic character of her early-late style is defined by a culmination of iconography seen in *Diego y yo* that was not apparent before. Further, her self-portraits, through this episodic character, become a means of the art gaining a livelihood of its own. The painting becomes a self-determined being where Kahlo's existence is based in her self-portraiture. *Diego y yo* is Frida's crux of the theme of three and alternating tensions, defining characteristics to her early-late style self-portraiture. By emphasizing the self-portraits of a human quality over traditional still lifes, Kahlo's early-late style becomes an important fixture in understanding what dominated her oeuvre in the 1950s before her death. *Diego y yo* as Kahlo's final self-portrait is the marking point before her shift into still lifes, making it a critical piece of examination for her early-late style and for the importance of it.

Chapter I: The Dove and the Elephant

Twenty-one years older than Kahlo, the artist's first marriage to Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, was in 1929. She was the dove and he the elephant, nicknames given to the pair by Frida's parents Guillermo and Matilde Caldéron de Kahlo as a disapproval of their marriage.[4] It was in this rejection of the couple that the dove and the elephant almost became a folkloric description of their union. A union that emphasized their relationship in the public eye to a greater or same weight as their private one. The public interest in the couple at the height of their fame, perpetuated an environment where the two were allowed to be their own artists but were not contextually separated from one another. For Frida, her art added to the public consciousness regarding her and Diego. In a way, she fed into the public opinion of their marriage while also creating and solidifying her opinion through her paintings. Their relationship is rooted in their Mexican heritage and their passion for their revolutionary and indigenous culture. With both showing different ways of conveying this through their art. Rivera as part of the muralist movement where his art is communal and a means of viewing is a means of activism. He was a public painter, more outward facing in depicting the history and people of Mexico. Whereas, Kahlo was a painter of the invisible, of her thoughts and feelings. Her medium was meant for private audiences where there is an intimacy to her paintings. Frida neglects muralism, she was teetering on the line of surrealism. While often being quoted as describing herself as not a surrealist artist, Kahlo hybridizes her sense of her unconscious mind into her easel work. Rivera painted for the people, Kahlo painted for herself, where "in complex, almost surrealistic images she formulates her desires and longings and presents them with a penetrating gaze to the

[4] Hayden Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1983), 99.

viewer".[5] Kahlo's wants and wishes come to fruition within her painting, and continue to do so long after her death. Diego's paintings did not have the same effect of personal sentiment. She put herself within her paintings and allowed for herself to outlive herself. Diego, in catering to the public and to politics, did not fashion a sense of immediacy to the artist within his art.

As an artistic couple, they are a genre of their own, dabbling in the conventional power dynamics of artist couples in an untraditional way. Their public image became rooted in their private lives, allowing for commentary on their personas, their relationship and their artworks to become blended. To understand Frida's art, her relationship with Diego is of great importance. Yet, their relationship was one full of contradictions, of fact and fiction, of love and neglect.[6] Her paintings are reactions to their love, to his neglect. It was a tumultuous marriage with the two engaging in various love affairs with others, sometimes both engaging with the same person. *Diego y yo* is the consequence of Rivera's affair with Mexican actress María Felix. Kahlo put on display her love for her mentor while at the same time expressing her loneliness and betrayal because of him. As her mentor, Diego molded Frida into the painter who would create an artistic exposé of him. Rivera as Kahlo's mentor and lover brought her into the new realm of Mexican art after the Mexican Revolution. Art that was characterized by celebrating the roots of their culture.[7] Before their marriage and Frida coming into her artistry, she painted in a style quite similar to Diego's. In understanding their relationship as an artistic couple, Diego and Frida are a traditional mentor-student pair yet evidently deviate in their artistic expression. It was Frida, the self-taught artist, learning from Diego, not Diego, the trained painter, learning from Frida.[8] In his

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[5] Helga Prignitz-Poda, *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Mexican Modern Art* (New York; Fort Lauderdale: Skira Rizzoli Publications, Inc; NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale, 2015), 12.
[6] Gannit Ankori, *Frida Kahlo (Critical Lives)* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2013), 68.
[7] Schaefer, *Frida Kahlo: A Biography*, 24-28.
[8] Prignitz-Poda, *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Mexican Modern Art* 15.

biography of Kahlo, Hayden Herrera comments on the truth of their mentor-student status as an artistic couple.

> Rivera refrained from teaching Frida: he did not want to spoil her inborn talent. She, nevertheless, took him as a mentor; watching him, listening, she learned. As she developed, the Riveraesque style was to disappear, but other lessons remained with her. 'Diego showed me the revolutionary sense of life and the true sense of color'.[9]

As a couple, there is a conflicting sense of complementing each other, even their art proves as such. Their passion for Mexicanism through art is what truly connects them. Though they are a mentor-student pair, it is more often than not that the student is left with a greater effect from the relationship than the mentor. Kahlo's admiration as a student for Diego, her mentor, manifests itself through her works. Even if Rivera was not infringing on her artistry in a technical or stylistic manner, he was on an emotional level.

Despite Herrera noting that the pair's mentor-student relationship was more sincere than controlling, photographs of the couple provide a different perspective. Bernard Silberstein's *Frida pinta su autorretrato mientras Diego la observa* is one of the more tangible pieces of evidence of an imbalance in their relationship (Fig. 2). Rivera's domineering position as he watches over Kahlo is the act of a mentor-student relationship in perfect play. Even if Diego was quoted to have said, "Frida was 'the greatest proof of the renaissance of the art of Mexico'", he gave himself a position of power.[10] One that Frida took and created an extreme infatuation and love for him with. The importance of Rivera in Kahlo's life is visible through her art and her diary entries that provide support for her emotional states about Rivera and views of him. Diego as the patriarchal artist is turned into a motif of intense love where Kahlo allows him to have a leading position in her mind, as seen in her art. This is furthered by the fact that Diego does not

[9] Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*, 95.
[10] Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*, 362.

do the same for Frida in his works. This is their deviation as an artistic couple, Diego fulfills the role of a patriarchal teacher through Kahlo's continual reference of her husband in her art. Her paintings are the evidence for him as her mentor as she physically and figuratively places him on a pedestal within her paintings. Kahlo gives Rivera the power he cultivated.

Chapter II: *Diego y yo*

Set against an impasto, forest green background Kahlo's portrait stares directly at the viewer in a frontal, straight-on gaze (Fig. 1). At 29.5 cm by 22.4 cm, the relatively small painting has a thickly applied background and is flat with red inscriptions in the upper right corner, barely overlapping the self-portrait. This four line inscription attributes the painting to Kahlo, "Mexico. Frida Kahlo. 1949. Diego y yo." Kahlo has deep brown, round eyes set in heavy creases with blush red cheeks, the same color that extends down into her neckline. Her textured skin, like that of the background, is impasto. Frida's nose is slightly pointed to the right, lending to her face being in a ¾ view while her shoulders are squared straight. The contour lines of her jawline give a rounded effect in contrast to the sharpness of her right cheekbone. There are deep shadows emphasizing the curvature of her jaw and chin on the left side. Her lips are tinted red with her characteristic understated mustache. Kahlo is adorned in a traditional Tehuana dress, a red *huipil*, with a yellow and gold cross hatching embroidery.[11] The dress appears relatively simple as its true ornaments cannot be fully discerned through her hair. Kahlo's black hair, parted down the middle, is her dominant physical feature of the portrait. For a self-portrait of the artist, her hair is in an atypical depiction. Customarily, Kahlo depicts her hair either in a braided updo or in a headdress. Here, her hair is left almost all the way down, with the front strands pulled back along the top by what is perhaps a dark green ribbon, only discernible on the left side of her hair. There is a great thickness to her black hair, a coarseness that is paired with thick brushstrokes. Her hair is in a sense, wild, taking up a majority of the composition. Strands of her hair are wrapped around her neck appearing to almost strangle her, taking on a life of their own.[12]

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[11] Helga Prignitz-Poda, *Hidden Frida Kahlo: Lost, Destroyed or Little-Known Works* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2017), 166.

[12] Hayden Herrera, *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 172.

The brushstrokes of the hair around her neck are much thinner in comparison to the rest of the hair. The mass of Kahlo's hair overshadows her being, with strands spreading themselves over her dress. The looseness of her hair is amplified with loose brushstrokes that leave the ends of her hair appearing to have no definitive end. The left side of her hair is tucked behind her ear, an ear that is darked with shading but appears flat in its stylistic anatomy. Synonymous with Kahlo is her unibrow, which is of the same coarseness of her hair. The pointed, downward tip of where her two eyebrows meet, creates a line to her nose and thus the teardrops as they are falling in the same direction.

In contrast to the resolute expression of Kahlo, she has shown herself with three teardrops. Her expression that is paired with a penetrating gaze is a tactic employed by Kahlo. This creates a staged quality to her work that coincides with the characteristic features found in her self-portraits. The teardrops glisten in silver over her textured, warm toned skin. Two tears cascade from the left eye and one from the right in its moment of just coming through the socket. The teardrops allude to sorrow where Kahlo creates a juxtaposition of the tears in representing sadness, against the seriousness of her face. The highlights of the drops centralize her portion of the portrait. In looking solely at Kahlo, the tears draw the viewer into her eyes and emphasize a theme of three seen throughout the painting. Frida's eyes appear glossy and her cheeks add to the flushed, emotional state she sees herself in. The emotion Kahlo desires to convey to the beholder is observed through artistic choices that do not at first glance impart the emotion of sadness with the tears.

In a pyramid-esque layout, Kahlo's husband, Diego Rivera, is painted in the middle of her two eyes. The portrait of Rivera is highly individualized, even in its small size. Rivera's portrait is set on top of Kahlo's unibrow, in the position of where one's 'third eye' would be.

Kahlo is then invoking the idea of Rivera being her third eye. Diego as Frida's third eye may suggest a superiority that Kahlo has given to Diego, one where he is always on her mind and guides her life. Gannit Ankori supports this notion with an analysis of the Diego image: "a miniature portrait of Rivera on her forehead, indicating that he is lodged in her thoughts, that he is an integral part of her very being, and that has become her 'third eye' and source of insight"[13]. Diego is shown in a red shirt with a heavy, overtly oval face. For a miniature portrait, the contour lines of Diego's chin in separation from his neck are quite apparent. Rivera's skin tone is in contrast with that of Kahlo, appearing much lighter. This lightness furthers the idea of Diego with a third eye as superior in Kahlo's mind as he is highlighted to be the focal point of the portrait for the artist. His profile is in ¾ view to the left side, opposite to Frida's view. Diego's left eyebrow is rounded, whereas his right is angular. He likewise has a third eye, but in his case, the third eye is an actual eye, not another portrait. This adds an additional layer of power to his being in him as Frida's third eye. All three of Rivera's eyes are different from one another, all in an oval shape but with varying eyelid space and pupils. His lips are full and his nose wide. Diego's hair is untamed and the same color as Frida's - his curls are traced more clearly but blend into Kahlo's hairline, a seamless transition between the two. Frida's middle part allows for the top of the composition to lead a viewer's eye to Diego and his third eye as her hair part ends where Diego's portrait sits. Diego's right ear is the only one visible, balancing out the right side to the left side where Frida's ear is the only one shown. To a viewer, Frida is the key figure of the composition, but for Frida herself, Diego is. His position in the center of her mind, where her third eye would be, suggests the importance of Rivera's psychological power in Kahlo's life.

Rather than a sense of linearity, there is a sense of equality. What Kahlo lacks on one side, Rivera makes up for on the other. To Frida, Diego fulfills her physically and mentally. The

[13] Ankori, *Frida Kahlo (Critical Lives),* 141.

hierarchy of importance for Frida is Diego, but to the viewer is Frida. Kahlo is seeming to look through Diego and so through to the audience, he becomes her gaze. The control of her eyes rely on his eyes. Diego's with his own third eye as he himself is Kahlo's third eye furthers this idea. These two figures are situated on the same plane and are primarily flattened. There is a lack of three-dimensional space within the painting, the background is devoid of any substance. There are three red dots however outlined in a darker green than the background, scattered about around the self-portrait. The only true indications of being are Kahlo and Rivera. With Frida as the central figure there is evidently a sense of three-dimension to her facial structure, but not of the space. She is the focal point of an image where space is difficult to describe, she is the space she embodies. Frida as the space of the painting is understood in the context of her hair as its vastness creates the space. There is no ability to determine any delineation within the hair that is loose and down. This is where line and color become merged in the composition, with her hair.

Diego y yo is one of Kahlo's more unique self-portraits as it appears to be a culmination of iconography grouped together that Kahlo had chosen to keep separate prior. This is first recognized in the context of Kahlo's hair; a vehicle for her public self-expression where her private life intercedes on behalf of her portraits. Traditional self-portraits of the artist show Frida with a braided updo, as seen in the *Self-Portrait with Red and Gold Dress MCMXLI* (Fig. 3). The facial sense of control in *Diego y yo* is well reflected in this portrait, with Frida almost seeming inert. Suggesting a performative identity where control is to be portrayed through physical means. For Kahlo to stray away from this hairstyle was a way for her to signify her underlying emotion behind the painting. Kahlo and Rivera had their first divorce in November 1939, and a year later, Kahlo reacted by painting the *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair* (Fig. 4). This painting is a drastic shift from the femininity Kahlo employs upon herself. She is dressed in an oversized

man's suit and this is the only self-portrait where her long hair is entirely cut. Strands of her hair are found across the floor and wrapped around the chair Kahlo sits in. The feminine beauty that Rivera favored for Kahlo in the Tehuana dress and her long hair were discarded by Kahlo in this painting.[14] This painting made visible Kahlo's rejection of Rivera after their divorce. The pair did remarry the following year as her self-portraits regained her traditional appearance. One of the few other times Kahlo painted herself with her hair down is seen in the *Self-Portrait with Loose Hair* after she had spinal fusion surgery in 1946 (Fig. 5).[15] In being in recovery, Kahlo depicts herself as fragile and exhausted but with her long tresses loose for Diego who she would have wanted to acknowledge her beauty in a fragile state. There is a significance to acknowledging that her emotional states were dependent on Diego, they were public displays of appeasing Rivera when she could not in their private life. In comparing *Diego y yo* to these other self-portraits, it becomes clear that her hair is a means of expressing emotion, of performing her identity in relation to Diego. Her hair then acts as a signifier and carrier of her emotion. The strangulation of her hair around her neck is a mark of her emotional anguish over Diego's affair, one that begins to suffocate but does not overpower. In considering the admiration that Diego is noted for having had for Kahlo's hair, the hair strangling Kahlo can likewise be representative of an all-consuming love even when the marriage is unloyal.

Another component of *Diego y yo* in which iconography is referenced in an earlier painting is seen with the three teardrops on Kahlo's face. Painted a year before *Diego y yo* in 1948, Kahlo's *Self-Portrait* is the only other known painting of the Mexican artist with three teardrops (Fig. 6). Here her pain of being separated from Diego at the time is masked by the finery of the Tehuana headdress.[16] The three teardrops are a reference to the Madonna of

[14] Kettenman, *Frida Kahlo: 1907-1954 - Pain and Passion*, 54.
[15] Herrera, *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings,* 193.
[16] Herrera, *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings*, 170.

Sorrows, a Christian typology where Mary is shown weeping for her son, Christ.[17] The Virgin of Sorrows, or Mater Dolorosa is often visualized in Christian art, as for example seen with the Italian artist Titian's 1555 *The Virgin Dolorosa with her Hands apart* (Fig. 7). In Titian's oil painting, the symbol of the three teardrops of the Virgin Mary are represented.[18] A clear difference in Titian's from the two portraits lies in the visual expression of sadness. The sentiment of sadness within Kahlo's portraits are through the stylized tears, where in the Virgin Mary there is a physical embodiment of sorrow that accompanies her tears. Kahlo's simplification of the tears as a literal representation of what they mean with no complement of a physical manifestation does not diminish her emotion, but in fact accentuates it in the portraits. Kahlo's reference to the Madonna of Sorrows is strengthened through a double portrait within her diary that shows Frida in the form of two broken vases who are shedding tears (Fig 8). Within the diary and her paintings, the tears are literal and symbolic motifs. Literal in referring to a physical pain regarding health or heartbreak and symbolic of the Mater Dolorosa.[19]

The final iconographical piece noted in other of Kahlo's paintings is the motif of the third eye. The earliest depiction of Diego in the position of Frida's third eye was seen in the 1943 *Self-Portrait as a Tehuana (Diego in my Thoughts)* (Fig. 9). With Rivera's portrait once again sitting atop of Kahlo's eyebrows, this alludes to the artist's addictive nature of always thinking about her husband.[20] Rivera in the locale of the third eye signifies a wisdom to his being that is also expressed in *The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), Diego, Me and Señor Xólotl* (Fig. 10). This 1949 painting follows the *Diego y yo* in which Rivera has a third eye and is

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[17] Gordon Campbell, "Mary," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[18] Museo del Prado, "The Virgin Dolorosa with Her hands Apart - The Collection," Museo Nacional del Prado, https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-virgin-dolorosa-with-her-hands-apart/44188485-b32c-453d-8dc3-b28d46b161a6..
[19] Carlos Fuentes, *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate of Self-Portrait*, (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995), 253.
[20] Kettenmann, *Frida Kahlo: 1907-1954 - Pain and Passion*, 67.

a crucial comparison in realizing the apotheosis of iconography in the self-portrait.[21] The nature of this particular painting brings to light a mother-child relationship Kahlo so often regarded with Rivera. Even though this relationship is not seen in *Diego y yo*, the sentiment of the third eye remains the same. In a 1949 essay for Rivera's exhibition, she describes the 1949 painting and makes an explicit reference to the third eye, "Between those eyes, so distant one from the other, one divines the invisible eye of Oriental wisdom".[22] This is a direct link to non-Western thought, an inclination Kahlo often employed. The wisdom of the third eye coincides with the love Kahlo has for Rivera, a love so intense she places him on a pedestal to revere and emulate, this being the third eye. For Kahlo, it was not simply enough to depict that her husband was always on her mind, the portrait had to provide evidence of his own wisdom and influence that is part of why Rivera is a constant in her thoughts. *Diego y yo* epitomizes the notion of Rivera as one who is all knowing and perpetually on the mind of Kahlo as it is a double representation of the third eye.

The juxtaposition of Kahlo's interest in Hindu beliefs with Christian iconography adds a layer of depth to *Diego y yo* and to Frida in her interpretation of her reality. Art historian Helga Prignitz-Poda outlines the Hindu story of Parvati and Shiva as one Kahlo took inspiration from. The third eye that is rooted in Hindu belief is why the argument for this love story is made as a point of reference for Kahlo. Parvati, the wife of the Hindu god Shiva, who has a third eye, longs for the love of her husband. Diego, with an open third eye, symbolizes Shiva's own open third eye that destroys whom or whatever bothers him. When Shiva continually rejects her love, Parvati transforms into her dual nature, Kali, a goddess who is characterized by black, loose hair. Prignitz-Poda makes the connection that the *Self-Portrait with Loose Hair* is the beginning of Kahlo representing herself as Kali. It is only in *Diego y yo* though where the vengeance and

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[21] Elliot King and Dot Tuer, *Frida & Diego: Passion, Politics, and Painting*, (Ontario: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2012), 82.
[22] Kettenmann, *Frida Kahlo: 1907-1954 - Pain and Passion*, 73.

entire being of Kali is visible through Kahlo. The untamed strands of Frida's hair wrapping around her neck visually align with beliefs of Kali whose black hair surrounded her being.[23] For Kahlo, this Hindu love story bears great resemblance to her relationship with Rivera. Rivera's love escapades are a rejection of Kahlo's love. Kahlo allows for her audience to see the love story unfold through the chronology of her paintings. Kali is first hinted at in *Self-Portrait with Loose Hair*, then she reverts back to Pavarti in *Self-Portrait as a Tehuana (Diego in my Thoughts)*. In *Diego y yo* is Kahlo as Kali in her full form and finally with *The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), Diego, Me and Señor Xólotl*, Kali is more subdued with her love for Shiva, Diego, appearing to have not dwindled. The Chrisitan iconography of the three teardrops in combination with this Hindu story imparts insight into the dual nature of Kahlo's love for Diego.

The motherly nature as one part of Kahlo's dual persona is depicted in *The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), Diego, Me, and Señor Xólotl*. In this painting, Kahlo is often understood as acting as a Madonna who is carrying the Christ Child, or in the instance of the painting, carrying Rivera.[24] The painting itself is another example where Christian iconography and Hindu mythology are joined together by Kahlo under the premise of a dualistic nature.[25] This motherly attitude is further adopted in the Madonna of Sorrows reference made in *Diego y yo*. The mother of Christ, the Mater Dolorosa, cries out of love for her son. Kahlo, in donning these tears, is crying out of her love for her husband. The tears are symbols of the anguish of a mother's love, a role Kahlo gives to herself in her relationship with Diego. There is a shifting and changing relationality between the roles of Kahlo and Rivera - a constellation of sorts: mother, son, husband, wife, lover, godhead. The motherly side of this dual nature from the Hindu story

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[23] Prignitz-Poda, *Hidden Frida Kahlo: Lost, Destroyed or Little-Known Works*, 166.
[24] King and Tuer, *Frida & Diego: Passion, Politics, and Painting,* 82.
[25] Prignitz-Poda, *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Mexican Modern Art* 34.

would be Kahlo in her Parvati form. It is in Diego's absence and dismissal of her love that Kahlo exhibits the other half of her dual nature, Kali. A nature that is overbearing for both Rivera and Kahlo herself. Diego's rejections are emotionally and physically consuming Kahlo's being to the point where the painting acts as a form of revenge in exposing the affairs of Diego. But even in unveiling her husband's absence in her life, her love is still evident. The tension of an all-loving, a dejected, and an upset Kahlo - a dual nature Kahlo - manifests itself in the culmination of iconography from her other paintings coming to be one in *Diego y yo*.

Chapter III: Trouble by the Double - A Psychoanalytic Approach

The notion of the 'double' from Sigmund Freud's writings takes form in *Diego y yo* and thematically across Kahlo's oeuvre. The phenomenon of the 'double' involves both a repetition and an "interchanging of the self".[26] The presence of the 'double' first makes its appearance in Kahlo's *Two Fridas*, painted in 1939 after her divorce from Rivera (Fig. 11). Her customary idea of truth, of being with Rivera becomes troubled, thus the idea of her 'self' becomes troubled. These two bodies disturb the true self as Frida contemplates who she is without Diego. In Kahlo's portraiture, to separate her actual reality from the reality of the painting would be an injustice to understanding her art. Her self-portraits are meant to be understood as a doubling of her reality, with the context of her actual life influencing the content that creates the reality within and of the painting. With the content in the painting still being part of her actual reality, but not as often clearly delineated. Similar to that of other self-portraits, *Diego y yo* as the 'double' can be understood as persevering herself and her perceived identity of herself. While at the same time creating a tension between her true self. In this particular painting, preserving herself as the Kahlo who truly experienced sorrow over her husband's affair and as the Kahlo she knows herself to be and wants others to recognize, one with great love for Rivera even after his dismissal of their relationship. In preserving these two versions of herself, she neither neglects one or the other but allows for a viewer to cement these two types of Kahlos as both true. Yet, the truth of the real Kahlo is thrown into question for both the viewer and herself. Allowing for the 'self' to perhaps be formed in the 'double'. The self as being made in *Diego y yo*, one that Kahlo grapples with and as a result relays the troubling of this 'self' into the portrait.

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[26] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *Writings on Art and Literature*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 210.

The mirror was perhaps Kahlo's most important and influential tool in her repertoire, it brought to life her portraiture. Considering that a large number of Kahlo's works are self-portraits, the mirror stage of psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, is formative for expanding on the phenomenon of the 'double' and for synthesizing how Kahlo's portraits could be understood. The mirror stage is when an individual assumes and identifies with an image that troubles the idea of the true self. By privileging the visual, Lacan argues that by identifying with the mirror image, an image that is not oneself, individuals can come to know themselves.[27] In connection with Freud's phenomenon of the 'double', Kahlo's perceived identity of herself that is reflected in her painting is the mirror image, this perceived identity troubles the "true" self. An image though that is what Kahlo wants to see in the mirror and projects onto her paintings. In looking in and producing works of art out of a mirror, Kahlo is undoubtedly engaging with herself, but engaging with an image of herself that is different from what is truly being visualized. An image where the self is further formed. The portrait acts as a continual intervention of the mirror image. The self that troubles the truth is thus sustained in perpetuity.

In her catalogue essay, theorist Mieke Bal advances a new idea about Kahlo's self-portraits in alignment with Lacan's the mirror image. Bal argues for the need to interpret Kahlo's portraiture in a separate context outside of being autobiographical. Her questioning of self-portraiture becomes rooted in the mirror image in that the meanings of "self" and of "portraiture" change and become separated.[28] In self-portraits being made out of looking in a mirror, the image coming out of the mirror is distorted. Thus, self-portraits are distorted, they are mirror images. Consolidating self-portraits into an artist's autobiographical account of themselves is what Bal argues is unfit in the portraiture of Kahlo as what is being shown is an

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[27] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Phase as Formative of the Function of the I," in *Art in Theory*, (1949), 620.
[28] Mieke Bal, "Allo-Portraits: Inventing Deconstruction," in *Frida Kahlo - A Life in Art*, ed. Christian Gether, (Denmark; Germany: ARKEN Museum of Modern Art; Hatje Cantz, 2013), 58.

alternate version. It is evident that the same characteristics of the artist would be discernible across self-portraits, but they are distortions and perceptions the artist imposes upon herself for others to see. The concept of Kahlo's self-portraits as being 'other' is outlined in what are known as "allo-portraits".

> This made-up word plays on *allo*, Greek for "other" or "different". An allo-portrait is what we see as a self-portrait, but without the "true self" being visible. For an "allo-portraitist" has no illusions concerning the possibility of capturing, or even the existence of, a unified "self". What we see is a self, but not quite, because the self is not one; it is a self - only in appearance.[29]

Diego y yo can be understood as a mirror image, as an allo-portrait. The image of Kahlo with Rivera as her third eye and himself with a third eye as well, is an image the artist identifies with but it is not her true image. The improbability of a human being having a third eye has to be isolated in this particular context of the painting and its position as a mirror image. The painting is not a mirror image because it is impossible for a human to have a third eye. It is a mirror image because of Kahlo's characteristic unibrow, dark hair, unflinching gaze, and her pout are all in the portrait and what Kahlo sees in the mirror is this typology of herself. But what the viewer sees is a self of Kahlo that only appears to be Kahlo. The impossibility of a third eye would seemingly make a viewer think this self-portrait is anything but Kahlo's self. But it is Kahlo, in choosing her own motifs, who acknowledges her mirror image, her allo-portrait, and identifies with it while at the same time it troubles her true being. *Diego y yo* is an appearance of Kahlo's self, one she saw and created out of viewing herself.

[29] Bal, "Allo-Portraits: Inventing Deconstruction," 60.

Chapter IV: The Episodic Frida - Early-Late Style Self Portraiture

In the discussion of Kahlo's self-portraiture, her art evolves into a new character in the later years of her life. The late artistic style of Kahlo though is not often recognized as her self-portraits, rather it is her still lifes that dominate the remainder of her oeuvre. The late style of an artist is understood as the pieces of work that are produced in the final years of their life. These pieces of work often differ from the prior art of the artist in their realization of their impending death sparking a new reaction to their medium. The 1952-1954 *Unfinished Self-Portrait* of Kahlo is widely accepted as the final attempt of a physical representation of herself before her venture into still lifes (Fig. 12).[30] Yet, to neglect to mention the shift in her physical representations of her true, late self-portraits would be a missed opportunity in expanding and understanding her late style in the context of legitimate self-portraiture. Making up more than half of Kahlo's artworks are self-portraits and the evolution of her early portraiture to her final ones delineate clear changes in how Kahlo approached herself in paintings. Further, in the knowledge of her still lifes being alternative versions of self-portraits, the style of her late, physical self-portraiture reflects a new energy that Kahlo could no longer persist with. One that she felt she could not give justice to in portraying herself, hence the turn to still lifes and the importance in acknowledging her physical, early-late style portraiture. It is not false to say that self-portraits dominated her late style before her death in 1954, there is simply a significant distinction between the kind of self-portraiture - those that represent her physically and those that are represented in still lifes - with the emphasis on those of a human quality.

It is Kahlo's depictions of herself as an individual, such as *Diego y yo*, that was produced five years before her death that become infused with a new identity. The early-late style of her

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[30] Prignitz-Poda, *Hidden Frida Kahlo: Lost, Destroyed or Little-Known Works*, 180.

self-portraiture will be focused on to come to terms with how Kahlo's deteriorating health and mental state influenced her art. Kahlo's physical health was inherently a difficulty in the artist's life, it is the root of her unraveling mental state. Eight years before her death and three years before she painted *Diego y yo*, she required more surgery and a spinal fusion, resulting in her becoming dependent on drugs and Diego; one of which she could only truly rely on.[31] The combination of drugs and an obsessive love for Diego created a sense of anxiety and possessiveness in her self-portraits.

In discerning Kahlo's early-late self-portraits, it is clear that there is a new energy to images of herself. An energy that Edward Said would attribute to an awareness of her impending death as a result of her health. Kahlo's late style portraiture is evidence of the continuity of her artistry being interrupted by a new episodic character. Said describes the episodic character as a means of cultivating an artist's late style.[32] It involves a unique, personal experience of the thought of death that brings about a new type of communication with a medium. Kahlo biographer Hayden Herrera notes that "as Frida's health declined, her attachments - to things, to politics, to painting, to friends, and to Diego - grew more and more intense," this coincides with the drama of her new episodic character.[33] For Kahlo, the pain of her suffering, both physically and mentally, and an awareness of her death is visible in *Diego y yo*. The culmination of iconography in the painting is indicative of a new energy within Kahlo. Never before had Kahlo presented these varying motifs in one painting. The excitement to represent so much in so little time is ultimately a combination of her drug use for health matters amplifying pre-existing concerns over her death. The painting bears the effect of appearing to showcase itself as one self,

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[31] Herrera, *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings*, 202.
[32] Edward Said, "Timeliness and Lateness," in *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, (New York: Vintage, 2006), 10.
[33] Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*, 394.

the self Kahlo recognizes herself as before her death. In *Diego y yo* being one of the artist's true, final self-portraits before her shift to still lifes, this notion of Kahlo having a new energy to be remembered beyond her death in the version of herself she desires is solidified in the intensity of the portrait.

The mental strain of her physical health and of her husband's numerous affairs combines together to create the unraveling of Kahlo's steadfast love seen in *Diego y yo*. Her anxiety of death can be interpreted as an anxiety over the idea of leaving Rivera behind. Kahlo's diary is the leading source in realizing the artist's obsessive love for Rivera.

> *Diego* beginning. *Diego* builder. *Diego* my child. *Diego* my boyfriend. *Diego* my painter. *Diego* my lover. *Diego* "my husband". *Diego* my friend. *Diego* my mother. *Diego* my father. *Diego* my son. *Diego* = *me* -. *Diego* Universe. *Diversity within* unity.[34]

Kahlo's undying love for Rivera is essential to her being, it is a part of her she wanted to dominate her self-portraiture. And so it does, *Diego y yo* represents an energy of instability not seen before as she realizes her physical health will lead her closer to death and so closer to leaving Rivera behind. Kahlo's early late style portraiture was desperate to immortalize herself as a lover to Diego, unveiling the great intensity behind such love in *Diego y yo*.

Kahlo's *Diego y yo* is evidence of what self-portraiture inherently does, it preserves the artist the way they want to be remembered. In a poem to her friends Arkady and Lina Boytler, Kahlo explicitly makes note of this reason, "*I leave you my portrait… so that you will have my presence… all the days and nights…that I am away from you*".[35] Seemingly then, all of Kahlo's self-portraits, not just those of her late style, are meant to outlive her being and be a reminder of her existence after her death. Her existence becomes rooted in her self-portraits. In his book *Aesthetic Theory*, the philosopher Adorno brings forth the idea of art leaving the artist behind

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[34] Fuentes, *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait*, 235.
[35] Robin Richmond, *Frida Kahlo in Mexico (Painters & Places)*, (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1994), 133.

and living on its own, acquiring a language that is freed from the artist.[36] Kahlo's late style portraiture was once the language inside of her, the one she was speaking to herself in this new artistic mentality. Once it was put out onto the medium, the language was translated and evolved. The late self-portraits represent the closest conception of Frida, the one she knew herself to be in her later years, since before her death. In Kahlo's self becoming intertwined with her portraits long after her death, these self-portraits mature into a new expression. With the foundation of this new expression being her late style episodic character. An expression that is separate from Kahlo but still respectful in her creating the medium for this new language of the art to be formulated.

In *Diego y yo*, the portrait encapsulates Kahlo's love for Diego and her sorrow from him. But the painting, despite knowledge of historical context that brought about the subject matter, speaks on its own and has a life of its own. A life that has become recognized far from what Kahlo initially aimed to do in the painting, which was to eternalize her love and her perceived identity of herself with and through Rivera. Another point from Adorno is the idea of art anticipating something that does not yet exist, a being-in-itself that will be self-determined. That art does not imitate the real nature of the being it portrays, it is a materialization of a subject that has not yet come into the world.[37] A being-in-itself born from the artist's hand but that comes to a life of its own. In Frida's actual separation from Diego when she was confined to her house and bedridden, *Diego y yo* becomes the anticipation of a being that goes beyond her, one that is conjoined with Diego. In Kahlo existing in the moment of her painting the self-portraiture, the being-in-itself is both part of her and separate from her. The being-in-itself of *Diego y yo* is the embodiment of a key feature of Kahlo's early-late style self-portraiture.

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[36] Theodor W. Adorno, "Natural Beauty" in *Aesthetic Theory*, (London: Continuum - Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002), 78.
[37] Adorno, "Natural Beauty", 77.

Kahlo's newfound artistic character is reflected within the visual and symbolic techniques seen in her late style portraiture. In terms of artistic technique, there is a tone of agitation in her later portraits. The haste of her brushstrokes are not caught at first glance but leave a sense of thickness and underlying chaos. Frida's hair in *Diego y yo* and the patterns of her headdress in *Self-Portrait*, 1948 are primary evidence for such brushstrokes. Subject matter of her self-portraits becomes stressed through the technique of impasto, where actual thickness on the surface is created with applied layers of paint. There is a greater sense of texture to her late style that is a reflection of her hurried mindset. The softness of Kahlo's earlier self-portraits is completely eliminated from her face, her gaze. Her complexion has become a hue with traces of deep red and orange and her gaze marked with wide, shadowed eyes that draw the viewer into the brown bordering on black color of her irises. These technical deviations from her early portraiture bring to light a new being that Kahlo comes to be remembered as.

The themes surrounding Frida's often chosen subject matter of Diego become heightened in her late self-portraiture. A theme of three in varying patterns comes to be a constant in her later years. *Diego y yo* is the peak of the theme of three. A third perspective becomes employed when the third eye is represented twice in the self-portrait. An adjoining component to the theme of three and a characteristic of her late style is a focus on alternating tensions. Visually, it appears that a sense of control is fixed within the portrait as the opposing orientations in profile, gaze and ears of Kahlo and Rivera balance one another. The tension lies in Diego at the top of the pyramid layout with the highest point of another third eye. There is a symbolic destabilization with layers of three on top of one another in the portrait. It is Frida's bestowing to Diego of wisdom and superiority at the visual tip of the triage that creates the alternating tension between the two. In establishing Rivera in this position, Kahlo becomes able to almost merge to be one with her

husband. This further gives the painting a life of its own as she represents herself as one with and through Diego - the double depiction of the third eye mechanizes this. The exaggeration of Rivera can be viewed as a way for Kahlo to mediate through him, ultimately solidifying herself and her perceived identity as a lover to him. This seemingly new motif of Diego in Kahlo's early-late style self-portraiture is formed from this new energy where she acknowledges her own deterioration and that she can no longer validate the ways of living that Diego desires. And so her hurried nature in representing this culmination of iconography is a combination of an outcry for Diego in her isolation and an outcry for her last few years of life. Kahlo's self-portraits before her death are the most impactful remnants of her wanting to be remembered and how that remembrance and understanding of her identity as in love with Diego would be achieved.

Chapter V: *La pintora mas pintor*

The end of Frida's life found her in 1954 where her physical and emotional suffering was released. Her death is one of constant speculation with the moments leading up to it only showing the truth of her pain. Before her death, her final paintings were her still-lifes and the only insight they provide is a combination of heartbreak and relief. Her 1952 painting *Living Nature* is a reference to her eroding marriage with Diego Rivera after 23 years (Fig. 13). In the context of *Diego y yo*, this still-life is notable for its irony - it was meant for María Felix, the Mexican star who Rivera had an affair with and thus prompted the subject of Kahlo's final self-portrait. Kahlo and Felix became close friends after the affair and *Living Nature* was a testament to that.[38] Kahlo's final recorded painting is *Viva la Vida*, signed one month before she passed (Fig. 14). In her late-late style, this still life is the realization that her death is upon her. It follows the theme of *vanitas* where mortality is reminded while the title is a celebration that her life was lived and a hope to others to live life.[39] The last written record of Frida Kahlo comes from her diary, eight days before she passed, "I hope the leaving is joyful - and I hope never to return".[40] And the hope of her never returning was only fulfilled by her death as her artworks and legacy fashioned a life of their own. A life that is dynamic, of the Frida of the past and of the Frida of the present.

Frida Kahlo's *Diego y yo* has taken leave of the artist's initial intentions and lives now in its own right. The self-portrait, in its recent 2021 sale to a private collection, has pronounced Kahlo's painting as the most expensive Latin American piece of art to be sold to date.[41] In true Frida fashion, her final self-portrait surpassed Rivera as the highest selling Latin American

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[38] Prignitz-Poda, *Hidden Frida Kahlo: Lost, Destroyed or Little-Known Works*, 186-191.
[39] Salmon Grimberg, *Frida Kahlo: The Still Lives* (London: Merrell Publishers Limited, 2008), 139-140.
[40] Fuentes, *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait*, 285.
[41] Richmond, *Frida Kahlo in Mexico (Painters & Places)*, 9.

painting. Regardless of her love for Rivera in the self-portrait, the auction of *Diego y yo* is yet another ironic twist in the life of the painting considering its context and content. A more realistic cause though for the high price of *Diego y yo* and proof of Kahlo's legacy is the 1984 Mexican decree that claims all works by the artist as monuments and prohibits any exports of Kahlo's paintings outside of the country.[42] Leading to the only paintings of Frida's to be sold as those that had already left Mexico before the law. This gives her paintings an even more significant amount of value that is separate from the awe of her artistry. *Diego y yo* is a painting that evokes immense sympathy for an artist who succeeded in preserving her perceived identity of herself as a lover to her husband, Diego Rivera. The heaviness of the subject matter, of her love for Diego brings about an emotional intensity within the painting. The uniqueness of the self-portrait in its collection of iconography alludes to the new energy of artistry Kahlo experienced during the later years of her life. Kahlo's desire to be seen as herself and as the image she sees of herself is strengthened through a psychoanalytic application. Onto an alternate Kahlo, the artist fashioned herself in a way that was always recognizable to herself, but could only become known through *Diego y yo*. Painted five years before her death, *Diego y yo* is crucial in Kahlo's oeuvre as expressing to others what the artist found difficult to put into words. Frida Kahlo's self-critical analysis manifests itself in *Diego y yo* while delving into the depths of her relationship with Rivera, her artistic expression, and most importantly, herself.

The phenomenon of Frida Kahlo was forged through her own visual tradition. Her art serves as an autobiographical record of her life. And that is ultimately what she intended to do with her art. Her paintings were as much for herself as they were for others. A place where a

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[42] UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database. (1984). *Decree whereby all the works of art produced by the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo Calderón are declared to be artistic monuments, including easel, graphic works, engravings and technical documents, whether property of the nation or of private individuals*. Retrieved from UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database website: https://webarchive.unesco.org/#!/search?query=Frida%20Kahlo.

reflection of her emotions and thoughts could be translated into mementos of her life that would outlive her.

Illustrations

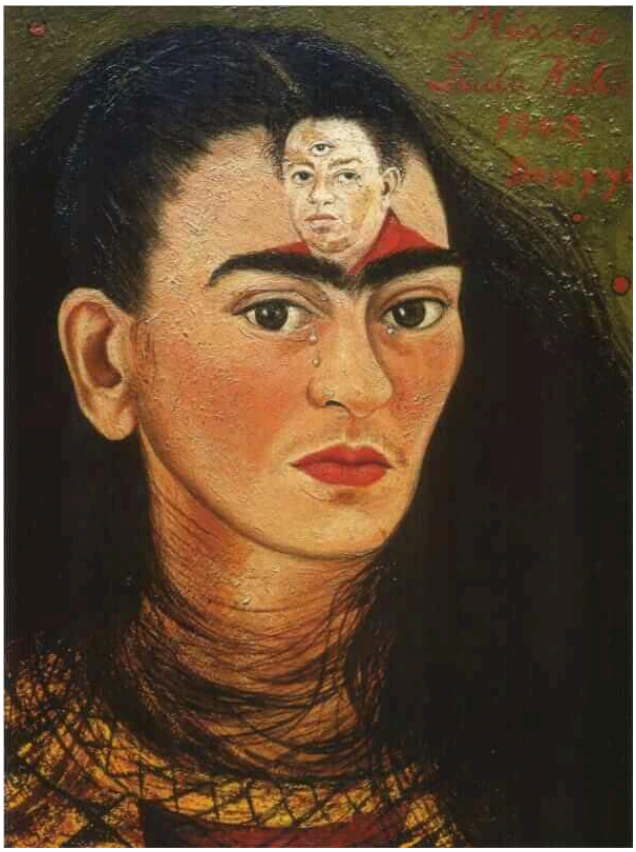

Figure 1. Frida Kahlo, *Diego y yo*, 1949, oil on masonite, 29.5 x 22.4 cm. Private collection.

Figure 2. Bernard Silberstein, *Frida pinta su autorretrato mientras Diego la observa*, 1940, sepia toned gelatin silver print.

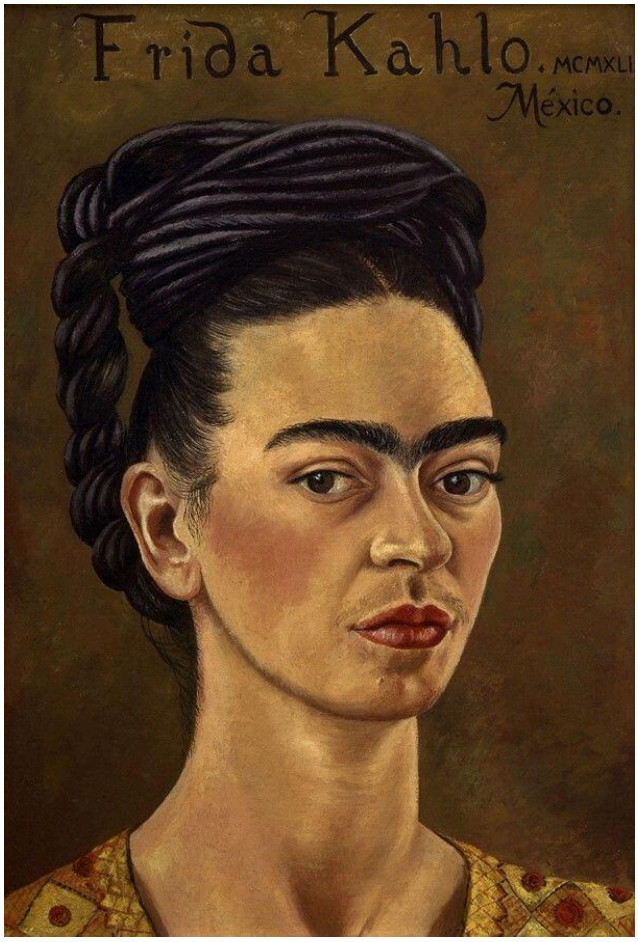

Figure 3. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Red and Gold Dress MCMXLI*, 1941, oil on canvas, 15.35 x 10.825 in. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection.

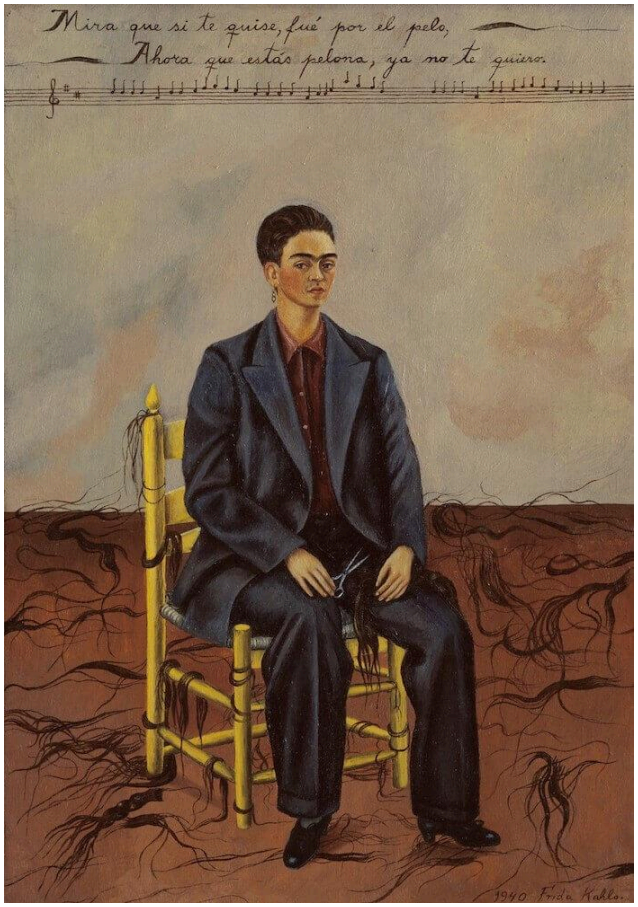

Figure 4. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*, 1940, oil on canvas, 15 ¾” x 11”. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.

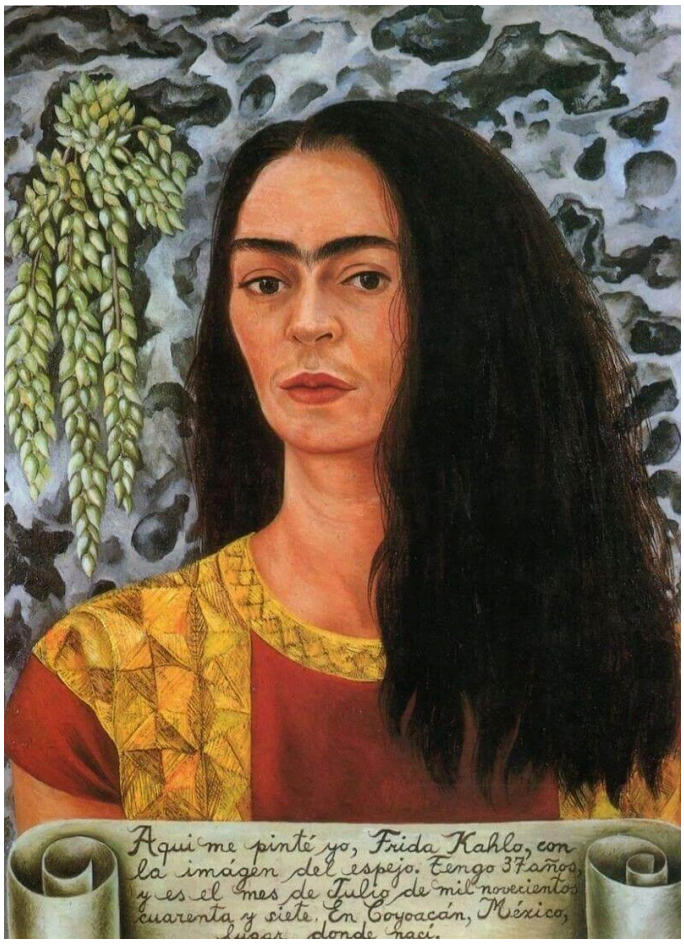

Figure 5. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Loose Hair*, 1947, oil on hardboard, 60.9 x 45.1 cm. Private collection, Des, Moines, Iowa.

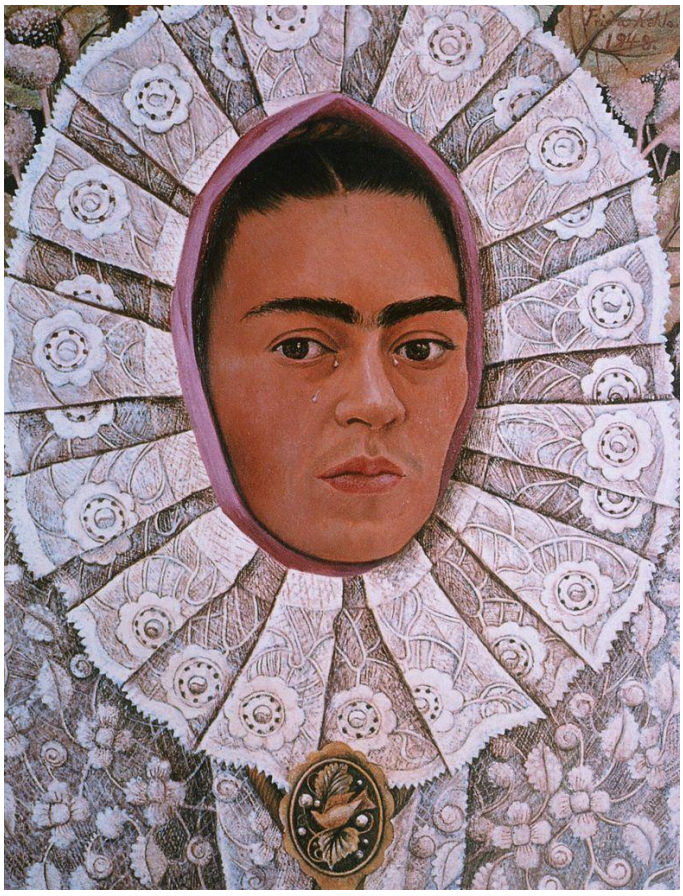

Figure 6. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait*, 1948, oil on canvas. Private collection.

Figure 7. Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), *The Virgin Dolorosa with her Hands apart*, 1555, oil 68 x 53 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Figure 8. Frida Kahlo, *No me llores! Si te lloro!*. Diary of Frida Kahlo.

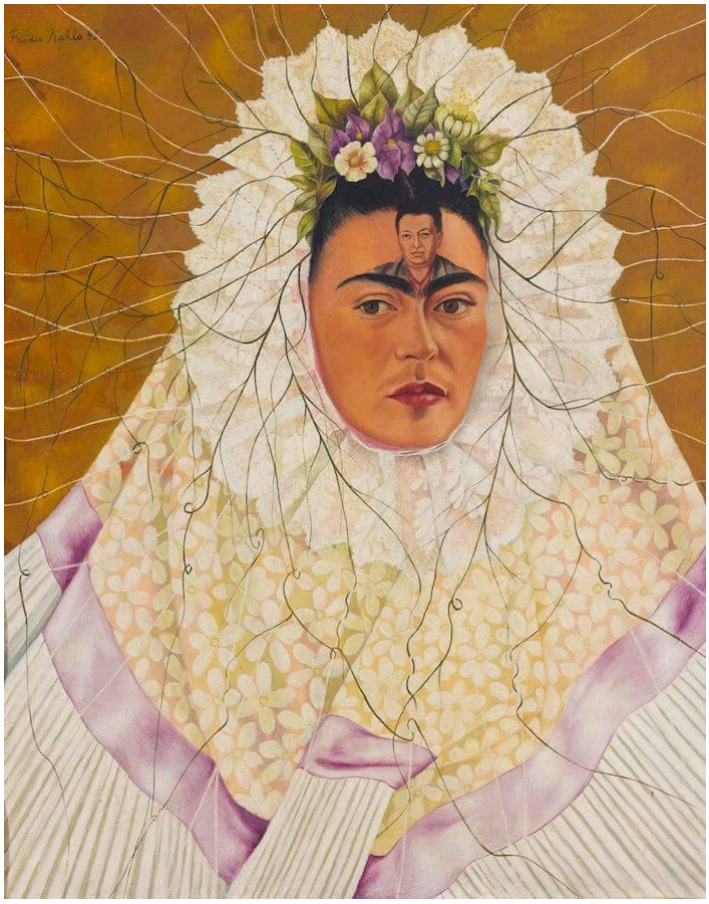

Figure 8. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait as Tehuana (Diego in my Thoughts)*, 1943, oil on masonite, 30 x 24 in. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection.

Figure 9. Frida Kahlo, *The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), Diego, Me,and Señor Xólotl*, 1949, oil on masonite, 27.6 x 23.8 in. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection.

Figure 10. Frida Kahlo, *Two Fridas*, 1939, oil on canvas, 173.5 x 173 cm. Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City.

Figure 11. Frida Kahlo, *Unfinished Self-Portrait*, c. 1952, oil and pastel on canvas, 55 x 65 cm. Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City.

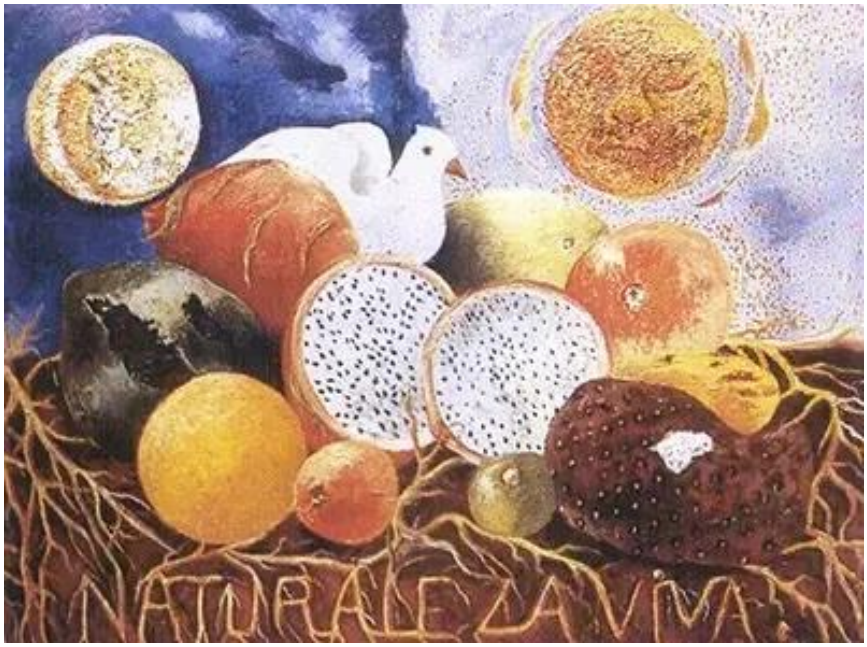

Figure 13. Frida Kahlo, *Living Nature*, 1952, oil on canvas, 44.1 x 60 cm. Private collection, Monterrey.

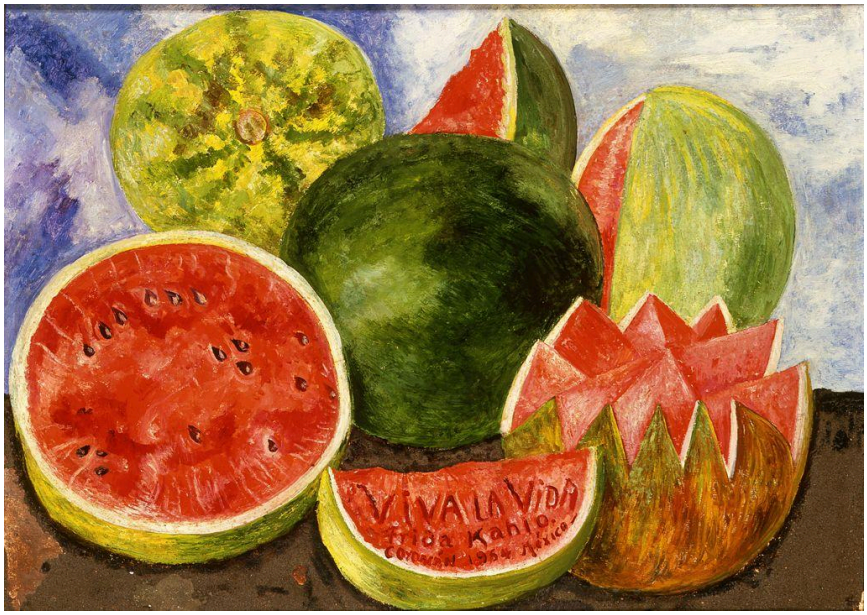

Figure 14. Frida Kahlo, *Viva la Vida*, 1954, oil and sand on masonite. Museo Frida Kahlo Collection.

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