Tamariki Guide

FRIDA KAHLO & DIEGO RIVERA

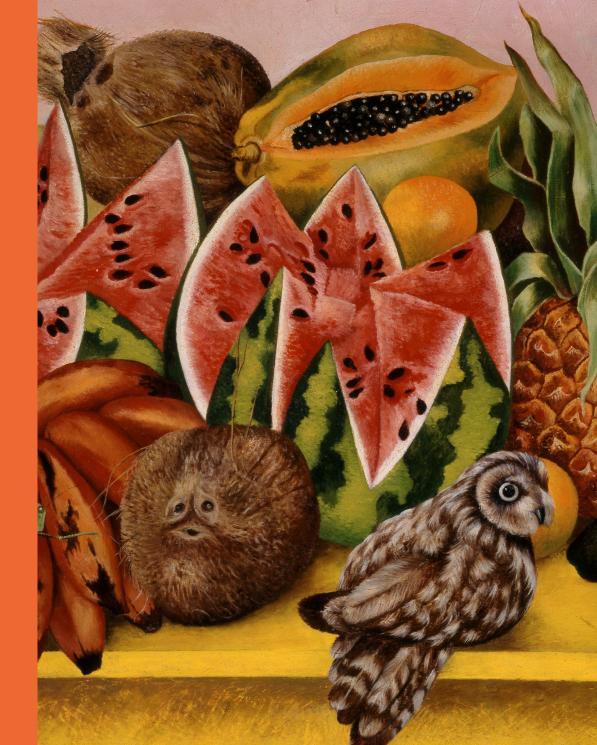
Art & Life in Modern Mexico



Hola! Welcome to the vibrant world of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera!

This exhibition will take you on a journey to experience the lives of two worldfamous artists who lived during a time of huge change in Mexico.

Frida Kahlo, *The Bride Who Becomes Frightened When She Sees Life Opened*, 1943, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo was born in Coyoacán, Mexico in 1907 to a Mexican mother and a German father. Her happy life turned upside down when she caught polio disease when she was six years old and was left with a weak right leg and a limp. Tragedy followed her: when she was 18 years old she was in a terrible traffic accident that nearly killed her. Bedridden for months at a time, Frida had a special easel made so that she could paint lying down and discovered that she could live a rich and meaningful life through making art: 'I never lost my spirit. I always spent my time painting.'

Diego Rivera

Diego Rivera was born in Guanajuato, Mexico in 1886 and found his love for drawing at a very young age. He sailed to Madrid in Spain to study art and also travelled to Paris in France, where he experimented with new methods of painting. Diego became well known for his huge murals that told real stories about Mexico and its people.

The two talented artists met each other for the first time in 1922 and married in 1929. Their lives together were not easy, but they shared their love for art and Mexico until Frida's death in 1954.

In Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Art and Life in Modern Mexico you will see paintings, photographs, video, costumes and more – all collected and treasured by Frida and Diego's friends, Jacques and Natasha Gelman.



Look out for this icon as you discover the artworks in this exhibition to help you complete the activities in this Tamariki Guide. It's a 'bird of paradise' flower – why do you think it has this name?

Frida Kahlo, Self-Portrait with Monkeys, 1943, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artesy Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



Vocabulario Huinga Kupu | Vocabulary

ancestors	people in your family who lived in the past
braids	plaited hair
bulbous	shaped like a bulb; round or swollen
commission	asking and paying someone to do a specific job or create something
corset	an item of tight clothing worn to support and hold the upper body in a certain position or shape
divorce	ending of a marriage
exotic	very different, unusual or interesting, often from an unfamiliar place
heritage	the traditions, achievements and beliefs that form the history of a group of people

femininity	behaviours and roles that are generally associated with girls and women
Indigenous	first people to live in a place
influential	to have the power to change or inspire people in some way
monobrow	a pair of eyebrows that meet above the nose, creating one eyebrow
Oaxacan	people who come from Oaxaca, southwest Mexico
patrons	people who give money or other support to artists
self-portrait	an artwork that represents yourself
Tehuana	women from Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, southwest Mexico



Look at this large painting of Natasha Gelman in a beautiful white gown surrounded by bouquets of calla lilies! It was commissioned by her husband, Jacques Gelman, who she met after immigrating to Mexico in 1942. Natasha and Jacques developed their passion for the art and culture of their new homeland and were among the most dedicated art patrons in Mexico at the time.

If an artist was commissioned to paint you, how would you pose? Which flowers or plants would you want to include?

Diego Rivera, Portrait of Natasha Gelman, 1943, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



Sketch your idea for a portrait that includes plants.

2.

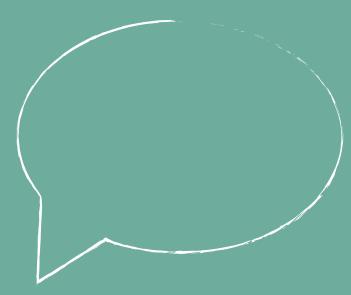
These bulbous cacti look like they're humans talking to each other – you can almost hear them say, 'Hola, ¿Cómo estás? (Tēnā koe, kei te pēhea koe? Hello, how are you?)'! Diego Rivera painted this playful image when he was travelling and working in the United States of America with his new wife, Frida Kahlo.



Imagine the conversations the cacti are having.



Fill in the speech bubbles around the plants. Look closely at the cacti in the distance too.



Diego Rivera, Landscape with Cacti, 1931, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter

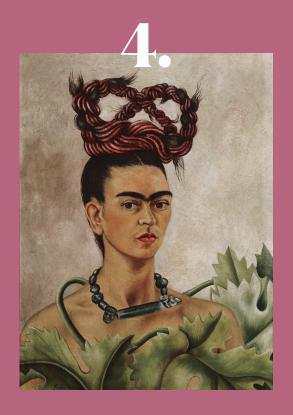




Two Mexican girls are quietly kneeling in front of calla lilies.
Calla lilies appear in many of Diego's paintings and symbolise the cycle of life as well as the customs of Indigenous Mexican culture. The double braids in the girls' hair mean that they are young and not married. Are they preparing for a day selling these lilies at the market?

Korero with your amigo or amiga (hoa, friend): Why do you think the artist has hidden the girls' faces from us? How does that make you feel? What might the girls be seeing, smelling and thinking? Did you also notice the hidden figure with the sombrero at the top of the painting?

Diego Rivera, Calla Lily Vendor, 1943, oil on masonite. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



Meet Frida Kahlo, one of
Mexico's most influential and
celebrated artists! You may
have heard many stories about
her, but who was the real Frida
Kahlo? This was a question that
Frida tried to answer through
painting 55 self-portraits. SelfPortrait with Braid was painted
after Diego and Frida remarried
in 1940. The hair that Frida cut
off after her clivorce from Diego
is shown reattached to her
head, making an endless loop.

Frida's long hair was a symbol of femininity – she cut it to express her independence and to show that she was ready for a new life.

Look closely. What are some other details you can see in this painting? How might they show Frida's sense of freedom or restriction?

Frida Kahlo, Self-Portrait with Braid, 1941, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



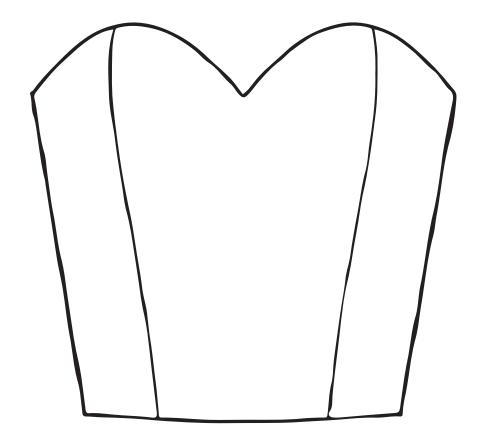


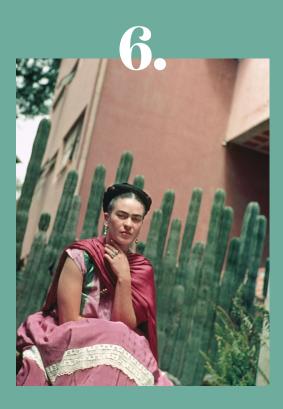


Frida was a true artist and a fighter, even when she was in a lot of pain. After recovering from her traffic accident, Frida was in and out of hospital throughout the rest of her life. She had 32 surgeries and spent months in bed wearing a corse to support her back.

Can you imagine yourself stuck in your bed for weeks at a time with your body tightly enclosed in a big plaster corse? How would you spend your time?

Despite all the pain, Frida was more energised than ever: she painted with a special easel and had a mirror fixed on the ceiling so that she could keep painting herself. She also transformed many of the 28 corsets she wore into beautiful pieces of art, decorating them with paint, fabric and mirrors.



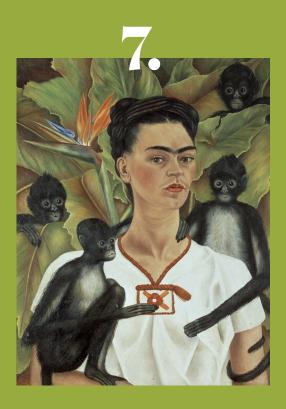


Frida is famous for her fabulous style of self as well as for her style of art. Her bold monobrow, brightly coloured Indigenous Tehuana dresses and braided hair with flowers became an important part of her identity and attracted a lot of attention. In wearing the Indigenous clothes from her Oaxacan heritage, Frida showed her respect for traditional weavers' and embroiderers' skilled mahi and her pride in Mexican culture.

What kind of clothes do you like wearing? What do they say about you?

Whisper to Frida in front of you to tell her what makes you proud of your culture.

Juan Guzmán, Frida at ABC Hospital Holding a Mirror, 1950,



Frida loved animals. She filled her home at La Casa Azul (The Blue House) with exotic pets: spider monkeys, cats, birds, baby deer, and hairless Xoloitzcuintli dogs! These treasured animals feature in many of her self-portraits. The spider monkeys in this painting symbolise the children she couldn't have as well as her beloved students.

If you were to paint your amiga or amigo (hoa, friend) as animals, what would they be?

Pretend that you are one of the spider monkeys who lived with Frida. What do you do all day? Where is your favourite place to play? Who are your best friends?

Frida Kahlo, Self-Portrait with Monkeys, 1943, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter

in	Write a letter to Frida, describing all the fun times you had together at La Casa Azul:
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This fruit looks delicious and juicy! Frida painted the everyday objects she saw around her. She had a garden full of fruit and shopped at her local markets. Her paintings remind us that we can be surprised by, and find beauty in, the small details all around us every day.

See your everyday world through Frida's eyes. Walk around your neighbourhood with your familia (whānau, family) and make a treasure map. Include street names, shops, plants, animals, houses and other things you see. You might notice a secret walkway that leads to a new place or something small, like a plant growing out of a crack ...! Be delighted by what you see!



Frida Kahlo, The Bride Who Becomes Frightened When She Sees Life Opened, 1943, oil on canvas. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



Frida's life was full of tragedies, but it was also filled with love for her husband, art, people and her homeland, Mexico. **Explore** how she has expressed her love for all these parts of her life in *The Love Embrace, the Universe, the Earth (Mexico) Diego, Me and Señor Xoloti.* It might seem like a strange painting but for Frida it showed her experience: 'I never paint dreams. I paint my own reality.'

What details does she include in *The Love Embrace*? What might they express about her life? What words would you use to describe the mood of this painting? How do you express your love for your *familia* (whānau, family), *amigo* or *amiga* (hoa, friend) and *tierra* (whenua, land)?

Frida Kahlo, *The Love Embrace, the Universe, the Earth (Mexico) Diego, Me and Señor Xoloti*, 1949, oil on masonite. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Institutio Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter



Think about a person or place you love and **draw** your version of *The Love Embrace*. **Tell** your loved ones how you feel about them and make their day!

Take-home activities

1.

Find murals in your school, neighbourhood and around the city. What stories do they tell?

Take photos of the murals and share them with your amiga or amigo (hoa, friend). Talk about the similarities and differences in what you've found.

2.

On the biggest piece of paper you can find, sketch what you would include in a mural telling a story about your neighbourhood. You might use some of the details you added in your treasure map, such as street signs, shop fronts and local animals, plants and people. You could include speech bubbles and dates of important events to help tell your story.

3.

Use a mirror to make a selfportrait (or take a selfie!). Include objects that tell the viewer about yourself and your pets, if you have any.

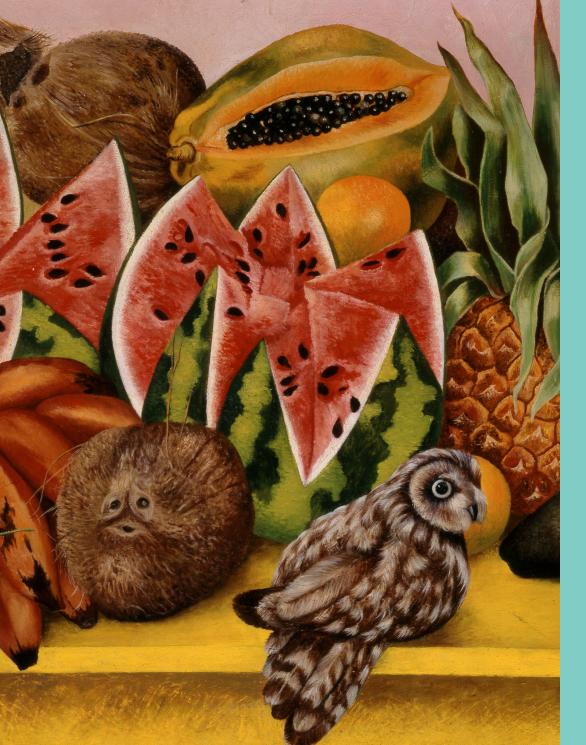
4.

Talk to the adults in your whānau and learn about your cultural heritage. Research the traditional clothing worn by your ancestors and, if you can sew, make a piece of traditional clothing, or draw the item.

Share your findings and artworks with the Gallery's Learning team: education@aucklandartgallery.com

Diego Rivera, *Calla Lily Vendor*, 1943, oil on masonite. The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL), Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter





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