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Modern art, modern love

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera

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Lecture summary

United by their commitment to their Mexican heritage and their shared political convictions, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera's relationship was as tumultuous as it was passionate. Rivera's monumental murals celebrated Mexico's indigenous culture and struggle for social justice, while Kahlo's deeply personal paintings explored themes of pain, identity, and womanhood. Despite a tempestuous marriage marked by infidelities and conflicts, they remained each other's greatest supporters and sources of inspiration. Their bond, turbulent yet undeniably symbiotic, became an integral part of their respective artistic identities, shaping the trajectory of Mexican modern art and its reputation on the world stage.

List of works (in order of presentation)

1. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940, oil on canvas, 61 x 47 cm; Diego Rivera, *Colonisation or Arrival of Hernán Cortés in Veracruz*, 1951, mural, 4.92 x 5.27 m, Palacio Nacional, Mexico City.
2. Frida Kahlo, *Diego y yo (Diego and I)*, 1949, oil on masonite, 30 x 22.5 cm; Diego Rivera, *The Rivals*, 1931, oil on canvas, 152.5 x 127 cm.
3. Diego Rivera, *The Firestone Self-Portrait*, 1941, oil on canvas, 61 x 43 cm; *Self-Portrait*, 1930, lithograph, 40 x 28.5 cm; Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait (to Dr Eloesser)*, 1940, oil on masonite, 59.5 x 40 cm
4. Frida Kahlo, *Portrait on the Borderline between Mexico and the United States*, 1932, oil on tin, 31 x 35 cm.
5. Diego Rivera, *Detroit Industry*, North Wall, 1932-1933, murals, Detroit Institute of Arts; *Vaccination* (North Wall supporting panel), 1932-1933, mural, 2.58 x 2.13 m, Detroit Institute of Arts.
6. Diego Rivera, *Classical Head*, 1898, oil on canvas, 48.5 x 39.2 cm; *La Era (The Threshing Floor)*, 1904, oil on canvas, 100 x 114.5 cm.
7. Diego Rivera, *View of Toledo*, 1912, oil on canvas, 112 x 91 cm; El Greco, *View of Toledo*, oil on canvas, 121 cm x 108.5 cm.
8. Diego Rivera, *Young Man in a Grey Sweater (Jacques Lipchitz)*, 1914, oil on canvas, 65 x 60 cm.
9. Diego Rivera, *Zapatista Landscape (The Guerrilla)*, 1915, oil on canvas, 145 x 125 cm.
10. Diego Rivera, *Creation*, 1922-1923, mural, encaustic and gold leaf, 7.08 x 12.19 m, Anfiteatro Bolívar, Colegio de San Ildefonso (formerly Escuela Nacional Preparatoria), Mexico City.
11. Frida Kahlo, *The Accident*, 1926, pencil on paper, 20 x 27 cm; *Ex-Voto (Retablo) No. 70* from the collection of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, retouched by Kahlo in c. 1943, oil on tin, 20 x 30 cm.
12. Robert Delaunay, *Eiffel Tower, First Study*, 1909, oil on canvas, 39 x 27 cm.
13. Frida Kahlo, *Broken Column*, 1944, oil on masonite, 40 x 30 cm; Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Sebastian*, c.1457, tempera on wood, 68 x 30 cm.
14. Frida Kahlo, *Portrait of Miguel N. Lira*, 1927, oil on canvas 106 x 74 cm.
15. Diego Rivera, *The Maize Festival*, 1923-1924, mural, 4.38 x 2.39; *Day of the Dead*, 1923-1924, mural, 4.38 x 2.39, Ministry of Education, Mexico City.
16. Diego Rivera, *Distributions of Arms*, 1928, 2 x 3.98 m, mural, Ministry of Education, Mexico City.
17. Diego Rivera, *Allegory of California*, 1931, mural, 5.48 x 2.74 m, Pacific Stock Exchange, San Francisco; *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City*, 1931, mural, 5.68 x 9.91 m, San Francisco.
18. Diego Rivera, *Emiliano Zapata: The Agrarian Leader*, 1931, fresco on cement. 238 x 188 cm.
19. Diego Rivera, *Sugar Cane*, 1931, fresco on cement, 145 x 239 cm; Diego Rivera, *Liberation of the Peon*, 1931, fresco on cement, 185.5 x 239.5 cm.
20. Diego Rivera, *Frozen Assets*, 1931, fresco on cement, 188 x 239 cm.

21. Frida Kahlo, *Frieda and Diego Rivera*, 1931, oil on canvas, 100 x 79 cm; Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, oil on wood, 82.2 cm x 60 cm.
22. Diego Rivera, *Infant in the Bulb of a Plant* (East Wall detail, *Detroit Industry*), mural, 1932, 1.33 x 7.93 m; Frida Kahlo, *El Aborto (Frida and the Miscarriage)*, 1932, lithograph, 22 x 14 cm.
23. Frida Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital (The Flying Bed)*, 1932, oil on metal, 30.5 x 38 cm
24. Frida Kahlo, *My Dress Hangs There*, 1933, oil and collage on metal, 46 x 55 cm.
25. Diego Rivera, *Man, Controller of the Universe*, 1934, mural, 4.8 x 11.5 m, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.
26. Diego Rivera, *World of Today and Tomorrow*, 1934, mural, 4.75 x 10.67 m, Palacio Nacional, Mexico City.
27. Frida Kahlo, *A Few Small Nips (Passionately in Love)*, 1935, oil on metal, 29.5 x 39.5 cm.
28. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky (Between the Curtains)*, 1937, oil on masonite, 76 x 61 cm.
29. Frida Kahlo, *What the Water Gave Me*, 1938, oil on canvas, 91 cm x 70.5 cm.
30. Nikola Muray, *Frida Kahlo on a White Bench, New York*, 1939, colour print, assembly (Carbro) process.
31. Frida Kahlo, *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale*, oil on masonite with wooden frame, 60.5 x 48.5 cm.
32. Frida Kahlo, *The Frame*, 1938, oil on aluminium framed in glass, 28.5 cm x 20.7 cm.
33. Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas*, 1939, oil on canvas, 173 cm x 173 cm.
34. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*, 1940, oil on canvas, 40 cm x 28 cm.
35. Diego Rivera, *Pan American Unity (The Marriage of the Artistic Expression of the North and of the South on This Continent)*, mural, 6.7 x 22.6 m, Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco.
36. Frida Kahlo, *Diego on my Mind (Self-Portrait as Tehuana)*, 1943, oil on masonite, 76 x 61 cm.
37. Frida Kahlo, *The Love Embrace of the Universe, My Earth (Mexico), Diego, Myself and Señor Xólotl*, 1949, oil on canvas, 70 cm x 60.5 cm.
38. Diego Rivera, *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park*, 1947, mural, 4.7 x 15.6 m, Hotel del Prado, Mexico City (today Museo Mural Diego Rivera).
39. Diego Rivera, *Portrait of Natasha Gelman*, 1943, oil on canvas, 115 x 153 cm; *Cala Lily Vendor*, 1943, oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm.
40. Diego Rivera, *The Temptations of Saint Anthony*, 1947, oil on canvas, 90 x 110 cm.; Matthias Grünewald, *The Temptations of Saint Anthony*, c. 1512-15, oil on wood.
41. Frida Kahlo, *The Bride Frightened at Seeing Life Opened*, 1943, oil on canvas, 63 x 81.5 cm.
42. Frida Kahlo, *Pitahayas (Dragon Fruit)*, 1938, oil on metal, 25.5 x 35.5 cm; *Still Life with Parrot and Flag*, 1951, oil on masonite, 28 x 40 cm.
43. Frida Kahlo, *Self-portrait with the Portrait of Dr. Farill*, 1951, oil on masonite, 41.5 x 50 cm.
44. Frida Kahlo, *Marxism Will Give Health to the Sick*, 1954, oil on masonite, 76 x 61 cm.
45. Frida Kahlo, *Viva la Vida (Watermelons)*, 1954, oil on masonite, 59.5 x 51 cm; Diego Rivera, *The Watermelons*, 1957, oil on canvas, 68 x 92.

References

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