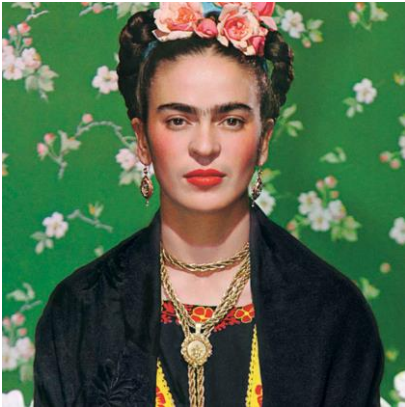




FRIDA KAHLO



EARLY LIFE AND INSPIRATION

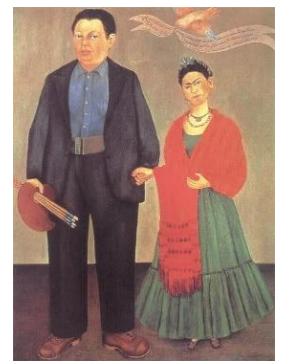
Frida Kahlo was born Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderón on July 6, 1907, in Mexico City, Mexico. At the age of six, Kahlo contracted the illness polio and was bedridden for nine months. Her father (a photographer) encouraged her recovery through soccer, swimming and wrestling (unusual for females at the time). Even at a young age, she was known for her high spirits and a love for colour. At school, she became politically active, joining the Young Communist League and the Mexican Communist Party.

On September 17th 1925, Kahlo – aged 18 - and Alejandro Gómez Arias (a school friend) were travelling together on a bus when the vehicle collided with a streetcar. As a result of the collision, Kahlo was impaled by a steel handrail, which went into her hip and came out the other side. She suffered several serious injuries as a result, including fractures in her spine and pelvis. It took her many months to heal, and she began engaging with art to help her get through the recovery.

LATER LIFE

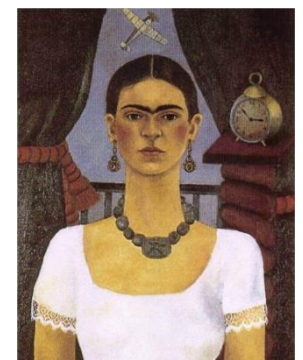
She married Diego Rivera, who was a Mexican muralist (someone who makes large pieces of art called murals). He was often depicted in Kahlo's earlier work. She followed him wherever his work took him. Over time, she was often betrayed by him, and their relationship grew further apart. For a period, they helped exiled Soviet communist Leon Trotsky and his wife. Kahlo and Rivera divorced and married other people, eventually living separate lives.

In later life, she needed assistance to walk. Her ill health caused her to attend her first solo exhibition in Mexico in 1953 lying on a bed. She died in La Casa Azul a year later of illness.



KAHLO AS AN ARTIST

Using oils, she painted many portraits and self-portraits, for which she would later become more known for. In later life, she still focused mainly on portraits and self-portraits, her art pieces became deeper and more personal over time as she represented her struggles within her art, often using symbolism and surrealist elements to share her heartache. Though her later years were plagued with ill health, this did not stop her from her political activism and painting.





FIND OUT MORE...

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/frida-kahlo>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. How old was she when she contracted polio?
2. How did her father encourage her recovery?
3. Why did she start to engage with art?
4. What year did she die?
5. What material did she use to paint?