

Frida Kahlo: The Dichotomy of Health and Art

1907: Born Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón

1925: Rides a bus that gets hit by a trolley. This accident left her body permanently impaired and in a constant state of pain.

1929: Frida marries Diego for the first time. She expands her painting from friends to citizens of Mexico.

1934: The couple return to Mexico; they experience separation after Diego has affair with Frida's sister.

1937: Leon Trotsky, the exiled Russian revolutionary stays with Frida and Diego. As one of Diego's old friends, he was well known for his politics and very much attracted to Frida. Their relationship helped Frida go international with her art.

1950: Frida is hospitalized at the English hospital in Mexico for a year

1954: Frida gets pneumonia after her last political rally. She dies shortly after from all health problems.

1926: During her long, painful recovery from the trolley accident, her parents bring her an art set and she begins to paint

1928: Frida talks to Diego Rivera and seeks his approval for her work.

1932: She suffers from depression because of her miscarriage, and her mother's death. She also misses Mexico and her family because she is in Detroit with Diego. She begins using a different medium, retablo style while Diego is painting murals.

1939: Frida is being recognized around the world for her art so she visits Paris as a Mexican surrealist

1940: Diego divorces Frida; later on that year wants her back

1953: Frida has her first solo show in Mexico. This would be her only solo Mexican show and her leg is amputated later on in the year.

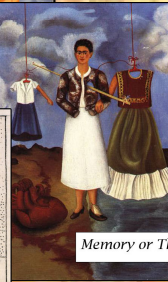
At the age of 6, Frida developed polio, making her right leg very thin. When she returned to school the children called her Frida "pata de palo" (Frida the pegleg). It was also believed that after this she developed spina bifida, which explains her life-long ailments involving her spinal alignment. She started a diary in the 1940s which coincides with many tragic things in her life, including her father dying, her being divorced from Diego Rivera, and her realization that she would never have a child, something she expressed regret over.

About the Poster

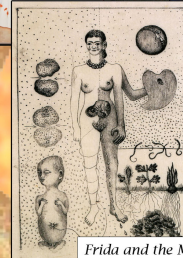
I chose the colors of the background based on what she wrote in her diary about her interpretation of certain colors; "yellow (madness, sickness, fear. Part of the Sun and of happiness), coffee (colour of mole [chile sauce], of fading leaves, Earth), magenta (blood? Well, who knows!)" and I felt these colors related to the poster since it has so much to do with her failing health conditions and the way nature played into her paintings. The spine and pelvic bone are in the poster because of their integral role in shaping her life, and therefore her work.



The Two Fridas, 1939



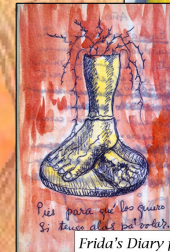
Memory or The Heart, 1937



Frida and the Miscarriage, 1932



Frida's Diary p. 161



Frida's Diary p. 134



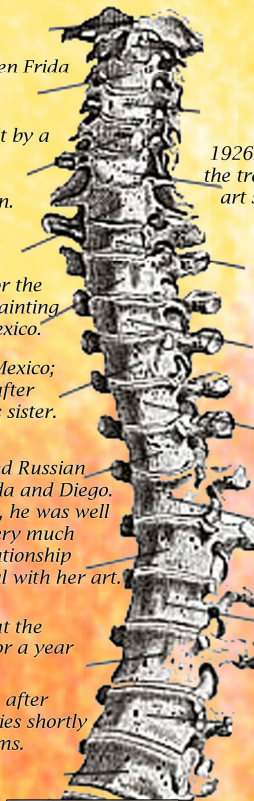
Frida's Diary p. 158

Frida Kahlo was a free spirit restricted by polio among all her other health issues, and became a daydreamer almost as if to escape her situation. One of her most famous quotes were "I paint myself because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best". And her description of her childhood imaginary friend exemplifies how alone she felt. She found narrative and exploration within herself and so her paintings became her adventures; almost seemingly unraveling over time. There are the paintings that have a natural, very earthy feel, and many of these paintings involve a hurt to her.

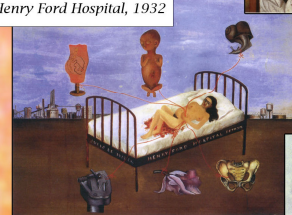
Enshrouded in the leaves, foliage, and vines she's embracing her return to the earth, where her ailments can no longer plague her. In many of her paintings there were also manifestations of the emotionally repressed feelings. In "The Dream", she paints a depiction of herself, once again returning to the earth, but separates her physical self from her soul. The dynamite on the skeleton is the physical explosive pains that she feels, but when she sleeps that pain is outside of herself. Since she spent so much of her life lying down, she also paints herself lying down, usually with some connection to her environment, whether cerebral or physical. And in all of those paintings there is pain and comfort she is experiencing.

Bibliography

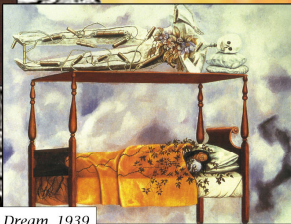
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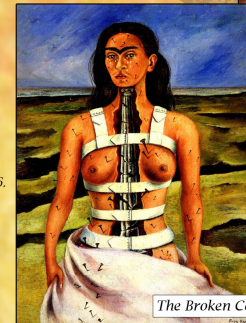
Without Hope, 1945



Henry Ford Hospital, 1932



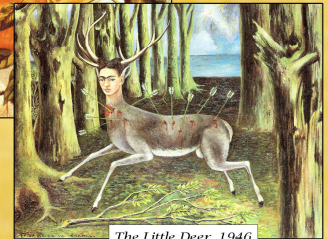
The Dream, 1939



The Broken Column, 1944



Roots, 1943



The Little Deer, 1946

Lesly Jerome

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