

The art of Frida Kahlo

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Frida Kahlo Response The art of Frida Kahlo is revered by art historians and feminists alike. Kahlo had the rare ability to tell an entire story in each and every piece that she did. Kahlo incorporates her life long struggle with physical pain into much of her work as well. Kahlo was victim to a tragic accident early in her life which sentenced her to a life of pain and suffering. Additionally, she was married to Diego Rivera, which inspired an enormous amount of the emotion felt in her work. In one such piece, Kahlo depicts in shocking detail, a portrait of her physical pain. This particular piece is named The Broken Column. Kahlo skillfully but unabashedly reveals herself topless in this painting, wrapped in a brace and adorned with pins in her flesh. Kahlo pays particular attention to the element of both her femininity and her physical pain in this piece. We see her bare breasts but more obvious is the fact that she is riddled with pins all over her body.

As a woman, Kahlo experienced the gravity of love (the love of her life was Diego) but also the betrayal of that love. Her marriage to Rivera was turbulent as Rivera was unfaithful throughout their relationship. Kahlo herself dabbled in extramarital relationships as well as bisexuality. Kahlo expresses this side of her in one particular piece where she dresses as a man. She challenges the assigning of gender roles within society.

Kahlo also lets her work tell a rich story detailing her inner most feelings and struggles. This is particularly apparent in the famous piece entitled The Two Frida's. Kahlo is able to materialize the inner struggle experienced by so many women, making her an icon in feminist art. In another piece by Kahlo, Tree of Hope, Kahlo is illustrating herself in a colorful landscape back drop. At first glance, Kahlo appears to be something of a goddess or royalty. This

piece perhaps irradiates some of her other work that may allude to self-loathing or self-perceived deficiencies.

In much of Kahlo's work, she used herself as a focal point making it a true and honest expression of herself. Kahlo reaches within herself to produce an element of bravery which is ever present in each and every piece of work that she produced. She was not afraid to address the taboo of the female form as well as the uncomfortable topic of her injuries and pain. Kahlo's work forces its audience to confront things like excessive facial hair on a woman, challenged gender roles, graphic imagery and nudity. In this way, it is brutally honest but entirely in a way that is the artist looking internally in order to create.

Kahlo stands alone in her unfailing ability to mix beauty with startling contrast. Each piece that Kahlo produced had its own individual character and displayed a very real issue that was non-fictional and dealt specifically with Kahlo's own personal life. Kahlo was in love with color and made that clear throughout her work. She seemed to match color with emotion effortlessly. The aspect of her backgrounds almost always was a landscape of some sort. In her backgrounds, Kahlo did not employ simplicity but rather incredibly organic, almost spiritual images. One specific example of this is *Tree of Hope* where a brilliant sun and moon seem to battle for the sky. This two-sided background landscape is fluid from top to bottom and reminds its audience of *The Two Fridas*.