

# Essay summary of frida kahlo

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Art Essay - Frida Kahlo The Mexican Surrealist artist, Frida Kahlo, uses her personal experience, marriage and tragedies to express her feelings and emotions in her artworks. The artworks, *Recurred (Memory)*, *Henry Ford Hospital* and *The Two Fridas*, all use personal imagery, signs, symbols and everyday occurrences to show her experiences. Kahlo's artworks are personal and thought provoking and have made her one of the 20th century's most enduring and popular artists. Frida Kahlo was born on the 6th July, 1907 in Mexico. When she was a young girl she suffered from polio.

When she was 18, she and her boyfriend were involved in a bus accident. A metal pole pierced Frida Kahlo through her pelvic area. She suffered many injuries including a fractured spine, ribs, collarbone and pelvis. She endured more than thirty operations following the accident and was told she would be unable to have children. During her recovery in hospital, Kahlo began painting. She painted mainly self-portraits using a mirror above her hospital bed. Frida Kahlo married at 22 to a man called Diego Rivera. Their relationship was plagued with divorce, affairs and Kahlo's inability to have children.

Frida Kahlo suffered from gangrene in the years before her death which resulted in her having her right leg amputated below the knee. Kahlo died on the 13th July, 1954. She painted about 200 artworks and held many exhibitions over the course of her life. *Recurred (Memory)* is a very symbolic artwork painted by Frida Kahlo in 1937. It describes her pain when her husband, Diego, had an affair with Frida Kahlo's sister, Christina. Although her face appears expressionless, the tears pouring down her face vouch for her suffering from immense emotional pain.

The tears may also represent her physical pain at having a metal rod piece her chest and her heart being ripped out. Her broken heart now lies at her feet. The size of her heart emphasizes the sheer intensity of the pain she is experiencing from Diego and her sister's betrayal. She has painted this self-portrait without her hands, suggesting that she is experiencing feelings of helplessness and despair. The two outfits on either side of her, represent the happier times Kahlo experienced with Diego. Her school uniform signifies that Kahlo met Diego when she was still at school.

The other outfit is a Mexican dress. It symbolizes the Kahlo that Diego loved. Diego loved Kahlo's long hair so she cut it off to spite him. That is why this artwork pictures Kahlo with cropped short hair. Kahlo painted the artwork, 'Henry Ford Hospital' in 1932, directly after leaving the hospital following her second miscarriage. This artwork contains a lot of symbolism and is a representation of the pain of experiencing a miscarriage. Kahlo has painted herself naked, lying on her back on top of a hospital bed at Henry Ford hospital.

She has blood on the sheets beneath her pelvic area and a tear flows from her left eye showing the viewer the pain she is experiencing. The six images that float around the bed, each relate to her miscarriage. They are all connected to her by red lines which can be interpreted as umbilical cords. The diagram of a woman's torso is painted in the left upper corner and shows the workings of a female body and reproductive system. The image to the right of it, shows an almost fully formed male fetus. It represents the child she lost due to the miscarriage.

She refers to the miscarriage child as Disguise (Little Diego). The image in the right upper corner is a snail. It implies that the length and pace of miscarriage is very slow and tiring. Below that is an image of a pelvic bone. This is directly related to Kohl, explaining graphically that she was unable to have a child due to a shattered pelvis which she sustained in the bus accident. The orchard was a gift from her husband Diego. The Two Fridays was painted in 1939 during the time Frida Kohl and Diego were getting divorced.

She has used a lot of symbolism to show how much pain the divorce had caused her. The left Friday is the unhappy one that Diego no longer loves. She is displayed in a European style dress and is holding the hand-held scissors that are severing her ties with Diego. Her heart has been painted in a damaged manner, showing how the divorce has broken her and left her emotionally unstable. The right Friday represents the happy one that Diego loved. She is dressed in her traditional Mexican clothing and is showing a whole, happy and healthy heart.

In her hand, she is holding a picture of Diego. A cord is connecting her to this picture, suggesting they were lovers. The two Friday's are joined by their hands and by a cord. When Kohl was younger she had an imaginary friend who was a girl. Many believe that Kohl included her in the artwork but I believe that it means the only person she can rely on is herself. Diego has left her resulting in Kohl pushing all her friends away so in the end she is the only one left. The background shows a stormy sky, explaining her emotions perfectly.

Frida Kahlo once said, " I suffered two grave accidents in my life. One in which a streetcar knocked me down... The other accident is Diego'. This means that the bus accident caused her physical pain and Diego caused her emotional pain. Frida Kahlo has used a lot of symbolism and imagery in her artworks, *Recurred (Memory)*, *Henry Ford Hospital* and *The Two Fridas*, to show her personal experiences and tragedies. She used her paintings to express her feelings as she suffered physical and emotional pain throughout her life.