



**eva**

**ELEMENTARY VISUAL ARTS**

Park City Education Foundation • Kimball Art Center

LESSON

**5**

**Frida Kahlo**

Self-Portraits

Verbal Directions

## LESSON OVERVIEW

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was a Mexican artist known for her bold self-portraits depicting her culture and experiences. Students will learn how to draw the proportions and features of a human face while exploring symbols that reflect their personal identity in oil pastels.

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Learn about Frida Kahlo.
- Learn about the proportion of the face and apply them in artwork.
- Learn about Kahlo's symbolism and how it relates to her cultural background and personal experiences.
- Explore the properties of oil pastels, considering colors and layering techniques.
- Explore symbols to share a personal narrative.

### SUPPLIES

- Images of Kahlo's artwork
- Samples of Self-Portraits
- Map of the World
- Pastel paper/scratch paper
- Drawing pencils
- Mirrors
- Oil pastels.
- Diagrams of facial proportions
- Black construction paper for matting artwork

### FRIDA KAHLO



Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) is remembered for her self-portraits and bold, vibrant colors. She was born on July 6, 1907, in Coyoacán, Mexico. Frida's art often showed her own life and experiences, including the pain she felt from a serious bus accident when she was a teenager. Even though she was in a lot of pain, Frida continued to paint. She loved to paint self-portraits, which are pictures of herself, and often included symbols from Mexican culture. She often borrowed the style of 19th century Mexican portrait painters, and their use of a background of tied-back drapes. She was married to another famous artist, Diego Rivera. Frida spent a lot of time in her family home, called La Casa Azul (The Blue House), which is now a museum dedicated to her life and art. She often wore traditional Mexican clothing, like colorful dresses and flower crowns, celebrating her heritage and standing out with her unique style. Frida's work was recognized internationally during her lifetime, and she remains an iconic figure in art and culture today.



## LESSON PLAN

1. Introduce students to the life and work of Frida Kahlo. Pull out a map and point out where Mexico is located. Notice how self-portraits were her favorite subject matter. Discuss how her self-portraits represent her unique identity. Point out elements in each piece that show realism, surrealism and symbolism.

- What is unique about Frida Kahlo? What does she tell us about herself in her self-portraits?
- What gives us hints about her experiences and Mexican Identity in these paintings?
- What stories does the background of her image tell?
- What is unique about you that you would like to capture in a self-portrait?

*In her self-portrait, "Time Flies," Kahlo uses a folk style and vibrant colors. She wears peasant clothing, and the red, white and green in the painting are the colors of the Mexican flag.*

2. Tell students that they will have the opportunity to create their own self-portrait inspired by Frida Kahlo's style. Distribute mirrors, 1 sheet of paper, a pencil and diagrams of the face. Start with the shape of the face, and add a neck and shoulders. Remind students that this self-portrait should capture the **unique** features of their face. Using the diagrams of facial proportions talk about where to draw feature on the face. Add eyes, a nose and mouth. Continue adding characteristics such as hair, ears, freckles, glasses and eyebrows. (See resources for portraiture teaching aids)

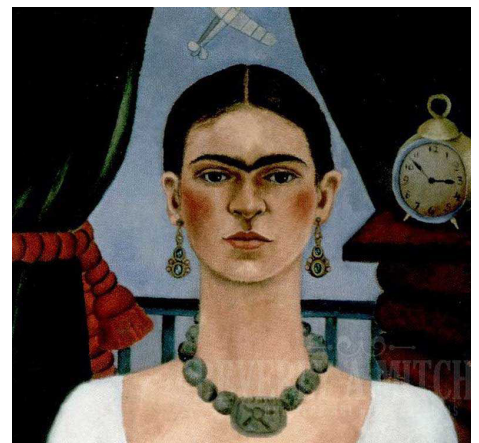
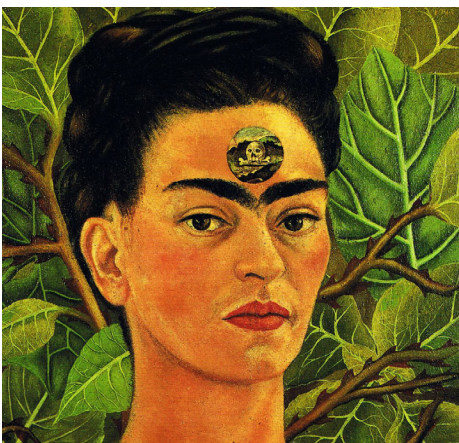
3. Encourage students to draw objects in the background that represents them and tells a story of their own unique identity.

4. Pass out the oil pastels and scratch paper for practice. Demonstrate layering colors in oil pastels. Ask students what colors they feel might best reflect their unique identity.

5. As students begin to add color to their portraits, talk about filling in the face and features with color, instead of outlining. Discuss how to add shadows by layering and smudging.

6. Finally, add color to the background. The background can be filled with objects, patterns or colors. Remind students that their art can tell people about themselves.

7. Have students reflect on what makes their portrait unique.







**KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO VISUAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM:**  
**Based on Utah State Visual Arts Core Curriculum Requirements (Grade 3).**

Strand: RESPOND (3.V.R.)

Standard 3.V.R.1:

Contemplate about the processes an artist uses to create a work of art, and determine messages communicated by an image.

Strand: CREATE (3.V.CR.)

Standard 3.V.CR.2:

Create a personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

Standard 3.V.CR.5:

Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance meaning.



**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**

Click on links to learn more.

- <https://www.fridakahlo.org/>
- <http://visualartspdsf.blogspot.com>
- <http://www.gustav-klimt.com/The-Tree-Of-Life.jsp>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav\\_Klimt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Klimt)
- [http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-7\\_RuCwo65qw/](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-7_RuCwo65qw/) ▪ <https://artsmarts4kids.blogspot.com/2008/01/introduction-to-art-nouveau.html>
- <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/61/eb/71/61eb710340a1554106eb3d4eea6dfc8d.jpg>

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