

Get Smart with Art Lesson

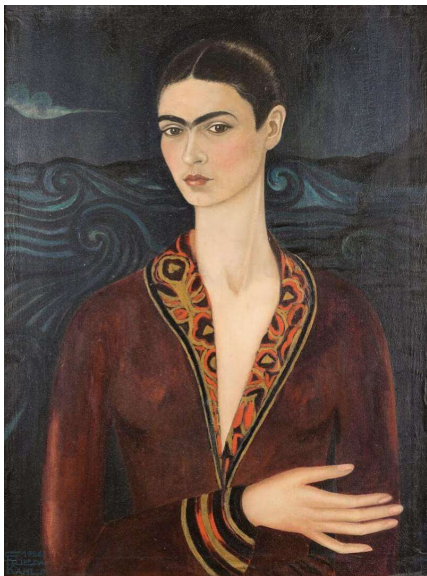
Frida Kahlo

Lesson Created by the Virgin Valley Artists Association of Mesquite, NV

For Parents: In this lesson, students will be introduced to famous Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo and then create their own self-portraits.

Supplies Needed: Students may choose from the following supplies to create their self-portraits- paper and pencil, markers, acrylic or watercolor paint, brushes and canvas or watercolor paper. If your child resides in Mesquite, NV or the Virgin Valley area and needs supplies for this lesson, send email to lindaharrisvva@gmail.com.

For Students:



Mexican artist Frida Kahlo was born on July 6, 1907. She became ill with polio at the age of 6 and had to stay in bed for 9 months. The polio caused her right leg and foot to grow much thinner than her left one. Her father encouraged Frida to participate in sports to help her recover her strength. She played soccer, went swimming and even wrestled, which was very unusual for a girl to do at that time. The polio left Frida with a slight limp. When Frida was 15, she entered the National Preparatory School in Mexico City, with an interest in studying medicine. There were only 35 female students in the school. Soon Frida became known for her bravery and outspokenness.

However, 3 years later, Frida was involved in a bus accident. It injured her so seriously that she had to undergo more than 30 operations during her lifetime. During her recovery from the accident, Frida taught herself to paint, studying the art of the Old Masters. Her parents encouraged her by buying supplies for her, and making a special easel so that she could paint in bed. One of her early paintings was *Self Portrait Wearing a Velvet Dress* (1926).

In 1929 Frida married famous Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. She changed her personal clothing style, wearing the traditional Tajuana dress that became her trademark. It consisted of a loose blouse, gold jewelry, a long, ruffled skirt and a flowered headdress. Her painting *Frieda and Diego Rivera* (1931) shows her new clothing as well as her new interest in Mexican folk art. The subjects are flatter and more abstract.



Life experience is a common theme in Frida's approximately 200 paintings, sketches and drawings. Her physical and emotional pain are often seen in her art. Frida Kahlo's self-portraits are considered among the finest created.

Frida died in 1954 at the age of 47. She is best known for her uncompromising and brilliantly colored self-portraits. After her death, Frida's work became widely acclaimed. Her painting, *Roots* (1943), sold in 2006 for over 5 ½ million dollars. Her last painting *Viva-la-Vida Watermelons* was completed just 8 days before she died. Viva-la-Vida means "Long live life."



Your turn: Use a mirror or a photograph of yourself to draw or paint your own self-portrait. Find light and shadow shapes on your face to block your face in. Then add smaller details. You might want to add some other personal items in the

background which are meaningful to you. Have fun and let your personality shine through!

This lesson was designed and written by Norma Sachar and Linda Harris, VVAA members.