



**FRIDA
KAHLO**
ART·GARDEN·LIFE

MAY 16 – NOVEMBER 1, 2015

Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940. Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin. © 2014 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Major Exhibition of 2015, FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life, features a Re-creation of the Artist's Garden and Studio, Along with More Than a Dozen Original Works

NEW YORK, January 14, 2015—The first solo presentation of artist Frida Kahlo's work in New York City in more than 10 years, *FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life*, focuses on the artist's engagement with nature in her native country of Mexico, as seen in her garden and decoration of her home, as well as her complex use of plant imagery in her painting. Opening on May 16, 2015, and remaining on view through November 1, 2015, The New York Botanical Garden's exhibition is the first to focus exclusively on Kahlo's intense interest in the botanical world.

Guest curated by distinguished art historian and specialist in Mexican art, Adriana Zavala, Ph.D., the exhibition will transform many of The New York Botanical Garden's spaces and gardens. It will reimagine Kahlo's studio and garden at the Casa Azul (Blue House) in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, and include a rare display of more than a dozen original paintings and drawings on view in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library's Art Gallery.

Accompanying programs invite visitors to learn about Kahlo's Mexico in new ways through poetry, lectures, Mexican-inspired shopping and dining experiences, and hands-on activities for kids. Bilingual texts in English and Spanish will provide historical and cultural background, with photos of the garden as it appeared during Kahlo's lifetime, along with quotes from the artist about her home and connection to the botanical world.

"*FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life* will be a one-of-a-kind exhibition that will provide an in-depth look at Kahlo's work and artistic environment and also celebrate the energy and sophistication of Mexican culture," explains Gregory Long, CEO and The William C. Steere

Sr. President of the Garden. “Frida Kahlo is a profoundly important artist whose work reflects the complexity of the artist’s life and times. The Garden is proud to present this focused look at Kahlo’s work, which examines how it was influenced by nature.”

“It has been a tremendous privilege to work with the team at The New York Botanical Garden to bring *FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life* to fruition,” notes Guest Curator Adriana Zavala, Ph.D., “As a scholar and ambassador of Mexican culture, I am proud that this exhibition will enrich our understanding of Frida Kahlo’s connection not just to her native Mexico but to the natural world overall. The research that has gone into building this multifaceted project demonstrates that Kahlo’s life, her times, and her work were, like the natural world itself, a crossroads of transcultural influences.”

THE GARDEN AND STUDIO AT THE CASA AZUL: CONSERVATORY EXHIBITION

The landmark Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at The New York Botanical Garden will come alive with the colors and textures of Frida Kahlo’s Mexico. Visitors entering the exhibition will view a reimagined version of Kahlo’s garden at the Casa Azul (Blue House), today the Museo Frida Kahlo, the artist’s lifelong home outside of Mexico City, which she transformed with traditional Mexican folk-art objects, colonial-era art, religious *ex-voto* paintings, and native Mexican plants. Passing through the blue courtyard walls with embellishments in sienna and green, visitors will stroll along lava rock paths lined with flowers, showcasing a variety of important garden plants from Mexico. A scale version of the pyramid at the Casa Azul—originally created to display pre-Hispanic art collected by Kahlo’s husband, famed muralist Diego Rivera—will showcase traditional terra-cotta pots filled with cacti and succulents found in her garden. The exhibition will include a



Gisèle Freund, *Frida in the Garden, Casa Azul* 1951.
Courtesy Throckmorton Fine Arts
Photo: Gisèle Freund/IMEC/Fonds MCC

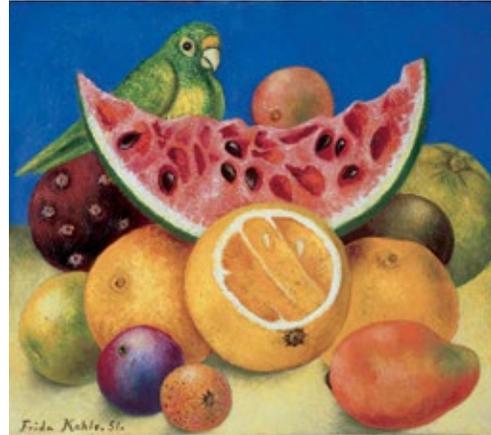
reimagination of Kahlo’s studio that overlooked her garden, as well as the organ pipe cactus fence that is still located at Rivera’s studio in the nearby San Ángel neighborhood of Mexico City. Visitors to the Conservatory will experience the Casa Azul as an expression of Kahlo’s deep connection to the natural world and to Mexico.

KAHLO'S WORKS ON VIEW: ART GALLERY EXHIBITION

The LuEsther T. Mertz Library's Art Gallery at the Garden will exhibit 14 of Kahlo's paintings and works on paper—many borrowed from private collections—highlighting the artist's use of botanical imagery in her work. Focusing on her lesser-known yet equally spectacular still lifes, as well as works that engage nature in unusually symbolic ways, this grouping of artworks will include *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940); *Flower of Life* (1944); *Still Life with Parrot and Flag* (1951); and *Self-Portrait Inside a Sunflower* (1954).

The Art Gallery exhibition, curated by Dr. Zavala, will introduce visitors to the importance of plants and nature in Kahlo's paintings and her life. Also on view will be large-scale photographs of the Casa Azul taken by Kahlo's father, Guillermo Kahlo, who purchased the home, and specialized in views of landmark buildings. These will be complemented by photographs of Kahlo and Rivera, taken by photographers and friends such as Lola Álvarez Bravo, Nickolas Muray, and Emmy Lou Packard.

An installation of specially commissioned artwork by contemporary Artist in Residence, Humberto Spindola, who has been instrumental in curating the current plant collection at the Museo Frida Kahlo, and who specializes in sculptural works in paper inspired by Kahlo and her home, will also be presented.



Still Life with Parrot and Fruit, 1951. Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin. © 2014 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

FRIDA'S AND DIEGO'S MEXICO CITY

A fascinating panel exhibition in the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery will highlight the museums and other destinations in Mexico City where Kahlo's and Rivera's artwork and other artifacts can be viewed, conveying the story and scope of their artistic and intellectual contributions to the cultural life of the city. Sites will include Kahlo's home, the Casa Azul (today the Museo Frida Kahlo); the pair of Functionalist home studios designed for Rivera and Kahlo by Juan O'Gorman in 1931–32 in San Ángel (today the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo); the Museo Dolores Olmedo; the Museo Anahuacalli, which houses Rivera's extensive collection of pre-Hispanic art; and various sites of Rivera's murals, including the Secretaría de Educación Pública, Palacio Nacional, Palacio de Bellas Artes, and the Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, where visitors can experience Kahlo's and Rivera's Mexico.

PROGRAMMING THROUGHOUT THE GARDEN

Programs will include weekend music and dance performances ranging in genre from folk to mariachi to contemporary. **Frida al Fresco** evenings, when the exhibition will be open late, will feature live music, cocktails, and Mexican-inspired dinner menus. A self-guided Mexican Plant Tour will showcase plants native to Mexico and located in the various collections throughout the Garden's 250 acres. Developed in partnership with the Poetry Society of America, a poetry walk will highlight the work of important 20th-century Mexican poet Octavio Paz (1914–98).

Events will include a symposium entitled **Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera—Mexican Art in the 20th Century**; a Mexican film festival; and food and culture festivals. Special programming for children and families will include a scavenger hunt, interactive puppet theater, cooking demonstrations featuring Mexican cuisine, and botanical science activities.

ABOUT FRIDA KAHLO, HER WORK, HER GARDEN

Frida Kahlo (1907–54), revered as one of the most significant artists of the 20th century, has risen to prominence over the past three decades as an international symbol of Mexican and feminist identity. Important aspects of her life's story, including her tumultuous relationship with her husband, muralist Diego Rivera (1886–1957), and her struggle with injury and illness, are well known and have been documented in countless biographies, exhibitions, fictional accounts, and analyses of her art. *FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life* will add to this legacy by showcasing the artist's love of Mexican plants and nature.

Of Kahlo's approximately 200 paintings, 55 are self-portraits, and many more are portraits of friends and colleagues, including art patrons. Many of these portraits incorporate plants and other organic materials. In her still-life paintings, she depicts a variety of fruit and flowers, including many native to Mexico, alongside animals, Mexican folk art, and pre-Hispanic objects. Kahlo's inclusion of plants and nature in her work spans her entire career but her most intensive dedication to the still-life genre dates to the 1940s and 1950s, particularly as her health declined and she was increasingly confined to her home and garden, which underwent its most significant period of development during the 1930s and 1940s.

ABOUT GUEST CURATOR DR. ADRIANA ZAVALA

Adriana Zavala, Ph.D., Associate Professor of modern and contemporary Latin American art history and Director of Latino Studies at Tufts University, has published widely on Mexican art. Her book *Becoming Modern, Becoming Tradition: Women, Gender, and Representation in Mexican Art* (Penn State University Press, 2010) was awarded the Arvey Prize by the Association for Latin American Art in 2011. She has also curated several exhibitions, including *Lola Álvarez Bravo: The Photography of an Era*, shown at the Diego Rivera Studio Museum, Mexico City (2010); the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California (2011); and in expanded form at the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona (2013); *Mexico Beyond Its Revolution* for the Tufts University Art Gallery, Medford, Massachusetts (2010); and *Maria Izquierdo: Un Arte Nuevo* for the Blaisten Collection at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (2007).

FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life is The New York Botanical Garden's next installation within the ambitious exhibition program created to explore the gardening lives of cultural figures such as Charles Darwin, Emily Dickinson, and Claude Monet and the intersection of art and nature—an approach that had never been executed at a botanical garden. These comprehensive flower shows in the Haupt Conservatory re-create their gardens and are accompanied by exhibitions in the Mertz Library's Art Gallery.

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Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit nybg.org.

The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

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