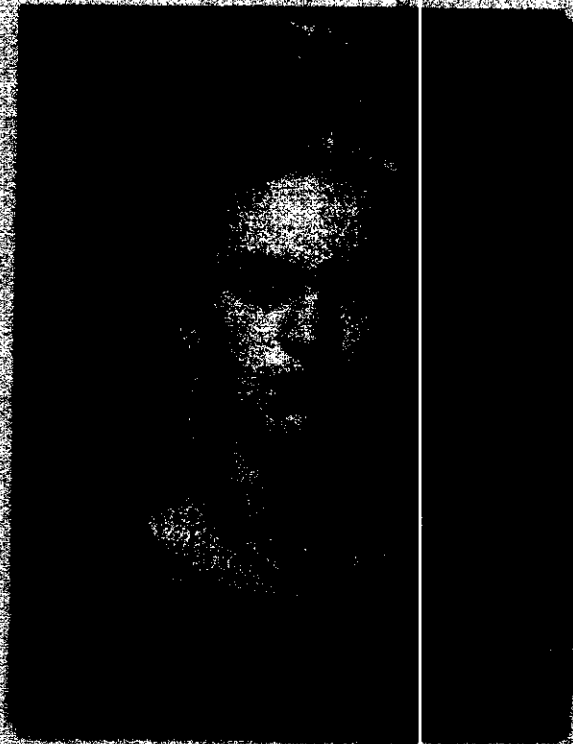


University of Arizona  
Center For Latin American Studies  
Fall 2002

**Saturday Workshops for Educators**

*Frida Kahlo  
and Beyond*



**CLASSROOM  
ACTIVITIES**

The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona offered workshops for K-12 teachers during the fall semester of 2002. Once a month a group of educators interested in Latin America met to explore specific topics related to the Latin world. They engaged in presentations from university faculty and community experts at an academic level to satisfy their personal interest and knowledge. They also discussed ways to incorporate such information into the K-12 curriculum. The lessons found in this collection were derived from these dialogue sessions. The titles of the four Fall 2002 workshops were:

Frida Kahlo and Beyond  
Spicy Salsa, Lemon Merengue  
Day of the Dead  
Murals

We have created three lessons for each of the four workshops, a primary lesson, intermediate lesson and secondary lesson. However, each is adaptable to a variety of teaching levels. Please modify information, ideas and the activities to fit your appropriate level, and feel free to share your ideas with the outreach department.

A variety of teachers participated in the workshops, not just social studies or Spanish teachers. Such a mixture of expertise and personal interest enriched the discussion and lessons created, as well as reminded us all of the power behind interdisciplinary learning. Hopefully the lessons found in this collection will inspire you to include information and details from Latin America into your own teaching.

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## **Frida Kahlo**

Frida Kahlo was a painter whose work fascinated prominent and diverse artists around the world. The wife of world-renowned Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, Kahlo forged a place in the art world that was completely of her own. Her dramatic work consisted primarily of self-portraits, although she did capture her family and friends on canvas on occasion. Some critics contend that Kahlo's paintings were reflections of her personal history, her relationship with Diego Rivera, her damaged physical condition, her philosophy of nature and life, and her individual and mythological worldview. Although Kahlo never had formal training in art, she developed into an artist who fascinated a wide range of fellow artists, including Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, painter Pablo Picasso, and novelist Andre Breton. In addition to these literary and artistic luminaries, her circle included political figures such as Leon Trotsky and the Rockefeller family.

Frida Kahlo lived from 1907 to 1954, a time of incredible worldwide movements and changes. The Mexican Revolution occurred just three years after she was born, a development that triggered dramatic social and economic change in Mexico. A new sense of nationalism surged throughout Mexico as the people rejected dictator Porfirio Diaz and his policies, and a renaissance of cultural renewal glorifying Mexico's native roots took place. The modern Mexican muralist tradition grew out of these changes and proved to be an enduring method of expressing national pride. Kahlo was an active participant in the social, economic and political landscape that characterized that life.

Frida Kahlo was born Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderon on July 6, 1907, in her parents' house in Coyoacan, Mexico a suburb of Mexico City. In about 1935 she dropped the "e" in her first name. Her father, one of Mexico's foremost photographers, was the son of Hungarian Jews from the German town of Baden-Baden who emigrated to Mexico. Guillermo Kahlo married her mother Matilde Calderon, a Mexican of Indian and Spanish ancestry. The family home, called the Casa Azul ("Blue House"), was built by Guillermo Kahlo a few years before Frida's birth. She was born, raised, lived and died in her family's home. Kahlo's father had a profound influence on her life. Her mother was a meticulous housekeeper and devout Catholic whose conventional patterns of thought created some distance between her and her daughters. Kahlo's father, on the other hand, recognized and encouraged her intellectual independence and curiosity.

At the age of seven, Kahlo was afflicted with polio, a disease that left her right foot turned outward and stunted the growth of her entire right leg. Her father nursed her back to health and subsequently encouraged her to play various active sports not typical for a Mexican girl at that time. Kahlo's bout with polio held her back in school, so in 1922, when she entered the National preparatory School, she

falsified her age. Some historians have speculated that she chose 1910 as her birth date to coincide with the year of the Mexican Revolution started. Kahlo was adamant in her commitment to ideals of revolution. She expressed her bond to the Mexican people in her art, in her dress, her behavior, and the decorations of her home. During her days at the National Preparatory School, Kahlo became known as something of a prankster and was a highly visible presence. She often wore elaborate indigenous jewelry and colorful native clothing, and was fond of piling her hair upon her head and decorating it brightly with ribbons and bows in the fashion that the natives of Oaxaca, Mexico, favored. Kahlo regarded every occasion as a cause for rejoicing, and celebrated birthdays, baptisms, and all the popular holidays with great enthusiasm.

It was at the National Preparatory School that she first met Diego Rivera, an artist whose work she admired. Her attraction to the painter was considerable, and one story from that period of her life alleged that she declared to her school friends her ambition to have a child by Diego Rivera. In 1925, however, Kahlo was involved in a tragic accident that dramatically changed her life.

Traveling home from school on a bus, the vehicle collided with a trolley car, driving a piece of iron into her pelvis and back. Kahlo struggled with the effects of this accident and the pain it caused for the rest of her life. She underwent as many as 35 operations over the course of her life, most of them on her spine and her polio-deformed right foot.

It was during Kahlo's convalescence from the bus accident that she began painting. Kahlo was required to spend long periods of time flat on her back in bed, so her mother bought her a special easel that she could use despite her physical limitations. She began to express her explosive feelings through painting.

Kahlo never returned to school after her release from the hospital. Instead, she concentrated on her painting. About this time, she met the Italian-born American photographer Tina Modotti. It was through her friendship with Modotti that Kahlo was introduced to an exciting new sphere of art and leftist politics. Diego Rivera was a member of this circle, and he and Kahlo soon became involved. Kahlo joined the Young Communist League, an organization that Rivera founded and led the 22-year-old Kahlo married the 42-year-old Rivera in a civil ceremony in 1929.

The marriage proved to be a tumultuous one. Kahlo lamented that she suffered through two accidents in her life; one was the trolley car incident, the other her marriage to Rivera. Both had extramarital affairs, and several of Kahlo's relationships were with other women. Kahlo and Rivera separated for a long time, divorced, and eventually remarried. All during their stormy association,

however, they served as the hub of an international intellectual circle. Their political activism continued, unaffected by the state of their marriage, as both Kahlo and Rivera used their artistic talents to express their social and political views.

In 1938 Andre Breton visited her in Mexico and remarked that she was a surrealist. Kahlo disagreed, arguing that she painted her reality. She did, however, travel to Europe and New York to show her work in surrealist exhibitions. Later, she firmly rejected the surrealist label, contending that her work dissolved the distinctions between reality and fantasy.

In the 1940s Kahlo taught art, her students became known as Los Fridos. Although her students spent a lot of time with her at home, in her studio, and out in the streets, they never saw her paint. She painted alone, a practice that led some critics and friends to describe her paintings as a form of therapy.

Kahlo's marriage to Rivera was but one of the difficulties she grappled with during her adulthood. She suffered numerous miscarriages that caused her great grief. In addition, the injuries suffered in the bus accident continued to hound her, relegating her to her bed for months at a time and keeping her in a state of almost constant pain. Finally, in 1953, her right leg was amputated due to gangrene. Throughout all of these difficulties, Kahlo continued to paint. She became addicted to the medicine prescribed for pain. Despite her failing body, Kahlo endeavored to maintain the old ways of gaiety, excitement and drama.

Her last public appearance was at a demonstration protesting C.I.A. intervention in the overthrow of leftist President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala. She died seven days later on July 13, 1954, at the age of 47.

Source: Tardiff, Joseph C. and Mabunda, L Mpho, editors. *Dictionary of Hispanic Biography*, New York, Gale Group, 1996

## **Frida Kahlo Bibliography**

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## **FRIDA KAHLO & BEYOND: Self-Portraits**

## **PRIMARY LESSON**

**Arizona State Standard: PRIMARY: Foundations (grades 1-3)**

**Writing and Literature: W-F4: P01, P02, P03, P04**

- **Listening and Speaking:** all benchmarks apply
- **Viewing and Presenting:** all benchmarks apply

**Social Studies**

- **History:** 1SS-F1: P01, P02  
ISS-F2: P01  
ISS-F3: P02, P03
- **Civics and Government:** 2SS-F1: P01, P02

**Art:**

1AV-F1: P01, P02, P03,	2AV-F1: P02,
1AV-F2: P03	2AV-F3: P01, P02, P03, P04
1AV-F3: P01	3AV: all benchmarks apply
1AV-F6: P01, P02,	

**Goals &**

**Objectives:** (1) Students will become familiar with Mexican artist Frida Kahlo  
(2) Students will describe their personal features (or their emotions) and create a self-portrait. (3) Students will describe portraits of each other.

This is a good activity for practicing observation and analyzing. Self-Portraits can also be done as an ice-breaker activity at the beginning of the year, or as a community building activity as needed during the school year. They also make nice gifts for parents.

**Length of lesson:** 3 class periods

**Materials & Preparation:**

examples of self-portraits done by Frida Kahlo  
photograph(s) of Frida Kahlo  
(transparencies available at CLAS)  
example of a self-portrait done by the teacher using the same supplies that the students will use  
mirrors for students to share while creating self-portraits  
art supplies to create a portrait  
(consider using multi-ethnic construction paper or markers to help them create more realistic work.)

## **LESSON:**

### **First Period:**

- ◇ Show a self-portrait of Frida Kahlo, a realistic one such as "Self-Portrait," (1926) or a surreal one such as "The Two Fridas," (1939) depending on what you would like your students to focus on their exact image or their emotional state.
- ◇ Discuss the painting with the students. Ask questions such as, What does she look like? Does she use any symbols? Why do you think she made herself to look this way? Why did she paint a picture of herself? How do you think she feels? What kind of person is she? What kind of supplies did she use to make her painting?
- ◇ Show the students a photograph of Frida Kahlo. Ask them if she looks like the same person in the painting. Why? Do they like the painting or the picture better and why?
- ◇ Show the students the self-portrait made by the teacher. Ask the same questions you asked of Frida Kahlo's portraits. Ask if they can create their own self-portrait. How? Why should they paint a picture of themselves?
- ◇ Explain that each person will create their own self-portrait (for the reasons they stated earlier) And that after everyone finishes, they'll talk about their pictures the same way they talked about Frida Kahlo's pictures.

### **Second Period:**

- ◇ Students create their own self-portraits

### **Third Period:**

- ◇ Show one of the student's self-portraits to the class. Explain that they are going to analyze the picture just like they did the portrait by Frida Kahlo. Start by discussing what everyone likes about the picture. Then ask the same questions you asked earlier about Frida Kahlo's paintings. (What does she look like? Does she use any symbols? Why do you think she made herself to look this way? Why did she paint a picture of herself? How do you think she feels? What kind of person is she? What kind of supplies did she use to make her painting? )
- ◇ Divide students into groups of 3 or 4 each with portraits of students that aren't in that group. Have them talk about the portraits the same way as they just did with the first student's portrait.



- ◇ Have each group report to the class, what they like about the portraits they analyzed and what they learned about the artist from analyzing their portrait.

### **Closure:**

- ◇ Discuss as a group whether or not they enjoyed creating their self-portraits. Ask what they learned. What did they learn about Frida Kahlo? Share with them a painting of Frida Kahlo showing she was sick, such as "Self-Portrait with the Portrait of Dr. Farill" (1951) or a photograph of her that shows she was sick in bed or in a wheel chair. Ask students how they think she felt, and how they think painting helped her. Ask them to think about how creating art can help them.

**Evaluation:** (1) Students will be able to identify Mexican painter Frida Kahlo and various pieces of her work. (2) Students will have effectively analyzed themselves, either physically or emotionally, and recreated what they see or feel using art supplies. (3) Students will be able to discuss self-portraits, talking about particular aspects of the portrait, as well as relating it back to the artist who created it.

### **Extensions:**

#### **#1**

- ◇ Display multi-ethnic construction paper into piles arranged by color on a big table. When students select their colors to use in their self-portrait, have them place their hand on the color they first choose, which more often than not will not be the color that best corresponds to their skin.
- ◇ While each student continues to place his/her hand on the colored piles, talk to them about the wide range of colors of human skin. Point out that people tend to be divided into black, white or brown....Can they see how that isn't true?
- ◇ Share with the whole group how two students who society would label "white" or "black" or "brown" are really different. Show the construction paper colors that actually correspond to these students' skin.

#### **#2**

- ◇ Use a variety of Frida Kahlo self-portraits. Divide your students into groups, one each with a portrait of Frida Kahlo. Have them talk about the painting together, discussing who they think she was or what kind of person she was.

- ◇ Bring the groups together and share the Frida paintings from their groups. Ask if each group had a picture of the same person, or if these paintings are of different people. How do they know?

### **#3**

- ◇ Before discussing the self-portraits done by students, hang them up on the walls. Make a game out of guessing who each portrait is.
- ◇ Hang up the Frida Kahlo portraits and the teacher portrait as well, so students can enjoy the comparisons between them.
- ◇ When the portraits are taken down (hopefully after a few weeks) return to the third part of the lesson to discuss everyone's portraits. Having the paintings on the walls for some time should lend to interesting analysis and discussion.

### **#4**

- ◇ Research more about Frida Kahlo, or other Latin American Woman artists, such as (Such as Carmen Duarte, Julia San Roman, María Izquierdo or Carmen Mondragón.)
- ◇ Research other artists or famous people that had physical handicaps to overcome.

**FRIDA KAHLO & BEYOND:  
Ethnicity**

**INTERMEDIATE LESSON**

**Arizona State Standard:** Intermediate: Essentials (grades 4-8)

**Writing and Literature**

- **Reading:** (4-8) W-E1: PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5
  
- **Writing:** (6-8) W-E1: PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5  
(6-8) W-E2: PO1  
(4-5) W-E2: PO1  
(6-8) W-E8: PO1  
(4-8) W-E8: PO1
  
- **Listening and Speaking:** Interpret and respond to questions and evaluate responses both as interviewer and interviewee. / Predict, clarify, analyze and critique a speaker's information and point of view.
  
- **Viewing and Presenting:** Plan, develop and produce a visual presentation, using a variety of media such as videos, films, newspapers, magazines, and computer images. / Compare, contrast and establish criteria to evaluate visual media for purpose and effectiveness.

**Social Studies**

- **History:** ISS-E9: PO3  
ISS-E10: PO3 (as applied to Aztec civilization)  
ISS-E11: PO1, PO3
  
- **Geography:** 3SS-E4: PO5  
3SS-E5: PO3, PO5, PO6  
3SS-E6: PO2, PO4
  
- **Art:** (4-5) 1AV-E1: PO1 (4-5) 2AV -E3: PO1, PO2, PO3  
(6-8) 1AV-E1: PO1, PO2 (6-8) 2AV -E3: PO1, PO2,  
(6-8) 1AV-E2: PO1, PO2 (4-5) 2AV -E4: PO1, PO2, PO3  
(4-5) 2AV -E1: PO1, PO2, PO3 (6-8) 2AV -E4: PO1, PO2  
(6-8) 2AV -E1: PO1, PO2, PO3 3AV: all benchmarks apply

**Goals &**

**Objectives:** (1) Students will become familiar with Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. (2) Students will analyze art by Frida Kahlo where she expresses her ethnicity. (3) Students will reflect on their own heritage, as well as learn about others. (4) Students will create a piece of art exploring their own racial identities.

Race and ethnicity is an important theme to discuss with children. Many students in our classes are multi-ethnic, as was the artist Frida Kahlo. She explored this important part of who she was through her art. An activity such as this helps students appreciate their own heritage and respect that of others.

**Length of lesson:** 3 periods

**Materials & Preparation:** A transparency of the paintings, "The Two Fridas." (1939) and "My Grandparents, My Parents and I" (1936)  
A photograph of Frida Kahlo  
(transparencies available at CLAS)  
art supplies to create a portrait

### **LESSON:**

#### **First Period:**

- ◇ Share the painting "The Two Fridas" with your students. Ask them to make a list of singular elements and double elements they see in the painting. (such as, two hearts, two dresses, two women, and one pair of scissors and one bench.) Students can do this in groups.
- ◇ Ask students who they think these women are. (Many students will say twins or sisters.) Show them a photograph of Frida Kahlo and explain that she is the painter and that this is a picture of just one woman, she just painted herself twice.
- ◇ Ask students why they think the artist painted herself twice. Accept any answers.
- ◇ Show the painting "My Grandparents, My Parents and I" and ask them who these people are. Point out that the little girl is the same one in the other painting, and that it was painted by the same woman. Ask again why they think the artist painted herself twice. If students don't, refer to the family tree painting, calling special attention to the two grandparents. Frida's mother and her mother's parents were Mexican. Frida's father and father's parents were German.
- ◇ Ask if anyone in the class has parents that are from two different places, or if their parents are two different nationalities or ethnicities. Let students individually tell the class about their family.

- ◇ Now go back to the painting “The Two Fridas.” Ask students to think again about why Frida Kahlo painted herself twice. If student’s don’t, refer them to the different dresses and differences in her skin color in each. Why do they think the artist painted two different dresses or two different colors of skin?

### **Second Period:**

- ◇ Have students think about two parts of themselves they could draw. It could be their two different heritages. (or two different parts of themselves, such as a soccer player and a piano player.)
- ◇ What elements in their pictures could they contrast, like Frida did with the dresses to show two parts of themselves?
- ◇ Have students draw a portrait of themselves using two different people using contrasting elements.

### **Third Period:**

- ◇ Have students share their pictures with a partner. See if their partner can guess the two elements that the other student use to show their two different parts, and see if the partner can guess the two different parts.
- ◇ Together write about their pictures. Have them write an essay that compares and contrasts their portraits.

### **Closure:**

- ◇ Show the students the painting of the “Two Fridas” again. Even if students talked about the heart before, call their attention to the two hearts in her painting. Why do they think she has two hearts? Why do you think the artist drew the hearts on the outside of her body? Why do you think the hearts are joined together?
- ◇ Discuss that maybe the vein joining the two hearts is showing that the Two Fridas are really one in the same.
- ◇ Ask students what emotion the heart represents. End the lesson by discussing that maybe the heart means that she loves both parts of who she is.

**Evaluation:**(1) Students will be able to identify Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (2) Students can point out particular details in art by Frida Kahlo. (3) Students will engage in discussing art by Frida Kahlo. (4) Students will reflect on their own heritage and show respect for the ethnicity of others. (5) Students will create a piece of art exploring their own racial identities.

## **Extensions:**

### **#1**

- ◇ Have students discuss their family's ethnicity(ies) in groups. Or have them write about it. This question is also a good one to send home for the family to talk about for homework, and then write about.

### **#2**

- ◇ Research more about the painting "The Two Fridas." Investigate what it is she's holding in her hand, why she's cutting the other vein, or is she cutting it? What kind of dresses are these? What era and location do they come from? Why is the sky cloudy and gray?

### **#3**

- ◇ Hang up the portraits in the room. See who can guess who each artist is.

**FRIDA KAHLO & BEYOND:  
Critical Analysis**

**SECONDARY LESSON**

**Arizona State Standard:** Proficiency (grades 9-12)

**Writing and Literature**

- **Reading:** R-P1: PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5
  
- **Writing:** W-P1: PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4, PO5  
W-P2: PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4  
W-P4: PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4

**Listening and Speaking:** Deliver oral interpretations of literary or original works. / Evaluate the effectiveness of informal and formal presentations that use illustrations, statistics, comparisons and analogies.

**Viewing and Presenting:** Deliver a polished speech that is organized and well suited to the audience and that uses resource materials to clarify and defend positions. / Communicate information expressively, informatively, and analytically through a variety of media to audiences inside or outside of school.

**Social Studies**

- **History:** 1SS-P1: PO1, PO2  
ISS-P2: PO1, PO2
  
- **Geography:** 3SS-P2: PO4  
3SS-P3: PO5

**Art:** 1AV-P3: PO1, PO2, PO3  
2AV-P1: PO1, PO2  
2AV-P2: PO1, PO2, PO3  
3AV: all benchmarks apply

**Goals &**

**Objectives:** (1) Students will become familiar with Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (2) Students will analyze famous pieces of art using a critical eye, moving beyond the visual elements represented. (3) Students will research Frida Kahlo in order to better understand her painting. (4) Students will realize how they can apply critical analysis skills to other academic areas.

Students are asked in literature classes to synthesize abstract information from text to gain insightful information from their reading. These same skills can be developed through critically analyzing artwork.

**Length of lesson:** 3-5 periods

**Materials & Preparation:** One piece of art work by Frida Kahlo rich in symbolism.  
(such as "The Two Fridas," (1939) "Self-Portrait on the Border Line Between Mexico and the United States." (1932) or "The Little Deer" (1946)  
(transparencies available at CLAS)  
Biographical books or information on Frida Kahlo

**LESSON:**

**First Period:**

- ◇ Divide students into groups and display a piece of art work by Frida Kahlo for all to see. (Transparencies are best)
- ◇ Begin by asking if anyone knows the name of this painting or who painted it. If some students have this information, have them share. If not, tell them the painter's name and the title.
- ◇ Ask each group to analyze the painting, explaining what it means and why the artist used the symbols that she did. Why did she paint it? Why did she paint it like she did? Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers, and that paintings are powerful that way, in that they mean something different to everyone who analyses them.
- ◇ Have each group share their ideas. Generate conversation between the groups to discuss their ideas. Again, stress that only the artist has the right answers.

**Second-Fourth Period:**

- ◇ Using the painting as a reason to investigate, have students research Frida Kahlo. (This can be done individually or in groups.) Stress that they are looking for information to explain the painting, and since only the artist has the right answers, maybe they will have more insight into her work if they learn about her.

**Fifth Period:**

- ◇ Display the same piece of art work and have groups get back together. Have them re-examine the painting with the information they learned about the artist.
- ◇ Have each group share their ideas again. Ask if they learned anything about the society the artist lived in, or during a historical time. Ask if the artist had an opinion about society or politics during the time she painted the painting. Is that opinion still relevant today? Do you agree with her? Why do you



think Frida Kahlo painted? Should more people look at her paintings and learn about her?

- ◇ Ask students if there is any other symbols or aspects of the painting that still confuses them. See if anyone else can explain it. If not, compliment the student on his/her question, reminding them that with questions everyone continues learning.

### **Closure:**

- ◇ End the lesson by discussing what it is that they did. They explored a painting with a “critical eye.” Remind them that some people just look at paintings and think about if they liked them or not, or decide if it was pretty or ugly. Instead of simply doing this, by analyzing a piece of art by Frida Kahlo they looked critically and thought about the abstract information that isn’t always the easiest to see or focus on. However, through doing this, they understand the message that the painter was trying to send, not just painting a pretty picture to hang on a wall.
- ◇ What else could they do with this “critical eye”, besides looking at paintings? How could they look critically at what they read or write? How could they critically watch television or listen to music?

**Evaluation:** (1) Students will be able to identify Mexican painter Frida Kahlo and discuss who she was, historically and culturally. (2) Students will engage in conversation, discussing elements of a Kahlo painting (3) Students will have researched and found significant information about the artist that can be applied to better understand her painting. (4) Students will apply critical analysis skills to other academic areas.

### **Extensions:**

#### **#1**

- ◇ Have students read about the Mexican Revolution or the Cold War and use this information to critically look at Frida Kahlo’s work. Does her work express an opinion about either of these topics?

#### **#2**

- ◇ Compare a portrait of a person that both Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera painted (such as Lupe Marin, Leon Trotsky, or of the artists themselves.) Critically compare these portraits of the same person by explaining the differences between the two. Research this person to find more insight into the painting.

**#3**

- ◇ Research more about Frida Kahlo, or other Latin American Women artists. (Such as Carmen Duarte, Julia San Roman, María Izquierdo or Carmen Mondragón.)

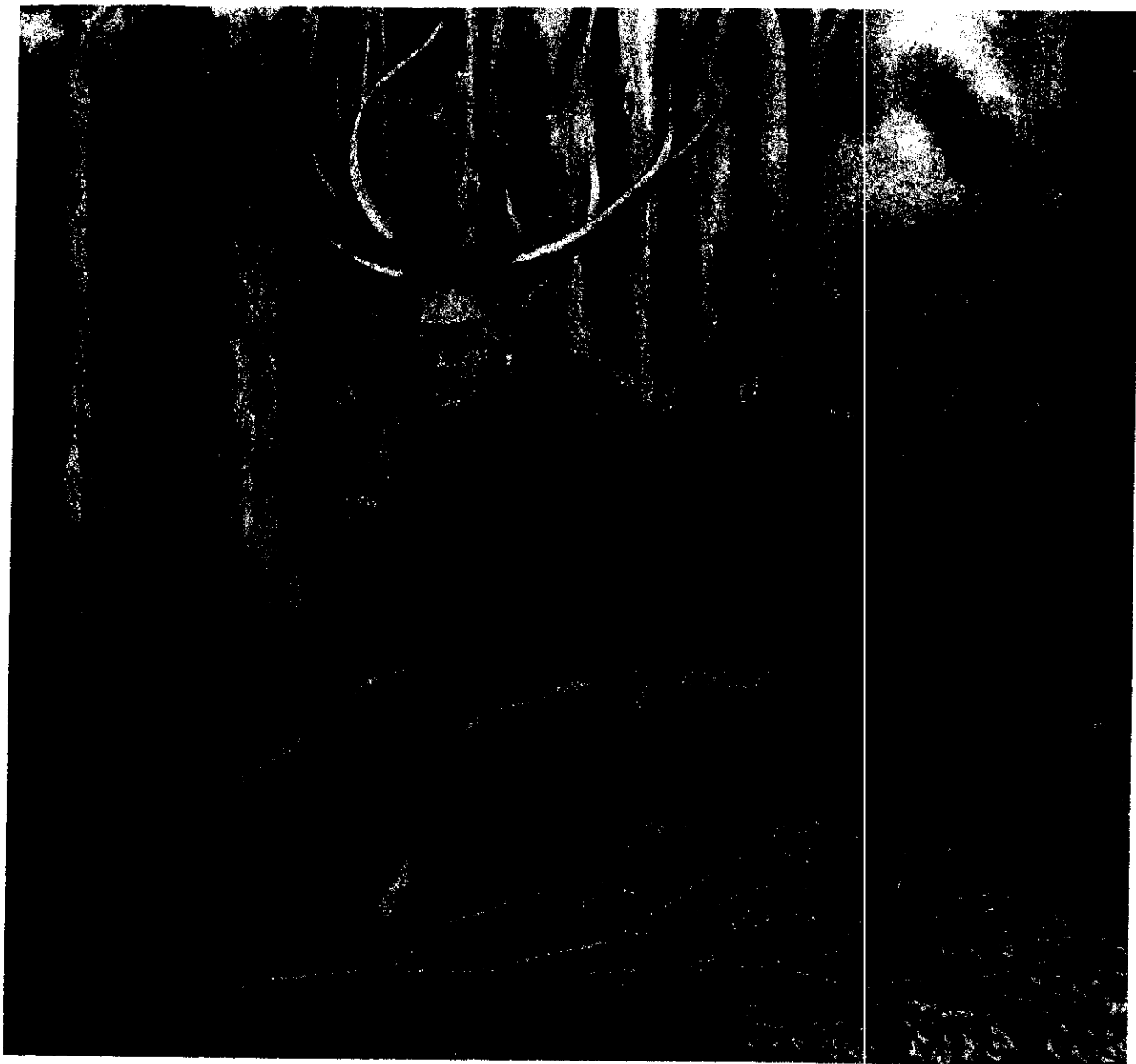


**Frida Kahlo**  
*Self Portrait Between the Borderline of Mexico and the United States*

Date: 1932

*My Grandparents, My Parents and I (1936)*





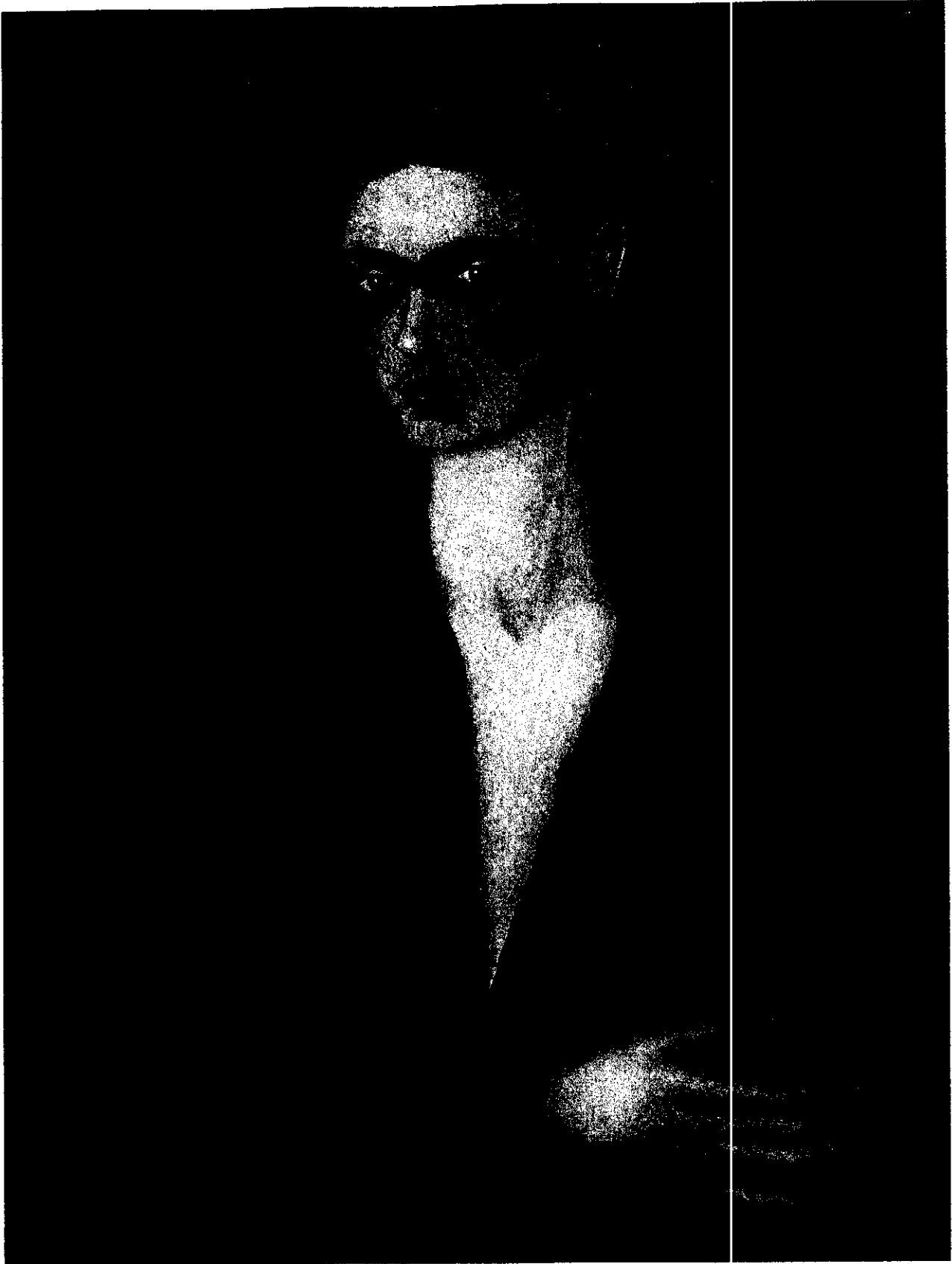
*The Little Deer* (1946)



*Self-Portrait with the Portrait of Dr. Farill (1951)*



*The Two Fridas* (1939)



*Self-Portrait* (1926)