

Frida Kahlo Center Stage at Florida's Dalí Museum

The exhibit of Paintings, Drawings and Photographs runs to April 17

"I paint myself because I'm so often alone and because I am the subject I know best", Frida Kahlo once said.

An exhibition of **Frida Kahlo's** paintings and drawings, together with her personal photograph collection, is on exhibit at The Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg. The exhibit continues through April 17, 2017. Kahlo's works have achieved monumental importance in art and popular culture. Her dreamlike work suggests that love and suffering create a new sense of beauty. Kahlo's art and storied life stir immense public interest.

Frida Kahlo at The Dalí will be Florida's first solo exhibition showcasing the extraordinary career and life of the acclaimed 20th century artist. The exhibit will feature a collection of more than 60 Kahlo pieces including 15 paintings, seven drawings and numerous personal photographs from the celebrated female artist and influential icon. The exhibition will extend outdoors where a special collection of flowers and plants representative of those in Kahlo's own garden at Casa Azul, her home in Mexico, will grace the grounds of the Museum's Avant-Garden.

Co-organized by The Dalí and the Museo Dolores Olmedo in Mexico City and featuring the Vicente Wolf photographic collection, the exhibition is an intriguing exploration of the life of Kahlo, her striking artwork and her fascinating psyche. Together with the exclusive photographs of family, friends and lovers, the exhibition gives a complete view of Kahlo's world along with the joys, passions and obsessions of this remarkable artist.

"With her dreamlike images, Kahlo has stirred huge public interest beyond the traditional art audience. In a way, Kahlo created a persona that serves as a contemporary feminine ideal – both tender and fierce," said Dalí Museum Executive Director, Dr. Hank Hine. "Much like Dalí, she constructed an eccentric identity through the iconography in her paintings and then dressed and carried herself as the personality she created in her art. Painting by painting, she becomes a heroic figure of struggle and perseverance."

Kahlo and Dalí each created artistic autobiographies and their personalities loom behind their paintings, generating a presence that both shapes and overshadows their works of art. While Kahlo largely rejected the term 'Surrealism' and felt that her works were as real as her life, André Breton, known as the founder of Surrealism, took great interest in her work and described her painting as 'a bomb wrapped in a ribbon.' "It's a natural fit for The Dalí to present an exhibition of Frida Kahlo," said Kathy Greif, Chief Marketing Officer of The Dalí. "We've been broadening the scope of our exhibi-

tions, presenting works from famed artists and icons like Warhol, Picasso and Walt Disney – all whom have a connection to Dalí – but this is the first renowned female artist to grace our halls in some time, we are honored to share Kahlo's incredible art and complex life story with the world."

In conjunction with this exhibition, The Dalí will host a series of programs that engage visitors in journaling, Mexican cooking, and gardening – some of Kahlo's favorite pastimes. And, this year, the Museum's annual student exhibit will carry a corresponding theme of 'Surreal Identity,' based on the symbolic and autobiographical approach utilized by Kahlo and Dalí. Additional programming such as films will accompany the Kahlo exhibition and a large variety of Kahlo-inspired merchandise – including jewelry, home décor, apparel and more – will be available in The Dalí Museum Store.

About The Dalí Museum

The Dalí Museum, located in downtown St. Petersburg, is home to an unparalleled collection of Salvador Dalí art, featuring more than 2,000 works comprising nearly 100 oil paintings; over 100 watercolors and drawings; and 1,300 prints, photographs, sculptures and objets d'art.

The building is itself a work of art, featuring 1,062 triangular-shaped glass panels—the only structure of its kind in North America. Nicknamed The Enigma, it provides an unprecedented view of St. Petersburg's picturesque waterfront. The Museum has attracted the world's attention, and among the other distinguished awards it has received, it was listed by AOL Travel News as "one of the top buildings to see in your lifetime." The Dalí Museum is located at One Dalí Boulevard, St. Petersburg. For additional information contact 727.823.3767 or visit TheDalí.org.



Frida Kahlo. Photographed by Lola Alvarez Bravo, circa 1945, at Casa Azul (with Diego's 1930 Self-portrait on a lithographic stone in the background).

A Bit About Frida Kahlo

The iconic Mexican painter's biography is riddled with sadness. At the age of six, she developed polio, leaving her right leg thinner than the left, which she disguised by wearing long, colorful skirts. Following a traffic accident in her teenage years, Kahlo went on to suffer further health problems until her death in 1954. She also had a volatile marriage with acclaimed Mexican artist Diego Rivera.

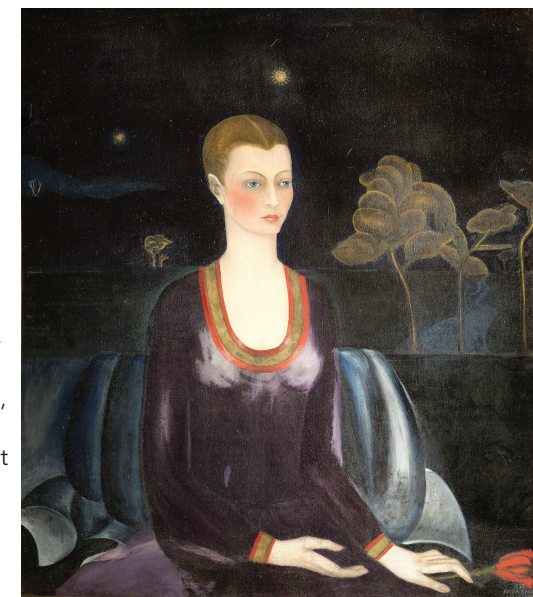
Kahlo's traffic accident was life changing. She suffered a broken spinal column, a broken collarbone, broken ribs, a broken pelvis, eleven fractures in her right leg, a crushed and dislocated right foot, a dislocated shoulder and other complications which affected her reproductive ability. She had several miscarriages and suffered periods of depression. During three months recovering in a full body cast, Kahlo neglected the study of medicine and began to paint, encouraged by her mother. She later stated, "I was born a bitch. I was born a painter."

Kahlo channeled her energy and emotion into her artworks and her many pets – monkeys, dogs, birds and a fawn – which lived at her home, Casa Azul (Blue House) in Coyoacán, Mexico City. Of her 143 paintings, 55 are self-portraits which feature her treasured animals and incorporate symbolic portrayals of physical and psychological wounds. Perhaps one of the most famous is her Self Portrait with Monkeys from 1943.

The iconic black-haired, unbrowed Kahlo is surrounded by three black spider monkeys, their arms wrapped around her. In Mexican mythology, monkeys are sym-



Self Portrait with Small Monkey. 1945. Collection Museo Dolores Olmedo, Mexico City



Frida Kahlo. Portrait of Alicia Galant, 1927. Oil on Canvas. Collection Museo Dolores Olmedo

bols of lust, but Kahlo portrayed them as tender and protective symbols. Kahlo's pet primates were a spider monkey named Fulang Chang (a gift from her husband) and another, Caimito de Guayabal. The species is recognized by disproportionately long limbs and long Prehensile tail and are normally found in the tropical forests of Central and South America.

Guests visiting the home of Kahlo and Rivera would often be entertained by Fulang Chang, or Bonito, the Amazon parrot, who would perform tricks at the table for rewards of pats of butter. At Casa Azul, Rivera constructed a small pyramid in the garden where her pets roamed around freely. She also had a fawn called Granizo; an eloquently named eagle, Gertrudis Caca Blanca (Gertrude White Shit); parakeets, macaws, hens and sparrows. She also kept hairless Mexican ixquintle – including her favourite, Mr Xoloti – a breed of dog with an ancestry traceable back to the Aztecs, hence their appeal to Kahlo, who was enormously proud of her Meso-American heritage. 🐾