

Press release
New Exhibition
From February 13 to May 18, 2020

Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and Mexican Modernism

A story of love and creation

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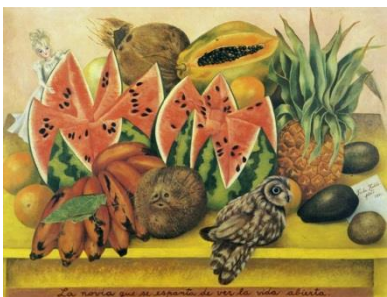
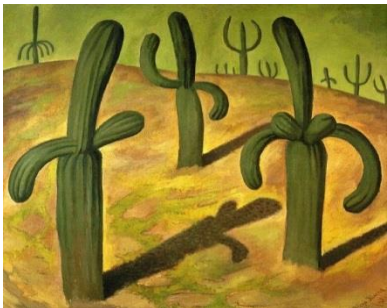
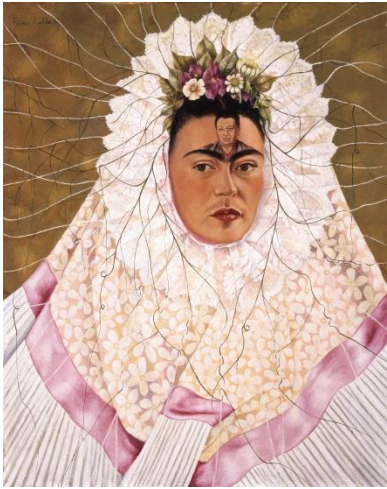
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Québec City, February 12, 2020 ☐ The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) is honoured to present a selection of outstanding works by art history's most celebrated painter couple, **Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera**. She was a committed artist and female role model. He was Mexico's foremost muralist painter. Together, they forged a romantic saga in which art and love combined to produce an unforgettable heritage.

From **February 13 to May 18, 2020** the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion will take on a Mexican air and transport visitors to the incredible universe of two

legendary artists who continue to shape the imaginative universe with their extraordinary destiny, more than 50 years after their deaths. They are recognized for their invaluable contribution to modern art. Their tumultuous love affair and their works are sure to charm visitors. The exhibition affords an ideal opportunity to present other masters of modern Mexican painting. This winter, discover *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and Mexican Modernism. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection*, one of the biggest private collections of 20th-century Mexican art.



The exhibition, presented by La Capitale Insurance and Financial Services, is organized by the Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre, in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL) in Mexico. It will not only assemble works by the artist couple but also numerous photographs that situate the artists in their period.

“We are indeed pleased to join forces with the MNBAQ, an influential Québec cultural institution, in conjunction with this major exhibition. In our capacity as a leading socioeconomic stakeholder in the community, La Capitale seeks to participate actively in cultural life, a vital mainstay of Québec society. I encourage the public to visit this major exhibition,” noted Jean St-Gelais, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of La Capitale Insurance and Financial Services.

The masterpieces presented include 20 works by Frida Kahlo, including the famous *Self-Portrait with Necklace* (1933), *Self-Portrait with Braid* (1941) and *Diego on My Mind* (1943), and the celebrated *Flower Vendor* (1943) by Rivera.

This fascinating exhibition will comprise more than 150 items, including 20 works by other Mexican painters, including Miguel Covarrubias, Carlos Orozco Romero and Juan Soriano, and 85 photographs by photographers of the period, including a superb selection of works by Manuel and Lola Álvarez Bravo, a couple who rank among the foremost Latin American photographers of the 20th century.

The MNBAQ is proud to be part of the prestigious circuit of the exhibition, which has enjoyed enormous success in all the cities in which it has been presented in recent years, notably in Bologna, Istanbul, Sydney, and Nashville.

The remarkable destinies of Kahlo and Rivera

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was seriously injured in her youth in a bus accident and learned to paint during her convalescence. A feminist, socialist and fundamentally a nonconformist, the artist, who produced fewer than 150 paintings throughout her career, was also keenly interested in popular and aboriginal culture. Kahlo often made her own life the subject of her paintings and produced self-portraits of great emotional intensity that reflect her physical and psychological suffering.

Diego Rivera (1886-1957) lived in Europe from 1907 to 1921, where he developed a style inspired by the avant-gardists. He returned to Mexico in 1921 after the Revolution and sought to create painting that spoke to the masses. He is regarded as a major figure of Mexican muralism. He received numerous official commissions and created art that is at once original and universal combining modernist influences with Mexican cultural heritage.

Frida Kahlo married Diego Rivera in 1929. A tumultuous, passionate relationship ensued that lasted a quarter century. The MNBAQ is delighted to tell this story.

The exhibition combines art, love and revolution. It proposes a fascinating dialogue between two legendary figures of modern art and highlights the remarkable vitality of Mexico's artistic and cultural life in the first half of the 20th century.

Jacques and Natasha Gelman



Jacques Gelman (1909-1986) was born in St. Petersburg and settled in Mexico at the outset of World War II. He became one of the leading film producers of his time and discovered the brilliant film actor and comedian Mario Moreno, nicknamed "Cantinflas." Natasha Zahalka (1912-1998), a native of Moravia (now the Czech Republic), met Jacques Gelman in Mexico City. They married in 1941 and began to assemble a large modern art collection.

The Gelman Collection highlights a remarkably prolific period in Mexican art at a time when the arts community was flourishing. It comprises numerous artists, thereby offering an outstanding overview of different facets of art from this period. In addition to celebrated works by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, the exhibition presents major works by several of their contemporaries, such as María Izquierdo, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo. All these artists are well-known in Mexico and several have acquired over time great renown on the international scene.

Credits

The exposition *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and Mexican Modernism. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection* is presented by La Capitale, Insurance and Financial Services, from February 13 to May 18, 2020. It is organized by the Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL) in Mexico.

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Québec 



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CULTURA
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Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and Mexican Modernism.
The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection
Pierre Lassonde Pavilion of the MNBAQ
From February 13 to May 18, 2020

INFORMATION:

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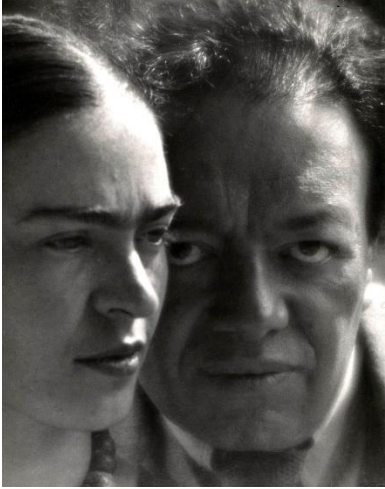
Page 1 - Photo: Frida Kahlo, *Self-portrait with Monkeys*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 81.5 x 63 cm. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th Century Mexican Art and the Vergel Foundation

Page 2 - From top to Bottom: Photo: Frida Kahlo, *Diego on My Mind (Self-Portrait as Tehuana)*, 1943. Oil on Masonite 76 x 61 cm. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th Century Mexican Art and the Vergel Foundation // Diego Rivera, *Landscape with Cacti*, 1931. Oil on canvas, 125.5 x 150 cm. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th Century Mexican Art and the Vergel Foundation // Frida Kahlo, *The Bride Who Becomes Frightened when she Sees Life Opened*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 63 x 81.5 cm. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th Century Mexican Art and the Vergel Foundation

Page 3 - Photo: Diego Rivera, *Portrait of Natasha Gelman*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 115 x 153 cm. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th Century Mexican Art and the Vergel Foundation

Page 6 - Photo: Martin Munkácsi, *Frida and Diego*, 1934. Gelatin silver print, 35.6 x 27.9 cm. The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th Century Mexican Art and the Vergel Foundation

Biography of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera



1886

December 8, birth of José Diego María Rivera in Guanajuato, Mexico, the son of María del Pilar Barrientos and Diego Rivera, both teachers.

1898

At the age of eleven, Rivera enters the National School of Fine Arts in Mexico City, where he remains a student until 1906.

1907

July 6, birth of Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo, daughter of Matilde Calderón and the German photographer Guillermo Kahlo, in Coyoacán, a suburb of Mexico City. She later claimed she was born in 1910, at the start of the Mexican Revolution.

Rivera goes to Spain on a study grant from the Mexican government and stays in Europe for fourteen years.

1909

Rivera settles in Paris, where he keeps company with the artists of Montparnasse and meets the painter Angelina Beloff, who becomes his companion.

1910

Start of the Mexican Revolution, an armed insurrection led by Francisco Madero, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata against the dictatorship of General Porfirio Díaz. This civil war lasted until 1920, overturning the country's economic and social structures and causing almost a million deaths.

1913

Kahlo is stricken with polio, which permanently affects her right leg.

1914

Beginning of World War I. In Paris, Rivera frequents avant-garde art circles, taking part in the Cubist movement before returning to figurative art in 1918.

1917

Promulgation of the new Constitution of Mexico. One of the most advanced in its time, it institutes agrarian reform, asserts the separation of Church and state, recognizes the right to education and contributes to the establishment of labor unions.

1921

Rivera returns to Mexico at the request of José Vasconcelos, Minister of Education, who set up a huge mural-painting program in public buildings.

1922

Rivera joins the Mexican Communist Party. He executes his first mural, *Creation*, in the auditorium of the prestigious National Preparatory School in Mexico City.

Kahlo enters that school to pursue medical studies. She is one of thirty-five women among two thousand students. Kahlo meets Rivera there, while watching him paint his mural.

1923

With David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco and others, Rivera signs the manifesto of the Union of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors, which promotes monumental art in the service of the people.

Rivera begins a large cycle of frescos on the history of Mexico at the Ministry of Public Education. The cycle, covering seventeen thousand square feet, was completed in 1928.

1925

September 17, Kahlo is seriously injured when a streetcar overturns the bus she is riding in. She suffered more than twenty fractures to her spine, pelvis, right leg and foot, and her abdomen was pierced through by a metal rod. As a result, she was unable to have children and suffered from chronic health problems for the rest of her life.

1926

Kahlo paints her first self-portrait and gives it to her companion Alejandro Gómez Arias.

1927

Rivera is part of the Mexican delegation to the Soviet Union for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution.

1928

Kahlo and Rivera are reintroduced to each other at the home of Tina Modotti, a photographer and political activist. Rivera includes a portrait of Kahlo in *The Arsenal*, a fresco in the cycle “The Ballad of the Proletarian Revolution,” which he painted at the Ministry of Public Education.

1929

August 21, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo marry. Kahlo’s mother calls the event the “wedding of an elephant and a dove.”

Rivera begins the major mural *The History of Mexico* in the monumental staircase of the Palacio Nacional in Mexico City. Work ended in 1935.

1930

Kahlo loses the child of Rivera’s that she was carrying. It is the first in a series of miscarriages and therapeutic abortions.

The couple settle in the United States, where Rivera received a number of commissions for murals in San Francisco, Detroit and New York.

1931

Rivera is given a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Kahlo meets the Hungarian-born American photographer Nickolas Muray, with whom she maintains a sporadic liaison for almost ten years.

1933

Rivera includes a portrait of Lenin in the fresco *Man at the Crossroads* at New York’s Rockefeller Center. The work causes a scandal and is destroyed the following year.

Kahlo and Rivera return to Mexico City, living in the San Ángel district, in a house-studio designed by the architect Juan O’Gorman.

1934

Rivera has an affair with Kahlo’s younger sister, Cristina. Kahlo leaves him, but the couple are reconciled the following year.

1937

The Marxist leader Leon Trotsky and his wife Natalia Sedova move into the Blue House, the Kahlo family home in Coyoacán. Kahlo and Trotsky have a short-lived romantic relationship.

1938

The leader of the Surrealist movement, André Breton, and his wife, Jacqueline Lamba, spend several months in Mexico City. Breton writes the *Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art* with Trotsky and Rivera.

Kahlo inaugurates her first solo exhibition, at the Julien Levy gallery in New York. The catalogue introduction is by André Breton.

1939

Kahlo goes to Paris to take part in the exhibition *Mexique* at the Renou et Colle gallery. When she returns, she asks for a divorce and moves into the Blue House permanently.

1940

International Surrealist exhibition organized by Wolfgang Paalen and César Moro at the Galería de Arte Mexicano in Mexico City.

December 8, Kahlo and Rivera remarry in San Francisco.

1942

Kahlo becomes a teacher at La Esmeralda, the national art school. Four of her particularly loyal students refer to themselves as “Los Fridos.”

Rivera begins building the Anahuacalli Museum to house his immense collection of pre-Columbian objects.

1944

Kahlo begins keeping a diary, which she continues until her death.

1946

Kahlo’s health deteriorates. After undergoing surgery in New York, she has to wear a metal corset for eight months.

1948

Kahlo joins the Mexican Communist Party. In the last years of her life, during the Cold War, she became increasingly active politically, taking part in the anti-nuclear movement.

1949

Major Diego Rivera retrospective at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City to celebrate his fifty-year career. Kahlo writes a moving “Portrait of Diego” for the catalogue.

1950

Kahlo undergoes seven operations on her spinal column and spends the greater part of the year in hospital. She is increasingly dependent on medications.

Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo represent Mexico at the 25th Venice Biennale.

1953

Kahlo holds her first solo exhibition in Mexico City at the Galería de Arte Contemporáneo, directed by Lola Álvarez Bravo. She attends the opening in her bed. In August, the lower part of her right leg is amputated.

1954

Death of Frida Kahlo, at the age of forty-seven, of a pulmonary embolism.

1956

Rivera undergoes experimental cancer treatments in the Soviet Union.

1957

Death of Diego Rivera, at the age of seventy. He is buried in the Rotunda de las Personas Ilustres in Mexico City.

1958

Opening of the Frida Kahlo Museum in the Blue House, which Rivera bequeathed to the Mexican people.

General Information

OPENING
HOURS OF THE
MUSEUM COMPLEX

Until May 31, 2020

Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays till 9:00 p.m.

Closed Mondays (except March 2, April 13 and May 18, 2020)

ADMISSION

Adults: 22 \$

Seniors (65 and Over): 20 \$

Ages 18 to 30: 12 \$

Ages 13 to 17: 7 \$

Families (2 adults and 3 children
13 to 17): 48 \$

Families (1 adult and 3 children
13 to 17): 26 \$

Children 12 and under: free

Members: free

Wednesdays from, 5 p.m. to
9 p.m.: half-price

Reduced rates for groups

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Parking, Librairie-Boutique,
café, restaurant, free Wi-Fi and
Cloakroom

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