FRIDA KAHLO
DIEGO RIVERA
&MEXICAN MODERNISM

THE JACQUES AND NATASHA GELMAN COLLECTION

DENVER MUSEUM
MEET ALICIA AND JAVIER,

They are 13 years old and live in Mexico City. Alicia and Javier were assigned a school project about the artists who made art during and right after the Mexican Revolution in Mexico City.

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION (1910-1920), happened because of dictatorship-like rule, exploitation and poor treatment of workers, and a great divide between rich and poor.

HERE IS THEIR PRESENTATION:

Use this as a tool to guide you through the works of art. Alicia and Javier are interested in a variety of responses to help finish their presentation. To help them, please complete this guide by responding to the prompts and/or sketch in the boxes provided.
TRY SKETCHING A CALLA LILY BELOW:

WHY DO YOU THINK DIEGO RIVERA PAINTED THESE WOMEN SELLING CALLA LILIES?

WHAT DOES THIS PAINTING SHOW US ABOUT WHAT LIFE IN MEXICO CITY WAS LIKE 100 YEARS AGO?

THIS PAINTING IS CALLED CALLA LILY VENDOR. CALLA LILIES ARE FLOWERS THAT GROW IN OUR HOMELAND MEXICO, ARTISTS USE THEM TO REPRESENT PURITY AND INNOCENCE.
HERE'S ANOTHER PAINTING BY DIEGO RIVERA. WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT THIS PAINTING? WHAT MIGHT THE STORY BE? HOW DOES IT COMPARE TO CALLA LILY VENDOR? WRITE WHAT YOU THINK IS HAPPENING

DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING RIGHT OR WRONG - JUST LOOK AT THE PAINTING AND WRITE WHAT YOU THINK!
FRIDA KAHLO AND DIEGO RIVERA WERE TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ARTISTS OF MEXICO.

ALONG WITH MANY OF THEIR ARTIST FRIENDS, THEY WERE PART OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION.

AND HELPED BUILD A NEW NATIONAL IDENTITY FOR OUR COUNTRY AFTER THE WAR. FRIDA AND DIEGO WERE ALSO HUSBAND AND WIFE.

LOOK AT THIS SELF PORTRAIT OF FRIDA KAHLO.

WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU THE MOST WHEN LOOKING AT THIS PAINTING OF FRIDA?

HER PORTRAIT IS A BIT LIKE ONE YOU MIGHT SIT FOR ON SCHOOL PICTURE DAY.

THE NECKLACE FRIDA IS WEARING IS A TRADITIONAL MAYA JADE PIECE. WHY DO YOU THINK SHE IS WEARING IT? WHAT THINGS DO YOU WEAR TO EXPRESS YOURSELF IN YOUR SCHOOL PICTURES?

PLEASE ANSWER OR SKETCH BELOW:
Frida didn’t just create paintings. She also sketched a lot in journals.

What differences do you notice in this image of the Statue of Liberty from Frida’s journal compared to the real Statue of Liberty? What meaning do you think she is trying to convey? Respond below:

Yep! Look at these sketches she did that look like the Statue of Liberty. But with stuff added. For example, the statue is holding a bag full of money instead of a torch.
DIEGO RIVERA WAS FAMOUS FOR PAINTING LARGE PUBLIC MURALS, LIKE THIS ONE, THAT TELL STORIES. PICK JUST A SECTION OF THIS MURAL – WHAT DO YOU THINK IS HAPPENING? WHO ARE THE PEOPLE?

IMAGINE IF YOU CREATED A WORK OF ART AND BLEW IT UP TO BE THIS HUGE! WHAT STORIES WOULD YOU REPRESENT OR SHARE?
These photographs are by Lola Álvarez Bravo. She was friends with Frida and Diego, and she was the first female professional photographer in Mexico. She wanted to tell the story of how Mexico had changed by capturing the more traditional and forgotten parts of its beauty.

It was Lola Álvarez Bravo's strong friendship with Frida Kahlo that allowed her inside the intimate parts of her world. Frida's health suffered throughout her life due to a bus accident when she was 18. Here Bravo captures Frida's wounded body and her great strength.

Pick one of these photographs of Frida Kahlo and look closely at it for a bit. What do you notice about her? What is her body language saying?
HERE IS A PHOTO OF FRIDA KAHLO, BUT IN COLOR!

These are by Nickolas Muray, a very famous photographer. Muray loved to take photos of Frida – she was an ideal subject, so fearless. Her strength and bravery shine through in Muray’s photographs. It was one of his portraits that made her the first Mexican woman to appear on the cover of Vogue Magazine.

If you were to be on the cover of Vogue or another magazine, what might that look like? Draw a self-portrait that highlights your strengths shining through.
This is a page from one of Frida Kahlo’s journals. She said, “I used to think I was the strangest person in the world but then I thought there are so many people in the world, there must be someone just like me who feels bizarre and flawed in the same ways I do. I would imagine her, and imagine that she must be out there thinking of me, too. Well, I hope that if you are out there and read this and know that, yes, it’s true I’m here, and I’m just as strange as you.”

Everyone feels different and alone sometimes and it’s ok, and it can even inspire art that is weird and wonderful.
Based on what you saw today, what was the role of artwork and artists during the Mexican Revolution? How does that compare to the place of artists today? Create your own journal entry about the role of art and artists in your world today:
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Frida Kahlo, Self-Portrait with Necklace, 1933. Oil on metal; 13.8 x 11.4 in. (35 x 29 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter.

Diego Rivera, Calla Lilly Vendor, 1943. Oil on Masonite; 59.1 x 47.2 in. (150 x 120 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter.

Frida Kahlo, Untitled (Bomba Atomica), c. 1951. charcoal and mixed media on paper; 11.7 x 8.7 in. (29.5 x 22.2 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter.

Diego Rivera, Mexico Today and Tomorrow (From the Conquest to 1930), 1929–1935. west wall. © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Image courtesy Schalkwijk/Art Resource, NY.


Nickolas Muray, Frida Kahlo on Bench #5, 1939. Carbon print; 15.7 x 10.7 in. (40 x 27.3 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). Photo by Nickolas Muray; © Nickolas Muray Photo Archives. Digital Image by Gerardo Suter.