

Frida Kahlo

May 2026 Art Docent Lesson

K-5



Woodside PTA



Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderón



Born: July 6, 1907 Died: July 13, 1954

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter known for her portraits, mainly self-portraits.

A self-portrait is a representation of an artist created by that same artist.

It's a powerful tool for:

- Self-expression
- Identity
- Personal myth-making

whether through realistic, symbolic, or abstract styles.

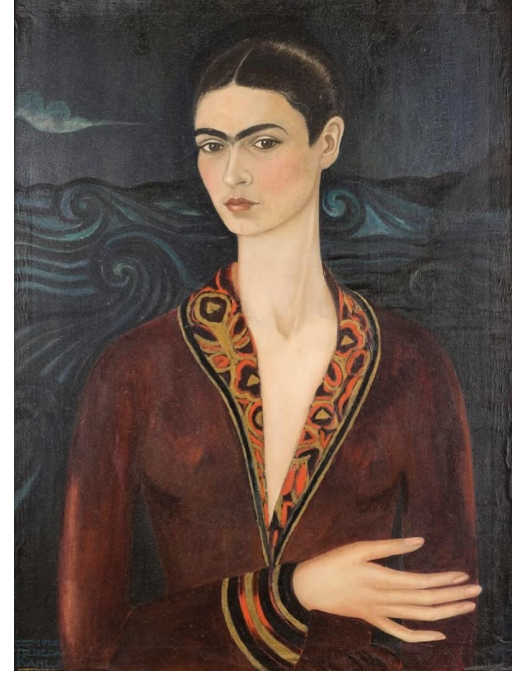
We're going to focus on Frida's use of symbolism.

Art has always been a language of symbols.



Symbolic imagery is used to express ideas, emotions, and values.

The hidden meanings transform a simple object or figure into something profound.



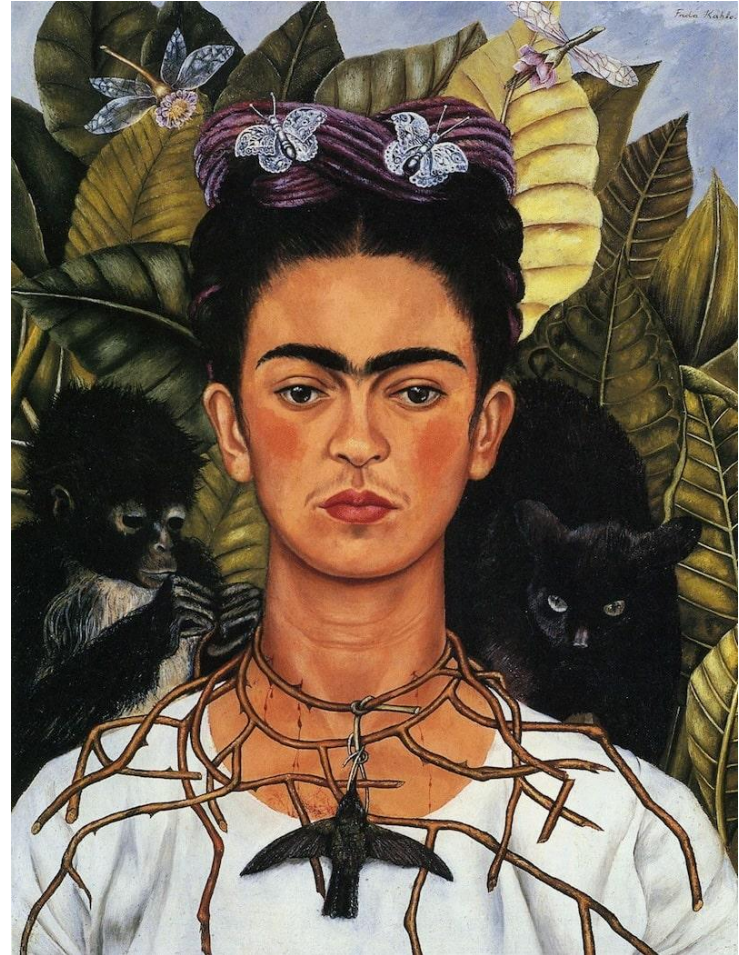
It invites viewers to look beyond and engage in a deeper narrative.

Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird (1940)

Symbolism in this painting

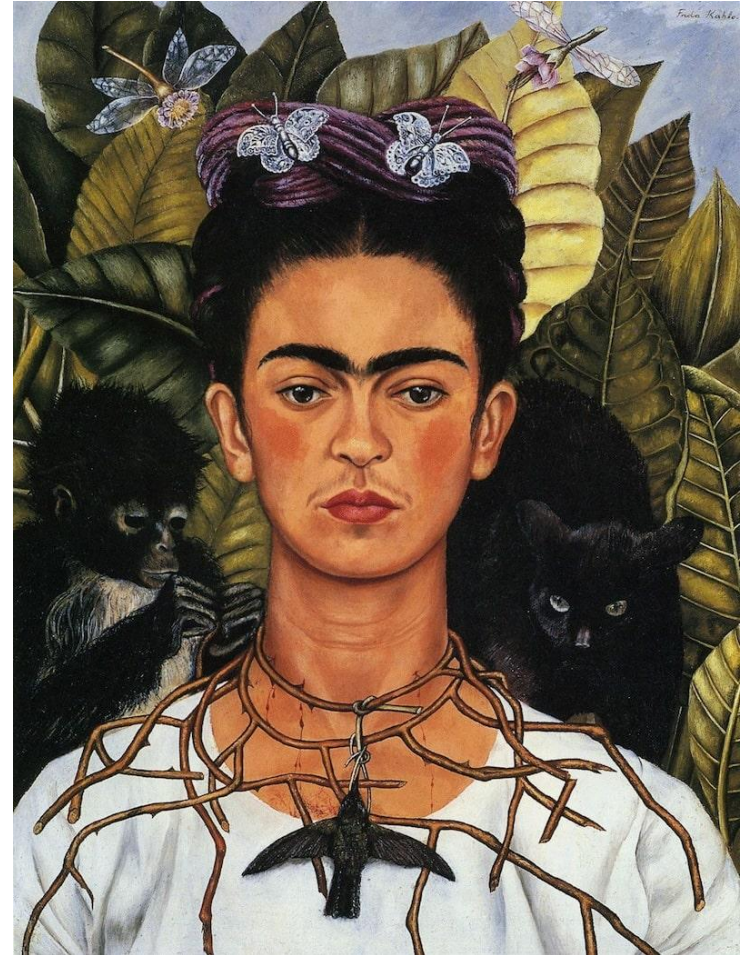
- Monkey
- Black cat
- Dead hummingbird
- Butterflies
- Plant leaves
- Thorns

What do you think each item symbolizes?



Symbolism in this painting

- Monkey- symbol of evil
- Black cat- symbol of bad luck
- Dead hummingbird- end of her marriage (hummingbirds represent falling in love in Mexican folklore)
- Butterflies- symbol of a resurrection
- Plant leaves- symbolizes vitality and entrapment
- Thorns- symbolizes her as a martyr

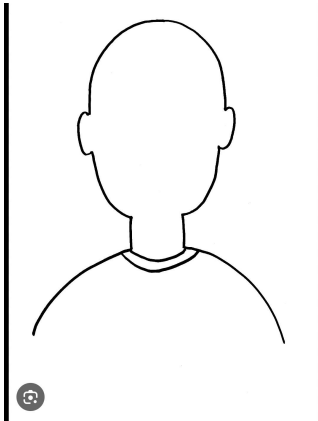


Now it's your turn to make a self-portrait!

- Drawing paper
- Drawing pencil and eraser
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers
- A template is provided for those students who want to use it.

Have the students draw themselves. They should try to be as accurate to their selves, but because it is art, it is their interpretation of themselves.

Have fun!



Choosing symbols to go into your self portrait.

Create a self portrait and try to use at least one of each symbol category.

Examples listed below:

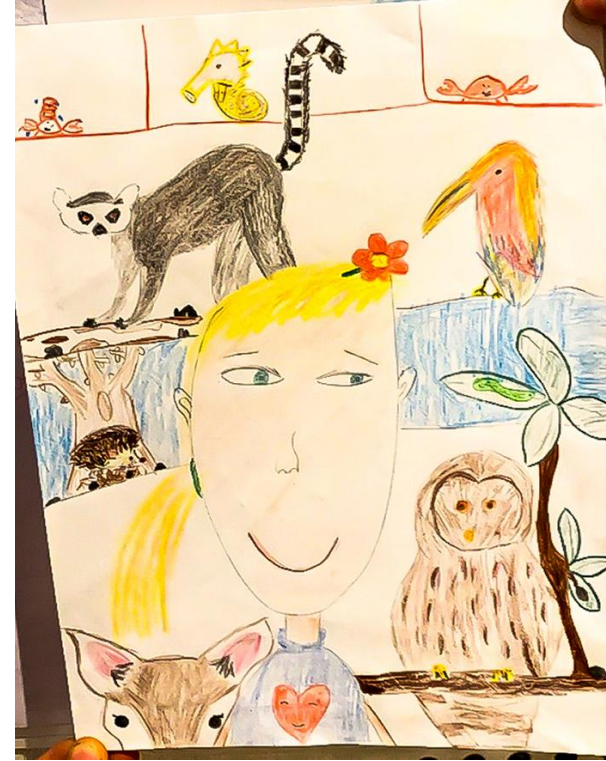
- **Animals**
 - Lion is bravery, Dog is loyalty, Bird represents freedom, Cat represents self reliance.
- **Colors**
 - Yellow is for happy, Grey is for sad, Blue is for peaceful, red for love or anger.
- **Objects**
 - Light bulb is an idea, Sports team logo could be belonging to a community.
- **Plants**
 - Red rose for love, Tree is for life, Fern represents growth and protection.
- **Weather**
 - Sunshine we think of summer, Dark clouds indicates danger, Rain can be cleansing, Rainbow is a sign of hope.

Try to pick what is important to you, not just what is on this list.

Examples found from the internet



More examples



Youtube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb8cU9MmII8> (3:17 in length)