



Frida Kahlo Photographs at the Museum MARTa Herford

February 5, 2015

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

GERMANY—The Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) is typically associated with painting, specifically canvases charged with vibrant color. As a testament to her art's staying power, Frida Kahlo's paintings will be the subject of solo exhibitions held in New York City, Florida and Detroit in 2015. Kicking off the year in Germany comes a hidden part of Kahlo—her interest in taking and collecting photographs. The exhibition launches the 2015 exhibition season for [MARTa Herford](#).

"Frida Kahlo—Her Photos" presents a selection of 241 photographs from Frida Kahlo's collection made up of those taken by famous and unknown photographers plus images made by Kahlo herself. Exhibited for the first time in Germany, the photographs served as mementoes, inspiration and working material for Kahlo. Kahlo's photography collection was discovered 50 years after her death in 1954. The black and white photo archive documents her life as well as her photography collection.

Kahlo's photographs were presented to the public for the first time in 2007 at the Frida Kahlo Museum in Mexico and traveled that year to the United States to the Artisphere of Arlington, Virginia for its only American presentation. [Last year](#), "Frida Kahlo—Her Photos" traveled to the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) at Long Beach, CA for another United States exclusive.

[MOLAA](#) explained the importance of photography to Frieda Kahlo this way: "Frida collected daguerreotypes and calling cards from the XIX century and kept photographs that she intervened upon — cutting things out from them, writing dedications on them and personalizing them as if they were paintings."

"Frida Kahlo—Her Photos" includes works by famous photographers such as Man Ray, Martin Munkácsi, Brassai, Tina Modotti, Lola and Manuel Álvarez Bravo as well as Edward Weston. "Frida Kahlo—Her Photos" mixes these with images made by Kahlo or those by unknown photographers. Many depict pictures of Kahlo, artist and her husband Diego Rivera (1886-1957), plus writers and artists who were friends or were admired by Kahlo.



View of the exhibition "Frida Kahlo – Your Photos." Foreground: Alejandro Gómez Arias and Cristina Kahlo (both anonymous). © Marta Herford, Photo: Hans Schröder.



View of the exhibition “Frida Kahlo – Your Photos.” © Marta Herford, Photo: Hans Schröder.

“Frida Kahlo—Her Photos” comprises 241 photographs selected by Mexican photographer Pablo Ortiz Monasterio for the Museo Frida Kahlo in Mexico. The works are presented in six central themes including the origins to the blue house; her damaged body; her loved ones; politics; revolution; and her artist husband, Diego Rivera. Taken together, the exhibition illuminates the important role that the photographic image played in Frieda Kahlo’s life, according to MARTa Herford.



Frida Kahlo with Dr. Juan Farill. Gisèle Freund, 1951. © Frida Kahlo Museum.



Frida and Diego with friends. Anonymous, ca. 1945. © Frida Kahlo Museum.

Photography grabbed Kahlo’s interest from an early age. Her father was a German-Hungarian professional photographer who emigrated from Germany to Mexico at the age of 18. The numerous portraits that Guillermo Kahlo made of his daughter not only reveal her self-confident manner in front of the camera but also left her with a deep consciousness of the graphic power of self-staging, according to the museum.



Frida Kahlo. Guillermo Kahlo, 1932. © Frida Kahlo Museum.

The Kahlo’s life and work were inextricably interwoven, which is clearly reflected in her photo collection. Her damaged body, her pain and suffering, and also her loves are recurrent themes in the photographs. Nickolas Muray, with whom she also had a relationship, shows her in very intimate and vulnerable poses. Other photos are evidence of how her body was increasingly scarred by

illness. This image is interrupted by pictures showing her in the company of her friends, relaxing or partying, happy scenes that express her *joie de vivre*. The exhibition also reveals how she treated the photographs: for the artist they were treasured and familiar objects that she colored and cut, marking them with thoughts and notes, and sometimes even with kisses.



Frida in New York hospital. Nickolas Muray 1946. © Frida Kahlo Museum.



Frida in her bed painting. Anonymous, 1940. © Frida Kahlo Museum.

Another room is dedicated to the subject of politics, revolution and Diego Rivera, making the political atmosphere of the times palpable. The documentations of industrial buildings such as the Ford works in Detroit are juxtaposed with the leaders of Russian socialism: Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Many of the photos also show Rivera, Kahlo's husband from 1929 and a focal point of her turbulent romantic and emotional life.

BASIC FACTS: "Frida Kahlo: Her Photos" opens February 1 and remains on view through May 10, 2015 at MARTa Herford. The museum is located at Goebenstraße 2, 32052 Herford, Germany. www.marta-herford.de.