

PROGRAMMES

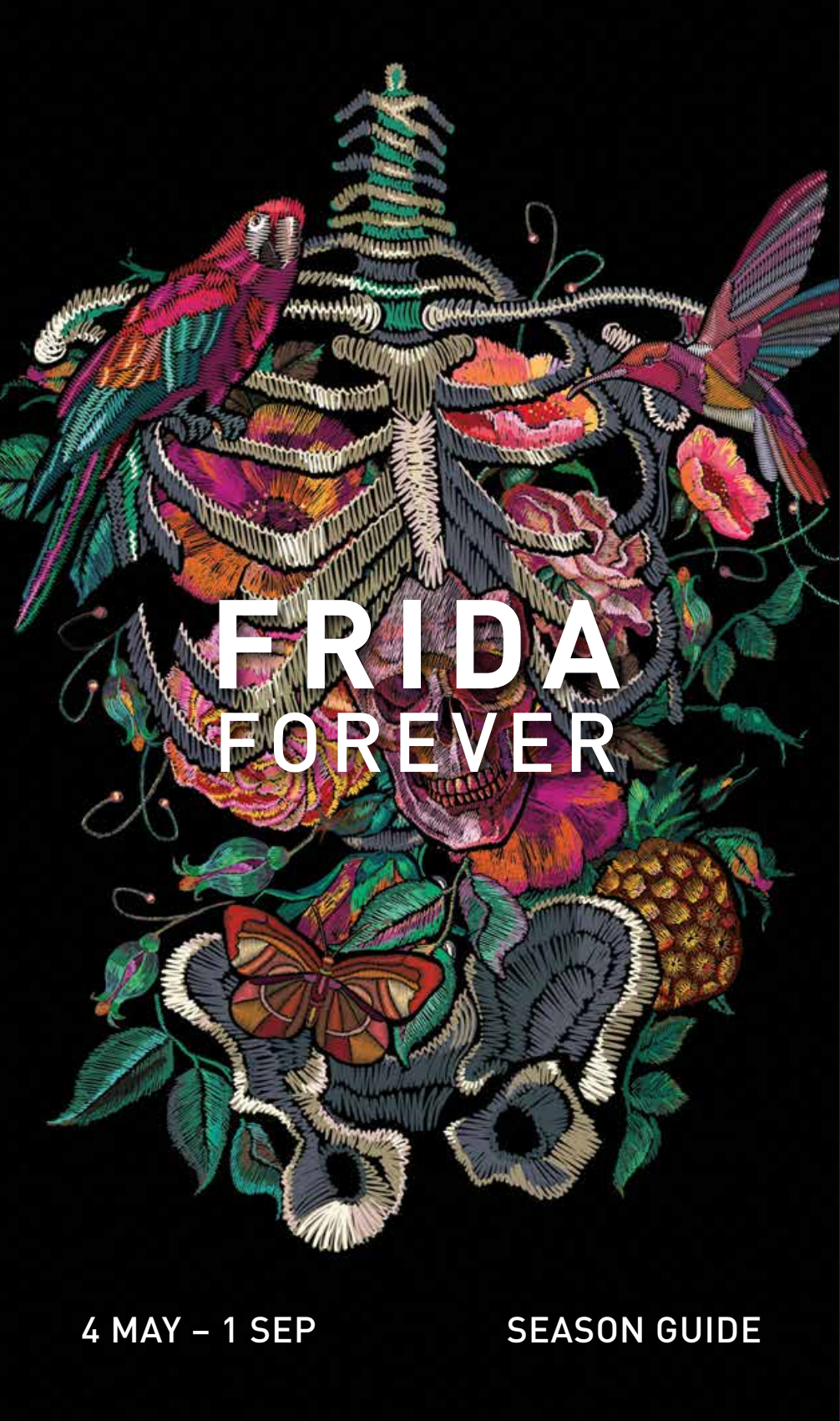
FLORAL PASSAGE: A TRIBUTE TO FRIDA

EXQUISITE CORPSE

LAID BARE: FRIDA'S INNER WORLD

FRIDA KAHLO: THE LIFE OF AN ICON

THE MAP



FRIDA FOREVER

4 MAY – 1 SEP

SEASON GUIDE



Most museums practise the 'NO FLASH' photography rule. The ultraviolet light of the flash generates heat and light, both of which can damage artworks.



You may have noticed art handlers wearing plastic gloves. This is because the oil on our hands causes a chemical reaction with almost everything we touch.

For artworks, this can have a detrimental effect, so please do not touch.



You may notice that our museum is quite cold.

Artworks must be kept at a specific low temperatures and relative humidity to protect them from deterioration.



Taking photographs in the museum is encouraged unless otherwise signposted.

Want to know more about collection conservation guidelines? Visit the International Council of Museum for more information. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/>

FRIDA FOREVER

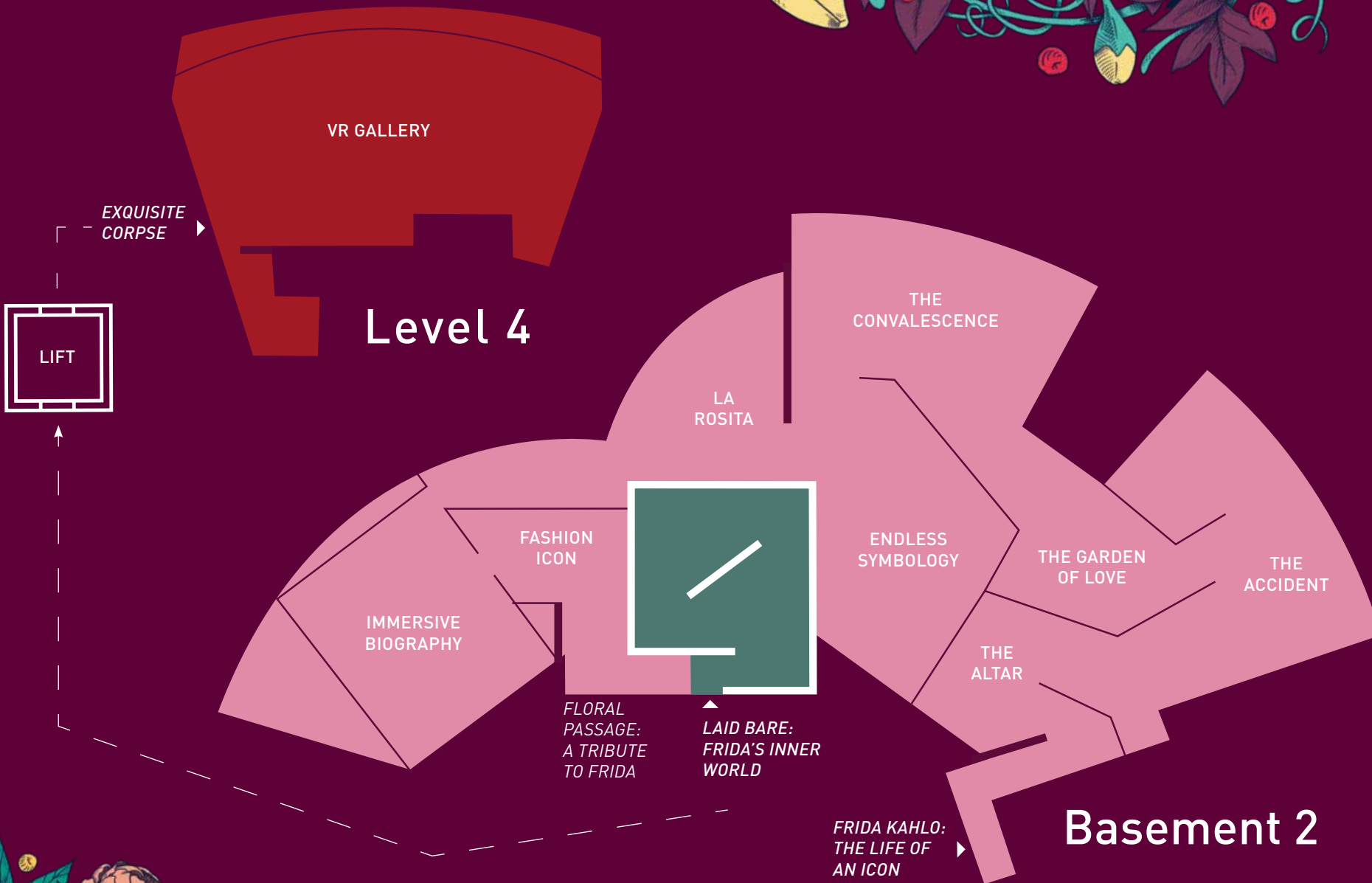
ArtScience Museum is proud to present *Frida Forever* — an exciting line-up of exhibitions, programmes, film screenings and a VR experience—celebrating the incredible life and legacy of Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo.

One of the most influential artists of the 20th century, Frida Kahlo's identity as a mixed-race, disabled, politically-active woman resonates with many, and in many different ways, in our contemporary world. As a pioneering artist, she defied societal norms, exploring themes of identity, gender and politics with raw honesty and intensity. Through her vivid and often surreal work, Frida delved into her personal struggles, depicting her pain and her resilience in equal measure. In fashion, she carefully crafted her own image with pride, through vibrant and colourful manifestations of her Mexican heritage, working with and around her fractured body, challenging expectations and the beauty norms of the time. 70 years after her passing, the influence of Frida's life and work continues to unfold.

Frida Forever—running from 4 May to 1 September 2024—explores the fascinating life of Frida Kahlo, painting poignant and enduring images of resilience and revolution.

Share moments of connectedness and find that little bit of Frida that exists in each and every one of us.

THE MAP



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FRIDA KAHLO: THE LIFE OF AN ICON

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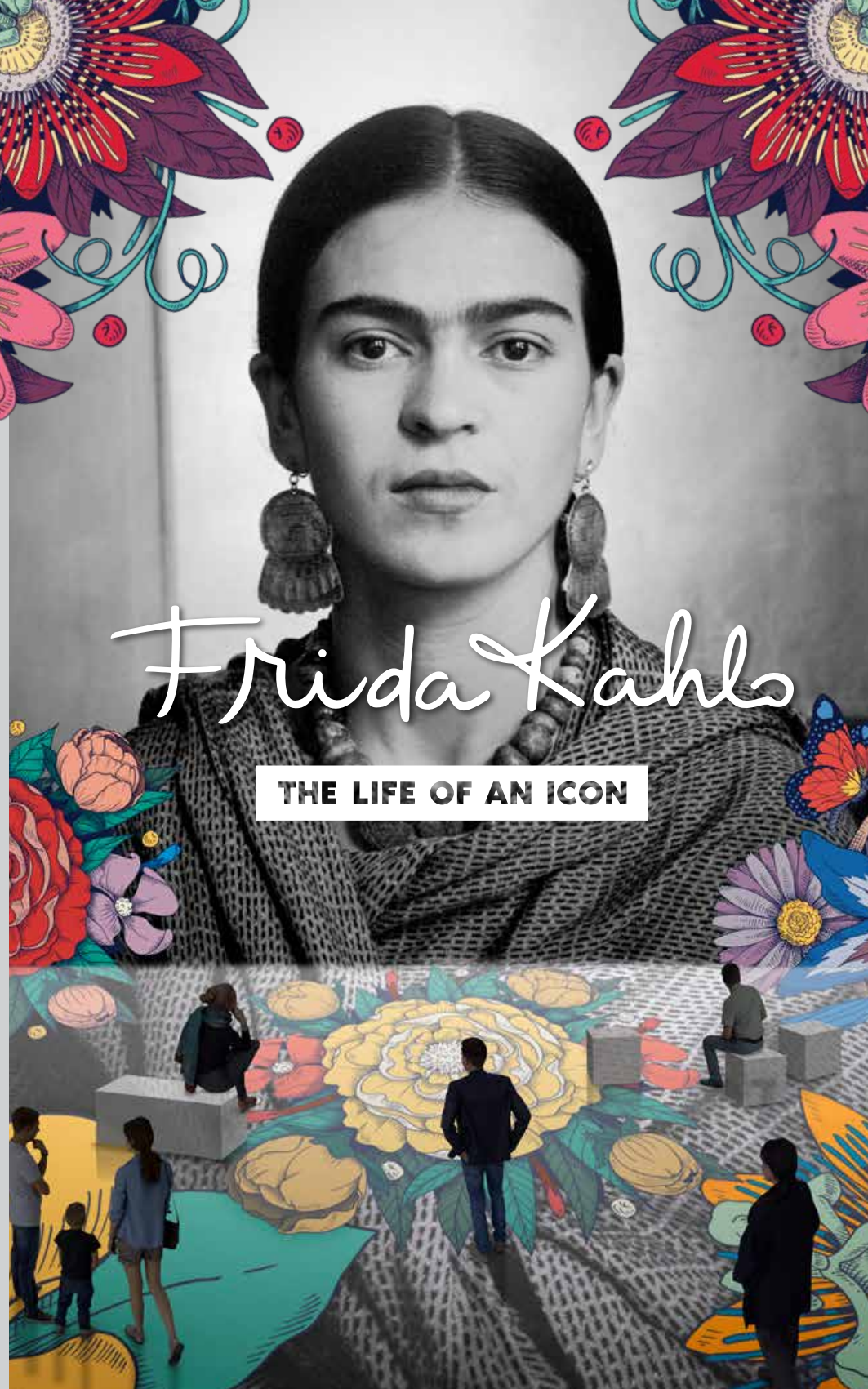
Frida Kahlo®
CORPORATION

Presented by:



ArtScience
Museum
MARINA BAY SANDS

a different kind of museum



Frida Kahlo

THE LIFE OF AN ICON

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Frida Kahlo: The Life of an Icon is an immersive biographical exhibition charting the life and work of Frida Kahlo—one of the most influential women artists of the 20th century—widely recognised for her many uncompromising and vibrant self-portraits.

Discover the life behind this cultural icon through eight thematic spaces featuring photographs, films, multi-layered technology, interactive and immersive installations, 360-degree projections and creative visitor activation spaces—all bringing Frida Kahlo's paintings and her story to life.

The exhibition journeys through the most pivotal moments of Kahlo's life from her childhood in Coyoacán, her physical and emotional

battles, and the life-changing accident that shaped her into a brilliant artist with an unyielding spirit of resilience.

This exhibition celebrates the legacy of Frida Kahlo, whose rebellion and courage continue to inspire generations today. The show explores the depths of her creativity, personal style, and existence beyond the limits of her painted canvases and also poses some questions: do we truly know what lies behind Frida's creativity, the way she dressed, loved, and lived? What is it about Frida that has made her an enduring icon years of her passing?

Exhibition view of *Immersive Biography* at IDEAL Centre D'Arts Digitals, Barcelona, 2022. Courtesy of Layers of Reality.

THE ALTAR

In Mexican tradition, the altar, otherwise known as the *Ofrenda*, is an integral component of *Día de los Muertos*—the Day of the Dead. This festival welcomes the souls of loved ones, who have passed on, are reunited with living family members. These altars honour and celebrate the lives once lived by the dead.

Each altar is personal to its respective family, they all include common elements such as water, candles, flowers (specifically marigolds), fruit, sugar skulls, even a traditional type of stew as well as items associated with the earthly life of the deceased—all of these items are used to welcome the spirits of the dead back home. An image of the deceased is placed at the top of the altar, presiding over everything. *Papel picado*—punched paper—is used to add festive decoration to the altar, and occasionally a flower arch is present—symbolically representing the gateway between the worlds of the dead and the living.



THE ACCIDENT

On 17 September 1925 Frida was involved in a fatal streetcar accident that would change her life forever. From that point on Frida would often turn to art as a way of expressing her deepest emotions.

The Instant is inspired by the moment Frida Kahlo's life was forever changed and reveals Frida's physical and emotional fragility in that unfortunate second. The work uses 'multilayer', a new projection format that creates a three-dimensional installation, overlapping transparent projection layers to create a video that appears to give volume to its projected subject.





THE GARDEN OF LOVE

Frida had a constant longing for love and filled her life with romantic companions and platonic friendships. Even though she never had her own children, Frida diverted all her love and care towards her nieces, nephews and the children she encountered throughout her life. Having lived in homes surrounded by an abundance of plants and animals, Frida also channeled her affection into taking care of the vegetation and caring for her animal companions including: monkeys, parrots, pigeons, dogs, cats, a deer and an eagle. Some of these animals, particularly the monkeys and parrots, would often appear in Frida's self-portraits.

Visitors can be part of the *The Garden of Love* activity by contributing a love wish to the programming activity.



THE CONVALESCENCE

After narrowly escaping death—a result of the streetcar accident—Frida faced a long and painful road to recovery. Yet, even in her convalescence she learnt to transform her pain into art. Using a specially designed easel her mother had installed on her bed, Frida began painting, transforming canvases into her own visual diary.

Life and death meet in this installation as we are transported back to Frida's bed—the place where she painted a significant number of her works. *The Dream* depicts birth and death, health and illness, referencing the continuous cycle of life and its many challenges.





ENDLESS SYMBOLLOGY

Frida Kahlo's works often act as portals into her personal life. Frida's paintings not only depict her surrounding landscapes but more importantly express her complex identity and unique life experiences often through the use of symbols and motifs. These include her ancestry and heritage, her close encounters with death and pain, her struggles with her marriage, and her inability to bear children.

Frida's Universe is a sensorial and interactive installation where visitors can interact with the most iconic symbols found in Frida's paintings. The vibrant colours and dreamlike landscapes invites visitors to play and explore.



LA ROSITA

When Frida began work as an art teacher at the La Esmeralda School, in Mexico, Frida encouraged her students to take their art to the streets and in so doing to reconnect with the history and traditions of their country. She challenged them to turn their encounters into mural paintings and to revive traditional Mexican customs by decorating *pulquerías*—Mexican taverns building connections with people and communities.

Pulquería La Rosita was once such a tavern where the walls were painted by the Frida Kahlo's students. Depicting everyday scenes and Mexican customs the space was also dotted with dozens of tiny roses—in reference to the tavern's name. Their brightly coloured murals clearly took inspiration from their teacher's chosen palette of colours.

Colour your own Frida portrait and take part in the decoration of the *Pulquería La Rosita*. This technological and creative experience combines artificial intelligence and digital art, making it interactive for the young, and young at heart!





IMMERSIVE BIOGRAPHY

Deep dive into the life of Frida Kahlo through this 360-degree immersive biography experience. Explore Frida's journey through life that begins in early 20th century Mexico, where Frida spent her childhood, developed her skills as an artist and lived out her final days. See the intimate world of Frida through her eyes, discover her landscapes, accompany her on her journeys, and experience her passions, joy and sadness.

This immersive biography features: Frida's formative years, her childhood and adolescence, much of which influenced her development as an artist. It features the passions in her life that kept her motivated and her tragic relationship with motherhood, that saw her direct her love and care towards her students, children of relatives, plants and pets. The immersive biography chronicles Frida's journeys overseas that impacted her personal life as well as her career as an artist, of course, the artist's aesthetic and visual choices that made her into the icon she is today.

FASHION ICON

While Frida used painting as means of self-expression, the artist's approach to the way she dressed was more complex. She chose long skirts, embroidered blouses, decorated her hair with flowers and ribbons, and employed jewellery and traditional clothing as a means of reinforcing her Mexican heritage, but at the same time it enabled her to conceal her fragmented body.

Her style was so distinct from the commercial world at the time that she began to make appearances on magazine covers such as Vogue in 1937. Today, her image has appeared in international publications and has influenced great fashion houses such as Givenchy, Jean Paul Gaultier and Valentino.





LAI D BARE: FRIDA'S INNER WORLD

This exhibition is curated and produced by
ArtScience Museum

With the support of Cristina Kahlo Alcalá and
Circe Henestrosa



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

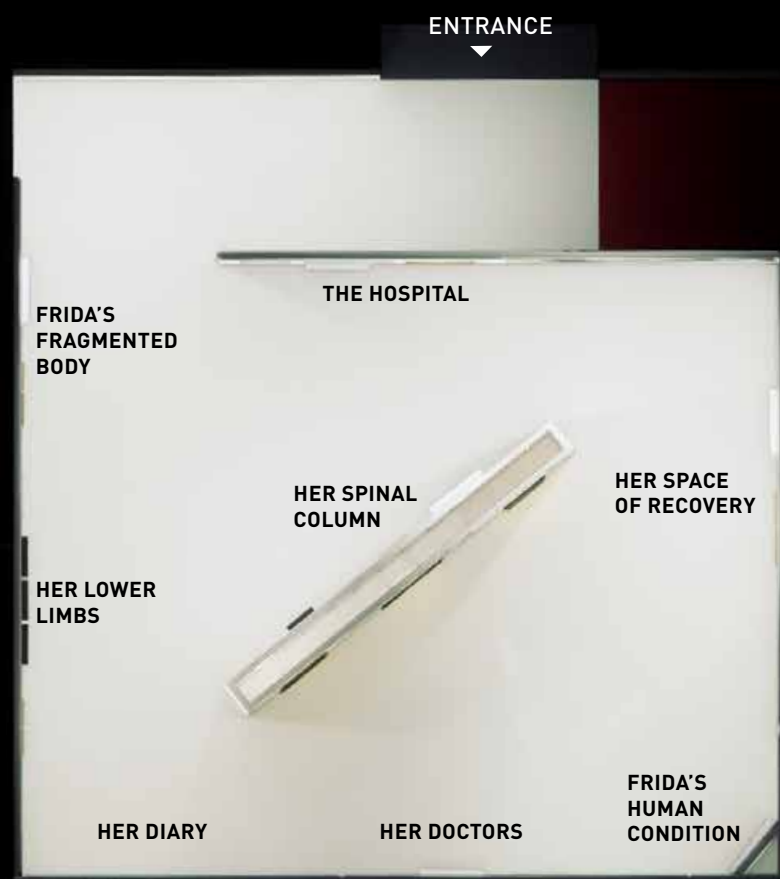
Laid Bare: Frida's Inner World reveals an intimate portrait of the renown Mexican artist—Frida Kahlo. Marking the 70th anniversary of Frida's passing, this exhibition celebrates the extraordinary woman who embraced her life's challenges and translated a lifetime of chronic pain into her art-making.

This exhibition tells the story of an artist who painted iconic self-portraits while recovering from chronic illness and multiple surgeries. It examines the relationship Frida had with her body and the profound impact these medical struggles had on her artistic practice.

Laid Bare: Frida's Inner World showcases the collection of Cristina Kahlo Alcalá—great niece of the artist—featuring photographs, medical documents and diary pages from Frida Kahlo's time at the American British Cowdray Hospital in Mexico City. It was at this hospital that Frida underwent an amputation of her lower right limb, several spinal surgeries and was cared for until her passing. Exclusive interviews with Cristina Kahlo Alcalá are presented alongside contemporary artworks, revealing the person Frida was beyond her iconic persona.

The exhibition also features interviews with medical experts from Singapore, who collectively provide insights into Frida's medical conditions—discussing the physical and mental challenges Kahlo could have faced at the time. *Laid Bare: Frida's Inner World* highlights the extraordinary resilience, determination and commitment Frida had to her artistic practice, all of which transformed her into the cultural icon she is today.

Laid Bare: Frida's Inner World is curated and produced by ArtScience Museum with the support of Cristina Kahlo Alcalá and Circe Henestrosa.



FRIDA'S FRAGMENTED BODY

Frida Kahlo had a complex medical history, undergoing more than 22 surgeries throughout her life. In 1913, at the age of 6, Frida contracted polio, leaving her left leg thinner and her right leg shorter. However, the majority of her severe medical issues were to begin at the age of 18. In 1925, on the way home from school, a streetcar crashed into the bus she was riding. This near-fatal accident left her with serious spinal fractures, a broken pelvis, 11 fractures in her right foot, a dislocated elbow and a serious puncture wound in her abdomen. Following the accident, Frida lived with these injuries and chronic pain until her passing on 13 July 1954.

Throughout her artistic practice, Frida embraced her broken body, finding beauty in her fragmented form.



Antonio Kahlo, *Frida in Chinese Suit (after operation)*, c. 1946, photograph. © Cristina Kahlo



Listen to exclusive interviews with Cristina Kahlo Alcalá—the artist's great niece—speaking about how she acquired these unique medical documents from the American British Cowdray Hospital where Frida Kahlo spent long periods of time. These interviews also reveal the person Frida was beyond the persona she became known for.

Laid Bare also features interviews with doctors and medical experts from Singapore, ranging from an orthopedic surgeon to an anesthetist and a clinical psychologist, who provide contemporary diagnoses of Frida's medical conditions, discussing the physical and mental challenges she would have experienced.

HER SPINAL COLUMN

Frida Kahlo's spine was severely damaged following the streetcar accident, in 1925, her spine never fully healed from the trauma of the accident. In an attempt to manage the chronic pain, Frida had to wear medical corsets for the rest of her life.

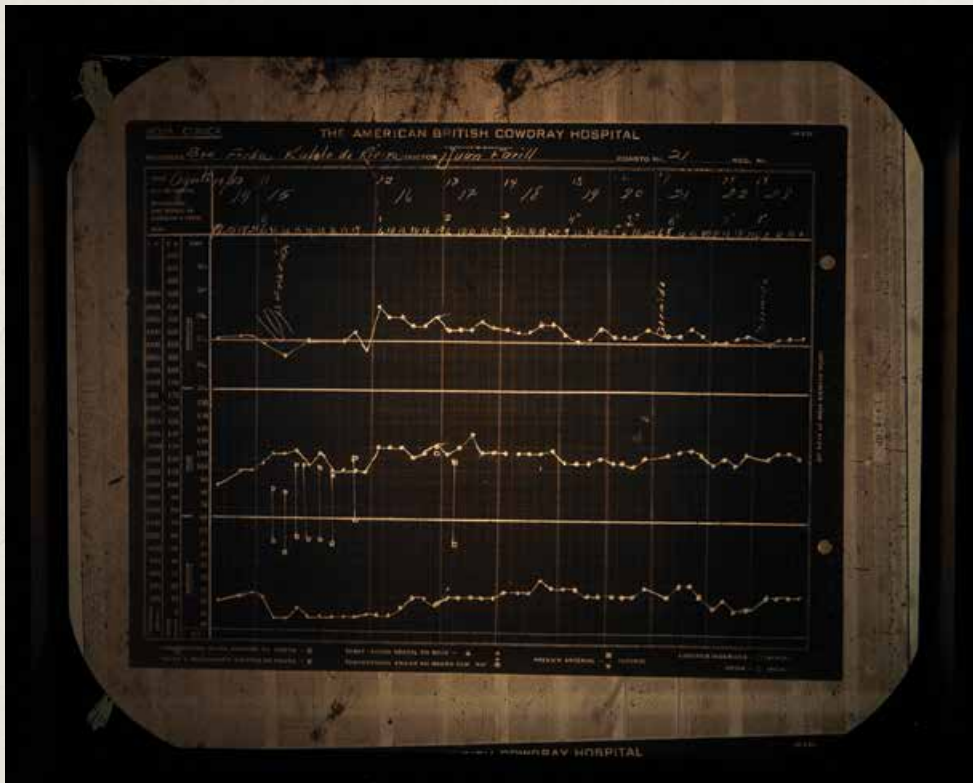
In 1946, after being bedridden for four months due to the severe spinal pain, Frida agreed to undergo a spinal fusion surgery in New York. The surgery, however, provided little relief. In 1950, her condition worsened and the artist was eventually admitted into the American British Cowdray Hospital in Mexico, where she stayed for nearly a year, undergoing seven operations on her spine.



X-ray of Frida Kahlo's Spine, 1954, 2023, lightbox installation.
© Banco de México. Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relative a los museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo.



Nickolas Muray, *Frida Kahlo (in New York)*, 1946, facsimile.
Photo by Nickolas Muray; © Nickolas Muray Photo Archives.



Cristina Kahlo Alcalá, American British Cowdray Hospital File (Clinical Sheet), August 1953, 2023, lightbox Installation. Courtesy of Centro Médico ABC Historical Archive and Cristina Kahlo Alcalá.

Cristina Kahlo Alcalá, American British Cowdray Hospital File (Operation Report), 11 August 1953, 2023, lightbox Installation. Courtesy of Centro Médico ABC Historical Archive and Cristina Kahlo Alcalá.

HER LOWER LIMBS

At the age of 6, Frida Kahlo contracted the polio virus, eventually leaving her right leg shorter for the rest of her life. This was further complicated by the streetcar accident, in 1925, that caused 11 fractures in her right foot. As a result, Frida lived with chronic pain in her lower limbs, often having to be treated for foot ulcers that were largely due to vascular insufficiency—in which a patient's blood circulation is weakened due to damaged veins. Frida eventually

amputated five phalanges—bones—in her right foot in 1934 and her sesamoid—bone in the big toe—in 1936.

The last major recorded surgery Frida Kahlo underwent was an amputation of her right leg, on 11 August 1953—less than a year before her passing. She underwent amputation as a result of experiencing gangrene—a potentially fatal condition in which bodily tissue dies due to a lack blood flow or a bacterial infection.



Photographer unknown, Partial view of the operating room at American British Cowdray Hospital, c. 1940, facsimile. Courtesy of Centro Médico ABC Historical Archive and Cristina Kahlo Alcalá.



Photographer unknown, Operating room at American British Cowdray Hospital, c. 1940, facsimile. Courtesy of Centro Médico ABC Historical Archive and Cristina Kahlo Alcalá.

THE HOSPITAL

Frida Kahlo spent a large part of her adult life in hospitals following her near fatal streetcar accident in 1925. Having severely injured her spine, lower and upper limbs, pelvis and abdomen, Frida was admitted into the Red Cross Hospital in Mexico City, where she stayed for a month in recovery. Having sustained lifelong medical complications and chronic pain, Frida was continuously admitted into and discharged from various hospitals throughout her life. Notable hospitals include the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit—where she was admitted to, in 1932, following a miscarriage—and the American British Cowdray (ABC) Hospital in Mexico City.

The ABC hospital was where Frida stayed for almost a year in 1950—undergoing seven spinal surgeries—and where her lower right limb was amputated under the care of Dr. Juan Farill. Frida was treated at the ABC hospital until her passing in 1954.

HER DOCTORS

Suffering from chronic pain and lifelong injuries, Frida Kahlo encountered many doctors, each attempting to provide a medical solution to her health complications.

Having undergone over 30 medical procedures, she spent long periods in hospital, eventually developing close relationships with her doctors. She often confided in them, writing personal letters asking for their opinion on her private life—including her marriage—and painted self-portraits dedicated to them. These doctors were trusted medical advisors and emotional supports to Frida.

Two of the most documented and notable doctors include Dr. Leo Eloesser and Dr. Juan Farill. Dr. Leo Eloesser first treated Frida's spine in 1930, in San Francisco, and continued to be a medical advisor for her until her passing. Dr. Juan Farill was the surgeon at the American British Cowdray Hospital in Mexico City, who cared for Frida up until she died and conducted her spinal operations in 1950 and her amputation in 1953.



Gisèle Freund, *Frida Kahlo and Dr. Juan Farill with her Self-Portrait*, 1951, facsimile. © Gisele Freund/IMEC/fonds MCC.



Postcard sent by Frida from New York to Dr. Leo Eloesser, 2 November 1940, facsimile. © Museo de Filatelia de Oaxaca.

FRIDA'S HUMAN CONDITION



In 2004, Frida Kahlo's personal wardrobe at her home in Mexico City—the Blue House—was brought to light. Previously locked away at the instruction of her husband—Diego Rivera—following her death in 1954, the wardrobe contained her medicines, her orthopaedic devices and exceptional examples of Frida's clothing. These objects provided new means of understanding how Frida's medical conditions informed her artistic and creative practice—as often presented in her self-portraits.

Frida once famously said, 'I don't paint dreams, I paint my own reality'. The damaged body she frequently painted



was not imagined but a genuine expression of her lived experience.

Examining Frida's personal relationship with her doctors, her intimate diary entries, her daily medical equipment and her handwritten letters to close friends, highlights Kahlo's embodied experience as a woman and as a human being. Frida lived a life that challenged her. However, she courageously chose to process her pain through her art-making, understanding the strength that comes with self-empowerment.

EXQUISITE CORPSE

Embark on an exhilarating virtual reality adventure that exposes and explores the vibrant tapestry of Frida Kahlo's creative mind in the *Exquisite Corpse* VR experience.

Immerse yourself in the essence of Frida's life, capturing the intimate moments of resilience and inspiration that unfolded from the confines of her bed. Weaving together the artist's iconic colour palette and evocative textures, *Exquisite Corpse* offers a captivating immersive journey through the world she so passionately painted.

Exquisite Corpse was developed by Layers of Reality, the creators of *Frida Kahlo: The Life of an Icon* and Blit Studios.

Experience *Exquisite Corpse* VR experience at the VR Gallery, Level 4.

FLORAL PASSAGE: A TRIBUTE TO FRIDA

Bringing Mexican traditions to the heart of *Frida Forever* is an ArtScience Museum commissioned work of Singapore-based Mexican artist and curator, Lidia Riveros.

Her flower arch installation symbolises a warm welcome to a home, with vibrant colours that reflect Frida Kahlo's lively spirit and her deep connection to Mexican heritage. Also etched onto the arch are flowers that mirror Frida's iconic fashion alongside butterflies that represent Frida's transformation and beauty despite the adversities she faced in life. Central to the installation is "Frida's heart", which represents her enduring influence in having touched the lives of many. This installation stands as a heartfelt tribute to Frida's enduring legacy.

Presented by:

