

# Comparative Study

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This particular Comparative Study will focus on two artists and three distinct paintings  
Frida Kahlo & Kat Rodriguez  
*Árbol de la Esperanza*, 1946 by Frida Kahlo  
*Dark Abyss*, 2016 by Kat Rodriguez  
*Escape*, 2016 by Kat Rodriguez

# Interpretation of function and purpose

## Frida Kahlo

- **Birthdate** : July 6, 1907
- **Birth place** : Coyoacan, Mexico City, Mexico
- **Death date** : July 13, 1954
- **Type of artist** : Added Mexican tradition with Surrealist renderings to her art
- Mexican female artist who became famous for the details explored in her self-portraits and symbolic patterns within her paintings of the traumatic events that occurred to her

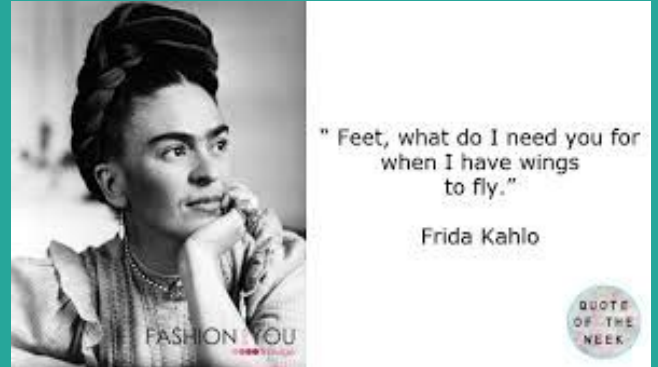
Frida Kahlo painted small, personal paintings about her surroundings and life experiences. The majority of her art work consisted of herself and her love experiences. Kahlo was considered a Surrealist painter but she never considered herself one. Her paintings contained a vast of imagination and concepts that would tie with Surrealism but her mind never found herself part of the art movement. Her art created questioning and curiosity within the audience because of the value and balance being explored.



# Interpretation of function and purpose

The majority of Kahlo's artwork was explicit and included the impact on people of wanting to know more about her art pieces and meanings behind them. Many of her master pieces were about her own self. Her self portraits reflected her inner and external pain and sexuality. Her appearance was well known and exposed. She wore colorful traditional Mexican dresses that made her stand out but most definitely her unique unibrow. Also she was known for the vibrant colors utilized in her paintings, which were influenced by her Indigenous culture in Mexico. Not only was she influenced by her hometown, Mexico but as well as Europe with symbolism and Realism. She developed her personality in her art work with the color, value, and emphasis of her persona within a canvas. Her gentle brushstrokes formulated the harmony or chaos that Kahlo wanted to convey within her art.

Frida's quotes have become popular around the world as time has advanced. They consist of deepness and emotion, just like her art. They reveal Frida's real life and her reflection on own herself. The quotes can be used to gain inspiration in art itself or life in general. With Frida's quotes it can be observed the type of artist she was. With her sayings, the deepness in her art is reflected. Her art work developed dark colors and contrast.



# Analysis of formal qualities

Frida, being a young artist, decided to approach Diego Rivera, the most famous Mexican muralist, for advice on her decision of pursuing art as her future career. Since Rivera had quite an experience with art, he quickly recognized her talent and uniqueness in her masterpieces. He encouraged her to become an artist as soon as possible because she had a strong talent in the field. Diego had an admiration for women with a passion.

Not so far into Frida's career, she and Rivera dated. Diego Rivera was much older than her, he was twenty years older. She had a vast appreciation for him, that she decided to marry him. Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera married each other in 1929. Frida's mother did not approve of this relationship due to the age difference. They both were well known for the nickname, "The Elephant and the Dove" referring to their size difference. Through this marriage she suffered a lot of emotional pain due to her husband's infidelities. He had the fame of not being a settled man. Even through the bad memories he made her go through she loved him. This is all relevant and reflected in her art, what she lived she would paint. She was said, "I don't paint dreams or nightmares, I paint my own reality" With this being said, it was definite that her life was her biggest inspiration in her art.

Frida never really lived a happy life. Ever since she was little she suffered. At the age of eight, she contained polio which affected her immune system later on in her life. She suffered from a few miscarriages during her marriage. Diego was not a loyal husband, he even cheated on Frida with her sister Cristina. Some of her artwork was formulated by these events in her life.



# Evaluation of cultural significance

## Kat Rodriguez

- **Birth Place:** Kentucky but grew up in Milwaukee
- **Type of artist:** Visual Art artist and illustrator
- **School she attended:** Received her BFA from the Peck School of the Arts in the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee



I came across Kat Rodriguez on spring of 2016 at a gallery night in downtown Milwaukee. Her abstract series of paintings caught my attention right away. I had never seen any type of painting like hers. She explained that her series connects to her pain of migraines which has a huge connection to Frida since she also painted her pain.

# Interpretation of function and purpose

Kat Rodriguez' abstract paintings touch upon her personal life and life perspective. "This work explores the visual representation of discomfort and pain that is felt with each of my migraines." It is seen that she ties in her artwork to something important in her life, her health.

Her work consists of a variety of bold colors and combination of cold and warm colors as well. Her intention towards the series is to gain curiosity in the audience towards her work.



This work explores the visual representation of discomfort and pain that is felt with each of my migraines.

Although my artwork centers on the migraine as an artery for expression, it is the observation of an unseen world that I am most fascinated in. As with a migraine, not everything it affects can be seen. So when viewers find a sense of familiarity within the abstractness, the piece rises to a new life.

While channeling a feeling that would otherwise be painful, I aim to produce works that provoke curiosity and awareness.

- Kat Rodriguez



# Analysis of formal qualities

## Influences

Kat's biggest artistic inspiration is Helen Frankenthaler. Helen was an American abstract expressionist painter. She had a major contribution to the history of postwar American painting. Other influences in her artistic path are her life perspective and own health. Kat's work explores a variety of color and shapes. As seen in her works the usage of color is something big, since all of her works included more than one shade. There is a constant pattern being created within her work. The pattern outlines circles and wavy lines. The pattern seems to present how the mind works when having a migraine, since the pain is vast then the mind is going crazy.





# Distinct Art pieces



*Dark Abyss, 2016 by Kat Rodriguez*



*Árbol de la Esperanza, 1946 by Frida Kahlo*



*Escape, 2016 by Kat Rodriguez*



# Evaluation of cultural significance



- Title of the piece : Dark Abyss
- Materials : gouache
- Year : 2016
- Made to create awareness and curiosity. Piece creates a new life when the audience familiarize with the painting and what is going on.

# Evaluation of cultural significance



- Name of piece : Arbol de Esperanza
- Materials : Oil on masonite
- Year : 1946
- This painting was dedicated to her patron, Eduardo Morillo Safa after a surgery in New York. The Frida on the left represents herself after coming out of her surgery while the one on the right reflects her forceful and confident figure. Not only does this painting consist of her personal life but Aztec mythology is also incorporated.

# Evaluation of cultural significance

- Title of piece: Escape
- Materials: watercolor, gouache, ink
- Year : 2016
- Created to portray curiosity in to the audience and for them to create their own meaning of the piece



# Comparing Artists



I've known about Frida Kahlo ever since I was a little girl when I for the first time watched the movie that demonstrated her life, Frida. Since I was young of age, I didn't really pay much attention to the women with colorful clothes and a unibrow. It was until my sophomore year for a history project where I actually learned about her and her art.



Kat Rodriguez caught my attention because of her positive attitude and personality she portrayed the very first time I saw her in a gallery night. As I approached her for an interview about her paintings, she had a big shiny smile that reflected who she was as an artist right away. The biggest reason why I interact with her and her work is because I consider myself to be a colorful and cheerful person, with that being said I chose to compare my work with someone who I was similar too.

Her quotes and artwork have become an inspiration to my everyday situations.

Thanks to the history project, I got to develop my knowledge towards the Mexican women artist. I've become impacted with her life story that and the way she confronted her obstacles. In a way I can admit that she has become someone to follow because sometimes we are so closed minded that we don't want to stand for ourselves when we have to.

## Frida Kahlo

- Incorporated darker hues to her works because they tied in with the meaning of the piece
- Inspirations : vibrant colors, surrealism
- Recognized for self-portraits
- Painted people rather than objects

- Majority of paintings had a upsetting meaning behind

- Both utilize hues that connect to the meaning
- Geometric shapes
- Overlooked / detailed items

## Kat Rodriguez

- Paintings portray peaceful thoughts
- Corporates light hues
- Inspirations : Helen Frankenthaler (Abstract Expressionist)
- Paintings don't have clear items (makes the audience wonder what the painting is)

# Making comparisons and connections



# Comparing Art works



This painting caught my attention on how the dark colors are being manipulated. When looking at it, it created peace within me because of its flow and lines.



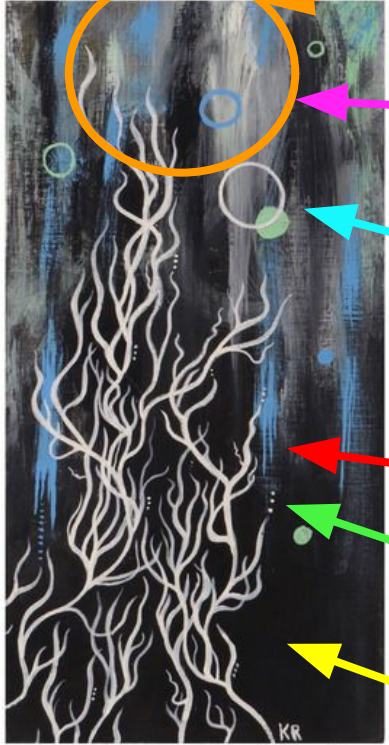
I chose this particular painting because I highly enjoy the things being portrayed such as herself in two situations. The painting creates a confusing/strange feeling when looking at it because of its presence and colors.



This painting I saw at the Gallery Night in which I met Kat. I loved the idea of using both hot and cold colors within one piece. It makes me feel doubt and questions raise up in my mind on what exactly is it that Kat wants to formulate with this piece.



# Making comparisons and connections



Day and Night hues

Sky pattern

Circular shapes

Moving patterns

Detail

Dark colors are being utilized : Black, dark blue, grey



# Making comparisons and connections



## Happy Presence

Portrays the mood of the whole painting and ties in with the meaning.

## Warm colors

Gives a warm sense of the painting and the meaning of the painting.

## Cold colors

Set the mood of the painting overall and what is occurring.

## Detail

Makes the audience look into the painting more in depth.

## Upsetting tone

Portrays the painting to not have such a happy tone, which ties in with the meaning behind the piece.

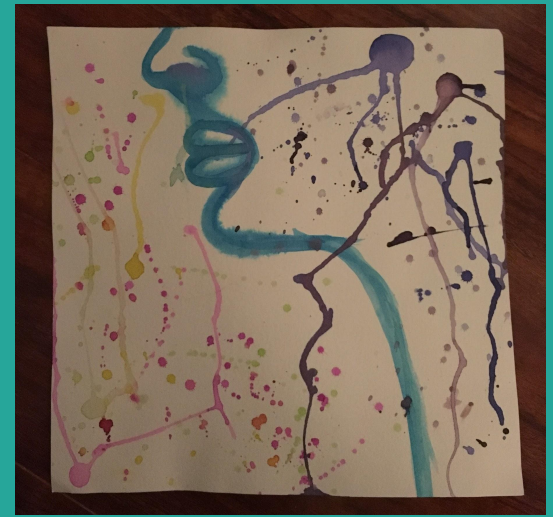


# My Artwork

Name of piece : Reality



A piece inspired the local artist, Kat Rodriguez. With the use of watercolor I wanted to show the movements of thoughts in the mind of one. The piece shows half a face with dark splashes in the inside and colorful vibrant splashes in the outside.



The meaning behind this piece is simple and real. As we see in the second paper, there half of face painted. The face represents the human being. To the right (the inside of the human) dark colors are painted with a sensation of drops. Towards the left the colors being utilize changed completely since they are bright and colorful. This simply reflects that as much light and happiness are shown there's always someone who does not change. Their inside is too dark to actually see what's further of them. That is one way to interpret the piece, while the second interpretation includes: as much as a person is sad and depressed in the inside they will never reflect their true feelings. They say that the happiest people are the ones to have the worst life. The outside is colorful and all but what we don't know are the real colors inside. It's up to the audience to flow their mind and come up with their own meaning.



# Making comparisons and connections

## Similarities

- \* With *Reality* I decided to use the same material, watercolor, as the local artist being investigated in this comparative study, Kat Rodriguez.
- \* The meaning behind this piece is simple. I demonstrate how the human mind works. The mind of someone who is upset and blue in the inside but on the outside portrays otherwise. Kat's watercolor works reflect her personal illness of migraines. I went further than better with this piece since Kat does the same with her meanings.
- \* Watercolor swatches are soft and dark in particular areas. Manipulating the watercolor is part of the meaning since sometimes we manipulate our mind with trying to ignore who we are.

## Differences

- \* I don't have a background color like Kat creates with all of her work.
- \* Kat's work includes a vast variety of shapes, I only have wavy lines and splashes while she includes circles, wavy lines, straight lines, and unique shapes.
- \* Kat either uses dark colors or hot colors for each piece, I developed both of them in one painting.
- \* My brushstrokes go with the flow of the water while Kat's work demonstrates that she is very precise with each and one of her brushstrokes

# My Artwork

The intention towards this piece has a few things to it. To start of I wanted my outcome to be full of colors and truly stand out. With that in mind I chose my artistic inspiration.

The main focus on this piece is how my Mexican culture surrounds me, pretty self-explanatory by the title of the piece. Both my parents are from Mexico and I was born in the United States. Over time I have learned to really appreciate my roots. To many people like me it might not seem like a big deal but on the contrary with me, it is a huge part of my life. Being involved with two different traditions (Mexican and American) I have learned to like both of them equally. Both countries make up who I am now a day.

## Heart, Lesley, World

This piece was not only influenced by an artist or a masterpiece but mostly by the love towards the artist culture. In order for this digital collage to be completed, Adobe Photoshop CS6 was used. The mind behind my culture demonstrates Mexican culture connecting to the artist Frida Kahlo and Aztec symbols.

# The Mind Behind my Culture



This piece reflects my life and the influence of the community I live in, with this piece. City in the Artist, demonstrates how much the city I was born and raised in means to me. Artist, shows how I truly portray myself as. A person with many contradicting conflicts inside myself. Artist in the City, reflects how I change / influence my own community. This piece is ties in with the artworks being compared because of the colors, shapes, and emphasis being used. All the pieces being compared include all of the above therefore this piece is perfect to compare with them.

## Similarities

- \* The usage of color in both of my pieces are similar to the works being compared since they all include a lot of color
- \* One of my pieces is inspired by Frida Kahlo, Frida was well known for her self-portraits therefore I decided to add my face to my piece
- \* The usage of flowers in my first piece shows the connection with Frida Kahlo since it develops Frida Kahlo's way of dressing with her traditional Mexican clothing
- \* In my second piece, there's a lot going on, which was what Kahlo would do within her work. Many things happening at one certain artwork

## Differences

- \* The media being used in my first art piece is different from what Kahlo would have utilized, a reason is the lack of technology back in the day
- \* Both of my artworks demonstrate a positive colorful vibe while Kahlo's work was shown as depressing and upsetting
- \* My second art piece was influenced by pop art a totally different movement than what Kahlo would base her work on
- \* The detail within each brushstroke, Kahlo was a very precise artist that included small details. My work includes detail but to a certain extent. If I were to improve my work I would add much more detail just like Kahlo would do with every one of her works.



# Conclusion

In conclusion, all the artworks utilize a variety of hues to make the painting stand out. Kat Rodriguez uses a more gentle brush stroke and flowy. On the contrary, Frida Kahlo was more detailed with her paintings and meanings behind her artworks. The mediums are different as well, since Frida used acrylic on canvas while Kat uses watercolor and ink. Two total different mediums that portray a different effect. At the end, the materials all contribute to the meaning of the piece. Both artists based their paintings on personal pain and events in their lives. Frida and Kat both reflect that pain can bloom a positivity in a way or another, such as their talent and fame.

# Citations

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