

Diego Rivera

El Maestro de los murales

# Who was Diego Rivera?



Diego at the age of 5 in 1890.

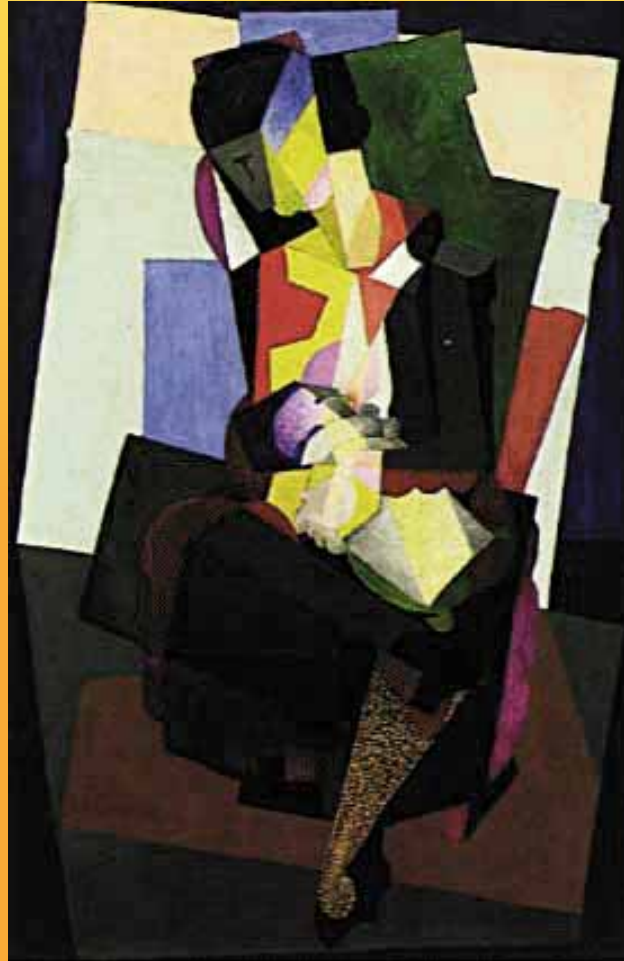
Diego Rivera (1886-1957) was one of Mexico's most important painters and a major artist of the twentieth century. Born in 1886 in Guanajuato, Rivera studied traditional European artistic styles at the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City. Rivera combined this classical training with the influence of Mexican folk artist Jose Guadalupe Posada, emerging as an accomplished painter with a distinctly Mexican style by the age of sixteen.

# Las murallas

Influenced by the Mexican Revolution (1914-15) and the Russian Revolution (1917), Rivera believed that art should play a role in empowering working people to understand their own histories. He did not want his art to be isolated in museums and galleries, but made accessible to the people, spread on the walls of public buildings. To this end, Rivera traveled to Italy to study early Renaissance fresco. When he returned to Mexico, he was ready to formulate his own style of public paintings that would speak directly to the working and indigenous peoples of Mexico.

# Maternidad, 1916

In 1907 Rivera traveled to Spain to study the works of Goya, El Greco, and Brueghel at Madrid's El Prado museum. Later he moved to Paris and became fascinated with the avant-garde Cubist movement which Pablo Picasso founded. After four years devoted to Cubism, Rivera began to question the movement.



*Maternity, 1916  
Oil on canvas*

*Museo de Arte Alvar y Carmen Carrillo Gil, Mexico City*

# La Creación, 1922-1923



*Creation, 1922-1923*

*Encaustic and Gold Leaf*

*Mexico City, Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Anfiteatro Bolívar*

# La Molendera, 1924



*The Grinder, 1924*

*Oil on canvas*

*Museo de Arte Moderno, INBA, Mexico City*

# Los Explotadores, 1926



*The Exploiters, 1926*

*Fresco*

*Universidad Autonoma de Chapingo Chapel, west Wall*

# La Sangre de los Mártires Revolucionarios fertilizando la Tierra, 1926



*Blood of the Revolutionary Martyrs Fertilizing the Earth, 1926*

*Fresco*

*Universidad Autonoma de Chapingo Chapel, east Wall*





*Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo on their wedding day*

*August 19th, 1929*

# Su Esposa

## **Frida Kahlo, Artist, Diego Rivera's Wife**

MEXICO CITY, July 13 -- Frida Kahlo, wife of Diego Rivera, the noted painter, was found dead in her home today. Her age was 44. She had been suffering from cancer for several years.

She also was a painter and also had been active in leftist causes. She made her last public appearance in a wheel chair at a meeting here in support of the new ousted regime of Communist-backed President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman of Guatemala.

Frida Kahlo began painting in 1926 while obliged to lie in bed during convalescence from injuries suffered in a bus accident. Not long afterward she showed her work to Diego Rivera, who advised, "go on painting." They were married in 1929, began living apart in 1939, were reunited in 1941. Usually classed as a surrealist, the artist had no special explanation for her methods. She said only: "I put on the canvas whatever comes into my mind." She gave one-woman shows in Mexico City, New York and elsewhere and is said to have been the first woman artist to sell a picture to the Louvre.

Some of her pictures shocked beholders. One showed her with her hands cut off, a huge bleeding heart on the ground nearby, and on either side of her an empty dress. This was supposed to reveal how she felt when her husband went off alone on a trip. Another self-portrait presented the artist as a wounded deer, still carrying the shafts of nine arrows.

A year ago, too weak to stand for more than ten minutes, she sat daily at her easel, declaring: "I am happy to be alive as long as I can paint."

# Historia de México - El antiguo Mundo Indígena, 1929-1935

*The Indigenous World,  
1929-1935, 1923-1924*

*Fresco*

*Mexico City, National Palace,*

*North Wall*



# Hombre en una Encrucijada, 1934



*Man at the Crossroads, 1934*

*Fresco*

*Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.*

# Cargador de Flores, 1935

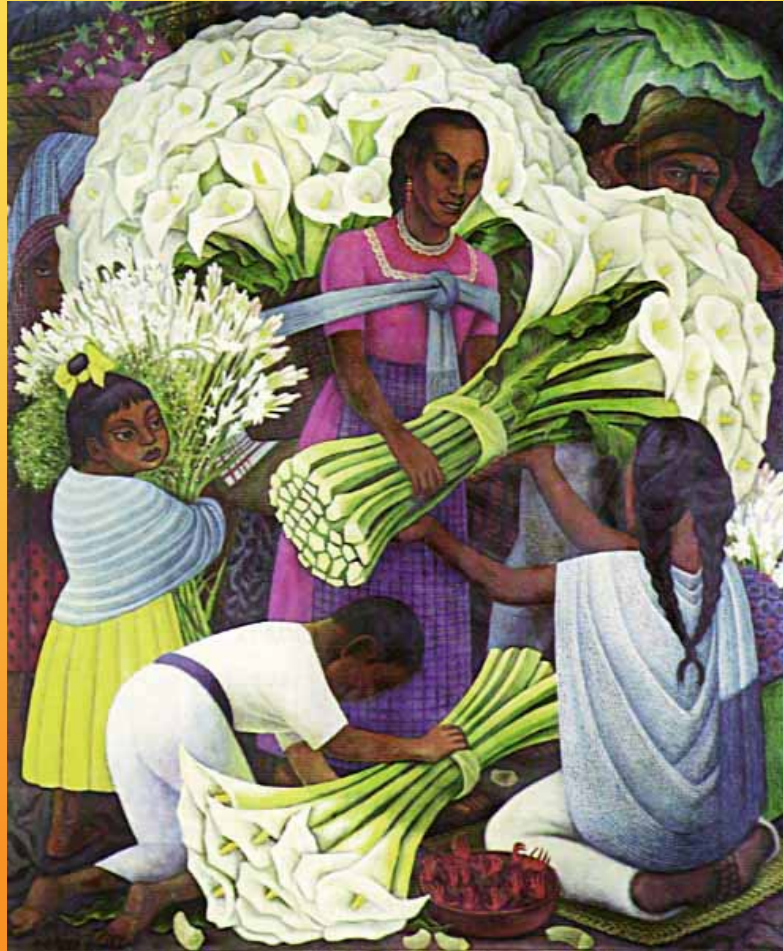


*"Rivera believed that art should play a role in empowering working people to understand their own histories."*

*The flower carrier, 1935  
Oil and tempera on masonite*

*San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*

# Vendedora de Flores, 1949



*Flower Vendor, 1949*

*Oil on canvas*

*Madrid, Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo*

# Retrato de Dolores Olmedo, 1955



*Portrait of Dolores Olmedo, 1955  
Oil on canvas  
Museum Dolores Olmedo Patiño*

# Desfile del 1o. de Mayo en Moscú, 1956



*May Day Procession in Moscow, 1956*

*Oil on canvas*

*Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex*

# Su muerte

In addition to being a celebrated and controversial artist, Diego Rivera was also a provocative political activist who incited debate not only in Mexico, but also in the USA and Soviet Union. Since his death in 1957, his hundreds of public artworks, his many oils and watercolors, and his political daring continue to contribute invaluablely to the development of public art across the Americas.



# Bibliography

For more information about Diego Rivera and the works presented here, go to:

<http://www.riveramural.org/rivera/home.html>