

MEMENTO MORI / 01

FRIDA KAHLO

1907-1954 · Mexican painter



Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter whose self-portraits made the injured body, identity, pain, and death impossible to look away from.

The face became famous later. The work began with a body that nearly did not survive.

BEFORE / 02

Coyoacán, before the icon



She was not training to be an art icon. She survived polio, studied in a pre-medical program, and learned close looking from her photographer father.

Medicine was the plan. Attention was the instrument.

HINGE / 03

The bus and the trolley

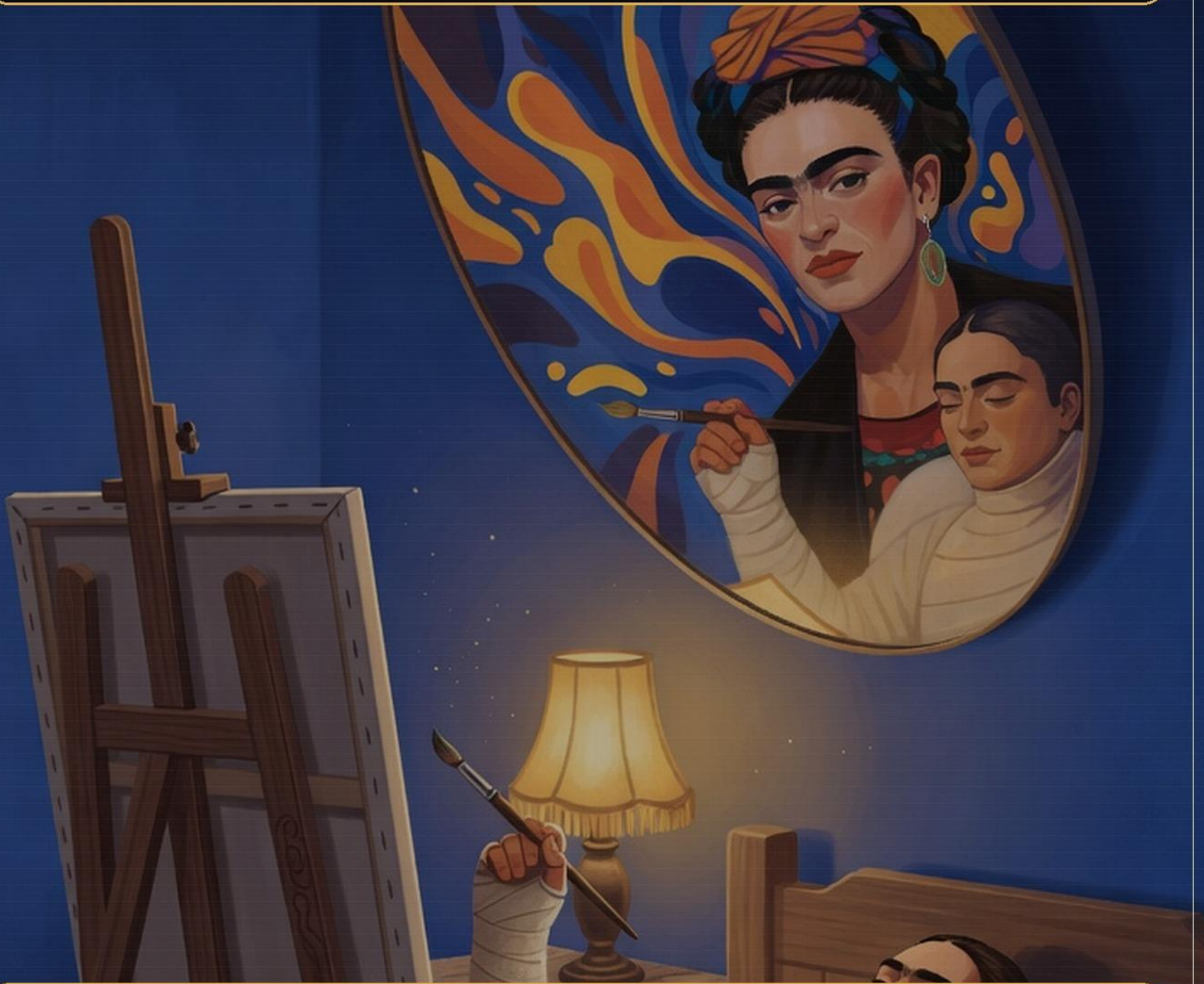


In 1925, a bus carrying the eighteen-year-old Kahlo collided with a trolley. Her spine, pelvis, ribs, collarbone, leg, and foot were shattered; an iron handrail pierced her body.

The accident did not become a myth first. It was hospital, plaster, pain, and time.

RECOVERY / 04

Bed, mirror, paint



Immobilized at home, she was given a bed easel and a mirror. She began painting the one subject that would not leave the room: herself.

“I paint myself because I am often alone...”

WORK / 05

The body as evidence

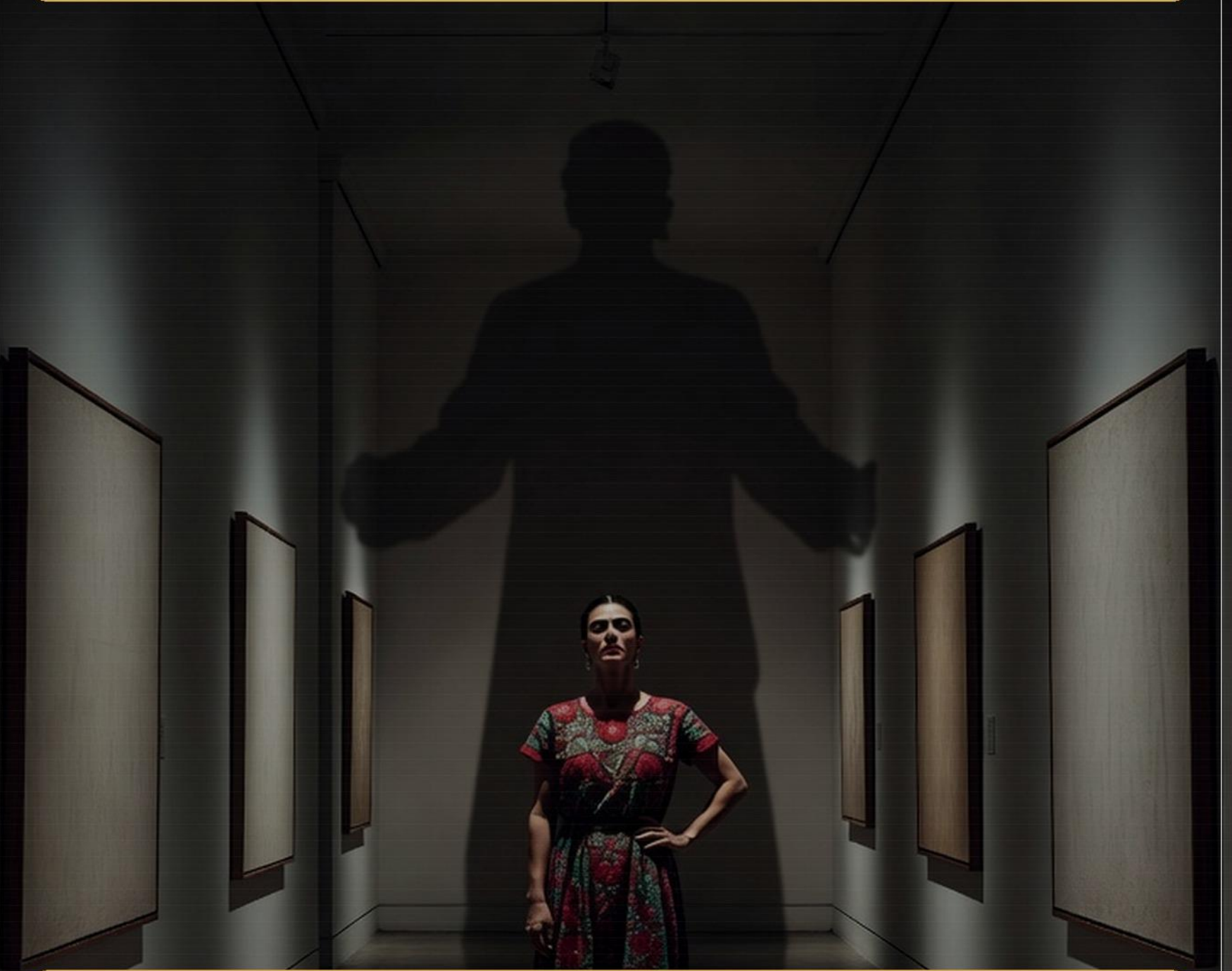


The later paintings did not decorate pain; they anatomized it. Henry Ford Hospital, My Birth, and the self-portraits made miscarriage, surgery, desire, politics, and death visible.

Her body was not background. It became the weather of the work.

RECOGNITION / 06

A language of her own



In 1938, New York gave Kahlo her first solo exhibition. Paris followed. While Rivera's shadow was large, her own visual language kept refusing to vanish.

Folk color, surgical clarity, a stare that did not blink.

The Blue House narrows



Her final years narrowed into surgeries, pain, and the Blue House. In 1954, Frida Kahlo died in Coyoacán at forty-seven.

The body stopped. The paintings did not.

What the mirror kept



After her death, feminist art history, museums, and readers returned to the work. Kahlo remains because she painted the self not as vanity, but as evidence.

Worth / achievement: Kahlo helped make personal injury, womanhood, Mexican identity, disability, and death legitimate subjects of modern art.

The crash broke the plan. The mirror helped build the work that remains.