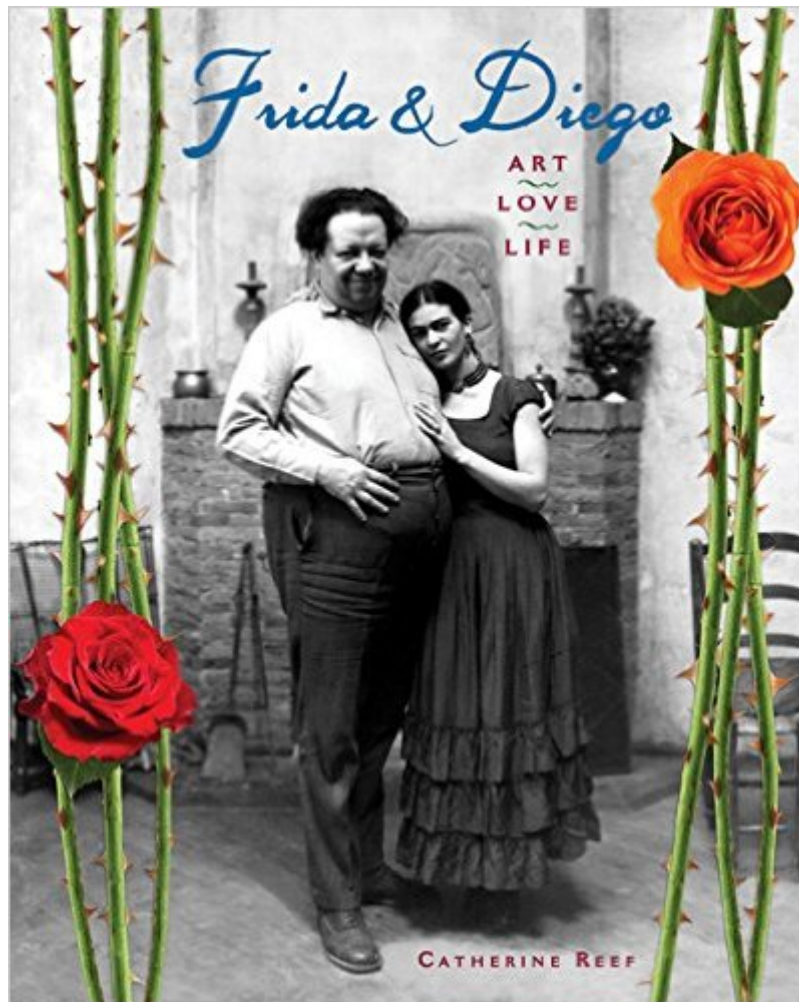


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# Frida & Diego: Art, Love, Life



## Synopsis

Nontraditional, controversial, rebellious, and politically volatile, the Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera are remembered for their provocative paintings as well as for their deep love for each other. Their marriage was one of the most tumultuous and infamous in history—filled with passion, pain, betrayal, revolution, and, above all, art that helped define the twentieth century. Catherine Reef's inspiring and insightful dual biography features numerous archival photos and full-color reproductions of both artists' work. Endnotes, bibliography, timeline.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (34 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #602,621 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in [Books > Teens > Art, Music & Photography > Art > History](#) #17 in [Books > Teens > Art, Music & Photography > Art > Biographies](#) #41 in [Books > Teens > Biographies > Social Activists](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

It makes perfect sense to pair these two great artists for a biography: their relationship defined their lives and to a great extent, their work. Reef explores both in language accessible to her target audience (ages 12 and up), presenting not only the facts necessary for a biography report, but an examination of how their lives were reflected in their art. While she does not hide their unconventional relationship(s), she does present their numerous affairs in middle-school appropriate versions, and makes the case that each was the great love of the other's life. Reef is clearly familiar with both artists' work, and her use of primary sources (diaries and letters of Kahlo and Rivera) lends an immediacy and vigor to the text. Her analyses of their work would have been better served if there had been reproductions of the artwork facing the page analyzing and describing it, rather

than grouped at the end of the book, and sparsely furnished throughout the text. (And even there, not all the works described in the book are included, although there is a helpful index at the back listing where they can be found.) A clear look at two fascinating and influential figures of 20th century art--and their fascination for and influence upon each other.

You can never have too many "Frida and Diego" books. If you already have "Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo" by Hayden Herrera, then this will make for a colorful supplement. I find that if you are being introduced for the first time to a subject it is best to start off with a young reader's version as this book. However the book is more sophisticated than the advertising would have you believe. It is well organized (mostly chronological) and does not talk down to you on the subject of Frida or painting. There are more first person quotes than in most of the biographies and stories. We get plenty of foot notes that enhance and not distract from your reading pace. There is a timeline in the back of the book to keep you abreast of what is happening. The color pictures alone are worth the price. After reading the book be sure to watch the movie "Frida" (2002) with Salma Hayek as Frida and Alfred Molina as Diego. Frida [Blu-ray]

This is an easy read - in fact I read the entire book in one evening. It gave me a bit more insight to the relationship between Frida and Diego and how that relationship impacted her art and her life.

This true life narrative weaves a love story, the lives of two world-famous artists and a bit of art appreciation in a way that can appeal to mature middle school kids and even adults. It will work especially well for young readers who are aspiring artists, or who have special affinity for Frida Kahlo. Kahlo is a bit of a role model for a certain kind of freethinking, make-my-own-way-thank-you girl (i.e., still fighting the Ophelia syndrome). The writing is straightforward, but not workmanlike, and succeeds at bringing some art criticism into view along with the photos without being pedantic -- the latter being a sure deal-breaker for this age group. Some parents unready for questions that may arise about infidelity or the lifetime of cruel suffering a severely injured person endures may want to wait until the child is a bit older. Or at least until those topics have been introduced in a favorite cable TV show. I would have loved the book as a YA, hence the rating.

Frida & Diego: Art, Love, Life, by Catherine Reef, is a complex and satisfying portrayal of two giants of twentieth-century art and the development of their storied careers. The book relies on primary sources and seldom-seen photographs to describe the individual lives and work of each artist, as

well as their combined lives. Reef weaves into this dual biography fascinating views of the political and social history of Mexico. Readers learn about Frida Kahlo's medical odyssey. A childhood diagnosis of polio left her with an atrophied leg. As a young woman, she also suffered a debilitating accident that resulted in many surgeries and long periods of painful convalescence. Reef includes details of the couple's complicated and often troubled marital life. These are not gratuitous digressions, however, since Frida's body of work is in many ways a reflection of her physical and emotional suffering. Diego Rivera's work as a muralist captures the era of upheaval that he lived in and reveals much about his devotion to socialist causes. The book includes behind-the-scenes stories of murals he painted in U.S. cities, which often became entangled in political controversy and resulted in conflict between Rivera and his patrons.

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