

Frida in Focus



Frida in Focus is dedicated to the 49 victims and families of the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history, the Orlando nightclub shooting (June 12, 2016).

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Frida Exhibit Foreword

Each year, along with many other institutions across the nation, the University of Cincinnati observes National Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the culture of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

We are very proud to present one of the main events scheduled for HHM 2016: a Frida Kahlo-themed exhibition in Niehoff Urban Studio, with a series of related events to take place during the month (September 15 to October 15).

Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (July 6, 1907-July 13, 1954) transcended her *métier* to become one of the most recognizable artists of the 20th Century. As such, she is still an ubiquitous popular culture fixture, featured in movies, documentaries, and books. Frida's image has graced everything from dolls to soap bars, tote bags, shower curtains, Converse sneakers and, sure enough, phone cases! At the same time, Frida has become one of the top Latin American iconic figures, as well as a feminist and LGBT icon in her own right.

Why Frida? Why UC?

"Fridamania" is alive and well, as attested by a constant stream of books and exhibits, however, the direct motivation for our project came from a serendipitous connection between Frida and the University of

Cincinnati. UC Professor Emeritus Dr. Edward B. Silberstein, an eminent specialist in radiology and nuclear medicine, has kindly provided the materials and artifacts featured in this exhibit: eight of the nine portraits of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera that his father, the renowned photographer Bernard G. Silberstein, took in the early 1940s. (We invite you to read the fascinating and authoritative essays on the topic, *infra*, authored by our colleague Kate Bonansinga and Tufts University art historian Adriana Zavala). The exhibit also includes the 10 monographs in which the photographs have been published, as well as the issue of *Art News* on which one of the photographs made the cover.

What does Frida tell us today?

Frida the magnetic woman--the "heroine of pain," as she came to be called by her fellow Mexicans (she suffered polio as a child, then had a horrifically odd accident that led to more than 30 surgeries)-speaks to us with a strikingly contemporary voice. We sympathize with her diverse cultural and ethnic makeup: Jewish, Christian, Mexican, German, indigenous. We admire the strength she showed facing myriad physical, emotional and mental hardships; our curiosity is piqued by her fluid and rebellious sexuality, and our compassion by

her life's upheavals. We see in her a celebrity of sorts before celebrities became a staple of modern life. In her paradoxes and contradictions (she could not live with Diego Rivera nor, apparently, without him), Frida reminds us of ourselves. It is difficult to avoid the temptation of comparing Frida's near obsession with self-portraiture (perhaps a third of her entire oeuvre), with our own selfie-ridden times; her sense of self-fashioning, of being always telling us something about her life, with our corresponding Facebookian epochal traits.

Frida is relevant because she reminds us of many social, ethnic, racial and gender-related issues and, by such reminder, we are encouraged to be more diverse, more inclusive. This is one of the main lessons we draw from her tumultuous and rich life. In that spirit, and since we are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, we also pay homage to all victims of sexual and racial hatred or prejudice, including the many Hispanic victims of the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. May their sacrifice at the altar of hate be the last.

This exhibition, as well as all related events, has been made possible through the generous support of UC Office of the Provost & Office of the Vice President of Research; the Taft Research Center; the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and the McMicken College of Arts & Sciences. We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to Interim President Beverly Davenport for her early and steadfast support to this exhibit, as well as for her resolute and continued leadership to advance the Hispanic and Latin presence on our campus.

Carlos M. Gutiérrez, Jennifer H. Krivickas and Vincent F. Sansalone

1940: Bernard G. Silberstein on Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera

Bernard G. Silberstein (1905-1999) is amongst the many photographers who were captivated by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) and her husband Diego Rivera (1886-1957). An electrical engineer who was also a self-taught photographer, Silberstein lived in Cincinnati his entire life but traveled widely in search of compelling imagery. Sometimes his subjects were assigned by preeminent publications such as *National Geographic*, *Life* and *Esquire*, and other times Silberstein worked for himself with the spirit of a fine art photographer.¹ The photographer's one-page type written account of his photo session with Kahlo and Rivera begins, "In December, 1940, I had an assignment to interview and photograph the major artists of Mexico... I met the Riveras through a mutual friend living in Mexico City, and the three days I spent with them were memorable. Their home was both colorful and unique..."

There is reason to question some of Silberstein's assertions in this account: his son, Edward, believes that there was no "assignment" per se and that Silberstein himself initiated the trip and photo session. Plus, at least one published source indicates that Rivera was in the U.S. in December 1940 and was forbidden re-entry into Mexico due to an investigation of his connection to the assassination of Leon Trotsky in Mexico City earlier that year. Other

published sources date one of Silberstein's photographs 1942, another 1943, and yet another 1945.² In the paragraphs below I attempt to unlock some of the mystery behind Silberstein's images of the two artists.

Silberstein took at least nine photographs of the artists posing in their home in Mexico City and of Rivera with murals that were in progress at the time. Eight of these were combined into a portfolio of offset lithographic reproductions of the photos, the publication of which was financed by Bill Wiggins, of Oakland, California, and executed by Tea Lautrec Lithography, also of Oakland, in 1998. Wiggins' original intention was to print 3,000 portfolios, but there are only 200 publisher-signed prints, so it is likely that Wiggins stopped at 200.³ There are four of Frida, three of Rivera, and one of them together that captures Rivera watching over Kahlo's shoulder as she paints.

The daughter of a photographer, Kahlo had become a masterful model over years of being in front of the cameras of the likes of Ansel Adams, Lola Alvarez Bravo, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Imogen Cunningham, Nickolas Muray and Edward Weston, amongst others. She often stares without smiling directly at the camera, her eyes conveying the pain that she had suffered throughout her life. Sometimes it was physical, due to a traffic accident when she was 18-years old that injured her spinal cord and to other frequent health problems. Sometimes it was emotional, due to Rivera's numerous affairs. But in the most iconic and widely published of the photographs, which happens to be by Silberstein, Kahlo looks away from the camera, her hands draped over her forearms and bedecked in rings, her hair in traditional Mexican braids, her chin held high. She seems confident and at peace. It is this portrait that was reproduced on the cover *Art News* magazine in April 1994, when Kahlo's popularity in the global art world was at its peak, in part due to the 1990 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Mexico: Splendors of 30 Centuries" that included Kahlo's artwork. In the years after the exhibition closed Silberstein began receiving requests to publish his photographs of her and Rivera because it ignited the interest on the part of scholars and publishers. Likewise, the portfolio of reproductions exhibited here dates to 1998.

In one of the portfolio's images, Kahlo is at work on an atypically large narrative. During her 9-month-long recovery from the accident in 1925, Kahlo was immobile in a plaster corset and began painting small-scale autobiographical portraits, and this is the genre for which she is best known. The painting pictured here has a cast of characters including Kahlo at the center, two well dressed children and a surreal oversized figure with an undersized head (possibly Diego) to her right, and a skeleton to her left. A heavy curtain is pulled aside in the foreground on either side of the scene; the figures become actors on a stage. This iconography is typical of Kahlo's paintings. It is the scale that is unusual, as most of Kahlo's paintings fit on an easel or on her lap during times that she was bedridden. Carla Stellweg, author of *Frida Kahlo: The Camera Seduced*, describes the importance of the painting and Silberstein's photograph of it:

There is one Silberstein portrait of Frida Kahlo that I cherish a lot plus find its background extremely fascinating, it is horizontal print in which Frida is painting a work titled "The Wounded Table", and that painting, one of her largest ever, was included in a 1950's Mexican Government traveling exhibition to Europe. After the exhibition came back to Mexico, the painting was not there...it seems that it left the Soviet Union, when the show went to Communist China, and from there it was lost. I have hopes that it will appear some day in either Russia or China, but who knows... The Silberstein photograph is the only one that exists of the painting.⁴

When Silberstein photographed Kahlo at work on "The Wounded Table" the painting was already in its frame, which invites us to question whether Kahlo posed with the brush for the photo session, hovering it in front of an already completed painting.

Kahlo committed to Tehuana clothing and hair ornamentation

after she married Rivera in 1929. It conformed to Rivera's notions of proletarian, authentic *Mexicanidad*. However, Kahlo was interested in the style before she met Rivera, as confirmed by a family photograph that includes her as a pre-adolescent wearing a headdress, square-cut blouse and long skirt. Kahlo and others strongly identified with Mexican indigenous lifestyle and dress after the Mexican Revolution of 1910 that challenged the rule of dictator Porfirio Diaz. When not in Tehuana garb, Kahlo tended to wear gender-neutral garb including men's trousers, though she was rarely photographed that way. Seductress of both women and men, Kahlo was open and honest about her expansive and shifting sexual identity.

Kahlo and Rivera divorced in early 1940, and then married again on December 8, 1940 in San Francisco, where Rivera had been working since June on a 74-foot long mural now commonly known as *Pan American Unity* commissioned by the organizers of the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition. (The mural is now in the lobby of the theater at City College of San Francisco.) Rivera was influenced by the Mexican Revolution (1914-15) and the Russian Revolution (1917) and believed that art should play a role in empowering working people to understand their own histories. From 1929-1939 Rivera identified with Soviet politician and revolutionary Leon Trotsky's anti-Stalinist communist views. In fact, Rivera persuaded the president of Mexico to offer Trotsky political asylum in 1937. (Trotsky had been exiled from the Soviet Union.) But by 1939 Rivera and Trotsky had fallen out. Trotsky declared that he no longer felt "moral solidarity" with Rivera's "anarchistic politics."⁵

Muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros, amongst others, attempted to murder Trotsky in May 1940, and Rivera, who was wanted for questioning because he was suspected of being an accomplice, claims to have fled to San Francisco because of this, though the *Pan American Unity* commission had been offered to him earlier in the spring of 1940.⁶ Kahlo returned to Mexico City in December 1940 soon after the couple's second wedding, but at least one text states that Rivera remained in the US until February 1941 when, "no

longer under suspicion, he returned to Mexico."⁷ During his time in San Francisco Rivera was distracted by the disunity of leftists worldwide, his own search for a compatible political affiliation, and the threat of fascism and WWII. Frida, too, was politically driven and aware: less than two weeks before her death in 1954 she and Rivera attended a demonstration protesting the United States CIA's intervention in Guatemala.

Whether or not Silberstein photographed the artists in December 1940 or at some other time around then, his images do not convey the political tensions of the early years of WWII and its global impact. Rivera championed common people in his politics and in his art; Kahlo celebrated her national identity in her attire and in her art. But Silberstein captures them as retreating from the political conflicts of the time to their home and to each other. Kahlo and Rivera as subjects, and Silberstein as photographer, have controlled the imagery to convey a calm mystique. Silberstein avoids the politics and instead captures the personal, representing the two artists as self-assured, and content with one another, their paintings and their treasured possessions.

Kate Bonansinga
September 2, 2016

1. Silberstein signed all of his photographs with his name followed by FPSA/FRPS acronyms for Fellow of the Photographers Society of America and Fellow of the Royal Photographers Society. He was clearly proud of these affiliations.

2. See Stellweg, Carla with memoir by Elena Poniatowska, *Frida Kahlo: The Camera Seduced*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992.

"The dates were never clear to me, 1942/43. He himself wasn't clear on it either." Carla Stellweg, e-mail message to author, August 4, 2016.

3. Lienau, Daniel, owner, Annex Galleries, Santa Rosa, CA, telephone

conversation with the author, August 1, 2016.

4. Carla Stellweg, e-mail message to author, August 4, 2016.

5. Craven, David, *Diego Rivera: As Epic Modernist*. New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1997, 147.

6. Alcantara, Isabel and Sandra Egnolff, *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera*. New York: Prestel, 1999, 74. For more background on Pan American Unity and the politics behind it, see Lee, Anthony W., *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics, and San Francisco's Public Murals*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 205-2015.

7. *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self Portrait*, with an introduction by Carlos Fuentes and essay and commentaries by Sarah M. Lowe, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995, 291.

pho·to·gen·ic
,fōdə'jenik/
adjective

1. (especially of a person) looking attractive in photographs or on film.

“a photogenic child”

2. BIOLOGY

(of an organism or tissue) producing or emitting light.

Frida Kahlo was visually photogenic: dark, piercing, yet at times impassive eyes framed by a striking unibrow; full lips curled up slightly at the corners, the soft fuzz of an almost-moustache; elaborate hair, worn up and adorned with flowers and ribbons; dramatic jewelry, usually Mesoamerican in origin or the iconic gold ropes so treasured by Zapotec women of Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec; and her inventive use of clothing. Given her stature

1. These women, known as Tehuanas, are symbols of female empowerment and are the originators of the distinctive traditional dress Kahlo adopted and is best known for. It includes a square-shaped embroidered tunic (*huipil*), long skirts of velvet or silk with lace flounces, gold rope necklaces (*torzales*) adorned with gold coins and filigree earrings that serve as a dowry, and a voluminous lace headdress (face or head *huipil*, or in Zapotec *bida nì quichi* and *bida nì ró*), resembling a petticoat, framing the face or worn thrown back over the shoulders and cascading down the back. For detailed analysis of Kahlo's costume collection see Denise and Magdalena Rosenzweig, eds. *Self Portrait in a Velvet Dress. Frida's Wardrobe. Fashion from the Museo Frida Kahlo*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007). Kahlo collected examples of indigenous clothing from various regions of Mexico and Central America as well. On the complex history of the costume see Francie Chassen-López. "The Traje de Tehuana as National Icon: Gender, Ethnicity and Fashion in

among the art-aware and adoring fans alike, one could say that she was also chemically photogenic for she truly “produced or emitted light.”

During her lifetime (1907-1954), Kahlo was known principally as Diego Rivera’s wife, yet today some hold that Rivera is her husband. She is an international icon and one of the world’s most recognized women. Recognition takes two forms (at least). She made sure of that. Her image is almost universally recognized. She is adored by many. Visitors to exhibitions featuring her work will inevitably encounter fans rendering homage, flowers in their hair, enhanced facial hair, colorful clothing. Frida Kahlo matters as a legend and an icon. An Internet search yields over 14 million hits including reputable and less than reliable websites; few if any are authorized by the Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo Trust to reproduce her artworks. Limiting a search to images yields many more photographs of Kahlo than images of her paintings, exemplifying how her celebrity is today tied as much to her visage as to her art historical contribution. Among the most popular photographs are those by renowned Hungarian-American photographer Nickolas Muray (once Kahlo’s lover). Among her most widely reproduced paintings is *Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Dead Hummingbird* (1940).

But Kahlo also matters art historically. As a painter she made a unique and important contribution to the history not just of 20th-century Mexican art but also of modern art. Accounts that suggest Kahlo’s painting was “autobiography in paint” or that her life was more interesting than her art are misinformed at worst and shortsighted at best. There is no question that she was an extraordinary personality but her art was complex and allegorical. It may have sprung from the personal but it was her way of expressing and mediating her deep engagement with the political, social, and cultural events of her day.

Mexico.” *The Americas*, 71.2 (2014): 281-314. On Tehuanas as empowered see Edaena Saynez-Vázquez, “Galan Pa dxandí: “That Would Be Great if it Were True”: Zapotec Women Comment on Their Role in Society.” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 3:1 (1996): 183-204.

Photography played a central role in Kahlo's life and art. She was intimately familiar with the medium as a result of her close relationship with her father Guillermo (Wilhelm) Kahlo, a German immigrant who arrived in Mexico in 1891. He became a successful photographer with a prestigious studio in downtown Mexico City. His most significant commissions required him to document many of Mexico City's most important buildings, including new landmarks built during the regime of Porfirio Díaz and colonial monuments that were becoming the subject of new scholarly appreciation. He earned a distinguished reputation as the "first official photographer of Mexico's cultural patrimony."² He is said to have disliked portrait photography because "he did not wish to improve what God made ugly."³ In truth however, he excelled at portraiture and yet he appears to have reserved that talent for his family.

In one such photo, taken on February 7, 1926, Frida Kahlo famously appears dressed in a man's three-piece suit. To her right stand her sisters Cristina and Adriana, and to her left, her cousin Carmen Romero and Carlos Veraza, Adriana's step-son. The group poses in the covered entry to the interior garden at the center of the Kahlo family home, now the Museo Frida Kahlo.⁴ Frida assumed title to the home in 1930 and it became her primary residence from the 1930s until her death in 1954. With Rivera, she redecorated the home with rustic furniture and Mexican folk art, as well as the couple's collection of modern art. Eventually it came to be known as the Casa Azul (Blue House), so named for the vivid indigo blue that Kahlo and Rivera chose for its stucco walls, making the home

2. Hayden Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* (1983), p. 7.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Another photo taken during the same sitting includes additional members of the Kahlo family, with Frida still sporting her three-piece suit.

stand out among its neighbors.⁵ In the portrait, Frida and Veraza face forward while Adriana, Cristina and Carmen turn slightly to the right. In the center, as the tallest of the group, Frida dominates the image not only because of her androgynous appearance but because her facial expression is strong and confident, especially in comparison to the younger Veraza, who as the only “real” male sitter in the image, looks meek. It is Frida who epitomizes stylish masculinity. Her hair is center parted and slicked down, it appears she may actually have been wearing it short in 1926, as opposed to merely pulled back at the nape of her neck. She holds a walking stick, a dignified accouterment; indicative, perhaps, of her recovery from the near-fatal traffic accident that befell her just six months prior in September of 1925. Cristina’s face is the softest and conventionally prettiest. She is the only one establishing physical contact with another member of the group; her left hand rests gently on Adriana’s shoulder. While posed outdoors, curiously the group stands on an oriental carpet.

The photograph is typical of the approach of a studio photographer. Carefully framed, the sitters are obviously arranged to Guillermo Kahlo’s specification. Even in these family portraits, he favored large-format German-made cameras over new more spontaneous models that could not yet produce such formal images. Large-format cameras were essential for creating the timeless, compositions that he favored. His was not a spontaneous approach and yet photos such as this one of his daughters, of which a considerable number survive, reveal something of both his affection for them and their distinct personalities.

When she died, Rivera established a Trust to transform Kahlo’s home into a museum for the Mexican people securing her then as-yet fully realized legacy. Hundreds of personal documents, most of her clothing, her cosmetics, medicines and medical aids, and over 6000 photographs were secured at that

5. See Adriana Zavala et al., *Frida Kahlo’s Garden*. (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2015)

time and hidden from public scrutiny. In 2004 this substantial collection of personal effects was unsealed from a closed section of the Casa Azul and these materials have now been incorporated into her archive.⁶ The collection has yielded many new insights. In terms of photography, we know now of her father's predilection for self-portraiture and perhaps it was from his example, among others, that Frida Kahlo developed her own penchant for the genre. Among the photographs found in the archive are a remarkable number of self-portraits of Guillermo Kahlo, including even one nude. One self-portrait, taken in 1925, copies of which were gifted to each of his daughters, includes the inscription "Every now and then remember the affection your father has always had for you."⁷ It was this photograph that Frida used to paint her father's portrait posthumously in 1951. She inscribed that portrait "I painted my father Wilhelm Kahlo of Hungarian-German origin, artist-photographer by profession, in character generous, intelligent and fine, valiant because he suffered for sixty years with epilepsy, but he never stopped working and he fought against Hitler. With adoration. His daughter Frida Kahlo."

As other commentators have observed despite his somber personality, Guillermo Kahlo practiced the social convention of including personal inscriptions on several of his self-portraits;

6. Approximately 500 examples from the photographic collection have been published in Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, ed. *Frida Kahlo. Her Photos*. Mexico City: Editorial RM, 2010. On the archive see Rosa Casanova, ed. *Fridas Frida*. Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2007.

7. Quoted in Margaret Hooks. *Frida Kahlo. Portraits of an Icon*. New York: Turner/Throckmorton, 2003. This is an excellent source for information about Kahlo's relationship to photography. See also Carla Stellweg and Elena Poniatowska. *Frida Kahlo. The Camera Seduced*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992.

this was a fairly common practice when gifting photographs of oneself to loved ones. Frida wholeheartedly adopted the habit of using such “paratexts” in her painting.⁸ She is also known to have assisted her father in his photographic studio and darkroom, charged with retouching and hand-tinting photographic portraits. She appears to have become adept, in this way, at using the tiny brushes that would impact her own mature style as an artist.

It is also evident that she understood photographic technology very well. Several photographs bearing her signature as maker, dating to April 1929, have turned up in the archive. One is a portrait of Carlos Veraza and two are still lifes; one suggests the study of Cubist composition and the other evokes a *milagro* insofar as it shows a little rag doll lying next to a bucking horse and about to be run over by a wooden cart. Unsigned photographs attributed to Kahlo have also been found in the archive, including one of a paper mache skeleton that normally slept on the canopy of her bed. The photograph shows it lying in the garden at the Casa Azul. The image likely served as source material for her painting *The Dream* (1940). There she depicted herself asleep in bed, plant tendrils sprout from her yellow blanket, and the skeleton sleeps atop the wooden canopy, its dainty skull on two fluffy white pillows. It clutches a bouquet of delicate pink and lavender lilies to its breast.

A detailed exploration of Kahlo’s use of photographs as sources for her painting lies beyond the scope of this essay but in brief, photographs corresponding to several paintings, both early and late, exist suggesting a prolonged practice. For example, her portrait of the California Horticulturist *Luther Burbank* (1931) is based on a photograph published in *Popular Science*

8. Inscriptions such as these have other precedents as well, particularly colonial Mexican portraiture and religious *ex-votos*, also known as *Milagros*, paintings on tin that pay respects to Jesus, Mary or honored Catholic saints, believed by the person commissioning the work to have intervened on their behalf, saving them from any number of mishaps. Kahlo collected these and most are works made by self-taught artists. They are valued still today for their confessional aspects and their naïve or primitive pictorial characteristics.

Monthly in April 1926 and in addition to the example of *The Dream*, already cited, *The Little Deer* (1946) may draw from photographs by Nickolas Muray, and *Love Embrace of the Universe* (1949) may well relate to a photograph by Mexican photographer Hector García that shows Kahlo, from an unusual angle, lying in bed embracing her hairless Mexican dog (*xoloitzcuintli*).⁹ The latter painting and photograph were made at a time when she was increasingly debilitated by pain or recovering from surgery and as a result spent much of her time at home, at the Casa Azul.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the reality of the trauma Kahlo experienced during her life, the notion that she translated emotional and physical pain to the canvas in a *direct* or unmediated way is simplistic if not a fallacy. So too the widely-held belief that Kahlo painted her self-portraits while seated before a mirror, which has yet to be proven. In fact the relatively few photographs that show Kahlo painting, whether at her easel or in bed, do not include a mirror in the frame.¹¹ Instead, archival evidence now exists to consider more carefully how Kahlo actively used photographs to inspire her and create her complex compositions.

9. On the Burbank portrait see Zavala et al., p. 60. For a discussion of this issue see also Hooks, p. 23; and also Ortiz Monasterio, ed. Especially pp. 12 and 20-21.

10. Additional information on Kahlo's home and especially its decor, gardens and the importance of these in her painting see Zavala et al.

11. In one of the very few photos that show Kahlo painting with the use of a mirror, she uses it not to paint a self-portrait but to aid her in painting on the plaster cast encasing her torso. The photo by Juan Guzmán (Hans Guttman) dates to the 1950s, a time when Kahlo was mostly painting still lifes rather than self portraits. The photograph is reproduced in Hooks, pl. 54. In the 1940s, her friend Lola Álvarez Bravo took several photographs of Kahlo in relationship to mirrors; despite their compositional and at times metaphoric intentions, in none does she appear painting a self-portrait.

In addition to posing for her father and learning important aspects of photographic technique and composition from him, Kahlo sat for a veritable who's who of 20th-century photographers including Edward Weston, Imogen Cunningham, Manuel and Lola Álvarez Bravo, Carl Van Vechten, Martin Munkacsi, Gisèle Freund, Nickolas Muray and Bernard Silberstein, among others. Muray's iconic photographic portraits of Kahlo hold great appeal not least because they are among the very few color photographs of the artist. Muray (1892-1965) was a pioneer of color photography and he built a successful career working for magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vanity Fair*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *McCall's*.¹² Muray's portraits of Kahlo are testaments to her striking physical beauty, her finely-honed and unique fashion sensibility, and how adept she was at striking a pose.¹³ In 1939, Kahlo wrote to Muray, thanking him for sending her a copy of one of the portraits of her taken in his studio in New York earlier that year. She shared that Rivera said "it is as marvelous as a Piero della Francesca."¹⁴ It seems opportune to affirm that Kahlo probably drew from this portrait to fashion her own self-image in *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940), which appropriately Muray purchased from Kahlo.

As Kahlo's grand-niece Cristina Kahlo has observed, "photography shaped [Kahlo's] life, and contributed decisively to shaping the myth surrounding the uniqueness of Frida Kahlo. . . The camera was a constant witness to her life in the portraits taken by photographers, who each interpreted her in his or her own manner."¹⁵ Portraits of Kahlo by photographic luminaries, including

12. See Salomon Grimberg, *I Will Never Forget You. . . Frida Kahlo to Nickolas Muray. Unpublished Photographs and Letters*. Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2004.

13. Nearly any source on Kahlo will comment on her talent for self-fashioning as a means of self-invention. Among the most useful is Rosenzweig and Rosenzweig eds. For a compendium of scholarly sources approaching the topic see Zavala, "Frida Kahlo," *Oxford Bibliographies Art History*. Ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

14. See Grimberg, p. 28. The photograph is from a series reproduced as plates 13-17.

15. Quoted in Cristina Kahlo, "Photographs as Witness: Frida Kahlo and Photography." In Helga Prignitz-Poda, ed. *Frida Kahlo: A Retrospective*. Munich/

Cincinnati Bernard Silberstein (1905-1999), reveal how powerfully Kahlo enjoyed being photographed.

For Silberstein photography was really a hobby although he became a very successful semi-professional photographer with his work published in *National Geographic*, *Life*, *Time*, *Holiday*, *Esquire* and many textbooks and advertisements over a 50+ year career. Born in Duluth, Minnesota, he eventually settled in Cincinnati after becoming a member of the University of Michigan faculty even before graduating with his degree in Electrical Engineering. As he described it, he met Kahlo and Rivera in December 1940, when he traveled to Mexico City to interview and photograph the country's major artists. In a typescript document he titled "A Visit with Diego and Frida Kahlo Rivera," Silberstein recalled:

Frida was a fascinating subject . . . Her jewelry was exotic and uniquely Mexican, so I naturally included the jewelry on her hands in most of the pictures.

Of Rivera, he observed, "He was kind enough to have me accompany him and his assistant in his station wagon to the various projects he was working on commissions." Among Rivera's commissions at the time was the monumental mural for Mexico's National Institute of Cardiology, painted from 1943 to 1944 that appears in one of Silberstein's portraits of the muralist. He also visited Rivera's studio where he photographed Rivera at work on what were, according to Silberstein "bread and butter pictures," or portraits of glamorous women patrons in alluring poses. By the 1940s Rivera enjoyed extraordinary renown worldwide. He was one of the 20th-century's most prolific artists and he had a larger than life personality to match his physique. He was over 6 feet tall and at times

New York: Prestel Verlag, 2010, pp. 210-212.

weighed more than 300 lbs. He adored Kahlo and, as Silberstein observed, her death was a great sorrow to Rivera.

Among the photographs Silberstein created while visiting the artists are a pair of three-quarter portraits. In their respective portrait, the artist looks over their right shoulder. Kahlo's ring-bedecked left hand and well-manicured red nails grace her right shoulder. She wears Tehuantepec-style *huipil* blouse, dark in color and embellished with dainty white polka dots.¹⁶ Over that she wears a kind of pinafore or bib-like garment, embroidered or appliquéd with flowers. From her earlobes hang a pair of long filigree earrings and her long dark hair is braided in with thick ribbons and coiled atop her head in the manner of indigenous women throughout Mexico. With her eyes slightly cast downward Kahlo looks regal if reserved. In his portrait, Rivera sports a wide brimmed hat and dark tweed jacket. He is formidable yet his unattractive features serve as a foil for Kahlo's stately beauty. Perhaps in another sitting, Silberstein captured Kahlo in a somewhat brighter mood, her full lips are perfectly painted and she appears about to smile. She wears a garment known as a *tomicotón* from Puebla. A heavy necklace of carved jadeite beads contrasts with delicate filigree earrings and she has embellished her hair with bougainvillea blossoms and a white rosebud. These contrasts demonstrate that when it came to her clothing, Kahlo was an original and she was no ethnographic purist. In this and the other portrait her brows and moustache are at their finest, brilliant and glossy black. The somewhat coarse fabric backdrop serves only to highlight her exotic and delicate beauty.

Silberstein also photographed Kahlo in her private bedroom, sitting next to her signature wood canopied bed. She nestles a baby goat, one of the many pets in her exotic menagerie that included monkeys, doves, an eagle and a fawn, as well as her pet parrot Bonito and her Aztec *xoloitzcuintli* dogs. In another pair of photographs, she stands bedecked in her full Tehuana

16. These garments and their regional origin are discussed in Rosenzweig and Rosenzweig, eds.

regalia in the dining room of her home. In one image, she appears to showcase her collection of Mexican folk pottery. The large paper mache *Judas* opposite Kahlo is one of several such figures that she collected or commissioned from a highly respected craftswoman named Carmen Caballero. These figures nominally represent Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. They are fabricated as effigies of reviled political figures or social types. Laced with fireworks for the purpose of exploding them in the streets on Holy Saturday they are part of a parodic political ritual. The particular *Judas* shown in Silberstein's photograph wears a worker's overalls and in that it seems a proxy for Rivera, who does not appear. A pendant photograph, evidently taken the same day, shows Kahlo wearing the same outfit, but now complete with the Tehuana's elaborate "face *huipil*." Here again, she stands before a set of shelves heavy with folk pottery.

The series is provocative in that it demonstrates that while she was not nearly as well-known as Rivera, she was aware that in posing for this American photojournalist on assignment she might garner interest not least for her physical beauty and exotic self-fashioning but also her unusual and carefully appointed home. Finally, in a photograph that shows Kahlo at work, she appears seated in front of her easel, painting her iconic self-portrait known as *Self Portrait as Tehuana, or Diego on My Mind* (1943). The details of the portrait are roughly sketched in and she appears to be working on her face, daubing paint with a fine brush. It is noteworthy that the painting's signature element, the miniature portrait of Rivera that she eventually added to her forehead in the work, hence its title, is absent. In Silberstein's photograph however, Rivera stands behind Kahlo's chair, watching her work. Once again it seems reasonable to suggest that upon seeing Silberstein's photographic image, Kahlo was inspired to add Rivera to the self-portrait but she chose to do

so not literally but by imprinting his image on her forehead and metaphorically in her mind and heart. On the wall beyond her easel is her famous lost painting *The Wounded Table* (1940), which can only be studied by consulting photographs, including this and another by Silberstein that shows Kahlo at work on the painting.

Silberstein's photographs of Frida Kahlo at home and at work attest to the fact that she enjoyed posing for the camera. She captivated so many photographers and clearly understood the power these images would have for posterity. It is her work that sustains her art historical legacy but it is her photographic image that sustains the legend and the icon that is Frida Kahlo. She matters today in ways she may not have imagined yet as Carlos Monsiváis, one of Mexico's eminent and most astute cultural commentators, has observed: "No myth is ever created without its own consent."¹⁷

© Adriana Zavala, PhD.
Tufts University
Department of Art History
August 2016

17. Carlos Monsiváis, "Of All the Possible Fridas (A Minimal Selection)," in *Frida Kahlo: Un Homenaje*. Mexico City: Artes de México and Museo Dolores Olmedo Patiño, 2004, p. 102.

A VISIT WITH DIEGO AND FRIDA KAHLO RIVERA

In December, 1940, I had an assignment to interview and photograph the major artists of Mexico. This included Diego Rivera and his painter wife, Frida Kahlo.

I met the Riveras through a mutual friend living in Mexico City, and the three days I spent with them were memorable. Their home was both colorful and unique, filled with old Mexican festival objects and an outstanding collection of Mexican antiques and modern pottery on shelves in every room in their home.

Of particular interest are the very tall Judas figures which appear in two of these pictures. One is towering in a corner of their living room, with a pin-shaped head and mock street clothes. The other is grotesquely installed on the top of Frida Kahlo's four-poster bed. Frida could see that I was amused by the contrast between the menacing, skeleton-shaped figure above and the sewing machine at the foot of the bed. These Judas figures are carried through the streets during the Easter processions and, at appropriate times, fireworks attached to them are exploded by connecting fuses.

My photographs of Diego covered a wide variety of his activities. He was kind enough to have me accompany him and his assistant in his station wagon to the various projects where he was working on commissions. The mural at the new Cardiac Institute in Mexico City was vast, as illustrated by one of the pictures in this folio. In his separate studio he showed me some of his partially completed and finished portraits. These were mostly glamorous women from the United States plus some nudes, which he laughingly explained were "bread and butter" pictures.

Frida was a fascinating subject and I did a number of head and shoulder pictures of her. Her jewelry was exotic and uniquely Mexican, so I naturally included the jewelry on her hands in most of the pictures.

Many of Frida's paintings, but none of Diego's, hung on the walls of their house. Several that she was working on while I was there are included in this folio. She is often referred to as the "painter of death," I was told, and you will frequently find skeletons in a variety of positions in her paintings. The Tehuna costume she was wearing in some of the photographs, and also in her self-portrait, has a history. The story goes that a boat was wrecked on the Peninsula of Tehunatepec in southern Mexico many years ago. In the wreckage a woman's petticoat was found, and the natives, not familiar with its accustomed use, made it into a dress, with the lace portion draped around their heads.

Frida Rivera was in a street-car accident and died before Diego. I'm sure it was a great sorrow to him because their devotion to each other was apparent. Diego was born in 1886 and died in 1957.

By Bernard G. Silberstein, FPSA, FRPS



Self-Portrait With Monkeys

after Frida Kahlo's painting

*When I open the medicine cabinet, their fingers fly
in all directions. Bottles jump
from hand to hand, rattling like maracas in child-size fists.
Pills tumble to the ground
or onto tongues; the sad one tosses back
the angry one's dose, the circus has-been
mistakes the antidepressants for peanuts,
and the prescription for separation
anxiety ends up scattered through the house.*

*You can try to pry them off but if you
pet them (go ahead) they're harmless.
Except for the klepto, and maybe the one who hides – a girl,
whose tail will curl from a button-hole
and beckon finger-like. She'll tickle
you while the klepto does his work,
or, if you come close enough, she'll hook
her tail into my pocket and give you back
your watch. Closer,*

*and you'll meet her sister who lives in my hair;
don't be alarmed to see her black eyes spill over.
She would have preferred a musician with a glittering
music-box whose handle she could turn
but she got me instead, tapping her nails at the base of my neck*

*to send the vibrations through my throat and into my tonsils
that tremble like a forked tuner
and out onto my tongue that produces,
always, only words.*

--- Caitlin Doyle

También las piedras hibernan

Stephanie Alcantar

Intenté ahogar mis dolores
pero éstos aprendieron a nadar.
Frida Kahlo

*El olvido nos arrancó los ojos
pusimos una piedra en cada cuenca.
La oscuridad es el lenguaje de los cirios
la libertad de las sombras.*

*A oscuras te reconozco
palpo tu voz,
limpio tus lágrimas de polvo
y las doy de beber a los años.*

*Hay heridas simétricas,
invernales.*

*Uno es el residuo de sus ausencias.
Incapaces de morir
trazamos un río
para hundir los dolores
pero éstos aprendieron a nadar,
a predecir el caos
y a deletrear los errores.
Comen con nosotros a la mesa,
cabalgan en los nudillos,
señalan el sonido,
hilvanan las pasiones
-las desgarran-*

*Hemos dejado de mirar
los dolores nos arrancaron las piedras de las cuencas
las aventaron al río para calcular el fondo.
Lo más parecido a nuestros ojos
son las hondas que forman las piedras al hundirse.*

Even the Stones Hibernate

Stephanie Alcantar

Translation: Linwood Rumney and the author.

I tried to drown my sorrows
but they learned how to swim.

Frida Kahlo

*Oblivion pulled out our eyes,
we placed a stone in each socket.
Darkness is the language of candles
the shadow's liberation.*

*In darkness I recognize you
I caress your voice and recognize you
I wipe away your dusty tears
and I give them to the years to drink.*

*There are symmetric injuries
wintry injuries.*

*One is the residue of our absences.
Unable to die
we drew a river
to drown these sorrows
but they learned how to swim
how to predict chaos
and how to spell mistakes.
They eat with us at the table
they ride in our knuckles
they point out the sound
they fasten the passions together
-they tear them apart-*

*We have stopped looking
our sorrows plucked the stones from their sockets
threw them into the river to calculate the depth.
Our eyes are most like
the rings that stones make while they are sinking.*

Bernard G. (Bernie) Silberstein (1905-1999)

Bernard Silberstein was born in Duluth, Minnesota, a younger brother to his beloved sister Helena, in a family which had achieved civic and commercial prominence in but two generations. Grandfather and namesake Bernard Silberstein and his wife Nettie were the first Jews in Duluth. Educated in Duluth public schools, Mr. Silberstein, who took delight as a youth in rigging up a variety of electrical devices that inevitably surprised and teased his family, matriculated at the University of Michigan, where he was asked to join the College of Engineering School faculty before graduation. His engineering career took him to a prominent company in Chicago which sent him to Cincinnati to open and lead a regional office covering sales in a five state region. Here he met and married Harriet Kahn Silberstein in 1933.

Bernard, seeking an avocation to keep his active mind involved away from his office, took the suggestion of a good friend to try photography. His son's Erector Set construction kits and motors kept mysteriously disappearing, if left untouched for a week or so, into one of a variety of my Dad's inventions, built Rube Goldberg style, to facilitate the developing of photographs in the darkroom he constructed as he took over the basement.

He quickly discovered that to his engineer's precise, problem solving mind there was wedded an innate sense of composition, an understanding of the use of color, and a love of adventure travel. My mother, who spoke at least four languages fluently, was invaluable in arranging for prospective subjects of my Dad's lens to agree to be photographed, sometimes in unusual but imaginative situation. There were wonderful views to be found only from the balcony of a stranger's apartment, but my mother always managed to convince the apartment

owner to let the couple in and get the picture. She also facilitated conversation with the likes of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, whom they met through mutual friends.

He not only achieved national prominence, with photographs in the *National Geographic*, *Life*, *Holiday*, *Esquire*, etc., but found a wide European audience when he was approached by agents in London, Amsterdam and Paris. He widened his local audience with a weekly Sunday noon television program on Channel 5 and also taught a two semester course in photography at the UC Evening College. He remained very active with a wonderful group of artists in the Queen City Camera Club. Bernard mastered the art of Flexichrome which required at least thirteen preparatory steps before the photographer added his own superb color scheme. In the late 1970's he added oil painting to his interests. He was also a collector of antiquities, e.g. Sumerian votive figures, some of which have been donated in his name, as have some of his fine photographs, to the Cincinnati Art Museum.

This remarkable scholar and artist, a quiet, intensely creative man with much to impart, died peacefully in 1999, having almost attained his ninety-fifth year. There remain in his son's basement hundreds of 8 x 10 inch prints, some simply superb, which still require cataloging, a treasure chest of great promise.

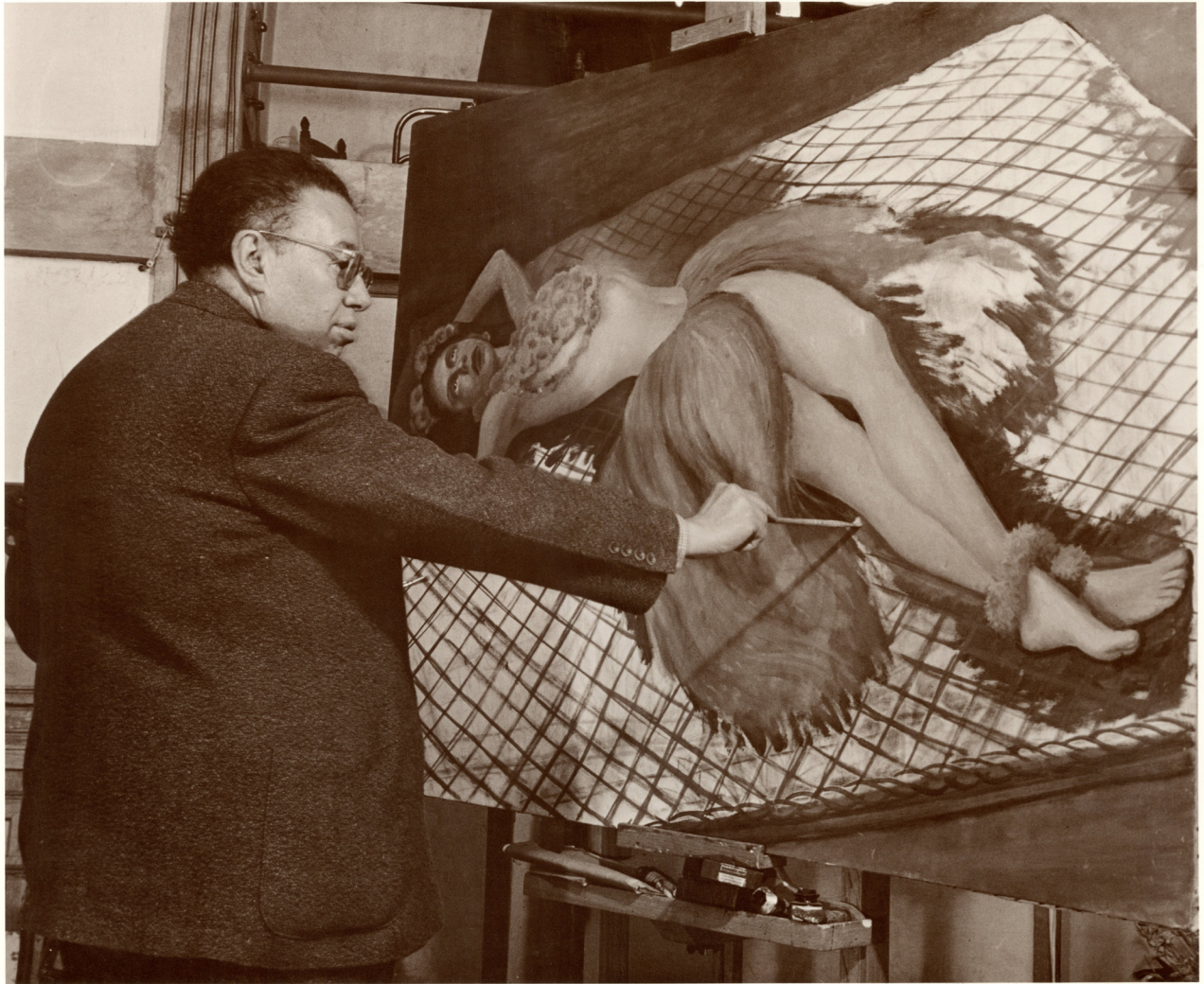
Edward B. Silberstein, M.A., M.D.



1.
Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999
"Frida with Crossed Arms and Rings," circa 1940
Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



2.
Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999
"Frida Wearing a Tehuana Headdress, Standing in the Blue House's Dining
Room," circa 1940
Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



Diego Rivera

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3.
Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999
"Diego Rivera painting unidentified work," circa 1940
Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



Diego Rivera

© Silberstein F12A-F125

4.
Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999
"Portrait of Diego Rivera," circa 1940
Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



5.
Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999
"Frida Kahlo painting The Wounded Table," circa 1940
Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



Frida Diego Rivera

© Silberstein FFSH-MRDS

6.
Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999
"Frida Paints Self-Portrait as a Tehuana," circa 1940
Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



Diego Rivera

@Silberstein F83A-FAPS

7.

Bernard Silberstein
American, 1905-1999

“Diego Rivera painting unidentified work,” circa 1940

Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.



8.

Bernard Silberstein

American, 1905-1999

"Frida Kahlo in her bedroom with a young goat in her arm," circa 1940

Courtesy of the Silberstein Family.

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Image 4

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Image 5

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FRIDA IN FOCUS

Hispanic Heritage Month: September 15, 2016 – October 15, 2016

Niehoff Urban Studio: 2728 Vine St, Cincinnati, OH 45219

September 15

DJ, drinks, and hors d'oeuvres

September 22

Bilingual Poetry Reading by 8 poets + wine & cheese

September 29

Keynote speaker Adriana Zavala + wine & cheese

October 13

Alumni event with presentation by Carl Bryant + wine & cheese

Contributors' Research Bios

STEPHANIE ALCANTAR (EEUU/ Mexico 1990) is a PhD student in Romance Languages and Literatures. Stephanie holds a BA in Applied Math from Universidad Juarez del Estado de Durango, Mexico and a MA in Spanish from the University of Cincinnati. She has published five books of poetry *Los lirios contarán cuentos de hadas* (2008), *La incertidumbre también tuvo infancia* (2009; translated to Polish), *Teoría del Olvido* (2011), *Humedad de la nostalgia* (2013), *Coreografía del miedo* (2015) and a sixth book, *El orden del infinito: relectura de un tema borgiano* (2013) about the mathematical conceptions/interpretation of four short stories written by Jorge Luis Borges. Her research focuses in this particular analysis and comparison of literary texts, included all genres, using mathematical concepts. Her creative writing has appeared in magazines and anthologies of Latin America and Europe. Since 2012 writes for the Journal *La Otra*.

KATE BONANSINGA is Director, School of Art, College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning at University of Cincinnati, where she is also associate professor and teaches courses about curatorial practice and theory and about public art. She was the founding director of Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Art at The University of Texas at El Paso where she curated dozens of exhibitions and established an undergraduate minor in museum studies. She is interested in museums as dynamic sites for learning, in the impact of art in gallery and non-gallery settings, and in the current methods that artists employ to make a difference in society and culture. Bonansinga is the author of *Curating at the Edge: Artists Respond to the U.S./ Mexico Border* (University of Texas Press, 2014) and of a chapter in *Born of Resistance*, edited by Scott L. Baugh and Victor Sorell (University of Arizona Press, 2015). In 2016 CEC ArtsLink awarded her a Back Apartment Residency Fellowship in St. Petersburg, Russia.

CAITLIN DOYLE received her MFA in Poetry from Boston University, where she held the George Starbuck Fellowship in Poetry. As an undergraduate, she attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as the Thomas Wolfe Scholar in Creative Writing. She is currently pursuing her doctoral studies as an Elliston Fellow in Poetry at the University of Cincinnati, where she teaches in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. Caitlin's poems have appeared in numerous journals and magazines, including *The Atlantic*, *Boston Review*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *The Warwick Review*, *Measure*, *Fugue*, *Borderlands*, and many others. Her poetry has also appeared in several book anthologies, including *The Best Emerging Poets of 2013* (edited by Abriana Jette), *The Southern Poetry Anthology* (edited by William Wright), *Best New Poets* (edited by 2009 guest editor Kim Addonizio), *American Creative Writers on Class* (edited by Shelly Reed), *The Crafty Poet: A Portable Workshop* (edited by Diane Lockward), *So Little Time* (edited by Greg Delanty), *The Best of the Raintown Review* (edited by Anna Evans, Quincy Lehr, and Jeff Holt), and *Writers Among Us* (St. Albans Press).

CARLOS M. GUTIÉRREZ, a professor of Spanish, serves as head of UC's Department of Romance Languages. His research focuses on Early Modern Spanish literary field and authorial self-fashioning. His publications include research and creative writing: *La recepción de Quevedo (1645-2010)*, (U de Navarra, 2011); *La red ciega* (Lima: Hipocampo, 2008; 2nd ed., NY: Digitalia, 2011; short stories); *La espada, el rayo y la pluma: Quevedo y los campos literario y de poder* (Purdue UP, 2005); *Dejémonos de cuentos* (Valladolid, 1994; short stories); book-chapters; reviews/articles in *Hispanic Review*, *Boletín de la Bib. Menéndez Pelayo*, *Cervantes*, *Iberoamericana*, *Calíope*, *Romance Languages Annual*, *Perinola*, *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, *Etiópicas*, or *Espéculo*. He currently works on a book about Cervantes.

CAROLYN HANSEN is a Metadata Librarian whose research focuses on the relationships between metadata and digital humanities, linked data, special collections, cartography, and history of the book. She is a certified digital archivist and also holds an MLIS from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a Masters of Arts in History from Marquette University, and a Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities from the University of Victoria. Carolyn has presented at national and international conferences for organizations including the American Library Association, the Society of American Archivists, the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, the Map Curator's Group of the British Cartographic Society, the North American Cartographic Information Society, and the Digital Humanities Summer Institute. She has published in the *Journal of Map & Geography Libraries*, *Technical Services Quarterly*, *Metaware: Metadata Standards, Trends, and Activities*, *ALCTS News*, and *Cartographic Perspectives*. She co-authored an article on dataset metadata for the monograph *Curating Research Data Volume 2: A Handbook of Current Practice* (2016), and in 2008 co-edited the proceedings of the international conference *Thinking Critically: Alternative Methods and Perspectives in Library and Information Studies*.

SHARAREH KHOSRAVANI is an artist, graphic designer, and illustrator. She has illustrated books published in Iran, Korea, Germany, France, and the United States. She has won multiple international prizes for her illustration.

JENNIFER KRIVICKAS serves as the Assistant Vice President of Integrated Research, is a tenured member of the UC faculty, Head of the Robert A. Deshon & Karl J. Schlachter Library for Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP), and instructor of two courses offered by the College of DAAP. She earned her MSLIS from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and ALB from Harvard University. Jennifer has served as a regular art book reviewer for *Library Journal* and has published in *Art Documentation*, *The VRA Bulletin*, *ArtsGuide* (ACRL), *Magazines for Libraries*, and *Art Libraries*

Journal. In 2015, she collaborated with DAAP Faculty to curate an internationally traveling exhibition, *"In the Public Interest: The Life and Work of Planning Pioneer Ladislav Segoe (1894–1983)"*, and co-author & publish a corresponding exhibition catalog, website, and digital collection of the same title. Jennifer has presented papers and moderated panels at IFLA, ARLIS/NA, ARLIS/OV, The New York Art Book Fair (2013), The International Textile & Apparel Association annual conference (2014), and at LIM College Conference, *Fashion: Now & Then: Meaning, Media, and Mode* (2013). Jennifer is the chief curator of the DAAP Library Special Collection, a collection with 20th-century avant-garde artist publications and steward of the UC Bonnie Cashin Collection, a collection of 200+ historical garments designed by notable American Sportswear pioneer, Bonnie Cashin (1908-2000).

LINWOOD RUMNEY is the author of *Abandoned Earth*, forthcoming from Gival Press and winner of their 17th Annual Poetry Award. His poems and nonfiction essays have appeared widely in journals, including *North American Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Ploughshares*, *Puerto del Sol*, and *The Southern Review*. His translations of Aloysius Bertrand, an early practitioner of the modern prose poem in French, have appeared in *Arts & Letters*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and elsewhere. The recipient of awards from The Writers' Room of Boston and the St. Botolph Club, as well as a residency from the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center, he has served as the Poetry Editor for *Redivider* and currently serves as an Associate Editor for Black Lawrence Press. Originally from Central Maine, he currently lives in Cincinnati, where he recently completed a PhD as a Charles Phelps Taft Dissertation Fellow.

VINCENT SANSALONE, Assistant professor of architecture, Artist and curator. Founder of DPMT7/SALT, a research studio.

ADRIANA ZAVALA is associate Professor of Art History at Tufts University, where she also directs the Consortium of Studies in Race, Colonialism, and Diaspora. She earned a PhD in Art History from Brown University. Her book *Becoming Modern, Becoming Tradition: Women Gender and Representation in Mexican Art* (PSU Press, 2010) won the Arvey Prize from the Association of Latin American Art in 2011. She has curated several exhibitions including *Frida Kahlo: Art, Garden, Life* at The New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx in 2015, with the accompanying catalog *Frida Kahlo's Garden* (Prestel 2015), and *Lola Álvarez Bravo: The Photography of an Epoch* for the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera in Mexico City, the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, and the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona (2011). Along with her specialization in modern Mexican art she is a passionate advocate for US Latinx artists and Chicanx/Latinx art history. She is founding Director of the USLAF (U.S. Latina/o Art Forum; uslaf.org), an organization dedicated to advocating for and advancing scholarship, writing, and historical inquiry about U.S. Latinx art and visual culture. She has conducted research on and written about the underrepresentation of U.S. Latinx art within the discipline of art history (*Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 40:1 Spring 2015).

I leave you my portrait so that you will have my presence all the days
and nights that I am away from you.

Frida Kahlo