

Press Release

## **Frida Kahlo – Retrospective**

**Retrospective from 1 September to 5 December 2010 in the Vienna Bank Austria Kunstforum.**

Vienna - In autumn 2010, the Bank Austria Kunstforum is presenting the first ever comprehensive **Frida Kahlo** retrospective in Austria. The myth surrounding the Mexican artist has taken on global format; Frida is an icon with star character: an identification figure of Mexican culture, forerunner of the feminist movement, a brand promoted in a mega-merchandising machine, glitteringly exotic film subject for the Hollywood cinema.

Kahlo's art is inseparably tied in with her life. Paintings and drawings are not only the mirror of her life history, which was marked by physical and mental affliction – Frida suffered the whole of her life from the injuries caused by a horrific bus accident. During the last years of her life Frida was confined to her bed. Her oeuvre in painting and the graphic arts comprises one of the most complex chapters in the period between the wars, between Neue Sachlichkeit – New Objectivity – and surrealism. During the 1920s she created graceful and delicate self-portraits, oriented on the figural ideal of Renaissance painting.

In the early thirties her paintings show the first tendencies towards surrealism: her strategy was one of combination, influenced by the cadavres exquis, the spontaneous graphic collages of the surrealists with whom Frida was in keen contact; an approach which produced iconographically complex compositions springing out of her inner life

Around 1940 Kahlo's self-portraits gain in expression. Instead of a neutral glance we see the "authoritarian eye": Frida takes the stage like a saint "worthy of adulation"; her dominant aura is inescapable.

The exhibition *Frida Kahlo – Retrospective* contains around 60 paintings and 90 works on paper. These are joined by a representative selection of photographic documents, compiled by Frida's great-niece **Cristina Kahlo**. Among them are iconic photos taken of her by **Nickolas Muray**: enthralling examples of the self-scenario she projected and which contributed decisively to the construction of her myth.

Most of Kahlo's artistic legacy is in Mexico and the USA. In view of the marginal number of paintings Kahlo produced (the catalogue raisonné lists no more than 143), the lack of Kahlo's oeuvre in European collections, and the sparsity of exhibition projects in Europe, we may regard this show as a sensation for Vienna.

The exhibition is being held in cooperation with the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin. The exhibition curators in Vienna are **Ingrid Brugger** and **Florian Steininger**.

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Frida Kahlo – Retrospective

Duration: 1 September to 5 December 2010

Venue: Bank Austria Kunstforum

Address: 1010 Vienna, Freyung 8

Open: daily 10 am – 7 pm

Friday: 10 am – 9 pm

Website: <http://www.bankaustria-kunstforum.at>

Route map: <http://maps.google.at/maps?q=freyung+8,+1010+wien&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-a&ie=UTF8&hl=de&hq=&hnear=Freyung+8,+Wien+1010+Wien&z=16>

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Visual material is available to be printed free of charge for editorial use. Further illustrative and information material is accessible in the press section of our website at <http://www.bankaustria-kunstforum.at>. (End)

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