

## THREE-PART ART: Pre-tour Activity

**PROJECT TITLE:** Frida's Palette

**CANNON ART GALLERY EXHIBIT & THEME:** *Frida Kahlo's Garden*

**AGE RANGE:** Grades 1-5

### **ART PROJECT INTRODUCTION:**

During this two-part project, students will learn about an artist's tool; the palette. Students will draw inspiration from Frida Kahlo's diary, and the colors found on Frida's palette to write about things which have meaning to them.

### **PART ONE: THE PALETTE**

Frida Kahlo painted with a broad palette of vibrant, intense colors. These colors were also found in her home, her garden, and the traditional Mexican clothing she wore. Her garden and the plants and animals of the Mexican landscape—richly green foliage, bright flower blossoms and fruits, tropical-hued birds and insects—inspired her work and also served as decorative and symbolic elements in many of her paintings. Frida Kahlo was inspired by her Mexican heritage, too. This palette of colors is also common in Mexican textiles, pottery, painting (such as bark painting, called amate), and other traditional art forms.

### **Inspiration Images:**



Frida Kahlo painting "Portrait of Frida's Family" in bed.

Photo credit: Unknown. However, Juan Guzman photographed Kahlo in this environment in the 1950s.



*Palette de Frida Kahlo*  
Mexique, 1952  
(Gisèle Freund)



Frieda and Diego Rivera  
1931

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## PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. **Look** closely at the images shown. What do you **see**? Can you find the palettes?
2. How would you describe the shape of an artist palette?
3. What do you think the palette is used for? What does this make you **wonder**?
4. Why do you think the palette has a hole in it? How do you hold it?

## ART PROJECT VOCABULARY:

**Palette** - in visual art, a palette is the range of colors used by an artist in a particular work; the thin board on which the artist places and mixes the colors they are using is also called a palette. The word comes from the Old French word, palate, meaning a small shovel or blade; and painters often mix their colors with a small blade or palette knife.

## ART PROJECT MATERIALS:

*Provided in Art Box:*

- Set of colored pencils (included in this Art Box are 120 colored pencils, 10 of each color, which can be used to supplement classroom materials)

*Classroom Supplies:*

- Drawing Pencil
- A sheet of white paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils

## ART MAKING INSTRUCTIONS (step-by-step):

### Step 1:

**Look** closely at the shape of the palette shown in the images. Using a pencil, draw the shape of the palette on the piece of copy paper so that it fills the page. Be sure to include the hole on the palette that the artist uses to hold it (FIG 1.).

### Step 2:

Select some of your favorite colors from the colored pencil sets, or classroom supplies. Add areas of color on the palette and label the colors using the Spanish word from the list provided (FIG. 2).

## COLOR VOCABULARY IN SPANISH:

Blue: **Azul**

Light Blue: **Celeste**

Purple: **Morado**

Red: **Rojo**

Pink: **Rosado**

Yellow: **Amarillo**

Orange: **Naranja**

Brown: **Marrón**

Green: **Verde**

Dark Green: **Verde Oscuro**

Black: **Negro**

White: **Blanco**

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### POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. Consider the colors in the mini Spanish lesson. What objects or feelings do you associate with each color?
2. Think of things in nature that remind you of each of these colors.
3. What kind of moods or temperatures do you imagine with each color?

### ART EXAMPLE PHOTOS:

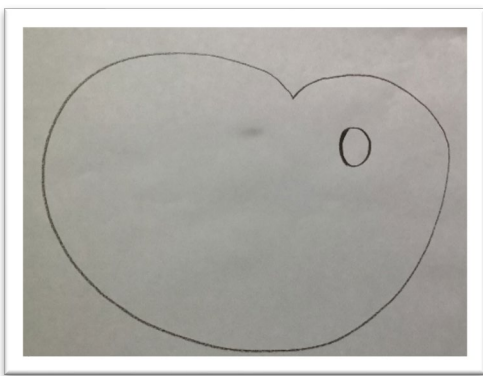


FIG. 1

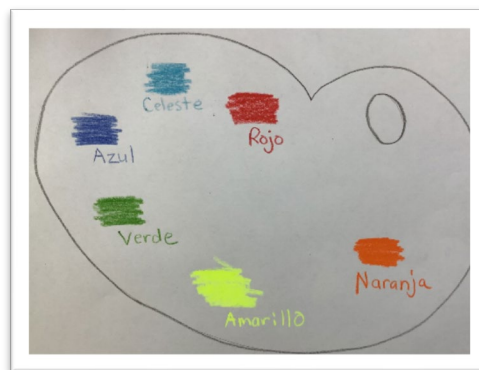


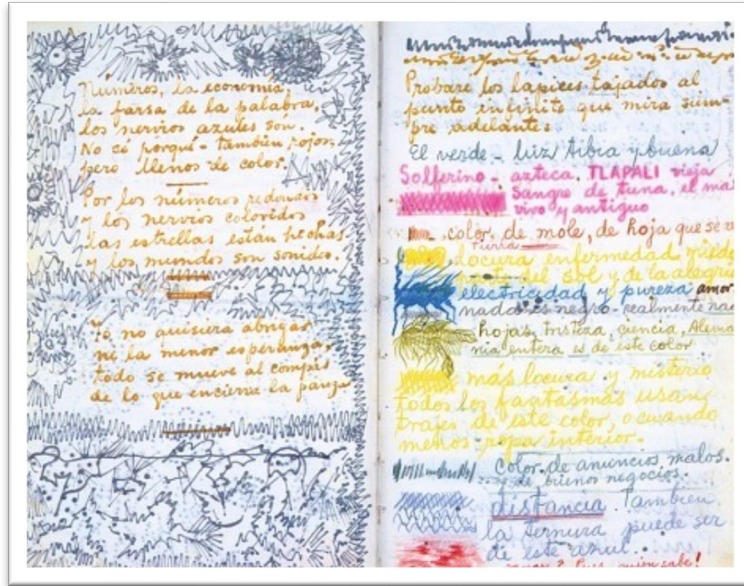
FIG. 2

### PART TWO: COLOR NOTES

One day, Frida picked up a bunch of her colored pencils and created a page in her diary to express what each color meant to her. In her diary she described how colors felt to her, and what they meant to her. Blue was one of her favorite colors, and she painted many of the outside walls of her home and garden blue. In fact, her house was called La Casa Azul or the Blue House. The blue pigment of the Casa Azul comes from indigo—a tropical plant in the pea family that is native to Mexico. Believe it or not, the vivid blue is produced by soaking the green leaves of the plant. In the pre-Hispanic cultures of the Maya and Aztec, blue was commonly used in art and even body paint. Sometimes, it's even called Maya blue. Mexican peasants continued to use blue paint around their homes to ward off evil spirits. Below is a list of a few of the color descriptions found in her diary:

- **Green-** good warm light
- **Magenta-** Aztec, old TLAPALI blood of prickly pear, the brightest and oldest
- **Brown-** color of mole, of leaves becoming earth
- **Golden Yellow-** madness sickness fear part of the sun and of happiness
- **Cobalt Blue-** electricity and purity love [Black] nothing is black — really nothing
- **Leaf Green-** leaves, sadness, science, Germany— the whole of it is this color
- **Orange Yellow-** more madness and mystery all the ghosts wear clothes of this color, or at least their underclothes
- **Dark Green-** color of bad advertisements and of good business
- **Navy Blue-** distance and also tenderness
- **Red-** blood

## Inspiration Images:



The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait (New York: Abrams, 2005)

## PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. What colors mean something special to you? Why are they important or meaningful?
2. Do certain colors inspire you to draw specific things?

## ART PROJECT MATERIALS:

Provided in Art Box:

- Supplemental colored pencils

Classroom Supplies:

- Optional: additional colored pencils
- Backside of palette drawing paper

## ART MAKING INSTRUCTIONS (step-by-step):

### Step 1:

Look at the palette you drew in "part one". Consider the colors you added. Now, turn the page over and select a few of those colors that have some connection to your life and your feelings about color.



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## Step 2:

Think about ways to express the colors you chose using descriptive words. Describe how the color makes you feel or what it reminds you of. Write a full sentence or just a few descriptive words. You can even practice writing the colors in Spanish! (FIG. 1)

## Step 3:

Use the pencils in your palette of colors to create a work of art or a design on your journal page. Get creative! Add sketches, doodles and drawings if you want (FIG. 2).

## Step 4:

Optional: in small groups, or as a class, share something that you have written or drawn. Explain why you chose the colors you did for them and what meaning the colors have to you. Compare with your class, or group, how individuals may have different connections to colors.

## POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. Was there anything surprising to you about the colors you chose for your journal page?
2. Which colors inspired you to write? Which colors inspired a drawing? Why do you think this was?

## ART EXAMPLE PHOTOS:

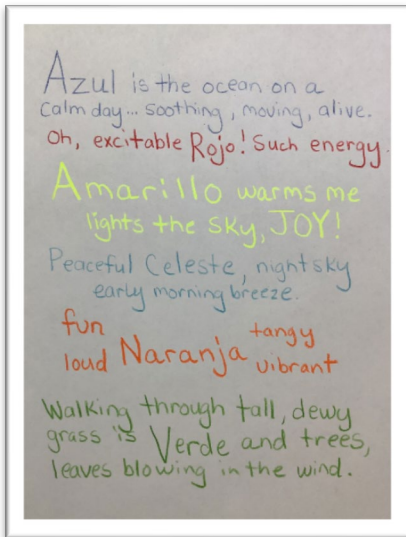


FIG.1

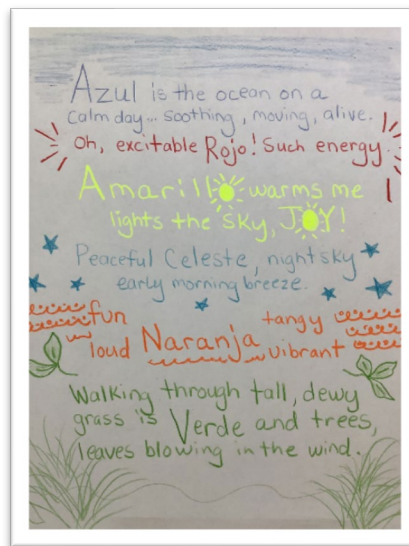


FIG. 2

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## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

### Artful Thinking

Look at the artwork or object for a moment.

- *What do you **see**?*
- *What do you **think** about what you see?*
- *What do you **wonder** about?*

**WHAT KIND OF THINKING DOES THIS ROUTINE ENCOURAGE?** This routine helps students make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations based on what they see. By separating the two questions, What do you see? and What do you think about what you see?, the routine helps students distinguish between observations and interpretations. By encouraging students to wonder and ask questions, the routine stimulates curiosity and helps students reach for new connections.

**WHEN AND WHERE CAN IT BE USED?** This widely- used routine works well with almost any artwork or object. It is versatile, easy to use, and almost never fails to deepen students' interest in the topic at hand, whether students have lots of background knowledge or none at all. Many teachers like to use this routine at the start of a lesson, or as a first step in a more extended activity.

For more in-depth information on this valuable teaching tool refer to The Artful Thinking website found at <http://pzartfulthinking.org/>

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## California Art Standards for Visual Arts

### CREATING – Anchor Standard 1: Generate and Conceptualize Artistic Ideas and Work

- 1.1 - Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed
  - 3.VA:Cr1.1 - Elaborate on an imaginative idea
  - 5.VA:Cr1.1 - Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea of art-making
- 1.2 - Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative artmaking goals
  - 2.VA:Cr2.1 - Make art or design with various art materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions and curiosity

### CREATING – Anchor Standard 3: Refine and Complete Artistic Work

- Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique to reflect on, revise, and refine work over time
  - 1.VA:Cr1 - Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art
  - 3.VA:Cr3 - Discuss, reflect, and add details to enhance an artwork's emerging meaning

### CONNECTING – Anchor Standard 11: Relate Artistic ideas and works with Societal, Cultural and Historical Context to Deepen Understanding.

- People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art
  - 1.VA:Cn11 - Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons
  - 4.VA:Cn11 - Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created