



EXHIBITION

Miradas de Mujeres – Isabelle de Borchgrave X Frida Kahlo

Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium
14 October 2022 > 12 February 2023



Isabelle de Borchgrave *Dress and necklace detail* [2020] Mixed media on paper © Courtesy of the artist
Photo/Foto: Jean-Pierre GABRIEL

From October 14th 2022 to February 12th 2023, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium present *Miradas de Mujeres* (Women's Gaze), an exhibition that highlights the view of Belgian artist Isabelle de Borchgrave on Frida Kahlo.

Miradas de Mujeres honours a dialogue between two women who have never met – one being born shortly before the death of the other – but who nevertheless share their love of fabric, patterns and colours; a women's perspective on the artist's role in society.

From an early age, Frida Kahlo [1907-1954] protested against the inequalities of Mexican society, defended the emancipation of women, while challenging gender stereotypes and aesthetic norms. An accomplished self-taught artist breaking with social conventions, she stands out today as a figure of feminism, symbolizing the strong, independent fighter and courageous woman in the face of the obstacles of a life strewn with pitfalls.

Trained at the Centre for Decorative Arts and the Royal Academy of Brussels, Isabelle de Borchgrave [1946], first become renowned in decoration [La Tour de Bébelles at the Sablon]. Specializing in printing and painting on paper, she later turned to creating collections of historical costumes out of paper [Papiers à la Mode, Mariano Fortuny, I Medici, Les Ballets Russes], which toured the world and gave her an international notoriety. She also creates objects and furniture with forms inspired by nature as well as paintings on pleated paper.

If Isabelle and Frida had met, they would surely have been close friends, as their respective personalities are characterized by the joy of living, the discipline of work, the pleasure of bringing friends together around a good table, their love of plants and flowers, music and, in particular, the role that colour plays or played in their lives.

Isabelle de Borchgrave took almost three years to create *Miradas de Mujeres*, a titanic work painted by hand. By using more than 4 kilometers of paper and cardboard she created



dresses, carpets, furniture, trees and other elements recreating the unique universe of Frida Kahlo and her iconic house, the *Casa Azul* [The Blue House].

Her approach invites us to journey into an often-ignored facet of Frida Kahlo's intimate personality, surprisingly more cheerful and radiant than her artistic work might suggest. To do this, Isabelle de Borchgrave recreated nearly 40 dresses and personal outfits of the Mexican artist, presented here against the backdrop of the *Casa Azul*, her birthplace and home which is a museum since 1958.

Thanks to *Miradas de Mujeres*, visitors will have the opportunity to stroll through the living room, the workshop, the kitchen, the dressing room or the garden; promising a unique, trompe l'oeil experience into the world of Frida Kahlo.

Far from the image of suffering and pain, linked to the disability of the Mexican icon, Isabelle de Borchgrave focuses here, through colour, on the joy of living of the artist who managed to transcend the hardships of her life in her role as a woman, artist, and cultural icon.

The exhibition invites the public to dive into the joyful universe entirely made of paper of Isabelle de Borchgrave and to be inspired by the generosity of this contemporary artist whose creative practice remains resolutely incomparable.



Isabelle de Borchgrave, Decor [2020]. Mixed media on paper © Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Jean-Pierre GABRIEL

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**Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
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14.10.2022 > 12.02.2023

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SAVE THE DATE! The press conference will be held on 13 October at 10.45 AM

Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

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