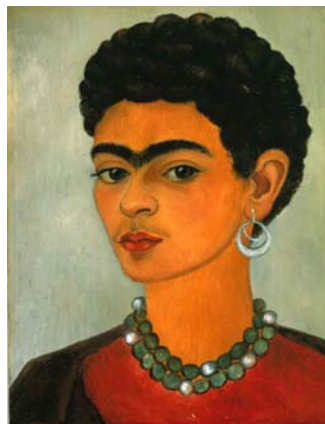


For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S TO SELL FRIDA KAHLO'S SELF-PORTRAIT WITH CURLY HAIR



Frida Kahlo, Self-Portrait with Curly Hair, 1935, oil on tin, estimate: \$1,500,000–2,000,000

Latin American Art
November 18, 2003

New York – Frida Kahlo's Self-Portrait with Curly Hair, painted in 1935 after the artist's disastrous discovery of the love affair between her husband, Diego Rivera, and her favorite sister, Cristina, will be offered at Christie's sale of Latin American Art on November 18 at Rockefeller Center. A gem-like work of small size (7 ¼ x 5 ½ in./18.2 x 15.2 cm) and enormous emotional content, it is an extremely rare image of the artist with short hair and not dressed in her customary Tehuana style. It is estimated at \$1.5 – 2 million.

Self-Portrait with Curly Hair is meticulously painted with delicate, sure strokes on a small sheet of tin, as is common with retablos, or small Mexican folk paintings, and is in fact a “double work,” as there is a sketch of another self-portrait carved on the verso.

Upon her discovery of her husband’s affair in early 1935, a distraught Kahlo moved out their home in the San Angel section of Mexico City and took a small apartment in the city’s center. To spite her husband, she cut off the long hair that he adored and stopped wearing the native costumes he felt Mexican women should wear (she would crop her hair and don European-styled clothes once again when Rivera divorced her for a year in 1939).

Having returned to Mexico from New York with Rivera after the debacle of the Rockefeller Center mural in 1934, and suffering several health problems thereafter, Kahlo produced no paintings that year and only two in 1935, including the present self-portrait.

Although it has none of the anguish of other Kahlo self-portraits that are marked by tears and wounds, the drama of *Self-Portrait with Curly Hair* is interior. The picture’s strange intensity recalls the imperturbable but searching look of Fayum portrait panels placed on the outside of Egyptian cloth-wrapped mummies in the 2nd century, A.D. As in Fayum portraits, Kahlo accentuated the whites of her eyes, individual eyelashes, and an outline around the cheek and jaw.

In July of 1935, the twenty-eight-year-old Kahlo fled to New York, where she confided her troubles to Bertram D. Wolfe, Rivera’s biographer and friend. While in New York, she decided to return to Rivera, and upon leaving gave the self-portrait to Wolfe’s wife, who displayed it in her home until her death in 2000.

The November 18 evening sale of Latin American Art will include an array of works by renowned Latin American artists, including Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam, Rufino Tamayo, Joaquín Torres Garcia, and Matta.

Auction: Latin American Art November 18 at 7 p.m.

Viewing: Christie’s Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza November 14 – 18

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Images available on request
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