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Making herself up

This year, personal effects of Frida Kahlo, one of the world's great humanists and artists, are on display for the first time ever outside of Mexico

Frida Kahlo is a true cultural icon. She is known for fashioning her own unique identity against the grain of society's expectations as much as for the paintings she produced. When she was 18 years old, Kahlo suffered terrible injuries in a bus crash which left her reliant on a plaster corset for the rest of her life and eventually led to the amputation of her right leg. Kahlo's resilience against adversity has made her a hero to many, and is exemplified by some of the exhibits in a new exhibition at the V&A in London. These include a prosthetic leg designed by the artist herself, featuring red lace-up boots, embroidery and bells, as well as intricately hand-painted corsets.

After her death in 1954, Kahlo's husband, the muralist Diego Rivera, sealed Kahlo's house, The Blue House in Mexico City, where her personal possessions remained undiscovered for half a century.

In 2004, The Blue House was opened and Kahlo's handmade jewellery and clothing based on traditional Latin American designs were discovered inside. These, along with the artist's decorated prosthetics and the eyebrow pencil that she used to create her distinctive personal appearance, are some of more than 200 exhibits that have travelled outside of Mexico for the first time ever for the exhibition *Frida Kahlo: Making Herself Up*.

The exhibition continues at London's V&A Museum until 4 November 2018.

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PICTURE CREDIT: V&A