As one of the twentieth century's most celebrated artists, Frida Kahlo used self-portraits as a form of storytelling to reveal or conceal parts of her ever-changing identity. Many of her self-portraits were filled with colorful symbols and costumes, including flowers, ribbons, and traditional shawls called rebozos. This project provides artists a chance to experiment with color and materials to create floral crowns similar to many seen in Kahlo's paintings.
Collection Connection
This project connects to the special exhibition *Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving*, in which many of the artist's highly personal items—including jewelry, clothing, and prosthetics—will be presented for the first time on the West Coast.

Materials
Tissue paper rectangles
cut 5 x 15 in.
Ruler
Pencil
Pipe cleaners
Scissors
Floral wire (or craft sculpture wire, copper wire) for the crown
Floral tape (optional)

Questions to Consider
Think carefully about your color palette:
Do you want soft pastels or bright and bold colors?
Consider your flower arrangement choices: do you want to pile your flowers high like Frida Kahlo, or have them sit low, side by side?
**Steps**

1. Pick three colors of tissue paper, cut two rectangles of each color, 5 x 15 in. Stack the six sheets with the colors together (e.g., two pink, two purple, two turquoise).

2. Position the stack on the table with the longest edge closest to you. Carefully fold the longest edge accordion-style, about an inch, making four folds. Place next to a ruler. With a pencil, lightly mark 5-in. increments, to show three sections—do not cut yet!

3. Fold three pipe cleaners in half. Position one pipe cleaner in the middle of the left section of the stack with the ends pointing up, make a couple of twists. Position the second pipe cleaner in the middle of the center section with the ends pointing down, make a couple of twists. Position the third pipe cleaner in the middle of the right section with the ends pointing up, make a couple of twists. (The positioning of the pipe cleaners allows for variance in the “top color” of the flowers.) Cut into three sections along the 5-in. marks. Round off the corners by cutting a gentle curve at both ends of each section.

4. Shaping the flowers: Holding the pipe cleaner “stem” in one hand, gently open up the folds on one side. Carefully pull up the first layer of tissue paper from the top (pull gently to avoid tearing the paper). Then carefully pull down the first layer of tissue paper from the bottom. Work your way through each layer of tissue paper, carefully lifting up and pulling down to create volume. Repeat with the other side. Use your fingers to gently scrunch and lift the layers until you are happy with the shape of the first flower. Repeat with the two other sections. You now have three flowers, two with the same “top color” and one with the color order reversed.

5. Making the crown: Using about an arm's length of floral wire (or craft sculpture wire, copper wire), wrap around your head with a long overlap, then twist the ends to make a join. (This can be wrapped with floral tape at the end if you like.)

6. Attach the flowers: Wrap the ends of the pipe cleaner around the wire, but keep about a 1-in. pipe cleaner “stem” above the crown wire; this allows for some adjustment of the flower's position. Attach the two outer-edge flowers first, then the middle flower, allowing for even more height above the crown wire for the central flower. Using a mirror, place the floral crown on your head and adjust the position of the flowers until you are happy with their arrangement. You may neaten the finished look by covering the crown wire and pipe cleaners with floral tape if you wish.

**Reflect**

After creating your floral crown, consider the following questions:
- How did you decide which color combination to use?
- What was most challenging when making the floral crown?
- The most rewarding? If you make a second crown, what adaptations could you try? Larger flowers? More layers of tissue paper? Could you experiment with different materials like paper towels or colorful paper napkins?

**Share**

Perhaps you and your friends could all make the project! When completed, you could dress up in a colorful outfit and wear your floral crown, take pictures and share your experience, or get together online and discuss the reflection questions together.

We would love to see what you make, so please tag us on any social platform using #BouquetstoArt or #deyoungsters.