

Artist Statement

While reading about the life story of Frida Kahlo, Bernadette Peña's granddaughter began to identify similarities between herself and the Mexican artist. She related to Frida's eyebrows, her love for painting, and their shared experience of living with a disability. Curious to learn more about Frida, Peña's granddaughter dressed with bright flowers in her hair and a flowing rebozo. Unknowingly, this moment set the course for a creative movement.

Peña founded the *Nuestra Gente: A Tribute to Hispanic Innovators and Dreamers*™ photo collection after finding minimal representation of women of color and diverse voices in children's literature. A visual representation of storytelling, children portray influential leaders who have shaped and influenced history and culture, documenting the global contributions of the Latino/a/x community through authentic narratives. By applying a multicultural and multigenerational approach, the collection cultivates the importance of cultural identity and literacy, bridging generations of trailblazers to the leaders of tomorrow.



Frida Kahlo by Ella (2017)