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ETHERTON GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

Etherton Gallery Announces Collaboration with Tucson Botanical Gardens
Presents Portraits of Frida Kahlo by Photographer Nickolas Muray at Porter Gallery

Tucson, August 25, 2016: Etherton Gallery today announced it will exhibit color portraits of Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) by photographer Nickolas Muray (1892-1965), in collaboration with the blockbuster exhibition, *Frida Kahlo: Art, Garden, Life* which opens at the Tucson Botanical Gardens October 10, 2016. *Frida Kahlo: Art, Garden, Life* was designed by Book of Mormon stage designer and U of A alum Scott Pask, and debuted at the New York Botanical Gardens in 2015. The Tucson Botanical Gardens is the only public garden in the United States to get the blockbuster exhibition. Muray's photographs will be shown in the Porter Gallery.

When Nickolas Muray met Frida Kahlo, he was a well-known portrait photographer who had photographed the luminaries of the modern age and a pioneer in a color process that was revolutionizing magazine and editorial photography. Muray operated a sought after portrait studio in New York and was celebrated for his soft focus portraits of people who were at the forefront of great social change, including writers Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald and D. H. Lawrence; political figures such Clarence Darrow, and Presidents Coolidge, Hoover and Roosevelt; Hollywood film stars Marlene Dietrich, Charlie Chaplin, and Fred Astaire; sports figures like Babe Ruth, and many others. When Muray met Frida Kahlo on a 1931 trip to Mexico to visit his friend, painter and caricaturist, Miguel Covarrubias, he was well known in New York's artistic circles. Shortly afterwards Muray and Kahlo began a decade long affair and a friendship that would last until her death in 1954.

Muray photographed Kahlo more than any other photographer from his unique perspective as lover and confidante. While Kahlo's paintings often present carefully constructed self-portraits influenced by her husband Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, Muray's gorgeous color photographs present a more intimate look at Kahlo. His best known portrait of Kahlo is, *Frida with Magenta Rebozo* (1939), made at the height of their affair when Kahlo was in New York to attend the opening of her exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery. Like the multiple layers of color Muray laid down in his photographs, Muray enlarges our understanding of Kahlo, and presents her as a strong complicated woman. Muray documents her well-known interest in indigenous Mexican culture, her life and their close circle of friends. However, although Kahlo's relationship with Rivera was rocky (they divorced and remarried), she was never able to commit to Muray and the affair ended in 1941.

Nickolas Muray's portraits have enlarged our understanding of Frida Kahlo. Almost 80 years later, Nickolas Muray's portraits have become essential to appreciating her as an artist and a woman and are they are the images we conjure when we hear her name.

xxx

Nickolas Muray (1892-1965)

A renowned commercial photographer who was among the first generation of color practitioners, Nickolas Muray (1892-1965) is best known for his portraits of artist Frida Kahlo. Born in Hungary, Muray received an extensive technical education at a young age. He studied photography, photoengraving and lithography at the Graphic Arts School in Budapest and later learned the color photogravure process at the National Technical School in Berlin. After emigrating to the United States in 1913, he initially worked for Condé Nast, making color separations and half-tone negatives. In 1918 he began working as a free-lance commercial photographer and over forty years built a successful career in fashion and advertising. By 1920 Muray had opened a portrait studio in Greenwich Village and following a *Harper's Bazaar* commission to photograph actress Florence Reed, was soon celebrated for his soft focus portraits of important political and cultural figures. Muray's portraits captured people who were at the forefront of great social change including writers Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald and D. H. Lawrence; political figures such Clarence Darrow, and Presidents Coolidge, Hoover and Roosevelt; Hollywood film stars Marlene Dietrich, Charlie Chaplin, and Fred Astaire; sports figures like Babe Ruth, and many others.

In 1930, after signing a four-year contract with *Ladies Home Journal* for color fashion photography, Muray converted his studio into one of the first color labs in the United States and became an expert in the carbro process. The carbro process produced color prints from black and white negatives. It was complex, expensive, and labor intensive, but it produced the most vivid and long-lasting color prints.

In 1931, *Ladies Home Journal* reproduced two color photographs that featured girls in beach wear for a swimming pool advertisement, inaugurating a new era in commercial photography.

Muray met Frida Kahlo on a 1931 trip to Mexico to visit his friend, painter and caricaturist, Miguel Covarrubias. Shortly afterwards Muray and Kahlo began a decade long affair and a friendship that would last until her death in 1954. Muray photographed Kahlo more than any other photographer from his unique perspective as lover and confidante. His portraits document her interest in indigenous Mexican culture, her life and their close circle of friends. In 1929, four years after a terrible accident that left Kahlo in pain for the rest of her life, Kahlo married renowned painter Diego Rivera who was twice her age. Rivera had a profound influence on Kahlo's career and the image portrayed in her self-portraits. Kahlo was never able to commit to Muray and the affair ended in 1941. Muray's best known portrait of Kahlo is, *Frida with Magenta Rebozo* (1939), made at the height of their affair when Kahlo was in New York to attend the opening of her exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery.

A man of many talents, Muray was an Olympic fencer and represented the United States in fencing at the 1932 and 1936 Olympics. He was also an aviator, serving in the U.S Civilian Air Patrol during World War II and a dance critic. In 1965, Nickolas Muray died after suffering a massive heart attack while fencing. A visionary for his pioneering use of color photography and his efforts to elevate the status of advertising photography, Nickolas Muray's photographs demonstrate a technical and creative mastery of the medium.

Nickolas Muray's photographs are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the George Eastman House and several other public and private American, Mexican and European collections.

Etherton Gallery

Now celebrating its 35th anniversary, Etherton Gallery is one of the leading galleries of fine art photography in the United States. The gallery is best known for its extensive inventory of classic and contemporary photography and works by emerging photographers expanding the medium in compelling ways. Our exhibitions consistently highlight the most important figures in the history of the medium and we remain dedicated to making great works of photography accessible to novices and experienced collectors alike.

In support of our goal to champion the arts of the Southwest and in particular Tucson, Etherton Gallery also exhibits top local and regional artists working in a variety of media, and regularly presents free exhibition programs that address related local and national issues.

Etherton Gallery is a long-standing member of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD) and regularly participates in fine art photography fairs including the AIPAD Photography Show, Classic Photographs LA, and Paris Photo. Terry Etherton is also an accredited member of the American Society of Appraisers and is available for appraisals, absentee bidding and collections consultation.