

ANDREW WEISS GALLERY



Born: 1887

Died: 1985

Nationality: Russian

"Ever since my earliest youth, I have been fascinated by the Bible. I have always believed...that it is the greatest source of poetry of all time...I have sought its reflection in life and art. The Bible is like an echo of nature, and this is the secret I have endeavoured to transmit."

- Marc Chagall

Marc Chagall, the eldest of nine children was born in the Russian city of Vitebsk. He was trained in St. Petersburg from 1906 to 1909, where he also worked as a sign-writer, then in 1910 he moved to Paris. It was there that he met such members of the avant-garde as Apollinaire, Delaunay, Léger, Modigliani and Soutine, and his work began to show Cubist influences. Chagall had his first one-man show in Berlin in 1914 but upon visiting Russia was forced to stay due to the outbreak of war. His marriage resulted in a series of exuberant paintings of lovers, such as 'Birthday' (1915-23).

Following the Russian Revolution Chagall was appointed Fine Arts Commissar for Vitebsk and founded an art academy. After suffering difficulties with two of his fellow teachers, Lissitsky and Malevich, he resigned, moved to Moscow in 1920 and designed for the newly founded Jewish Chamber Theatre. In 1923 he returned to Paris on the invitation of Ambroise Vollard who commissioned Chagall to produce the illustrations 'Dead Souls'. Over the next few years Vollard was to remain Chagall's main benefactor. Based in France, though travelling widely, Chagall was granted French citizenship in 1937. Four years later due to the occupation, Chagall was forced to leave his adopted

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homeland and headed for the USA. After major retrospectives there he finally returned to France in 1948 and settled in a house near Nice.

Chagall's work was wide and varied, ranging from set and costume designs to very strong distinctive paintings and stained glass windows. He was inspired by the Hasidic tradition and the Bible and developed his style from elements of Cubism and Orphism. His pictures convey a dreamlike quality, and he is often cited as one of the precursors to the Surrealist movement. All his pictures display a striking use of colour and feature very strong imagery, for example 'The Dream' (1927). At times his pieces tended towards the sentimental, yet the vitality and originality in his work has ensured his position as one of the most admired artists of the 20th century.