

## **MARC CHAGALL**

Marc Chagall was born in 1887 to a poor Jewish family in Russia. He was the eldest of nine children. Chagall began to display his artistic talent while studying at a secular Russian school. Despite his father's disapproval, he began studying art with Leon Bakst in St. Petersburg in 1907. It was at this time that his distinct style, which we recognize today, began to emerge. As his paintings began to center on images from his childhood, the focus that would guide his artistic motivation for the rest of his life came to fruition.

In 1910, Chagall moved to Paris for four years. It was during this period that he painted some of his most famous paintings and developed the features that became recognizable trademarks of his art. He began to portray the world in a dreamlike state using strong, bright colors. He also began to fuse fantasy, nostalgia and religion together to create otherworldly images.

In 1914, before the outbreak of World War I, Chagall held a one-man show in Berlin, exhibiting work dominated by Jewish images. During the war, he resided in Russia, and in 1917, endorsing the revolution, he was appointed Commissar for Fine Arts in Vitebsk, then director of the newly established Free Academy of Art.

In 1922, Chagall left Russia, settling in France in 1923. He lived there permanently except from 1941 to 1948 when, fleeing France during World War II, he resided in the United States. Chagall's horror over the Nazi rise to power is expressed in works depicting Jewish martyrs and refugees.

In addition to images of the Jewish world, Chagall's paintings are inspired by themes from the Bible. His fascination with the Bible culminated in a series of over 100 illustrative etchings, many of which incorporate elements from folklore and religious life in Russia.

Israel, which Chagall first visited in 1931 for the opening of the Tel Aviv Art Museum, is also endowed with some of Chagall's work, most notably the twelve stained glass windows at Hadassah Hospital and wall decorations at the Knesset.

Chagall received many prizes and much recognition for his work. He was also one of very few artists to exhibit work at the Louvre in his lifetime.