

MARC CHAGALL

The Poetry of Emotions

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CHAGALL**
The Poetry of Emotions

OPERA GALLERY

FOREWORD

When Marc Chagall (1887-1985) passed away in Saint-Paul-de-Vence at the age of 97, he left behind a prolific body of work that marked 20th-century art with a singular vision. Today recognized as an essential figure of modern painting, Chagall continues to fascinate collectors and art lovers alike. A man who staunchly remained outside of all art movements, Chagall went through the century of avant-garde and aesthetic revolutions independently, never once renouncing his identity. In fact, each of his creations bears witness to his personal, indeed intimate story, and exudes a strong allegoric and oneiric quality radiating through a symbolic language that is his very own.

Marc Chagall's works of art gush with light and bright colours, revealing above all the heart and soul of an artist brimming with love for everything that surrounded him. Raised in a Hasidic Jewish family where dreams, celebrations and joy were lauded with constant wonder, Chagall transformed everything he saw into sheer enchantment. After a tumultuous life which followed a succession of exiles and journeys in a Europe marked by pogroms and the Shoah, it was natural for Chagall to seek to instil in his work a happiness that he wished would be universal. Religion, love, and life were for him endless sources of bliss, imbued with a powerfully poetic aura that defines all of his art.

The artist's works of art are peopled with couples in love, his eternal muse and fiancée Bella, musicians, farm animals and hybrid creatures gliding about in a permanent state of weightlessness. Marc Chagall created floating, perspective-free spaces and played with sizes and scales between his characters and figures and their backgrounds essentially made up of recollections from his childhood village Vitebsk, flower bouquets, circus scenes or landscapes seen while in exile.

Over the years Opera Gallery has assembled one of the most exhaustive private collections of Chagall's works in the world. It appeared rather obvious that our gallery located in Paris, the Franco-Russian artist's adopted city that was so dear to his heart, would unveil a selection of pieces from this remarkable ensemble for a special exhibition: *Marc Chagall, The Poetry of Emotions*. This corpus of works takes us through fifty-five years of artistic creation, from 1930 until his death.

We are convinced that this unprecedented exhibition will transport you into Marc Chagall's "magical universe," as André Breton would say. We hope that the colourful and poetic intensity of Chagall's body of work, a universal ode to love and joy, will be a feast for the eyes of all our readers.

GILLES DYAN

Founder and Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

MARION PETITDIDIER

Director
Opera Gallery Paris



Marc Chagall painting the first stage of *The Arlequins*, 1933 © Boris Lipnitzki/Roger-Viollet

CHAGALL, THE POETRY OF EMOTIONS

JEAN-BAPTISTE DELORME

Marc Chagall was a poet. Whether putting his pen to paper to write – in Russian, French, or his native Yiddish – or wielding his brushes to let the oil paint pour his emotions onto the canvas, the artist unfolded a world conjuring the most vivid sensations through an intense combination of rhythm and harmony.

Born in an Eastern Europe Jewish community to which he remained attached his entire life, Marc Chagall (1887-1985) enlivened 20th-century art, into which he instilled his unique vision. An artist rooted in his era yet who reached a certain universality through the detachment he cultivated, he immersed himself in the avant-garde movements that he discovered upon his travels to St Petersburg, Moscow, Paris, Berlin and New York while never pledging allegiance to or actually joining any of them.

This resulted in over eighty years of prolific creation, driven by an inner need that never left him. As the artist himself said: "I chose painting because it was just as indispensable to me as food. It appeared to me like a window through which I flew into another world¹." The world through which Chagall soared was an oneiric realm peopled with fanciful hybrid creatures defying the laws of gravity, a world brimming with originality, at once funny and tragic, strange and familiar, in which the artist crafted and shaped his own reality.

From the onset of his career in the early 1910s, certain motifs and themes appeared recurrently. Far from repeating himself, however, Chagall

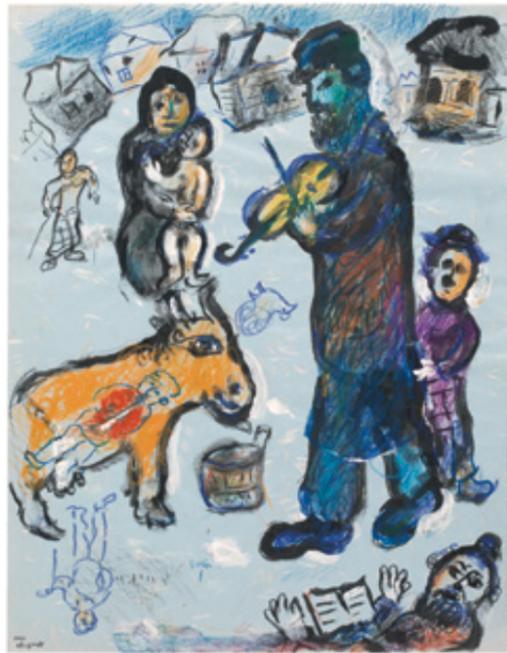
played with them over and over again, ceaselessly reshuffling, transforming or altering them with an imaginativeness that kept renewing itself during his entire lifetime, which was marked by two world wars, a revolution, two exiles, and constant moves until he finally settled down for good in the south of France in the 1950s, basking in the appeasing Mediterranean light.

This new exhibition – the first to be dedicated to Chagall's work in Opera Gallery's Paris venue – affords a comprehensive view, through an ensemble of thirty-six paintings and eighteen graphic art pieces, of the main topics broached by the artist, as well as the evolution of his approach over time, from his French period in the late 1920s until the early 1980s, when the artist while at the dusk of his life continued to produce art with the same creative force. It is thus a stroll through nearly fifty years of artistic output that is presented to the public, much like a journey to the heart of the emotions of a highly sensitive creative persona.

"Every painter is born somewhere, and even if later he responds to other surroundings, a certain essence, a certain aroma of his native land will always remain in his work²." This is even truer for Chagall, whose art is profoundly imbued with the Jewish traditions of Eastern Europe and the Slavic folk culture of his youth. The artist grew up in a family of Jewish shopkeepers from Vitebsk, a provincial town of the Russian

1. Marc Chagall, lecture given in Chicago, 1958, in *Chagall, livre d'images*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995 p. 147.

2. Quoted by Sylvie Forestier, *Chagall, entre ciel et mer, Marc Chagall - Les années méditerranéennes [Chagall, between sky and sea, Marc Chagall - The Mediterranean years] 1949-1985*, Nice, The Marc Chagall National Museum (Biblical Message), 1994, p.19.



Violinist in the Snowy Village, 1977



The Painter, 1976

Empire, now part of today's Belarus. Its wooden houses with sharply angled panes, its green-domed cathedral – particularly present in his 1940 *Self-Portrait* as well as in the 1961 *The Violinist* – appear in many of his paintings, like a persistent background, a protective matrix-like structure, the "haunting epitome of the native land³", which conveys a feeling of belonging and invariably evokes the artist's roots⁴.

"How it is that the air, the soil of Vitebsk, my native town, the thousands of years of the Diaspora find themselves mixed with the air and soil of Jerusalem? How could I have imagined that in my work I would not only be led by my

3. Sylvie Forestier, *Chagall, Between Sky and Sea*, op. cit., p.19.

4. After 1922, the artist never went back to his native town of Vitebsk, which he also preferred to avoid when travelling to the USSR in 1973.

own hands, with their paints, but also by the poor hands of my parents, and behind me would jostle and murmur still others, eyes closed and lips silent, waiting also to take part in my life.⁵" The views of Vitebsk thus seamlessly interweaved with those of other cities that were dear to Chagall's heart, whether it be Jerusalem, Saint-Paul-de-Vence or Paris, where the Eiffel Tower quite naturally flanks the *shtetl*, the Jewish neighbourhood of his youth (*The Painter*, 1976).

The artist was brought up among practising Hasidic Jews, a religious current within Judaism that prescribes the celebration of the divine in all forms of creation. Prayer is music, while dancing is a means to reach an ecstasy conducive to an ascent to God. Hence, all of Marc Chagall's work can be regarded as an ode to life. "The

5. Marc Chagall, *Marc Chagall: De Draeger*, Paris, Draeger: Vilo, 1979, p. 201.

joy of painting must overcome the worry of the creative act⁶," he would say repeatedly, dedicating his life to conveying this spiritual message through his work, to which he devoted himself daily with undiminished assiduousness. Create, always create, seemed to be the master's

accordance with the principle of synaesthesia) is incontestably one of Chagall's talents and played a key role in his status as one of the essential figures of 20th century art.

Among the many musicians in Chagall's world, the violinist is undoubtedly the most ubiquitously present (*The Violinist*, 1961; *Violinist in the Snowy Village*, 1977). Chagall himself tried his hand at the violin, one of the instruments traditionally accompanying weddings and festivities, which one could commonly hear being played in the streets. "A vehicle for memory, the violin is at once the emblem of the Jewish musical world and a trigger bringing to the surface intimate childhood recollections. [...] An artist's perfect attribute on which the mystery of creation can be played [...], it is naturally an identity accessory related to the image of the Wandering Jew⁷." Emerging in a medieval Christian legend, the figure of the Wandering Jew later became the symbol of the exiles in Europe, a symbol in which the artist recognised himself. The fiddle, as the musician's working tool, is substituted for the painter's palette, thus conveying the idea of a creative figure, and while a departure of sorts, it still provides an indirect approach to achieve a portrait of the artist.



Chagall's frescoes on the ceiling of Opéra Garnier, Paris, 2018 © Joe de Sousa

guiding principle, until the day he died in his Saint-Paul de Vence studio on the French riviera at the age of almost 98.

When he painted, it wasn't uncommon for him to listen to music, as though it were a way of multiplying the creative act through a fusion of art forms. Omnipresent, music set the rhythm of his life. A cantor at the synagogue before he decided to become a painter, he designed numerous ballet sets and costumes as of the 1940s, before paying homage to many great composers such as Mozart, Ravel, Debussy, and Stravinsky on the ceiling he famously painted in the Paris Opéra Garnier. Succeeding in rendering the notion of sound or melody in painting (in other words, stimulating the viewer's sense of hearing by prodding their vision in

6. Marc Chagall, Interview with André Verdet, 1983, in Sylvie Belanger, op. cit., p. 28.

Chagall's interest in the circus and its acrobats and entertainers is akin to that which he manifested for street musicians. These are nomadic, unconventional lives that resonate with the painter's own. Indeed, circus scenes appeared in his body of work as early as 1913, and became more numerous as of the late 1920s, when the gallery owner and art book publisher Ambroise Vollard regularly invited him to attend shows from his box at the Cirque d'Hiver [Paris Winter Circus]. Chagall was utterly fascinated with this world in which humans and animals coexist, in which they all seem to make light of the laws of gravity, twirling mid-air. It is also a festive and shimmering world, the ideal excuse to play with all the possibilities of his colourful palette, from the intense reds of *The*

7. Bruno Gaudichon, *Archetypes, Chagall and Music*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016 p. 149.

Red Acrobat (1963-1964) and *The Two-Faced Horsewoman in Red* (1970) to the speckled blaze of the *Multicoloured Clown* (1974).

"I have always considered clowns, acrobats and actors as tragically human creatures who resemble, in my opinion, the figures in certain religious paintings⁸," confided Chagall, who depicted numerous circus characters as of the 1950s, along with biblical representations. In this respect, *Multicoloured Clown*, with his outstretched open arms, could well be interpreted as an orant in prayer, its compositional structure akin to that of Jesus on the cross.

Spirituality suffuses all of Chagall's art, and it sometimes takes a trained eye to recognize the religious references behind scenes that appear secular. *Maternity* (1977-1978) is a take on the Christian iconography of the Madonna and child (Jesus and Mary), while *The Family in the Village* (circa 1978) is inspired by the traditional representation of the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary and Joseph).

Although evocations of Jewish devotion are numerous, as in *The Yellow Goat* (1966), where a man holds the Sefer Torah, Judaism's most sacred book, in his hands, Chagall also shows a keen interest in the Bible early on, as he considers it "the greatest source of poetry of all time." Illustrating it became one of his major life projects as of the 1930s, leading him to visit Palestine in 1931 to be closer to Biblical sites. As of 1956, Chagall began his Biblical Message cycle, which was later followed by the creation of a specific museum in Nice. Moses and King David hold a particular place in this cycle. *Moses and the Golden Calf* (circa 1979-1980) represents the scene where Moses is about to shatter the Tablets, which prohibited the worshipping of idols, as the Hebrew people just completed the construction of the Golden Calf which they intended to worship as their God. As for *King David* (1963), it portrays the second king of Israel accompanied by his harp, playing above Jerusalem and his people acclaiming him. King David is traditionally depicted with



The Two-Faced Horsewoman in Red, 1970



My Love and I, 1929

8. Marc Chagall, *Marc Chagall: De Draeger*, op. cit., p. 185.



Green Square Lovers, circa 1970-1975

a harp in Christian imagery to evoke his status as a poet and king. In him, Chagall saw the figure of the artist, and a model with which he frequently identified.

Representations of the artist himself are a constant feature in his body of work, whether actual self-portraits – Chagall did not shy away from depicting himself while painting as a form of staging of the creative act *Self-Portrait*, 1940 ; *The Painter*, 1976 ; *The Green Donkey*, 1978) – or in a less direct manner as a violinist, an acrobat, a donkey, a rooster, a goat or even a bouquet of flowers, all these elements being references to the artist's life story. Farmyard animals that are "inoffensive, nourishing, destined for sacrifice⁹," recall those he grew up with as a child in Vitebsk as well as those found in folkish tales. Their ubiquitous presence furthermore attests to Chagall's pantheist vision of the world and his wish for harmony between living beings, which explains why he went as far as merging them through a bountiful of hybrid creatures such as the woman with a goat's head in *Two-Faced Couple* (1980). The flowers can be seen as an allusion to the bouquet gifted to Chagall by his first wife, Bella Rosenfeld, when he returned

9. Jean-Michel Foray, *A small dictionary of Chagall in 52 symbols*, Paris, RMN-Grand Palais, 2013, p. 28.

to Vitebsk to marry her in 1915. By extension, they became a symbol of love, as in the 1929 gouache titled *My Love and I*. A central theme in Chagall's art, love is transcribed through the figure of the couple. Whether embracing mid-air or on land, in moments of bliss or conversely darker, it represents union and duality, and its feminine side is embodied by Bella, prematurely deceased in 1944, and by the artist's subsequent companions until they became an archetype. The couple appears as the primary structure, which survives all and allows a life within the world but also transcending it.

Lastly, the exhibition sheds light on the last few decades of Chagall's artistic creation, years when happiness had returned in the brightness of the Mediterranean shores with his second wife, Valentina Brodsky. These were also the years when the artist ventured even further visually into new horizons, while also receiving international acknowledgement for his work as well as monumental commissions, which often implied experimenting with new techniques (stained glass, sculpture, ceramics, mosaics, tapestry). The projects spurred him to rethink his creative process, and in particular to use collages on paper. "Collages, which he'd initially experimented with in the 1920s, serve a specific purpose, enabling him to create compositions for large scale spaces by ensuring consistency between various elements on a smaller format that revealed the monumental powerfulness of the whole¹⁰." This led Chagall to paint a new series of canvasses inspired by collages, including *Green Square Lovers* (circa 1970) and *The Painter* (1976), in which large areas of flat colour, whether red, yellow, green or blue, enliven the overall composition, entirely unrelated to the figures, freeing colour of any constraint, reflecting the mindset of an artist who no longer had anything to prove, relentlessly pursuing his quest for pure joy and the exaltation of feeling blessedly happy.

10. Ambre Gauthier, *Marc Chagall in 15 questions*, Paris, Hazan, p. 80.

THE PAINTER

“I chose paint because it was as necessary to me as food. It seemed like a window through which I could fly into another world.”

The figure of the man as an artist holds a prominent place in Chagall's body of work. An affirmation of the self as a painter, Chagall represents himself at work, his palette-easel in hand, a *mise en abyme* picturing within the picture the very act of creating. In a less direct approach, the painter also takes on the shape of an angel, a violinist, an acrobat, a donkey, a rooster, or a flower bouquet. These kind-hearted alter egos of the artist, each symbolizing his emotional state, also refer to Marc Chagall's Jewish culture and his private story. Moreover, these self-portraits have become a way of representing himself as the bearer of a message which he asserts as divine.

Self-Portrait

1940

Gouache, pastel and charcoal on paper laid down on canvas
Signed "Chagall" on the composition of the artwork,
dated "1940" on the lower right

50 x 66,3 cm | 19.7 x 26.1 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, circa 1960

EXHIBITED

Stockholm, Moderna Museet, *Marc Chagall*, September -
December 1982, p. 154, no. 56, ill. in colour p. 115

LITERATURE

Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, Harry N. Abrams Inc.,
New York, 1964, p. 435, no. 688, ill.

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Study for "The Lovers of the Bridge"

1945-1948

Gouache, Indian ink and pencil on paper
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

32,7 x 23,5 cm | 12.9 x 9.3 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



The Window in the Sky

1957

Oil on canvas

Signed and dated "Marc Chagall 1957" on the lower left

73 x 91,7 cm | 28.7 x 36.1 in

PROVENANCE

Michel Brodsky collection, France

James Cohen Gallery, New York, United States

Waddington Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Private collection

Christie's, New York, 7 November 2001, lot 198

David and Leslee Rogath, Connecticut, United States

Martin Lawrence Galleries, United States

Private collection

EXHIBITED

Hamburg, Kunstverein, February - March 1959

Munich, Haus der Kunst, April - May 1959

Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *Marc Chagall*,

June - September 1959, no. 170, ill.

Greenwich, Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, *Pleasures*

of Collecting: Twentieth Century and Contemporary Art,

January - April 2003

San Francisco, Martin Lawrence Galleries, *Marc Chagall:*

The Color of Love, August - September 2003

LITERATURE

Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall: His Graphic Work*, Harry N. Abrams Inc., New York, 1957

Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1963, cited on p. 558, p. 565, ill.

Izis Bidermanas and Roy McMullen, *The World of Marc Chagall*, Doubleday & Co. Inc., New York, 1968, pp. 38 - 39, ill.

Susan Compton, *Chagall*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 1985

Martin Lawrence, *The Art of Dreams*, Limited Editions, Pennsylvania, 2002, p. 44, ill.

Nancy Hall-Duncan, *Pleasures of Collecting: Twentieth Century and Contemporary Art*, Bruce Museum of Art and Science, Greenwich, 2003, p. 28, p. 80, ill.

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Painter's Inspiration for "Dear Vava"

1957

Pastel, coloured pencils, India ink and gouache on one side of a page of the "Bible"

Signed "Chagall" on the lower left and inscribed on the lower right "Dear Vava, to your health (in Cyrillic) Marc 16/4 957"

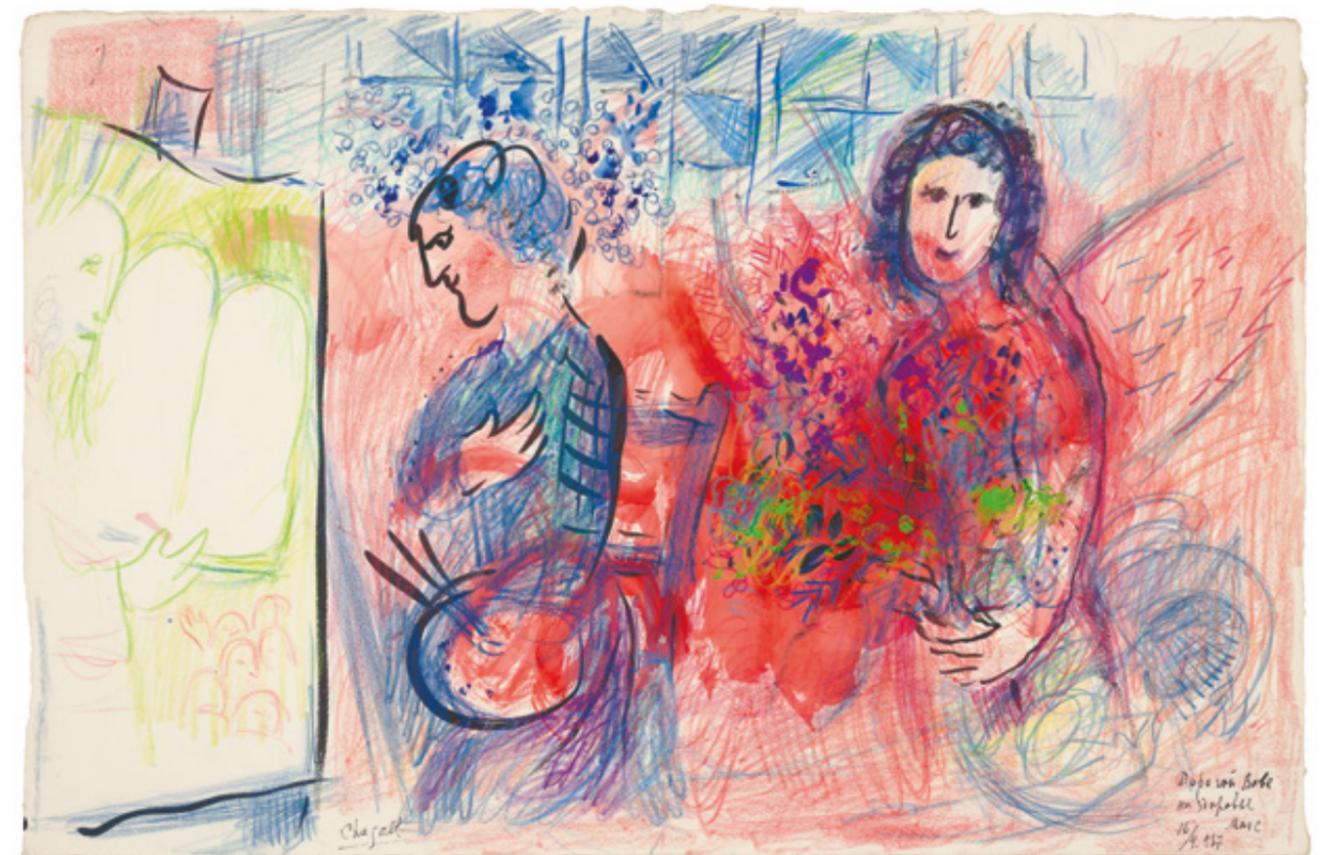
44,7 x 67,2 cm | 17.6 x 26.5 in

PROVENANCE

The estate of the artist, and thence by descent

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Profile

November 1959

Gouache, coloured pencils, Indian ink, coloured inks and pastel
on Japanese paper

Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right

67 x 52,5 cm | 26.4 x 20.7 in

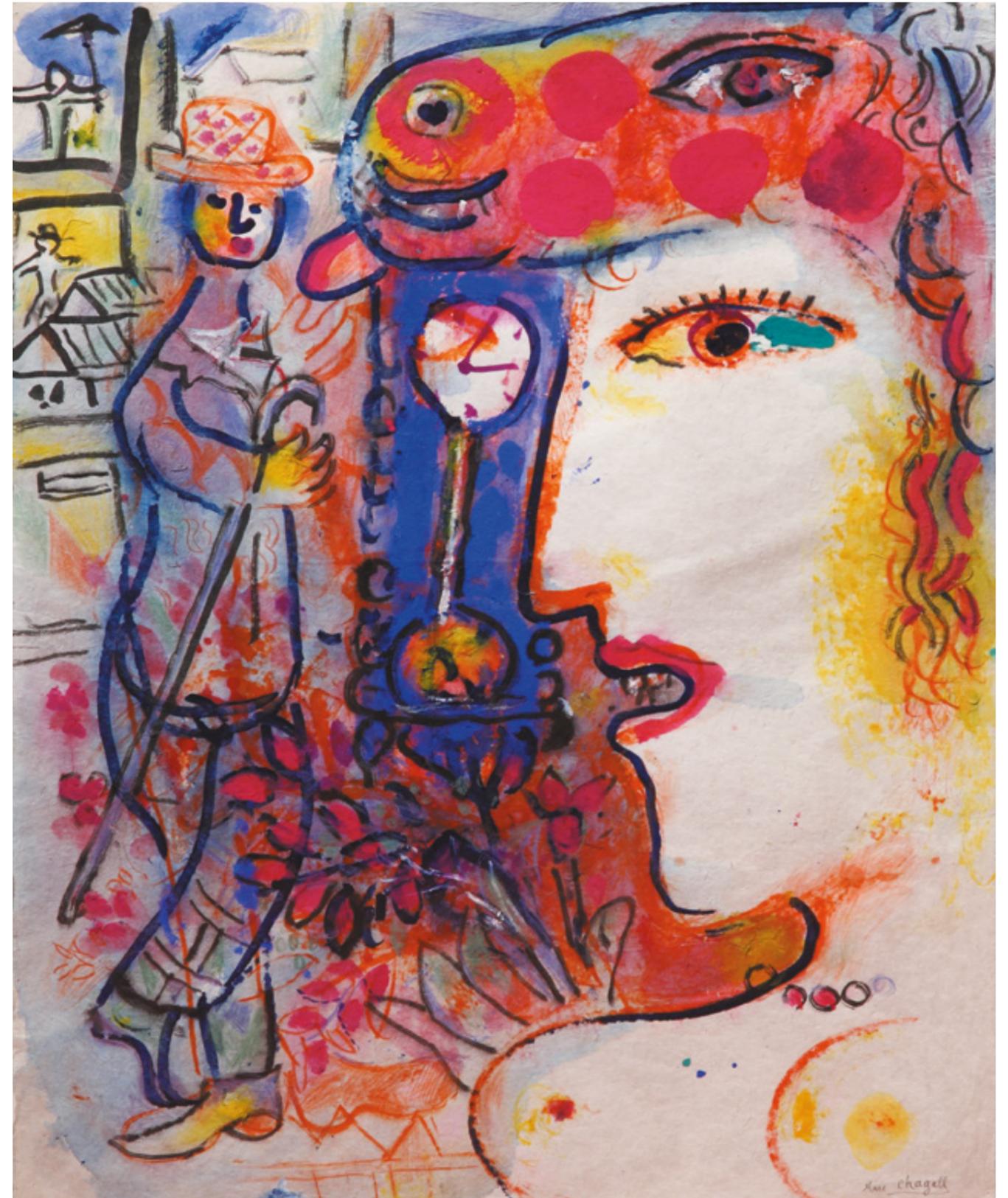
PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Colourful Profile with Three Eyes and Curls with a Dancer

Circa 1967

Pastel, felt tip pen, graphite and ballpoint pen on paper
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

41,9 x 29,7 cm | 16.5 x 11.7 in

PROVENANCE

The estate of the artist, and thence by descent

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



The Painter

1976

Oil on canvas

Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right; signed "Chagall Marc" on the reverse

65 x 54 cm | 25.6 x 21.3 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, United States

Christie's, New York, 15 May 1990, lot 81

Private collection

EXHIBITED

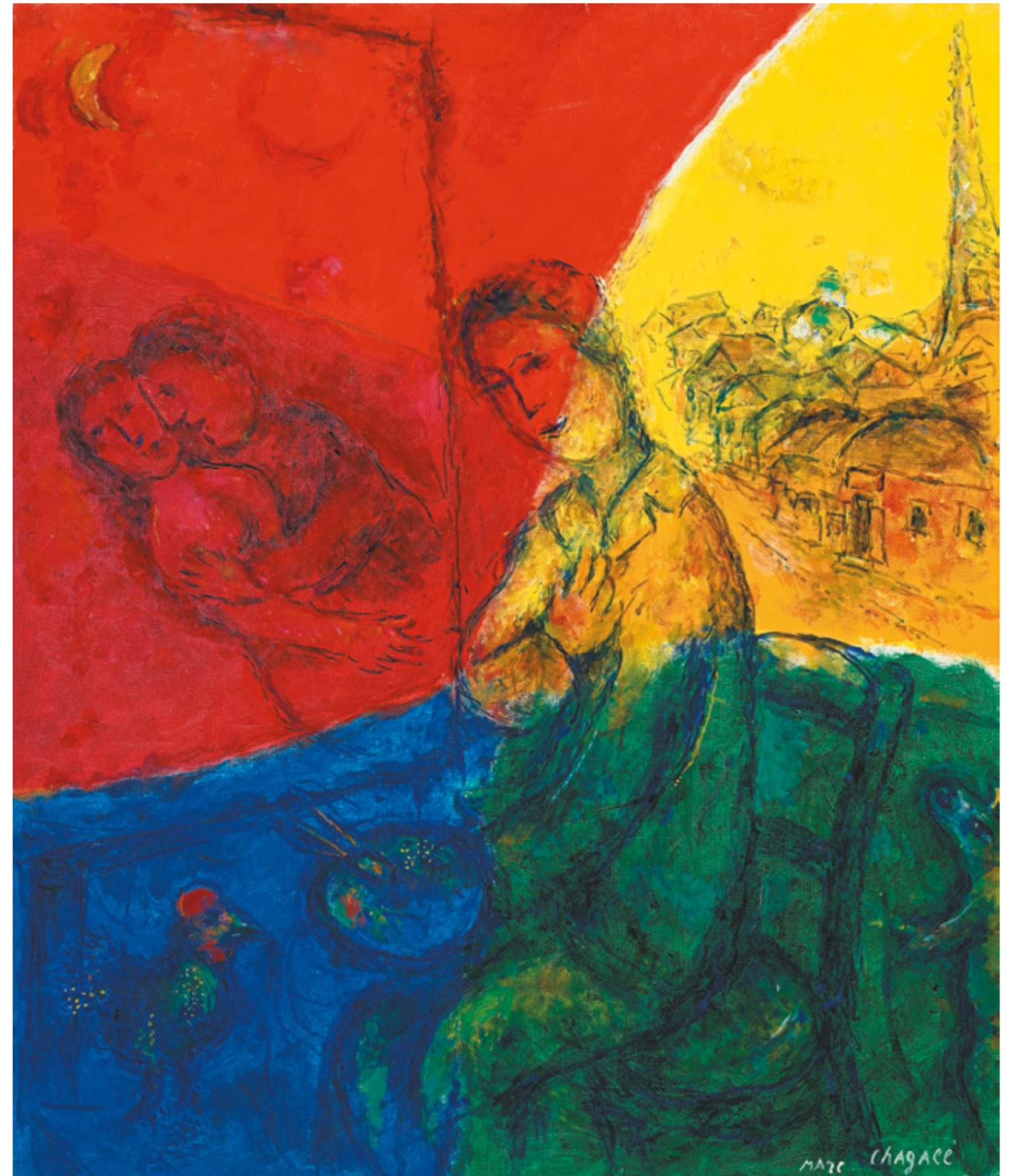
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Pavillon de Flore, *Marc Chagall : Peintures récentes, 1967 - 1977*, October 1977 - January 1978, no. 60, ill.

Tokyo, Fuji Television Gallery, *Marc Chagall, Recent Works: Oil, Acrylic, Tempera, Tapestry, Prints*, March 1979, no. 5, ill.

New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, *Marc Chagall: Paintings and Temperas, 1975 - 1978*, May 1979, no. 8, ill. in colour

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Green Donkey

1978

Oil on canvas

Signed "Chagall Marc" on the lower left; signed "Chagall Marc" on the reverse

73 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, United States

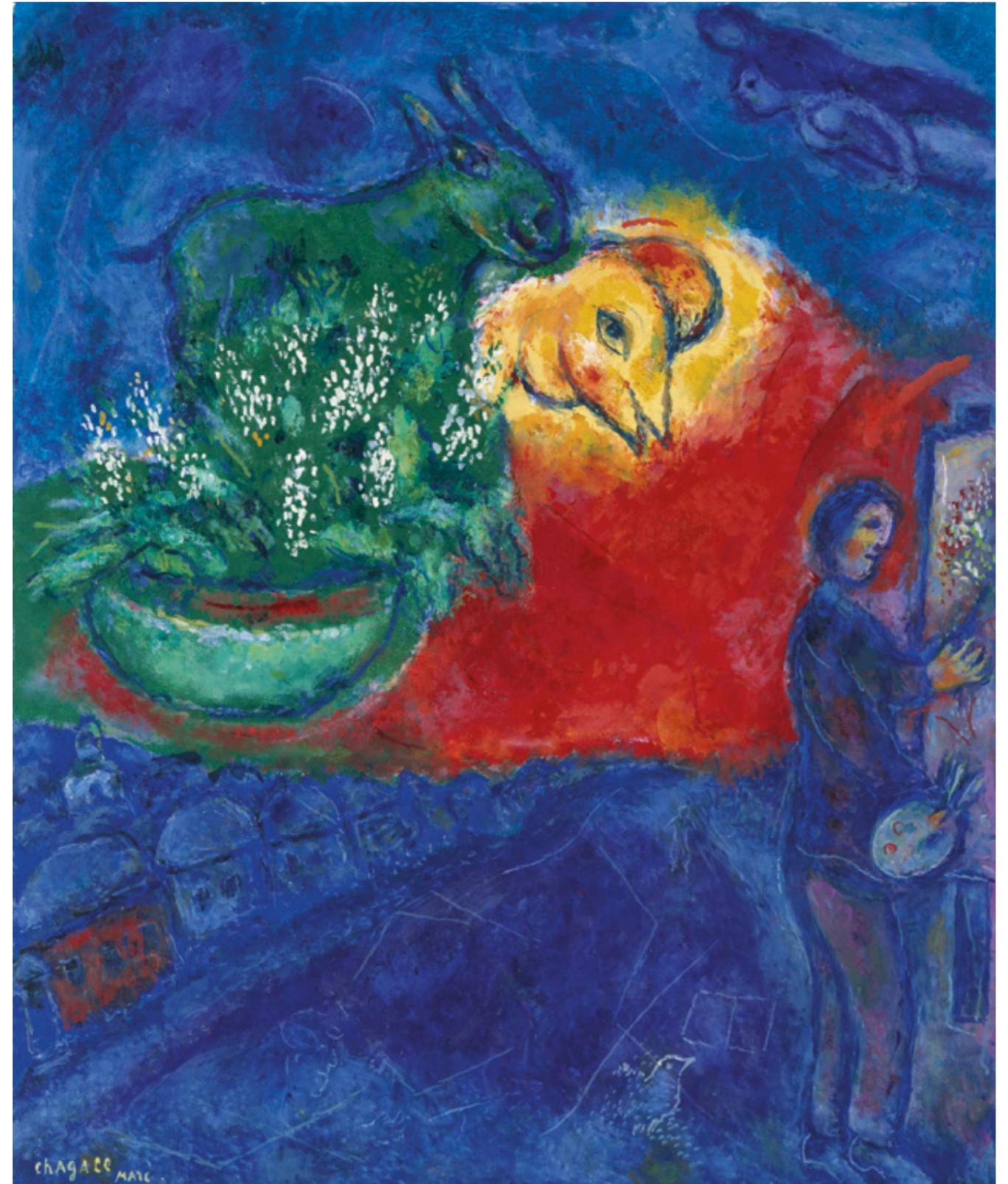
Private collection, Singapore

Christie's, New York, November 2006, lot 1723

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Apparition of Don Quixote to the Painter

Circa 1980

Tempera, gouache, Indian ink, coloured inks
and coloured pencils on panel
Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right

61 x 50 cm | 24 x 19.7 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection
Christie's Los Angeles, 14 December 1999, lot 246
Private collection, Europe

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



THE LOVERS WITH BOUQUETS

“Art is the tireless effort to match the beauty
of flowers without ever succeeding.”

Flower bouquets are a quintessential part of Marc Chagall's work. They appear early on in his life, circa 1909 upon his meeting with his future wife and eternal muse Bella Rosenfeld. In his pictorial compositions, bouquets are also intimately linked with couples in love. The flowers, already gathered into a bunch, are set in vases sometimes taking on unexpected dimensions and expanding beyond the human figures. Much like the angel, the acrobat or the self-portrayed artist, the flower bouquet becomes, in Chagall's painting, the expression of a biographical element elevating us into a spiritual sphere, then symbolizing – among other things – an offering. Marc Chagall painted his bouquets much like a hymn to love, leading us into a world of colour and beauty.

My Love and I

1929

Gouache and pencil on paper
Signed "Chagall Marc" on the lower left

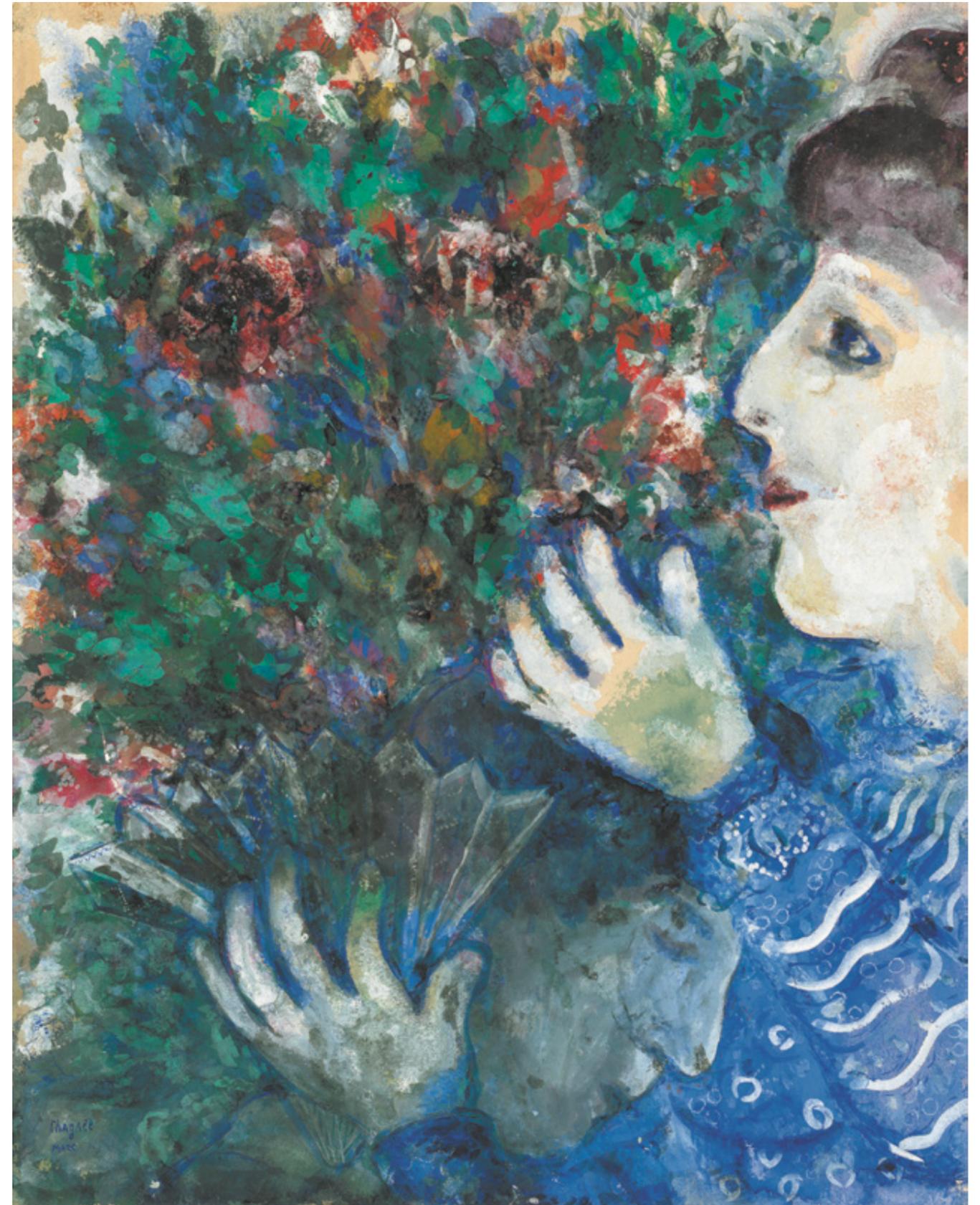
62 x 49,5 cm | 24.4 x 19.5 in

PROVENANCE

Edwin E. Hokin, Chicago, United States
Klaus Perls, New York, United States
Stuttgarter Kunstkabinett R. N. Ketterer, Stuttgart, 3 May 1962,
lot 53
Private collection, Switzerland
Sotheby's, New York, 4 May 2006, lot 347
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Chicago, University of Chicago, *Chagall*, 1958, no. 28



Naked in the Fields

1937-1938

Watercolour, gouache, ink and crayon on cream coloured paper
Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right

47,8 x 63 cm | 18.8 x 24.8 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection
Lempertz Auction, Cologne, 4 December 2001, lot 33
Private collection, Paris, France

LITERATURE

Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall, Life and Work*, H.N. Abrams, Inc.,
New York, 1961, no. 656, ill.

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Vava with Arums

Circa 1956-1968

Gouache, oil, graphite and pencil on paper

Signed "Marc Chagall" and inscribed "Vava" on the lower left

65 x 49,7 cm | 25.6 x 19.6 in

PROVENANCE

The estate of the artist, and thence by descent

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Green Square Lovers

Circa 1970-1975

Oil on canvas

Signed "Chagall Marc" on the lower left; signed "Chagall Marc" on the reverse

60 x 73 cm | 23.6 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE

Ida Chagall collection, Paris, France

Private collection, Paris, France

Sotheby's, New York, 9 May 2007, lot 412

Private collection

Christie's, New York, 15 May 2015, lot 1322

Private collection

EXHIBITED

Taipei, Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall, 1993

Beijing, National Art Museum of China, 1994

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Lovers with a Bouquet

Circa 1976

Pastel, gouache, Indian ink and graphite on Japanese paper
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower left

62,8 x 50,7 cm | 24.7 x 20 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



The Painter with Posies

September 1984

Oil and tempera on canvas
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

72,8 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



EULOGY TO LOVE

“I love love. Everything I paint is about love and our destiny. Love helps me find colour. We could even say love itself finds the colour, and I merely apply it onto the canvas. It is stronger than me, and comes from the deepest confines of my soul. This is how I envision life.”

A central theme in Marc Chagall's body of work, Love is embodied by the figure of the couple. Marriage and its ceremony are first and foremost the expression of the artist's attachment to the Jewish culture, and more broadly a symbol of happiness. Through these married couples, Chagall also celebrates his own nuptials. The feminine side of the couple represents Bella, the artist's muse and eternal love who died prematurely in 1944, as well as his subsequent companions, forming in the end an archetypal incarnation of sorts. With their embrace, whether on solid ground or in the air, in pure bliss or darker moments, these lovers personify both union and duality. The couple appears as the primary structure, which survives all and allows a life within the world while also transcending it.

Lovers in the Village on a Red Background

1968

Oil and coloured inks on canvas

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right; signed and dated, "Marc Chagall 1971 12/7" and dedicated in Cyrillic "To my kind Vava, I kiss you for 19 years, Marcousha" on the reverse

55 x 46,2 cm | 21.7 x 18.2 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Galerie Moderne Silkeborg, Silkeborg, Denmark
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Lovers with a Pink Horse in the Evening

1970

Gouache, pastel, coloured pencils, coloured inks, tempera and graphite on paper

51 x 36,2 cm | 20.1 x 14.3 in

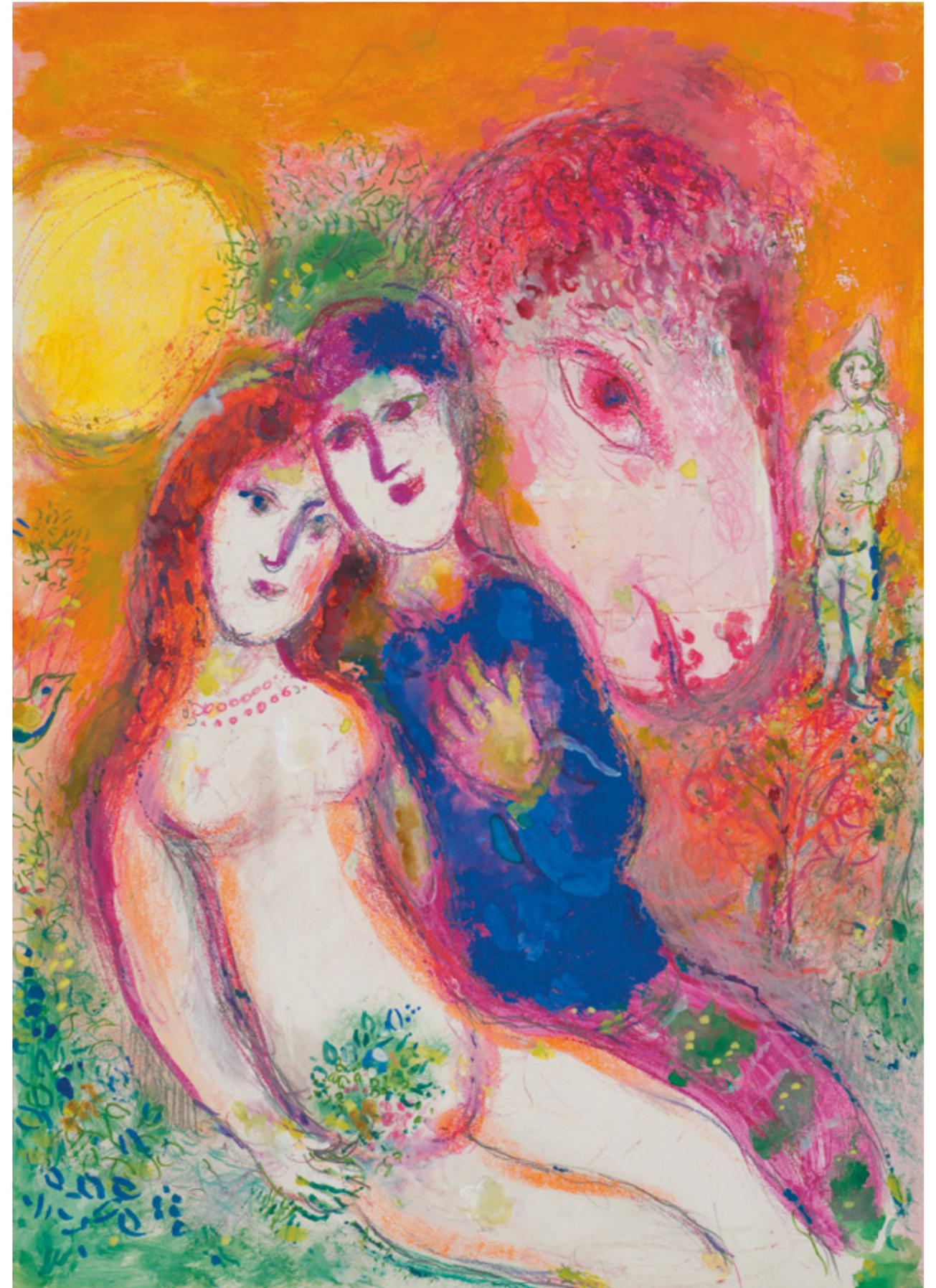
PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist

Private collection, Paris, France

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Painter, the Bride and His Painting or Couple and Violinist

Circa 1970-1975

Oil and tempera on canvas

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

100,3 x 81 cm | 39.5 x 31.9 in

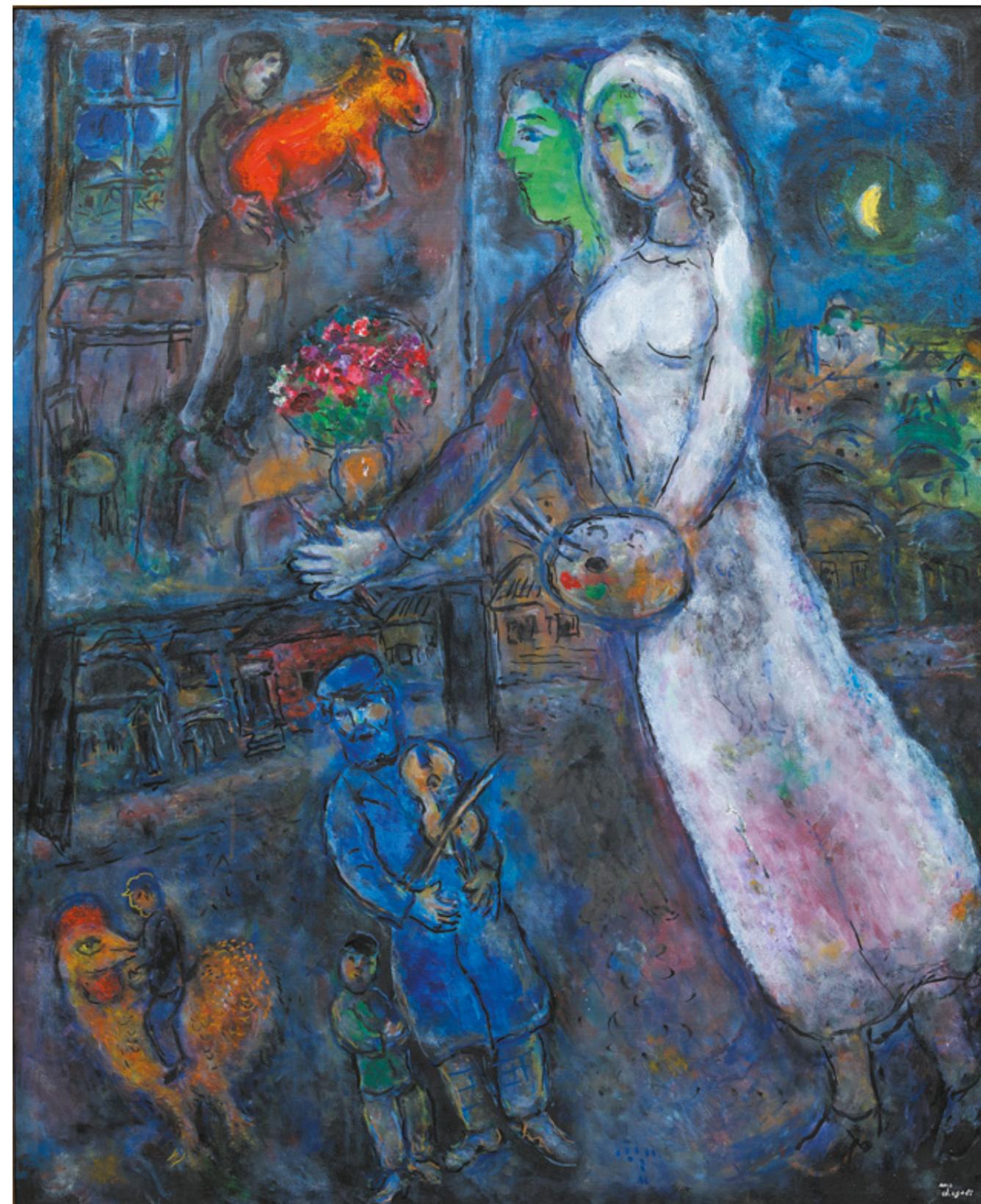
PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The lover with the Red Profile and the Blue Donkey

1971

Oil and coloured inks on canvas

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

38,2 x 45,8 cm | 15 x 18 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Newlyweds with Rooster

Circa 1975

Oil, tempera, coloured inks and Indian ink on canvas laid down
on plywood panel

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower centre

32 x 63,8 cm | 12.6 x 25.1 in

PROVENANCE

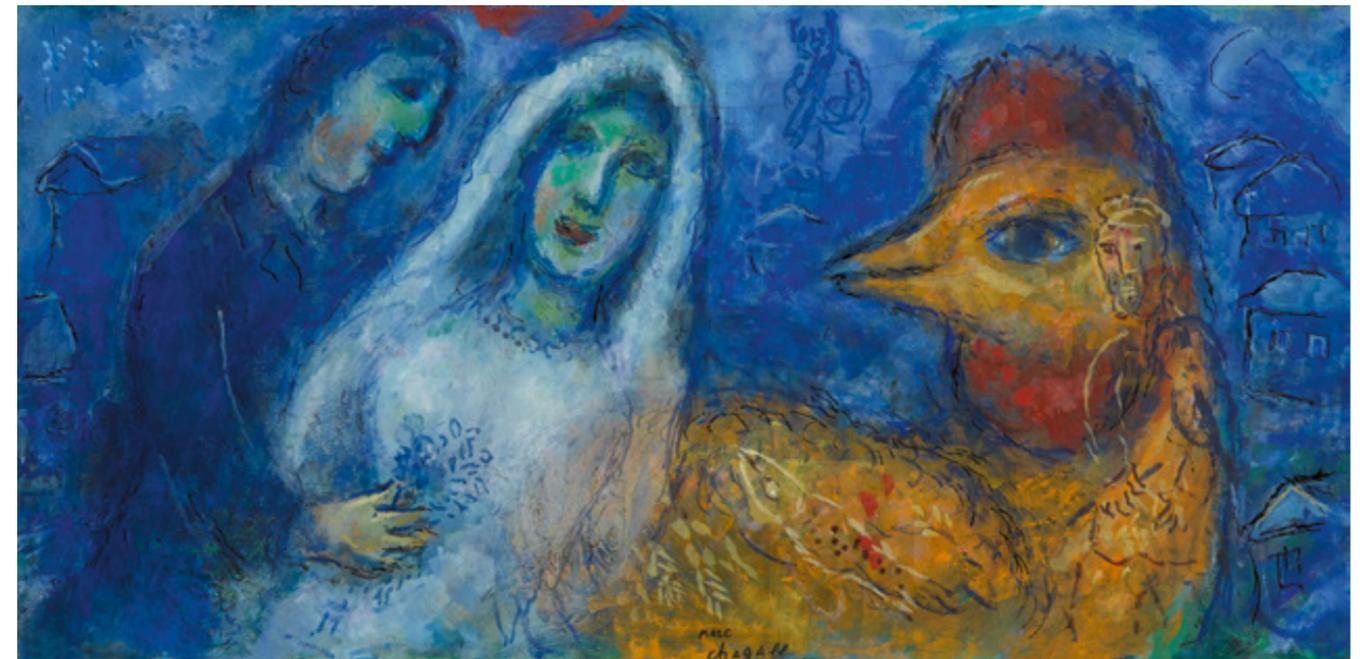
Vava Chagall, Paris, France

Sotheby's, London, 29 March 2000, lot 47

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



View of Paris

1978

Oil and tempera on canvas

Signed and dated "Chagall 1978" on the lower right; signed "Marc Chagall" on the reverse

100,3 x 81,5 cm | 39.5 x 32 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Private collection, Europe

Sotheby's, New York, 4 November 2009, lot 49

Private collection

Christie's, Paris, 23 October 2015, lot 14

Opera Gallery

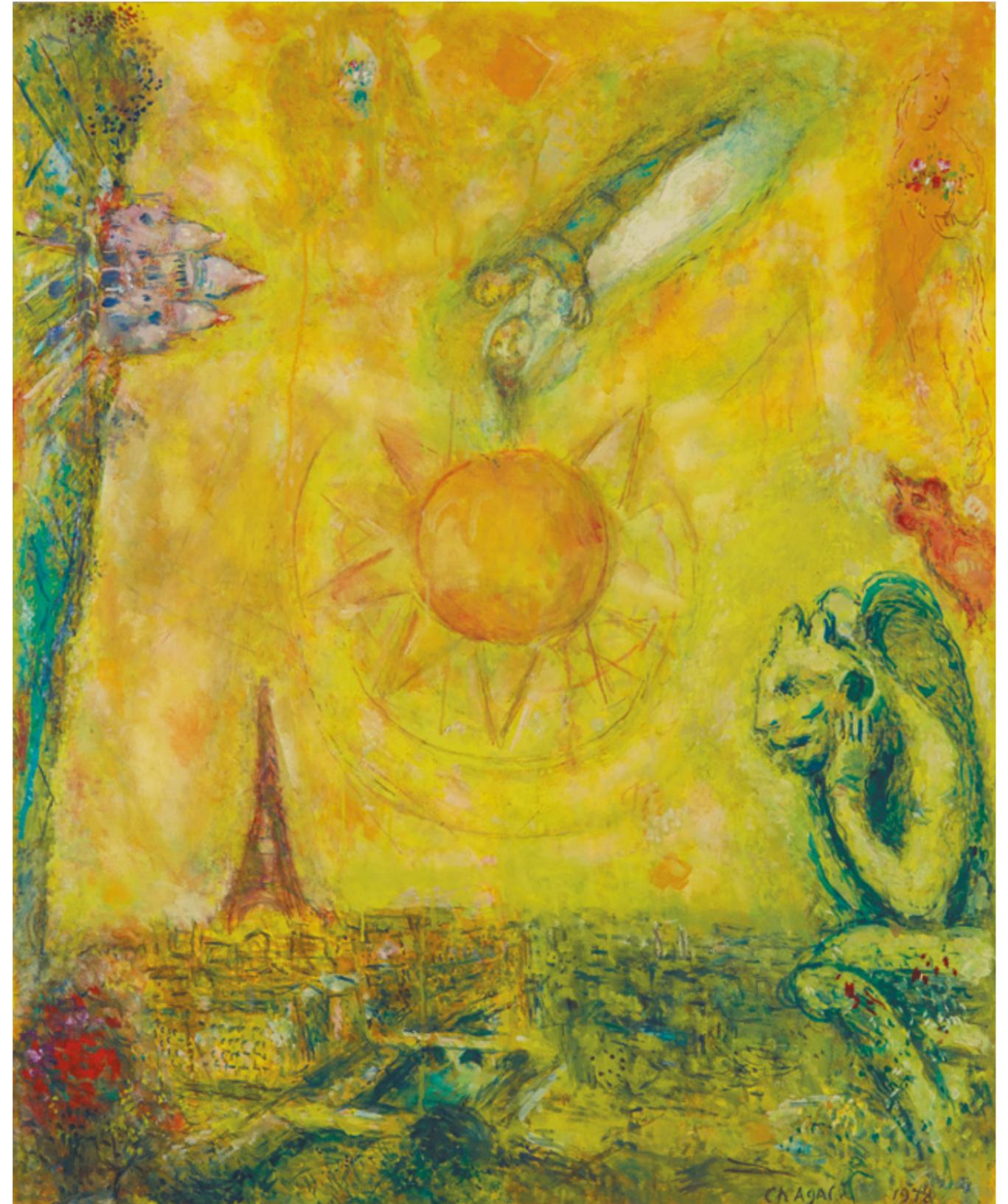
Private collection, New York

EXHIBITED

Singapore, Opera Gallery, *Masters of Distinction*,
September- October 2016

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Two-Faced Couple

1980

Tempera, oil and Indian ink on canvas

Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right; signed "Marc Chagall" on the reverse

91,8 x 64,5 cm | 36.1 x 25.4 in

PROVENANCE

David McNeil (son of the artist), Paris, France

Galerie Malingue, Paris, France

Landau Fine Art, Montreal, Canada

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Couple in the Moonlight

1980-1981

Tempera, oil and coloured inks on canvas
Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right

100 x 73 cm | 39.4 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist, and thence by descent

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



MEMORIES OF VITEBSK

“Every painter is born somewhere, and even if later he responds to other surroundings, a certain essence, a certain aroma of his native land will always remain in his work.”

Marc Chagall was born in Vitebsk, a small Jewish village located in today's Belarus. His whole life long, the artist expressed his nostalgia for this village and the Russian landscapes of his childhood through his paintings. Age-old themes such as music and musicians, dancing, the circus and its performers, farm animals and landscapes seen in exile are continually associated with Chagall's own biography, whether real or imaginary. The wooden houses with sharply angled panes and the green-domed cathedral so characteristic of Vitebsk appear in the background of many of his paintings, like an everlasting backdrop, a womblike protective presence, a "haunting embodiment of the native land," bringing forth a sense of belonging and a constant reminder of the artist's roots.

The Red Acrobat

1963-1964

Pastel, watercolour, gouache and Indian ink on Japanese paper
Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower right

38,2 x 28,2 cm | 15 x 11.1 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Christie's, London, 8 February 2007, lot 719
Private collection, Switzerland
Mainichi Auction, Tokyo, 7 November 2015, lot 324
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, Kyoto, Takashiyama Art galleries,
Hommage à Chagall, April - June 1986, no. 67 (titled as
Le Cirque rouge)

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Esquisse for "The Pink House"

1966

Printed paper collage, paper, fabric, gouache, pastel and graphite on paper

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

47,3 x 32,4 cm | 18.6 x 12.8 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist

Private collection, New York, The United States

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Two-Faced Horsewoman in Red
1970

Gouache, pastel, coloured pencils, blue ink and
black pencil on paper
Signed "Marc" in the composition on the centre

58,5 x 45 cm | 23 x 17.7 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Multicoloured Clown

1974

Oil and coloured inks on canvas

Signed "Marc Chagall" on the lower left; signed "Chagall Marc" on the reverse

81 x 65 cm | 31.9 x 25.6 in

PROVENANCE

Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, United States

Galleria Internazionale, Milan, Italy

Galerie Marcel Bernheim, Paris, France

Davlyn Galleries, New York, United States

Sotheby's, New York, 18 May 1990, lot 443

Private collection, Switzerland

Sotheby's, Tel Aviv, 11 October 1995, lot 36

Private collection, Europe

Sotheby's, Tel Aviv, 3 May 2000, lot 33

Private collection, United States

EXHIBITED

New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, *Marc Chagall, The Four Seasons, Gouache, Paintings, 1974 - 1975*, 1975, no. 3, ill.

Osaka, Hankyu Department Stores, *Aventure poétique de Bonnard à nos jours*, 1979

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Maternity

1977

Pastel and Indian ink on paper
Signed "To M. L. Trotalas sincerely yours 1977/8 Marc Chagall"
and dedicated on the lower right

37,8 x 28 cm | 14.9 x 11 in

PROVENANCE

Trotalas collection
Binoche et Giquello, Paris, France, 8 February 2001, lot 2
Private collection, Singapore



The Visit of the Goat, Yellow Background

Circa 1978

Acrylic, oil, tempera and ink on canvas
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

33 x 54,7 cm | 13 x 21.5 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Private collection, Switzerland

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



The Family at the Village

Circa 1978

Pencil on paper

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

68,5 x 58 cm | 27 x 22.8 in

PROVENANCE

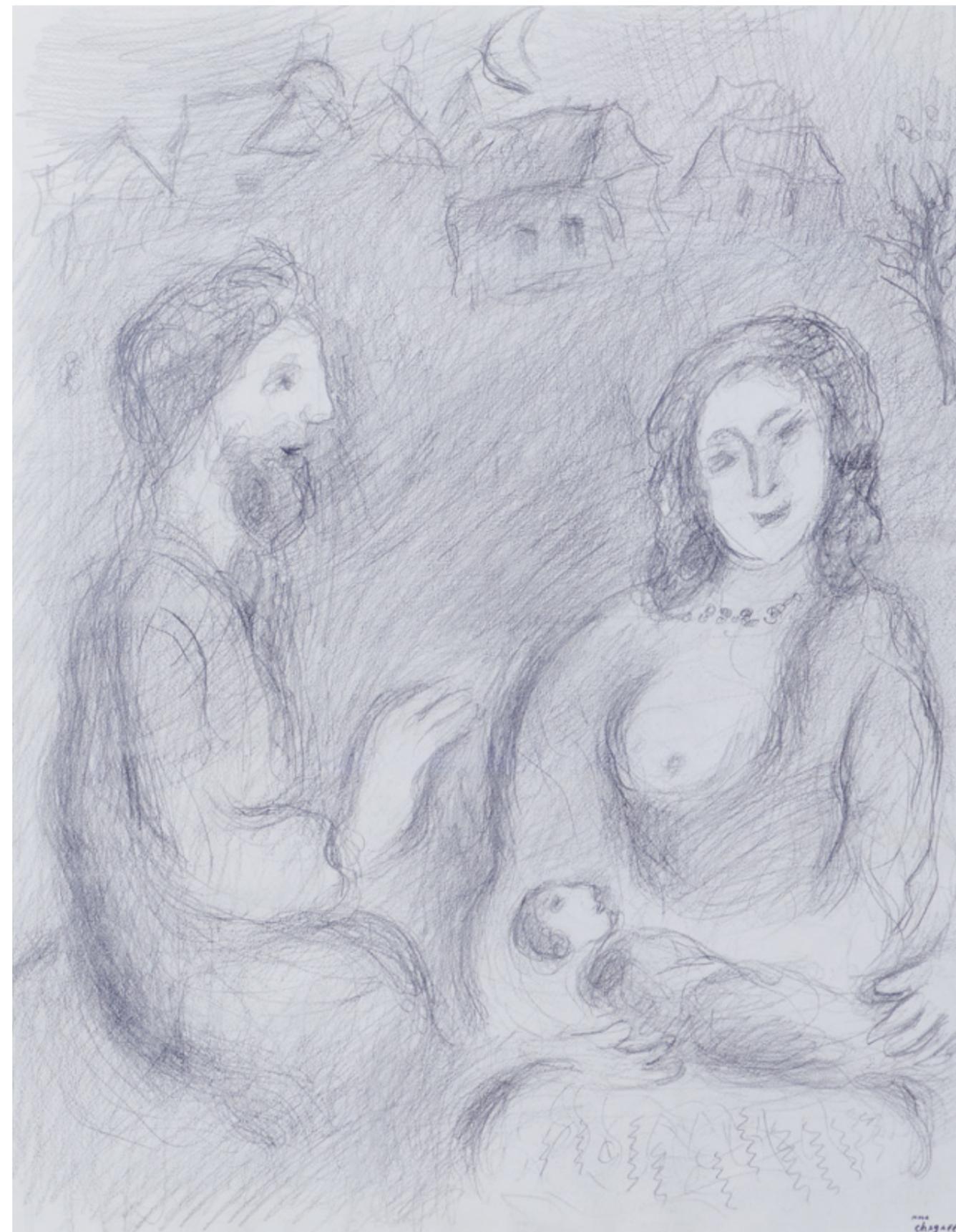
Private collection, Switzerland

Cornette de Saint-Cyr, 17 December 1998, lot 16

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Blue Goat above the Celebration in the Pink Village

Circa 1981

Gouache, pastel and Indian ink on paper
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

65,3 x 50,3 cm | 25.7 x 19.8 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



CHAGALL AND THE JEWISH HERITAGE

“If I weren't a Jew, I wouldn't be an artist,
or at least not the one who I am now.”

All of Marc Chagall's art is imbued with the Jewish traditions of Eastern Europe and the Slavic folk culture of his youth. The artist was brought up in the practice of Hasidism, a religious current within Judaism that prescribes the celebration of the divine in all forms of creation. Prayer is music, while dancing is a means to reach an ecstasy conducive to an ascent to God. Hence all of Marc Chagall's work can be regarded as an ode to life – dedicating his life to conveying this spiritual message through his work, to which he devoted himself daily with unwavering assiduousness. The Bible is an endless source of themes and poetry with a universal outreach, and the artist becomes a prophet bearing the divine word.

The Violonist

1961

Indian ink wash, Indian ink and Gouache on Japanese paper
Signed "Chagall Marc" on the lower left

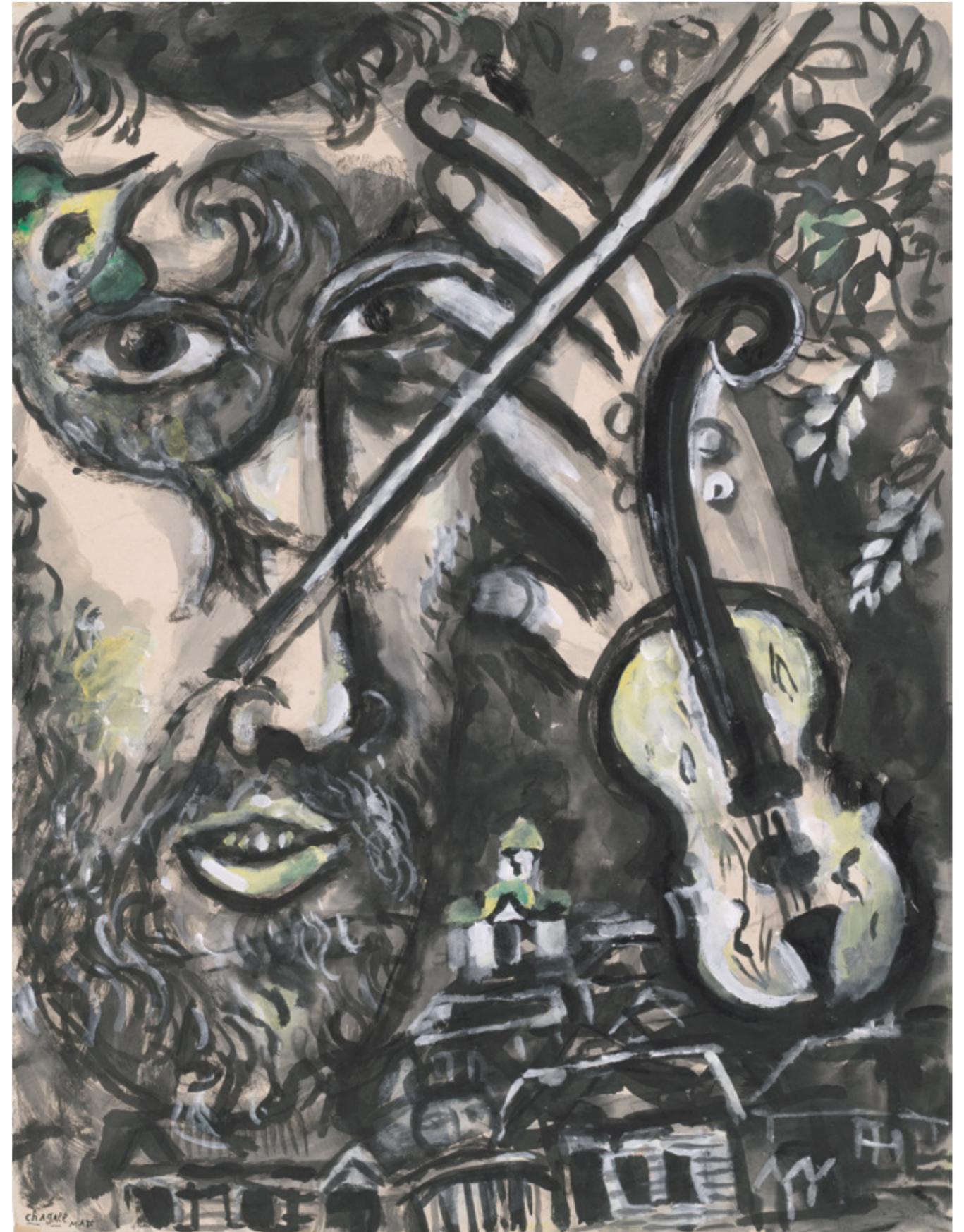
84,5 x 65,7 cm | 33.3 x 25.9 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne, Switzerland
Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., London, United Kingdom
Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1970, lot 70
Galerie Motte, Geneva, Switzerland
Hotel Drouot, Paris, France, 27 June 1975, lot 124
Private collection, Antwerp, Belgium
Galerie Cassirer, Berlin, Germany
Private collection, Monaco
Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



King David

1963

Oil and Indian ink on canvas

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower right

24 x 14 cm | 9.5 x 5.5 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Germany

Beck & Eggeling, Düsseldorf, Germany

Private collection, France

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Yellow Goat

1966

Indian ink wash, gouache and Indian ink on Japanese paper
Signed "Chagall Marc" on the lower right

71,9 x 53,1 cm | 28.3 x 20.9 in

PROVENANCE

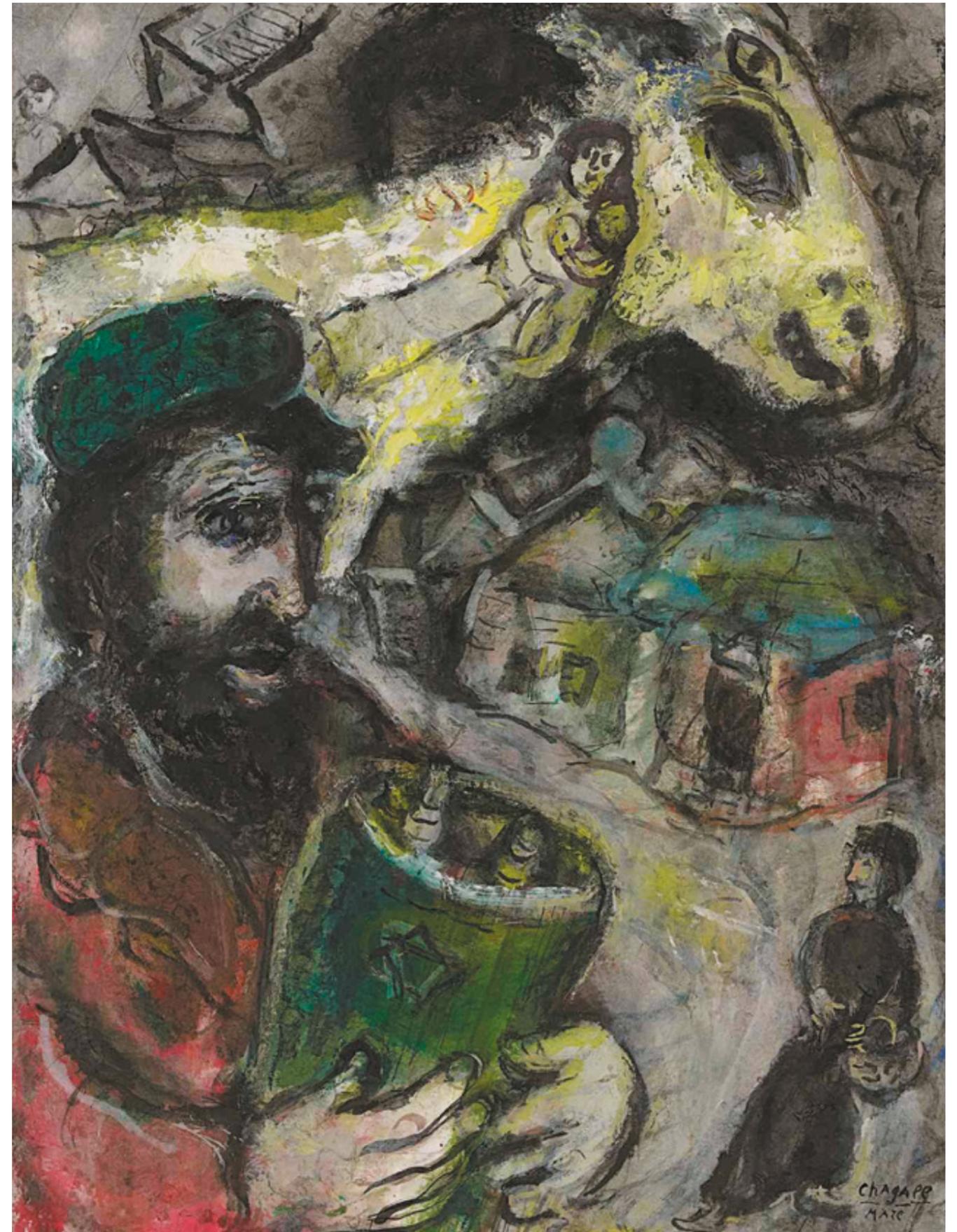
Osper Gallery, Cologne, Germany
Private collection, Germany

EXHIBITED

Lucerne, Galerie Rosengart, *Chagall, lavis et aquarelles*, 1967,
no. 17, ill. in the catalogue

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



Violinist in the Snowy Village

1977

Gouache, pastel, coloured pencils and Indian ink on light blue coloured Japanese paper

Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower left

63,9 x 47 cm | 25.2 x 18.5 in

PROVENANCE

Estate of the artist

Private collection

Galerie Kornfeld, Bern, 17 June 2017, lot 32

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Moses and the Golden Calf

1979-1980

Oil, tempera, Indian ink and black pencil on canvas
Marc Chagall estate stamp on the lower centre

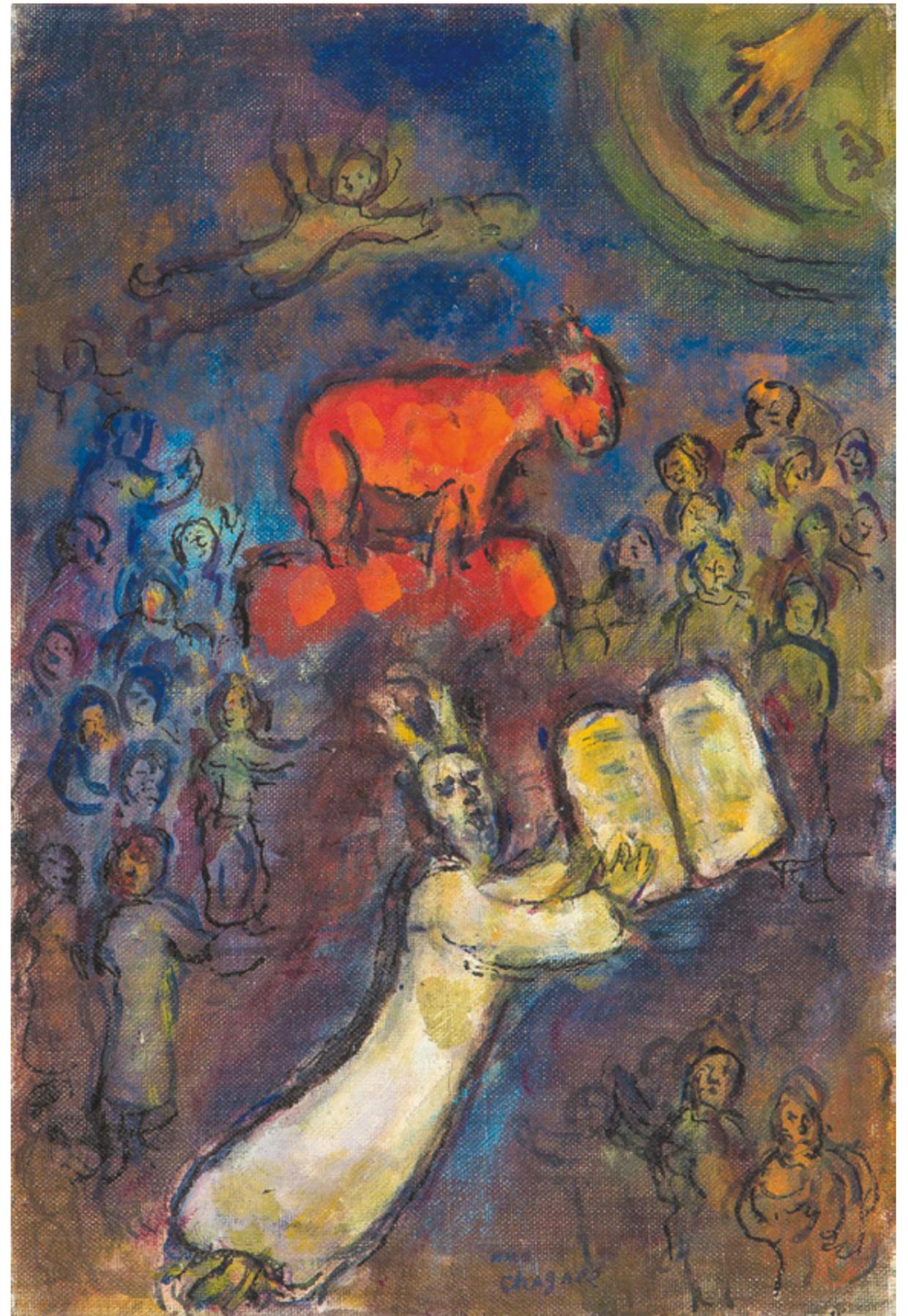
33 x 22 cm | 13 x 8.7 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Japan

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Marc Chagall has confirmed the authenticity
of this work



BIOGRAPHY



Marc Chagall (1887-1985) was born Moishe Shagal in Vitebsk, Russia (today's Belarus) in 1887 to a very devout and humble Hasidic Jewish family of nine children.

The first years of his life were influenced by numerous trips to his grandfather's farm, where he became familiar with Jewish customs, Russian folklore and learned to play the violin – the traditional musical instrument in Russian -Jewish culture. Memories from his early years later became strong recurring themes in his work, that would reflect a nostalgia for his village and landscape, as well as an ongoing fascination with animals and the daily affairs of his rural and farming environment.

When he was 20, Chagall moved to St. Petersburg to receive lessons in painting from Nicholas Roerich and Léon Bakst, with whom he honed his talents as a colourist at Zvantsera private school. He also worked in Léon Bakst's studio where he created sets for the Ballets Russes.

He became interested in the work of pioneer painters, including Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Henri Matisse.

He settled in Paris in 1911 and rented a studio at La Ruche which he shared with Amedeo Modigliani and Chaïm Soutine. It was there that he became influenced by Fauvism and painters using pure, bright, and clear colours. His first exhibition took place at the Salon des Indépendants in 1912. Living in Paris, he met Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars and Fernand Léger with whom he became friends.

In 1914, Chagall had his first solo exhibition in Berlin. In 1915, he married Bella Rosenfeld, and their daughter Ida Chagall was born subsequently. His love for his wife became one of the primary subjects of his work, reflecting the rapture of being in love.

In 1917 he embraced the ideas of the Bolshevik revolution, which included allowing Jews to become citizens in Russia. This led him to be appointed Curator of Fine Arts of Vitebsk region in 1918 and founded a museum and an art school there. He left his hometown for Moscow in 1920, where he worked on the creation of sets for the Kamerny Jewish Theater.

The couple moved to Berlin in 1922 where Chagall produced his first etchings published by Cassirer (illustrations of his poetic autobiography *Ma vie [My Life]*, 1922). He returned to Paris, 'his second Vitebsk', in 1923, and became a French citizen in 1937. Chagall founded a new studio and became acquainted with Sonia and Robert Delaunay and Louis Marcoussis, who further developed his interest in Surrealism. Upon art dealer Ambroise Vollard's request he made etchings for *Les Ames mortes [Dead Souls]* by Nikolai Gogol, *Les Fables de La Fontaine [The Fables of Jean de La Fontaine]*. Between 1931 and 1932, he produced 40 preparatory gouaches for the Holy Bible etchings ordered by Ambroise Vollard in 1930.

The Second World War, which threatened Jewish communities across Europe, forced him and his family to flee to New York in 1941, where he met up with numerous writer and artist friends, who had themselves taken refuge in the United States, such as Léger, Masson, Mondrian, Maritain and Breton. He remained there until 1948. Whilst in America, he designed several ballet sets and costumes notably for Stravinsky's *L'Oiseau de feu [Firebird]*.

After the death of his beloved wife and muse Bella in 1944, Chagall stopped painting for several months; such was the effect of her passing. In 1946, he met Virginia Haggard with whom he had a son, David McNeil.

That same year the MoMA in New York compiled a retrospective of his work, and a series of solo exhibitions were subsequently organised throughout Europe in 1947 (Paris, Amsterdam, Bern, Zurich). When Chagall returned to France in 1948, he had become famous and was celebrated worldwide. He settled in Vence, in the south of France, where he met Pablo Picasso and Aimé Maeght, who was to become his art dealer. Virginia left him in 1952, and the same year he met Valentina (Vava) Brodsky, who would become his second wife. Chagall started using a wider range of mediums and techniques: engraving, ceramics, sculpture, stained glass, mosaic, and murals, and was appointed to create several monumental commissions as the ceiling of the Opera Garnier, Paris. At the age of 65, the publisher Tériade asked him to illustrate the work of Greek author Longus *Daphnis et Chloé [Daphnis and Chloé]*. This work was published in 1961, illustrated by 42 original lithographs.

In 1967 Chagall's Biblical Message was exhibited at the Louvre, Paris, making him one of the very few artists to have had their work exhibited in the prestigious museum during their lifetime. In 1973 the Marc Chagall Museum was inaugurated in Nice, France.

Chagall died in Saint-Paul-de-Vence on 28th March 1985, at the age of 97.



Marc Chagall, 4 July 1941 © Carl van Vechten

CHRONOLOGY

- 7 July 1887** Birth in Vitebsk, Russia (now Belarus).
- 1909** Attends Zvantseva private school in St. Petersburg, Russia and works in Léon Bakst's and Mstislav Doboujinski's workshops.
- 1911** First trip to Paris, France. 1912-1913. Exhibition at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris, France.
- 1914** First solo exhibition at Galerie Der Sturm in Berlin, Germany. Returns to Vitebsk.
- 1915** Marries Bella Rosenfeld. Exhibition in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia.
- 1916** Birth of Ida Chagall, daughter of Bella Rosenfeld and Marc Chagall.
- 1918-1920** Appointed Curator of Fine Arts of Vitebsk region. He creates the popular school of art in his native country. Settles in Moscow, Russia, and realises all the decors for the Moscow Jewish Theatre.
- 1922** Moves to Berlin, Germany. Creates etchings dedicated to his autobiography *Ma vie [My Life]* (the text is published in French in 1931).
- 1923** Moves to Paris, France. Starts working with the dealer Ambroise Vollard who commissions illustrations for Gogol's *Les Âmes mortes [Dead Souls]* and *Les Fables de La Fontaine [The Fables of Jean de La Fontaine]*.
- 1931** Creates 40 gouaches to illustrate the Holy Bible, commissioned by Ambroise Vollard.
- 1935** Following a trip to Poland, he is categorised as a 'degenerate artist' by the Nazis.
- 1937** Obtains French citizenship.
- 1941** Has to leave occupied France and emigrates to New York, USA. 1944. Death of Bella Chagall.
- 1946** Retrospective at the MoMA in New York, USA. Meets Virginia Haggard with whom he had a son, David McNeil.
- 1948** Returns to Paris, France. 1950. Settles in Vence, France.
- 1952** Meets Valentina (Vava) Brodsky, who would become his second wife.
- 1966** Exhibition of his Biblical Message at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.
- 1973** Inauguration of the Musée national Message Biblique Marc Chagall in Nice, France (now entitled Musée national Marc Chagall).
- 28 March 1985** Death in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France.

4 November 2022 – 19 February 2023

World in Turmoil,
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt

13 August 2022 – 22 January 2023

I'd Like a Typical Chagall,
Kunstmuseum, Basel

9 July – 13 November 2022

Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine & Cie, L'École de Paris (1900-1939),
Musée d'Art Moderne, Céret

29 January – 25 April 2022

Marc Chagall, dans la lumière de la matière,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France

21 November 2020 – 30 August 2021

Chagall. Le passeur de lumière,
Centre Pompidou Metz, Metz, France

17 June – 31 October 2021

Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine ... Paris pour école, 1905-1940,
Musée d'art et d'histoire du judaïsme, Paris, France

10 October 2020 – 26 April 2021

De couleur et d'encre. Marc Chagall et les revues d'art,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

21 September 2019 – 2 February 2020

Chagall, Picasso, Mondrian and Others : Migrant Artists in Paris,
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

1 November 2018 – 24 March 2019

Chagall. Du noir et blanc à la couleur,
Hôtel de Caumont Centre d'Art, Aix-en-Provence

5 May – 15 October 2018

De la chapelle au musée, la création du message biblique,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France

20 March 2018 – 16 July 2018

Chagall, Lissitzky, Malévitch... L'avant-garde russe à Vitebsk (1918-1922), Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

31 July 2017 – 7 January 2018

Fantaisies for the Stage,
LACMA, Los Angeles

27 May – 28 August 2017

Marc Chagall, Sculptures, Musée national Marc Chagall,
Nice, France

28 January – 11 June 2017

Chagall : couleur et musique,
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Canada

4 March 2016 – 8 January 2017

Chagall, Songes d'une nuit d'été,
Carrières de Lumières, Baux-de-Provence, France

9 July – 14 November 2016

Le Cantique des Cantiques. La couleur révélée,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

26 June – 30 October 2016

Chagall. De la poésie à la peinture,
Fonds Hélène et Edouard Leclerc pour la culture,
Landerneau

5 March – 13 June 2016

Chagall et la musique,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

29 November – 9 March 2015

Des couleurs pour la Bible,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

24 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

Marc Chagall : Les Sources de la musique,
La Piscine, Roubaix, France

13 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

Marc Chagall : Le Triomphe de la musique,
Philharmonie de Paris, France

4 July – 21 September 2015

Soleil, Fleurs. Marc Chagall et la baie des Anges,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

21 March – 22 June 2015

Œuvres tissées,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

28 February – 28 June 2015

Chagall, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique,
Brussels, Belgium

27 September 2014 – 3 January 2015

Picasso, Matisse, Chagall Prints, Sangre de Cristo Arts and
Conference Center, Pueblo, USA

17 September 2014 – 1 February 2015

Marc Chagall. Una retrospettiva 1908-1985,
Palazzo Reale, Milan

15 September 2013 – 2 February 2014

Chagall: Love, War, and Exile,
The Jewish Museum of New York, New York, USA

28 June – 2 November 2014

Marc Chagall. Impressions,
Palais Lumière, Evian-les-Bains

14 June – 6 October 2014

Une œuvre invitée : La Vie de Marc Chagall,
Musée National Marc Chagall, Nice

16 June – 7 October 2013

Chagall devant le miroir,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France

8 June – 6 October 2013

Chagall: Modern Master,
Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, England

23 February – 20 May 2013

Marc Chagall, d'une guerre l'autre,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France

21 February – 21 July 2013

Chagall, entre guerre et paix,
Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, France

8 February – 5 May 2013

Chagall, Maître de la modernité,
Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland

20 October 2012 – 11 February 2013

Chagall et le livre,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France

13 October 2012 – 13 January 2013

Marc Chagall – L'épaisseur des rêves,
La Piscine, Musée d'Art et d'Industrie André Diligent,
Roubaix, France

21 July – 4 November 2012

Marc Chagall,
Nassau Country Museum of Art, Nassau, USA

14 February – 20 May 2012

Chagall, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid, Spain

7 January – 29 July 2012

L'universo spirituale di Marc Chagall,
Church of San Cristoforo, Lucca, Italy

19 November 2011 – 30 January 2012

Mais quel cirque !,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France.

18 October 2011 – 15 January 2012

Marc Chagall et l'avant-garde russe,
Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

5 March – 13 June 2011

Chagall et l'avant-garde russe,
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble

2 March – 5 June 2011

Chagall et la Bible,
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme, Paris, France

1 March – 10 July 2011

Marc Chagall and His Circle,
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA

4 December 2010 – 14 March 2011

Chagall, Kupka, Deux Visions du Cantique des Cantiques,
Musée national Marc Chagall, Nice, France



Marc Chagall in his studio in Vence, before preparatory drawings for Metz's cathedral stained-glass windows, 1957 © Franz Hugmann/ Imagno/Gettyimages

INDEX



pp. 14-15
Self-Portrait
1940



pp. 16-17
Study for "The Lovers of the Bridge"
1945-1948



pp. 18-19
The Window in the Sky
1957



pp. 20-21
The Painter's Inspiration for "Dear Vava"
1957



pp. 22-23
Profile
November 1959



pp. 24-25
Colourful Profile with Three Eyes and Curls with a Dancer. Circa 1967



pp. 26-27
The Painter
1976



pp. 28-29
The Green Donkey
1978



pp. 30-31
The Apparition of Don Quixote to the Painter
Circa 1980



pp. 34-35
My Love and I
1929



pp. 36-37
Naked in the Fields
1937-1938



pp. 38-39
Vava with Arums
Circa 1956-1968



pp. 40-41
Green Square Lovers
Circa 1970-1975



pp. 42-43
Lovers with a Bouquet
Circa 1976



pp. 44-45
The Painter with Posies
September 1984



pp. 68-69
Esquisse for "The Pink House"
1966



pp. 70-71
The Two-Faced Horsewoman in Red
1970



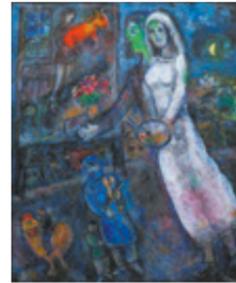
pp. 72-73
Multicoloured Clown
1974



pp. 48-49
Lovers in the Village on a Red Background
1968



pp. 50-51
Lovers with a Pink Horse in the Evening
1970



pp. 52-53
The Painter, the Bride and His Painting or Couple and Violinist. Circa 1970-1975



pp. 74-75
Maternity
1977



pp. 76-77
The Visit of the Goat, Yellow Background
Circa 1978



pp. 78-79
The Family at the Village
Circa 1978



pp. 54-55
The Lover with the Red Profile and the Blue Donkey. 1971



pp. 56-57
The Newlyweds with Rooster
Circa 1975



pp. 58-59
View of Paris
1978



pp. 80-81
Blue Goat above the Celebration in the Pink Village. Circa 1981



pp. 84-85
The Violonist
1961



pp. 86-87
King David
1963



pp. 60-61
Two-Faced Couple
1980



pp. 62-63
Couple in the Moonlight
1980-1981



pp. 66-67
The Red Acrobat
1963-1964



pp. 88-89
The Yellow Goat
1966



pp. 90-91
Violinist in the Snowy Village
1977



pp. 92-93
Moses and the Golden Calf
1979-1980

This publication was created for the exhibition *Marc Chagall, The Poetry of Emotions*, presented by Opera Gallery Paris from 18 March – 19 April 2023.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jean-Baptiste Delorme, for his enlightening critical text.

Our collectors and loaners, without whom an adventure of this kind would not be possible.

Our teams and contributors, who have done everything to bring this exhibition to life.

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PICTURES OF THE ARTWORKS

© Adagp, Paris, 2023

COVER

The Painter with Posies, September 1984

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