



# CHAGALL

*A Symphony  
of Colours*





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*“Love and fantasy,  
go hand in hand.”*

MARC CHAGALL

Gilden's Arts Gallery

April – June 2017











# INTRODUCTION

Marc Chagall [Mark Zakharovich Moses Shagal] was born in the rural Belarusian town of Vitebsk in 1887. His formative years here are familiar and easily recognisable to those who view his art through the frequent and sentimental symbols of Vitebsk. “*Every painter is born somewhere*”, he remarked whilst in exile, cementing the draw of his homeland and his childhood.

Our exhibition explores the numerous themes that are found throughout the artist’s long and colourful career. It begins with a look at some of the most delicate and intrinsically Russian folk infused compositions, created during his time in Berlin. These etchings and wood engravings show a wonderful mastering of figures and ethereal compositions.

We are delighted to exhibit a selection of works which can be considered self-portraits and they offer the opportunity to see the way in which the artist’s view of himself, changes through time. Chagall’s love of music and, in particular, Mozart is highlighted in his wonderful depictions of the Magic Flute. Furthermore, literature and ancient texts are heralded as a source of inspiration for numerous series – all of which are imbued with love.

It is with pleasure that we present two Monotypes by the artist, *Metamorphosis* and *Motherhood*. Each of which dealing with ever present subjects in Chagall’s life. *Metamorphosis* is focussing on the sense of ‘other’ and acts as an introspective view of the artist’s place in the world. Whereas *Motherhood* celebrates his eternal love for his wife Bella and the gift of life brought through family.

# BERLIN:

## *Before there was Colour*

Chagall's interest in printmaking was piqued early in his career, following his return to Berlin after the First World War. The artist had disappeared and many had feared the worst, before his sudden re-emergence in the Berlin art scene. Working primarily with Paul Cassirer and in the drypoint medium, Chagall produced 20 prints to illustrate his biography – one that was never published in this form.

Unlike his paintings, the prints from the Berlin period focus more closely on structure and bring forward many images of his childhood and homeland. The absence of colour make them all the more remarkable when considering the career of an artist celebrated as the 'Master of Colour'.

The subjects from this period evoke images of a long lost way of life in rural Vitebsk. The recurrent and ever present goats, cockerels and horses reinforce this pastoral way of life. The use of wood-engraving sets these works apart from his other prints in Berlin, as it is a technique the artist returned to only once in his later life. The small editions of 20 were published in the 1950s, long after Chagall first worked the wooden blocks.

These images would be amongst the last the artist produced as an 'Eastern, Russian Artist' and they would give way to his acceptance in Western circles.



The House | La Maison, 1922/23

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Wood Engraving  
on Japan Paper

33 x 47.5 cm. / 13 x 18.7 in.

Reference: Kornfeld 32



Man with Sack | L'homme au Sac,  
1922/23

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Wood Engraving  
on Japan Paper

47.5 x 33 cm. / 18.7 x 13 in.

Reference: Kornfeld 33





The Praying Jew | Le Juif priant, 1922/23

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Wood Engraving  
on Japan Paper

47.5 x 33 cm. / 18.7 x 13 in.

Reference: Kornfeld 31



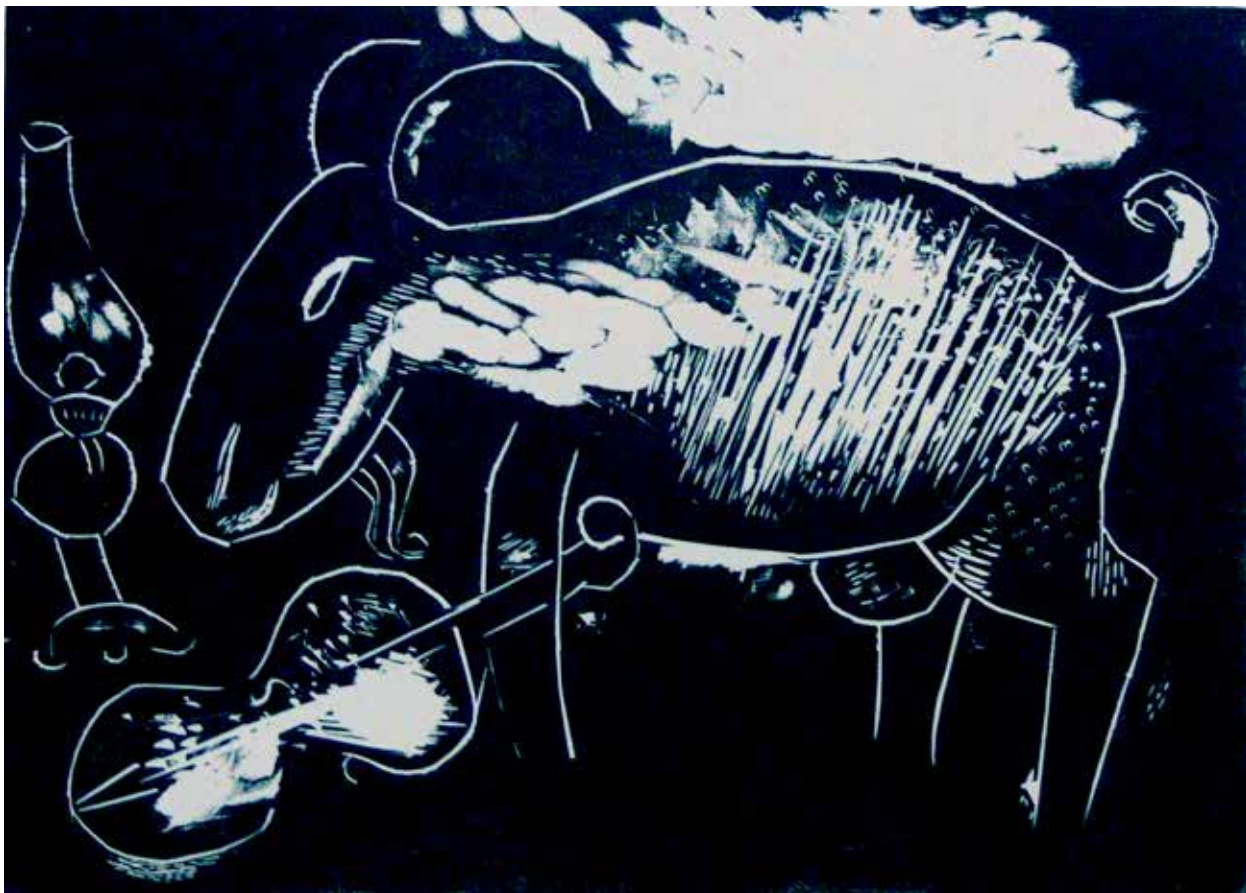
Jew with Torah | Juif à la Thora, 1922/23

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Wood Engraving  
on Japan Paper

47.5 x 33 cm. / 18.7 x 13 in.

Reference: Kornfeld 35





Goat and Violin |  
Chèvre et Violon, 1922/23  
Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Wood Engraving on  
Japan Paper  
33 x 47.5 cm. / 13 x 18.7 in.  
Reference: Kornfeld 34



The Rider and the Rooster |  
L'écuyère et le Coq, 1943

Original Hand Signed and Numbered  
Wood Engraving on Japan Paper

47.5 x 33 cm. / 18.7 x 13 in.

Reference: Kornfeld 84





On the Stove | Sur le Poêle,  
1922/23

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph  
on laid Paper

23.7 × 27 cm. / 9.3 x 10.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 16



The Farm | La Ferme, 1922/23

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph  
on laid Paper

23.3 × 27 cm. / 9.2 x 10.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 17

# THE BRIDGE:

## *A Union of Worlds*

The seemingly simple choice of a bridge, probably one over the Dvina River by Vitebsk, can be viewed as a metaphor for the artist's search for love and the bringing together of two worlds.

It is executed with such movement and violent expressionistic brushstrokes; the whole scene seems turbulent and stormy, with the dark sky and the criss-cross of lines forming the precarious construction of the bridge. The lone figure fights to cross the bridge almost as if fighting its way against the flow of Chagall's brushstrokes. It was created at a time in the artist's life when the hardships endured in Saint Petersburg were giving way to new successes.

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*"I see the river flowing away into  
the distance, the bridge beyond,  
and close at hand, the eternal  
barrier, the earth, the grave.  
Here is my soul. Look for me here".*

The Cyrillic inscription of 'the bridge' could perhaps be a reference to Chagall's encounter with his beloved future wife Bella, whom he had met the preceding year through Thea Brachman. The subject is also described in Bella's book of memories, where it is the title of a chapter describing her meeting with the artist and her subsequent fascination with his wild manner and ambitious character.





Bridge [Landscape]  
Pont [Paysage], 1910

Original Hand Signed and Dated  
Drawing in Wash, Brush and Ink,  
Pencil and Crayon on Paper

21.7 x 16.3 cm. / 8.4 x 6.4 in.

This work is sold with a photo-  
certificate from the artist's son,  
David McNeil.



Nude with a Fan | Nu à l'éventail, 1924

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Etching with Drypoint  
on Japan Laid Paper

28.2 x 35.1 cm. / 11.1 x 13.8 in.

Reference: Kornfeld 39



Man with Umbrella |  
L'homme au Parapluie, 1926/27  
Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Sugar Lift Etching on  
Richard de Bas Wove Paper  
56.5 x 41 cm. / 22.2 x 16 in.  
Reference: Kornfeld 73



# CONCERNING THE SELF

Self-Portraits can be found throughout the artist's life. Chagall specifically viewed them as an opportunity to reflect, as much as a chance to place himself in seemingly ever changing environments. He considered himself to always be an émigré, regardless of the degree to which he had settled. Chagall's characteristic long face, crowned with thick curly hair are found in many works.

The way in which the artist sees himself allows the viewer to gain an understanding of the ongoing issues of identity and creativity that would remain relevant throughout his life. His sense of isolation and need to examine was borne out of great respect for the Old Masters – in particular Rembrandt.

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*“Neither Imperial Russia, nor the  
Russia of the Soviets needs me.  
They don't understand me. I am  
a stranger to them. I'm certain  
Rembrandt loves me.”*

In the following works we see the artist as a young poet, in a dreamlike pose - contemplative and sensitive. *The Blue Studio*, depicts the artist at work surrounded by familiar motifs and creating before our eyes a painting of a couple's embrace. Whereas, in *Couple Green and Blue*, the artist stares out directly at the viewer – capturing our gaze.



The Poet | Le Poète, 1966

Original Hand Signed and  
Inscribed Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

66 x 46.8 cm. / 26 x 18.4 in.

Reference: Mourlot 442



The Blue Studio | L'Atelier Bleu, 1973

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

63 x 55 cm. / 24.8 x 21.7 in.

Reference: Mourlot 706





Couple Green and Blue |  
Couple Vert et Bleu, 1976

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

64 x 49.5 cm. / 25.2 x 19.5 in.

Reference: Mourlot 841

*“For me a circus is  
a magic show that  
appears and disappears  
like a world.  
A circus is disturbing.  
It is profound.”*



Circus Woman | Femme de  
Cirque, ca. 1960

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Colour Lithograph and Pochoir  
on Arches Wove Paper

79.2 x 63.7 cm. / 31.2 x 25.1 in.



The Red Circle | Le Cercle Rouge, 1966

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

54 x 75.8 cm. / 21.3 x 29.8 in.

Reference: Mourlot 440



# METAMORPHOSIS:

## *An Evolutionary Journey*

Marc Chagall began to produce monotypes only when Gerald Cramer, his Swiss publisher at the time suggested it to him in the late 1950's. From that point, Chagall worked with Cramer and the printer Jacques Frelaut to produce an outstanding group of etchings, aquatints, woodcuts and monotypes including our work "Metamorphosis". In fact, an exhibition of examples from that body of works was presented at the MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) in New York between November 1979 and January 1980. Riva Castlemain, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books at the MOMA, interestingly noted at the time that "This exhibition is about the creative interaction of three devoted people".

This work, Metamorphosis, has many typical aspects of iconography of this artist such as the couple, the bouquet and the bird.

The application of the colour to the plate in many places feels like little dabbed finger tips, bringing a tangible connection with the artist, who had become comfortable with this technique of monoprinting.

Metamorphosis | Métamorphose, 1965

Original Hand Signed Unique  
Monotype in Colours on  
Japan Nacré Paper

73.5 x 56.5 cm. / 28.9 x 22.2 in.

Reference: Cramer 246

*"The dignity of the artist lies in his duty of keeping awake the sense of wonder in the world."*



# ILLUMINATING THE WORD

Like many of the 20th Century's greatest artists, Chagall was never far removed from literature, in particular the Classics and their associated mythology. These areas were a source of inspiration for Chagall and his collaboration with publishers also encouraged the already well established artist to reach new audiences. The dreamlike, otherworldly style and Chagall's interpretation of the accompanying texts was perhaps the most engaging marriage of word and image throughout the century.

Chagall originally worked on illustrating series with the esteemed Parisian art dealer, Ambroise Vollard until the premature death of the latter. Following the end of the Second World War, a small number of these projects were published by Efstratios Eleftheriades, known affectionately in Paris as Tériade. A native of Mytilene,

Tériade brought a classical Greek romance of his native island to the attention of Chagall. The artist read the story of Daphnis and Chloe and before starting to work on the lithographs, insisted on visiting Greece; so that he could see the light, the sea and the sun for his own eyes. An important journey in the artist's life.

Chagall was also a lifelong advocate of the Bible and felt closely connected to the texts within. He once commented, *"Since my early years, I have been captivated by the Bible. It always seemed to me – as it does now – that this book is one of the most powerful sources of poetry of all time."*

This sense of poetry is evident in the compositions created by the artist, celebrating the Bible stories in both lithography and etching.



*“For there was never  
any yet that wholly  
could escape love, and  
never shall there be  
any, never so long as  
beauty shall be, never  
so long as eyes can see.”*

Chloe's Kiss, from: Daphnis and  
Chloe | Le Baiser de Chloé, 1961

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

54.1 x 38 cm. / 21.3 x 15 in.

Reference: Mourlot 316 |  
Cramer 46



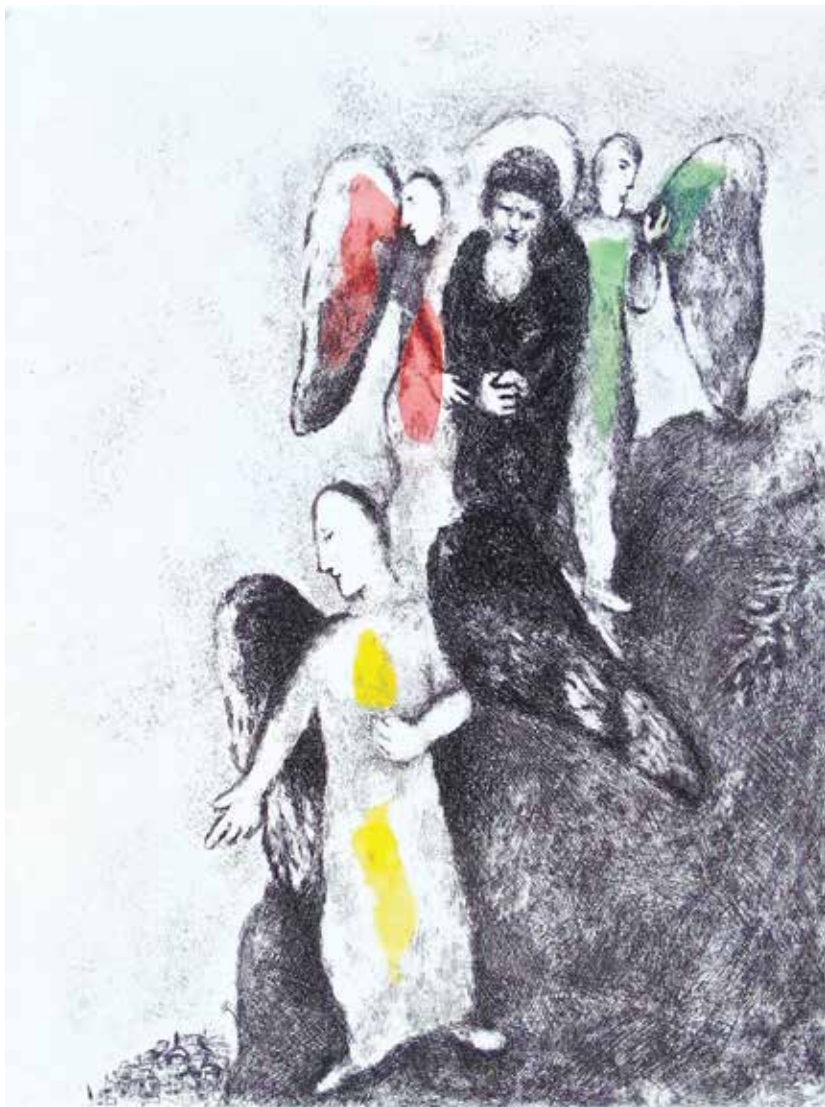


Sara and Abimelech, from:  
The Bible | Sara et Abimelech,  
from: Dessins pour la Bible, 1960

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

52.3 x 38 cm. / 20.6 x 15 in.

Reference: Mourlot 239



The Descent Toward Sodom,  
from: Bible | Descente vers  
Sodome, from: Bible, 1956

Original Hand-Coloured Etching  
with Watercolour on Arches  
Wove Paper

53.5 X 39 cm. / 20.9 X 15.35 in.

Reference: Volland 206 |  
Cramer 30



# TALES FROM THE EAST

Considered by many to be Chagall's lithographic masterpiece, the thirteen plates which comprise the illustration of *Tales from Arabian Nights* are a stunning celebration of colour, exoticism and mystery. The oriental stories provided a rich source for the artist's imagination. This quality had been recognised years earlier by Ambroise Vollard, when he publically had to defend his selection of Chagall to illustrate the French classic, *La Fontaine*. Writing in Chagall's defence, Vollard proclaimed *"an artist whose providence has made him familiar with the magic of the Orient would be the very person to produce sensitive illustrations"*.

When Chagall finished the *Arabian Nights* almost 30 years later, it was clear he had achieved perfection in bringing to life the charm of these tales.

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*"When I held in my hand  
a lithographic stone, or copper  
plate, I believed I was touching a  
talisman. It seemed to me that  
I could entrust them with all  
my joys, all my sorrows"*

Published in 1948 and in a limited edition of only 90, impressions from this series are amongst the most sought after of Chagall's graphic works.



Couple on a Blue Background, from:  
Four Tales from the Arabian Nights  
| Couple sur Fond Bleu, des: Contes  
des Mille et une Nuits, 1948

Original Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Laid Paper  
43 x 33 cm. / 16.9 x 12.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 47 |  
Cramer 18

In 1954, Chagall's Paris based dealer Aimé Maeght published an edition of his celebrated *Derrière le Miroir*, which was dedicated exclusively to the works of Chagall's Paris Series. The lithographs within contain some of the most beautiful imagery of Chagall motifs against the backdrop of recognisable Parisian sights.



Eiffel Tower with Donkey, from:  
*Derrière le Miroir* | La Tour Eiffel  
à l'Âne, 1954

Reference: Mourlot 97





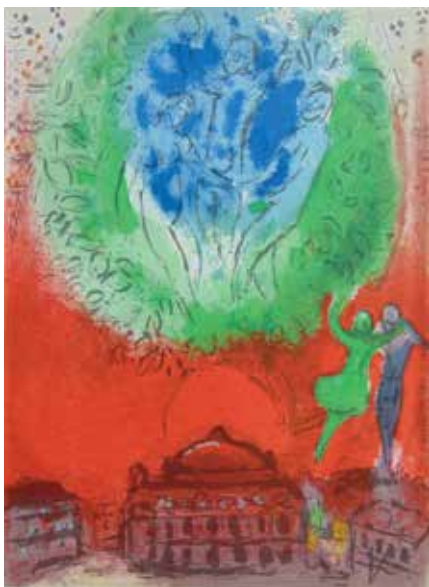
Quai aux Fleurs, from:  
Derrière le Miroir, 1954

Reference: Mourlot 99



St-Germain-des-Prés, from:  
Derrière le Miroir, 1954

Reference: Mourlot 100



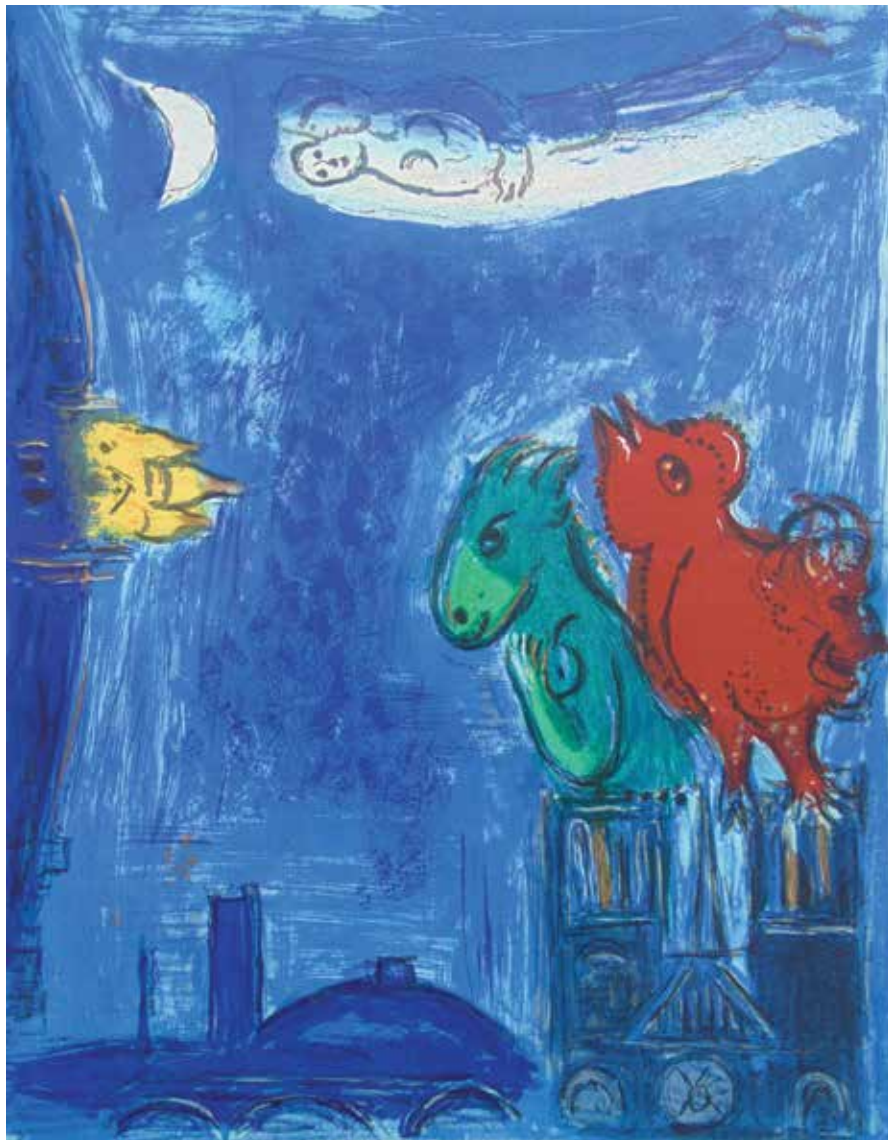
The Opera, from: Derrière le  
Miroir | Le Opéra, 1954

Reference: Mourlot 102



The Carrousel of the Louvre, from:  
Derrière le Miroir | La Carrousel  
du Louvre, 1954

Reference: Mourlot 103



The Monsters of the Notre-Dame,  
from: *Derrière le Miroir* | Les  
Monstres de Notre-Dame, 1954

Reference: Mourlot 101



Quai de Bercy, from: *Derrière le Miroir*, 1954

Reference: Murlot 93



# MUSIC:

## *A Symphony of Colours*

Even from the earliest works created by Chagall in Vitebsk, the presence of musical instruments is an intrinsic part of the artist's identity and a constant element in his expression. The more traditional instruments of Russian folk music are as celebrated as the more genteel, classical instruments used in Operas.

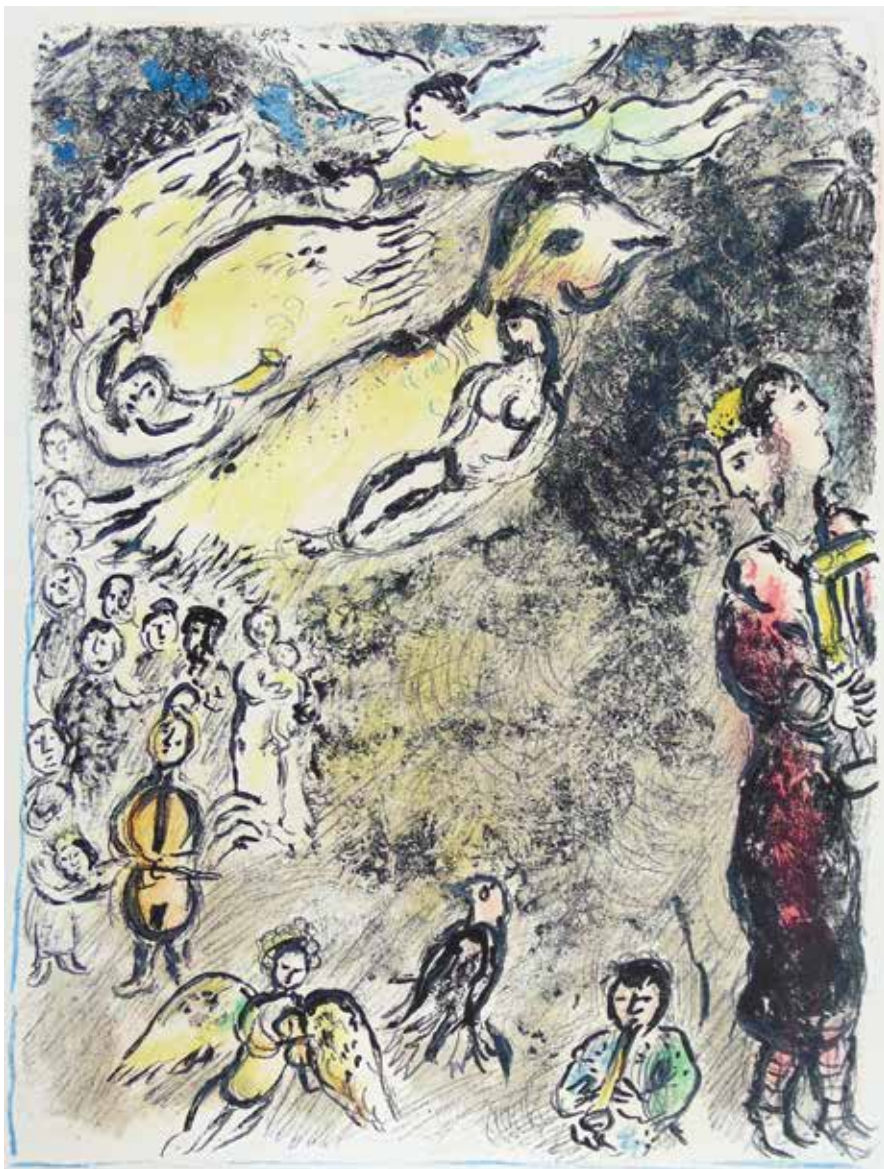
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's, *Die Zauberflöte* [The Magic Flute], particularly captivated Chagall, referring the composer, he declared...

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*"... he is a God and the Magic Flute is divine, the greatest of all operas. No, I cannot explain why; who can say why a God is divine..."*

The artist's dream to bring what is considered to be the most 'colourful' orchestral arrangement of the 18th Century to life in vivid 20th century, was finally realised as a result of a collaboration with Günther Rennert, Munich Opera and Rudolf Bing of the Metropolitan Opera, New York in 1964. The artist was commissioned to produce the stage designs for the entire production, a task that stimulated and enthralled Chagall.

The subject of the Magic Flute would continue to be a source of inspiration well into the artist's later life.

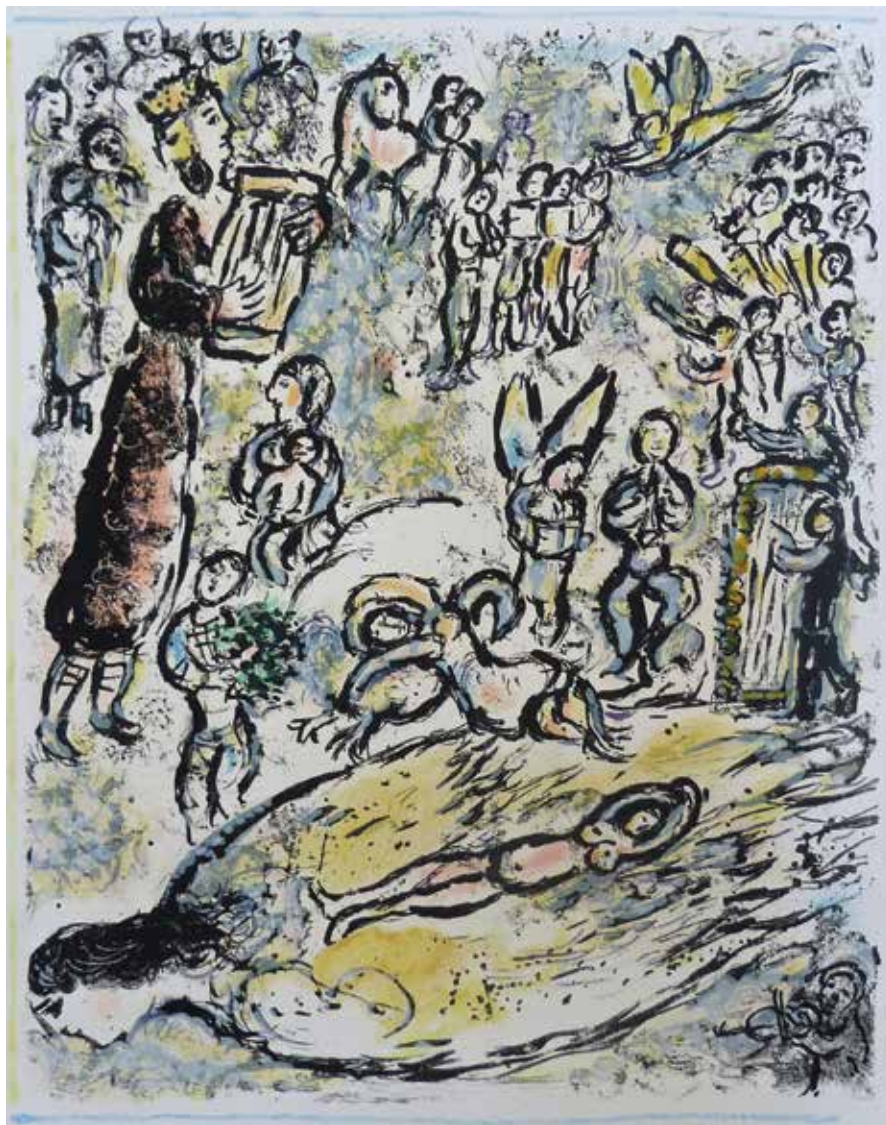


The Magic Flute I | La Flûte  
Enchantée I, 1972

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Wove Paper

58 x 44 cm. / 22.8 x 17.3 in.

Reference: Mourlot 663



The Magic Flute II | La Flûte  
Enchantée II, 1972

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

59 x 44 cm. / 23.2 x 17.3 in.

Reference: Mourlot 665





Branch with Flute Player | Branche  
aux Joueurs de Flûte, 1957

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph on  
Canson Grey Paper

65.3 x 50 cm. / 25.7 x 19.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 180







Siren and Fish, from:  
Nice and the Côte d'Azur |  
Sirène et Poisson, 1964

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Arches  
Wove Paper

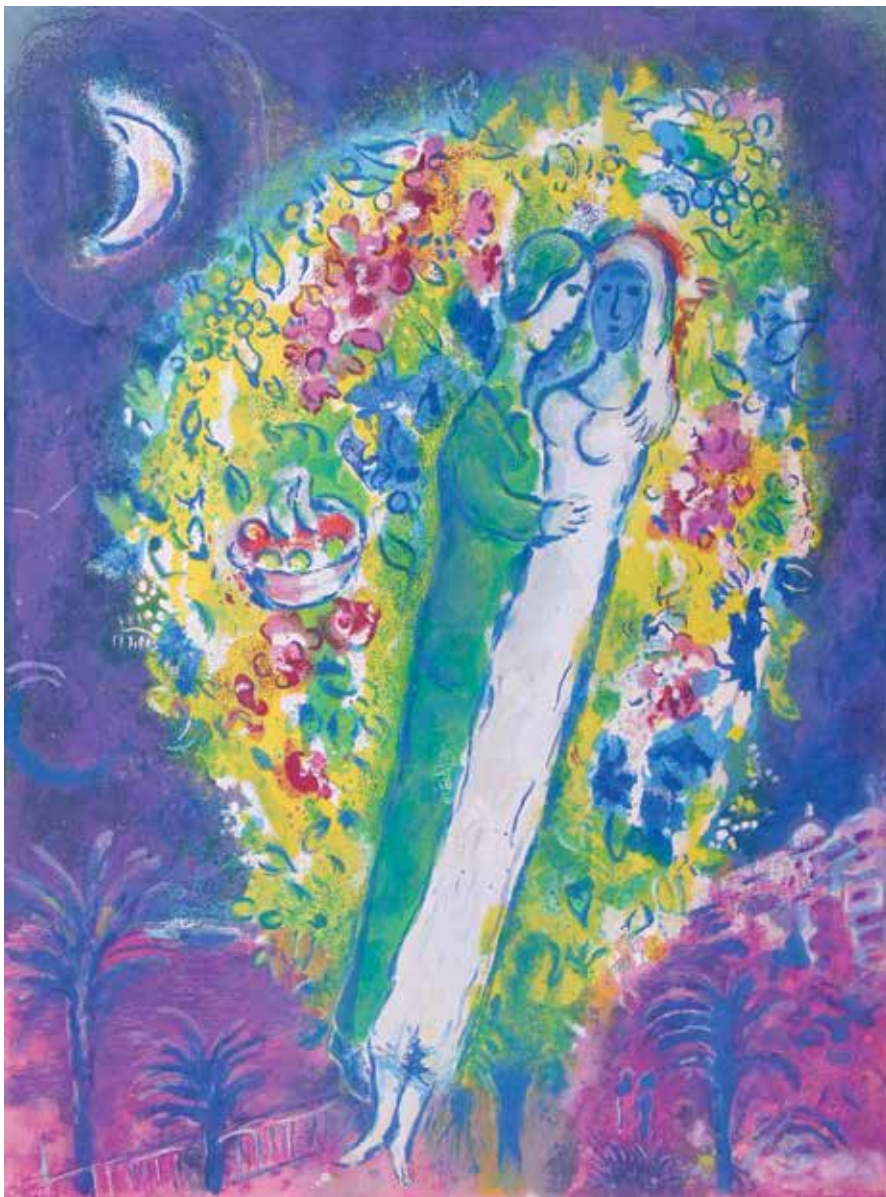
74 x 52.5 cm. / 29.1 x 20.7 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 28









*"The stars were my best friends. The air was full of legends and phantoms, full of mythical and fairy tale creatures, which suddenly flew away over the roof, so that one was at one with the firmament."*

Couple in Mimosas, from: Nice and the Côte d'Azur | Couple dans les Mimosas, 1964

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

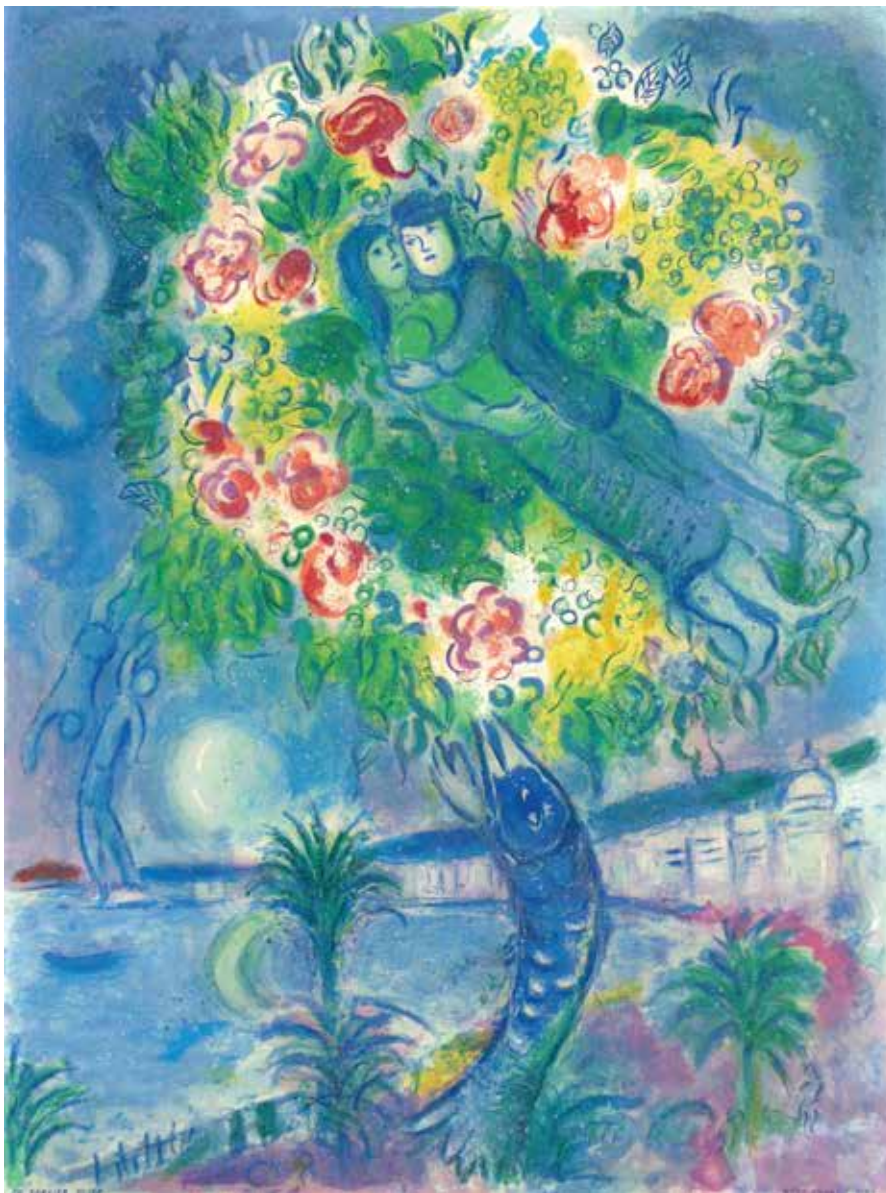
74 x 53 cm. / 29 x 21 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 32









*“Only love interests  
me, and I am only  
in contact with  
things that revolve  
around love.”*

Couple and Fish, from: Nice  
and the Côte d'Azur | Couple et  
Poisson, 1964

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

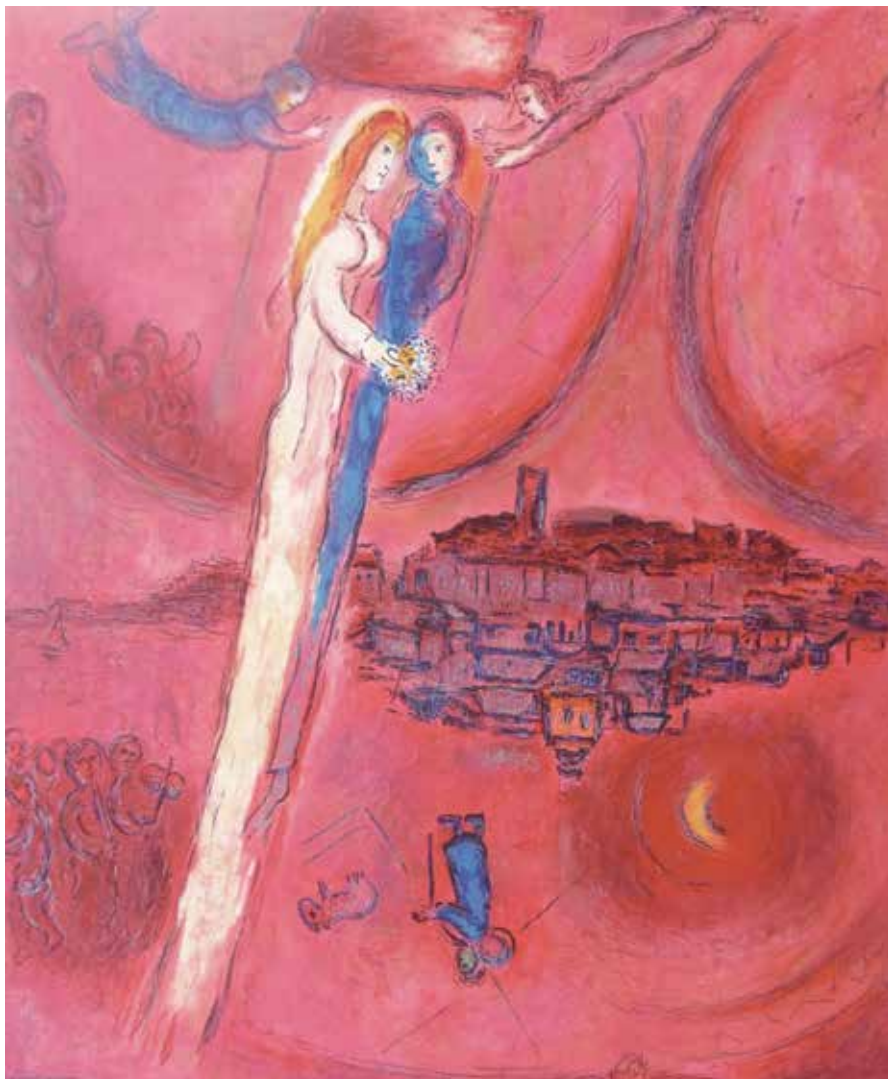
74 x 52.5 cm. / 29.1 x 20.7 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 34





*“Art must be an  
expression of love,  
or it is nothing”*



The Song of Songs | Le Cantique  
des Cantiques, 1975

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

71 x 53.5 cm. / 28 x 21 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 47



*“You could wonder  
for hours what flowers  
mean, but for me,  
they’re life itself, in all  
its happy brilliance.  
We couldn’t do with  
out flowers. Flowers  
help you forget  
life’s tragedies.”*



The Bouquet | Le Bouquet, 1955

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

74 x 55 cm. / 29.1 x 21.7 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 8



Still Life with Bouquet | Nature  
Morte au Bouquet, 1960

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

74 x 58 cm. / 29.2 x 22.8 in.

Reference: Mourlot 299



*“Art is the increasing effort to compete with the beauty of flowers – and never succeeding.”*



The Poppies | Les Coquelicots, 1949

Hand Signed, Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

63 x 48.2 cm. / 24.8 x 19 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 47





Basket of Fruit and Pineapples |  
Corbeille de Fruits et Ananas, 1964

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on BFK Wove Paper

76 x 56 cm. / 29.9 x 22 in.

Reference: Mourlot 421









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*“Colour is all.  
When colour is right,  
form is right.  
Colour is everything.  
Colour is vibration  
like music; everything  
is vibration.”*

The Joy of Living | La Joie de Vivre, 1967

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

74.5 x 53.5 cm. / 29.3 x 21.2 in.

Reference: Mourlot 472









Motherhood | Maternité, 1954

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Arches  
Wove Paper

59.5 x 78.5 cm. / 23.4 x 31 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 7









Motherhood | Maternité, 1962  
Original Hand Signed Unique  
Monotype in Colours on Japan  
Nacré Paper

56 x 38.2 cm. / 22 x 15 in.

Reference: Cramer 32



The Angel | L'Ange, 1960

Original Hand Signed, Inscribed  
and Dedicated Lithograph in  
Colours with a Drawing on  
Arches Wove Paper

56.5 x 42 cm. / 22.2 x 16.5 in.

Reference: Mourlot 288





*“Perhaps my art is the art of a madman, a glittering mercury, a blue soul that breaks through my pictures.”*

The Angel with the Candlestick |  
L'Ange au Chandelier, 1973

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

75 x 53 cm. / 29.5 x 20.9 in.

Reference: C. Sorlier 46



The Trap | Le Piège, 1962

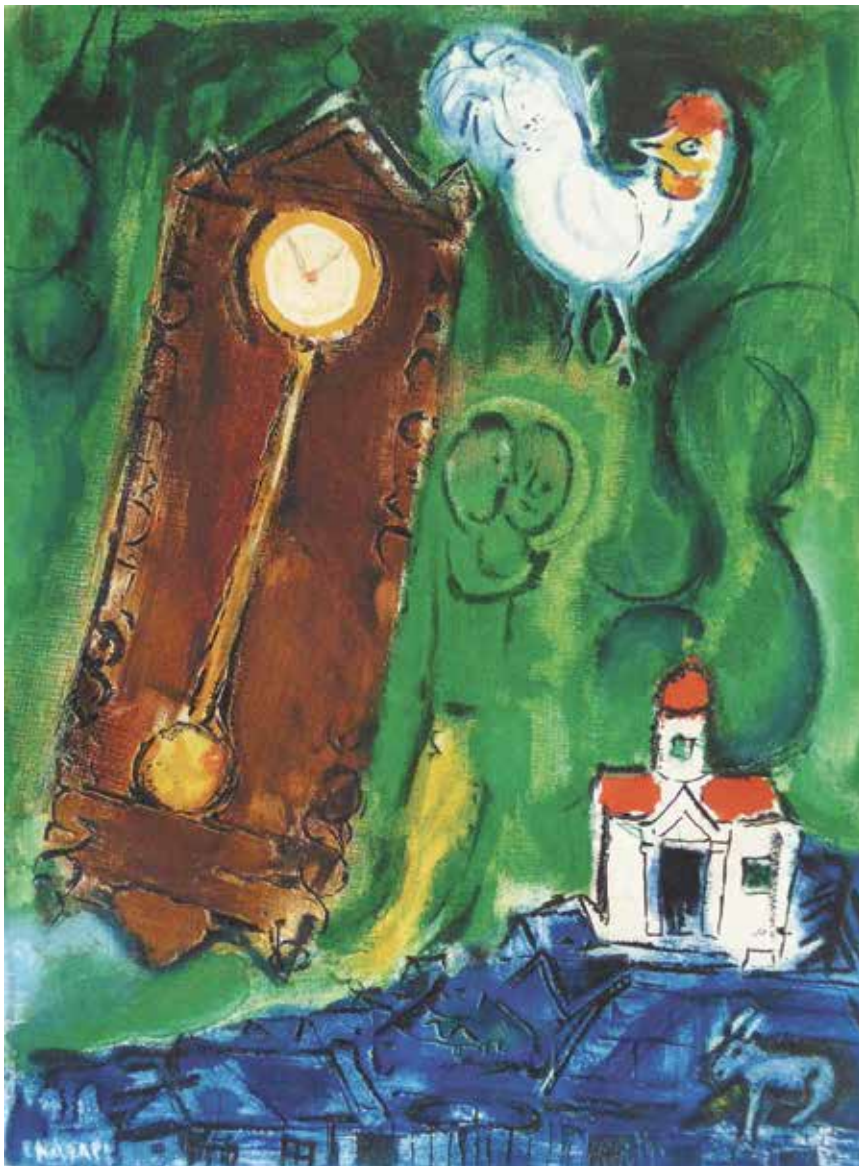
Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

56.5 x 42 cm. / 22.2 x 16.5 in.

Reference: Mourlot 355



*"Time is a river  
without banks."*



The Rooster and the Clock, ca. 1956

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Etching with Aquatint on  
BFK Rives Wove Paper

55.2 x 38 cm. / 21.7 x 14.9 in.

Reference: Maeght 1202



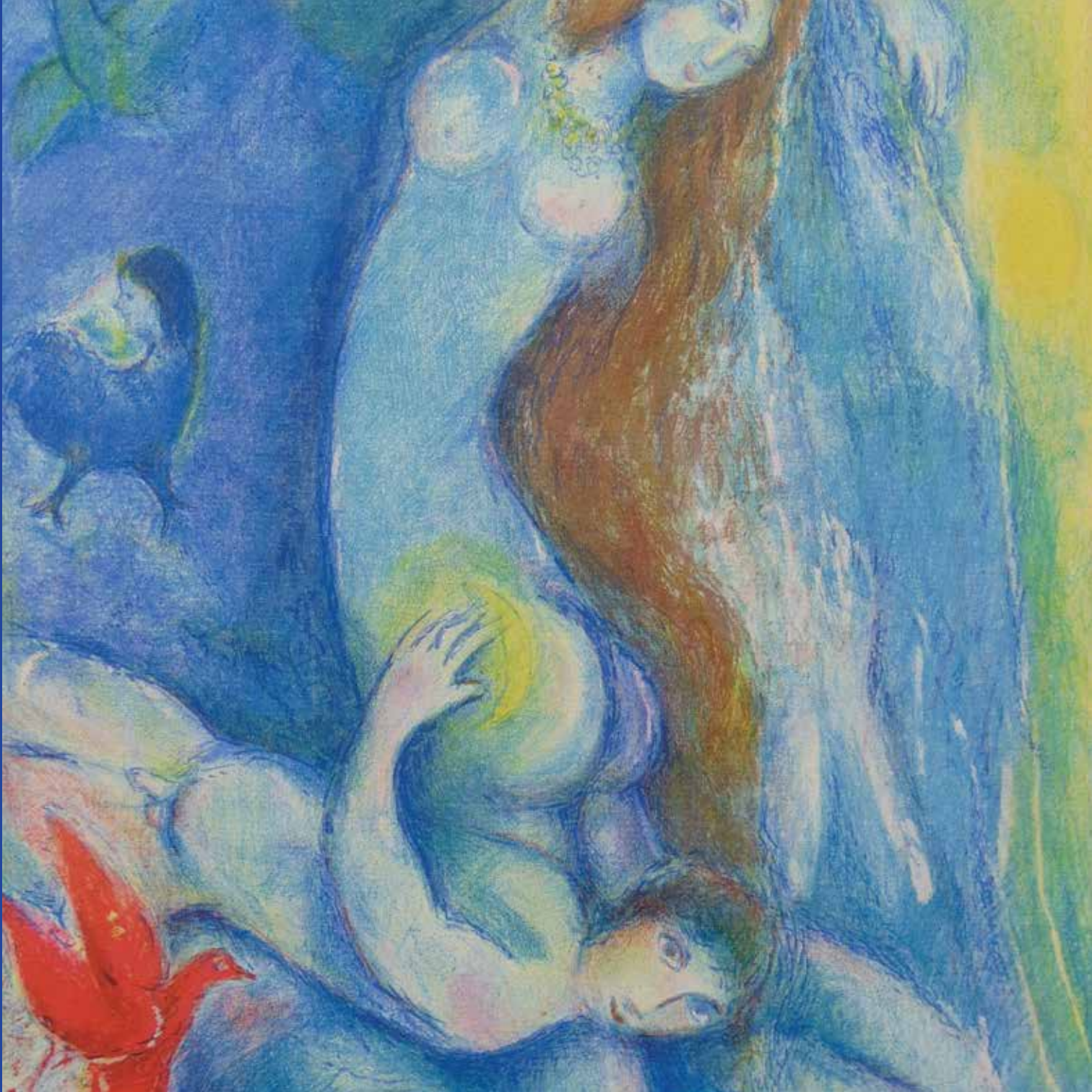
Lithographs I (Cover) | Couverture  
Jaquette, Lithographie I, 1960

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Arches Wove Paper

47.7 x 65 cm. / 18.8 x 25.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 281





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Marc Chayall

