



# Chagall

a life



# Chagall a life

September – November 2019





# Introduction

Gilden's Art Gallery is delighted to present a series of works on paper from the Modern Master, Marc Chagall (1887-1985). Taking inspiration from the artist's own biography, "Mein Leben" [My Life], started in 1911 and completed in 1922, the exhibition expands upon the major themes in the artist's colourful life.

We begin with the artists' formative years in the Russian town of Vitebsk, now in modern-day Belarus and the lifelong impact his beloved wife Bella had on his works. Fleeing the Nazi invasion of France, the Chagalls sought refuge in the United States of America – the second exile of their lives – as they were never to return to Russia.

Following Bella's tragic death in America, Chagall fulfilled his promise to her that he would return to Paris and did so in the late summer of 1948, it would be the beginning of a new age in the Parisian art world and Chagall was celebrated once more in his much-loved adoptive city.

As the years passed he moved to the South of France and made numerous trips to Greece, inspired by his close friend and publisher Efstratios Eleftheriades (Tériade). The light of the Mediterranean from the Bay of Angels to the Island of Lesvos would forever be remembered in Chagall's stunning blues.

Throughout his life, faith would always be present – a reminder of his identity and of those that came before him. Symbols of Judaic and Christian storytelling were woven seamlessly together to create a narrative so distinctively Chagall.

We are delighted to welcome you to the gallery to enjoy these beautiful works.



## Russia

Marc Chagall was born on 6th July 1887 Shagal, Mark, Zakharovich, Moses in the suburb of Peskovatik in Vitebsk. The sights, sounds and smells of the neighbourhood would remain etched in the artist's memory and he took them with him across the world. The village motifs mixed with his desire to remember the uniquely Jewish culture of Vitebsk have given us some of the most iconic imagery of Chagall's oeuvre. Rabbis, shtetl houses and folk music are all recurrent in the artist's prints from the beginning to the end of his career. He drew inspiration from his colourful family and their habits as well as the figures he passed in the streets of Vitebsk.

The shtetl, from the Yiddish, was a Jewish village or town in Eastern Europe that could vary greatly in size. They were also defined as microcosms of Jewish life with families coming from all walks of life. In the case of Peskovatik, the neighbourhood was full of small wooden houses, closely packed together. Animals were kept in the yards and the sense of the countryside was never far away. Over time the distinctive Russian village architecture gives way to the villages of Provence, but still the artist's childhood is evoked.

### **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



The oil painting "The Praying Jew" on which this work is based is held in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. This, along with one other version in oil held by the Ca' Pesaro, Venice, were created in 1923 upon the artist's return to Paris following the First World War. On his arrival in Paris it became clear much of the works he had created before the outbreak of war had not survived and so Chagall created these two paintings based on an oil he created in Vitebsk in 1914.

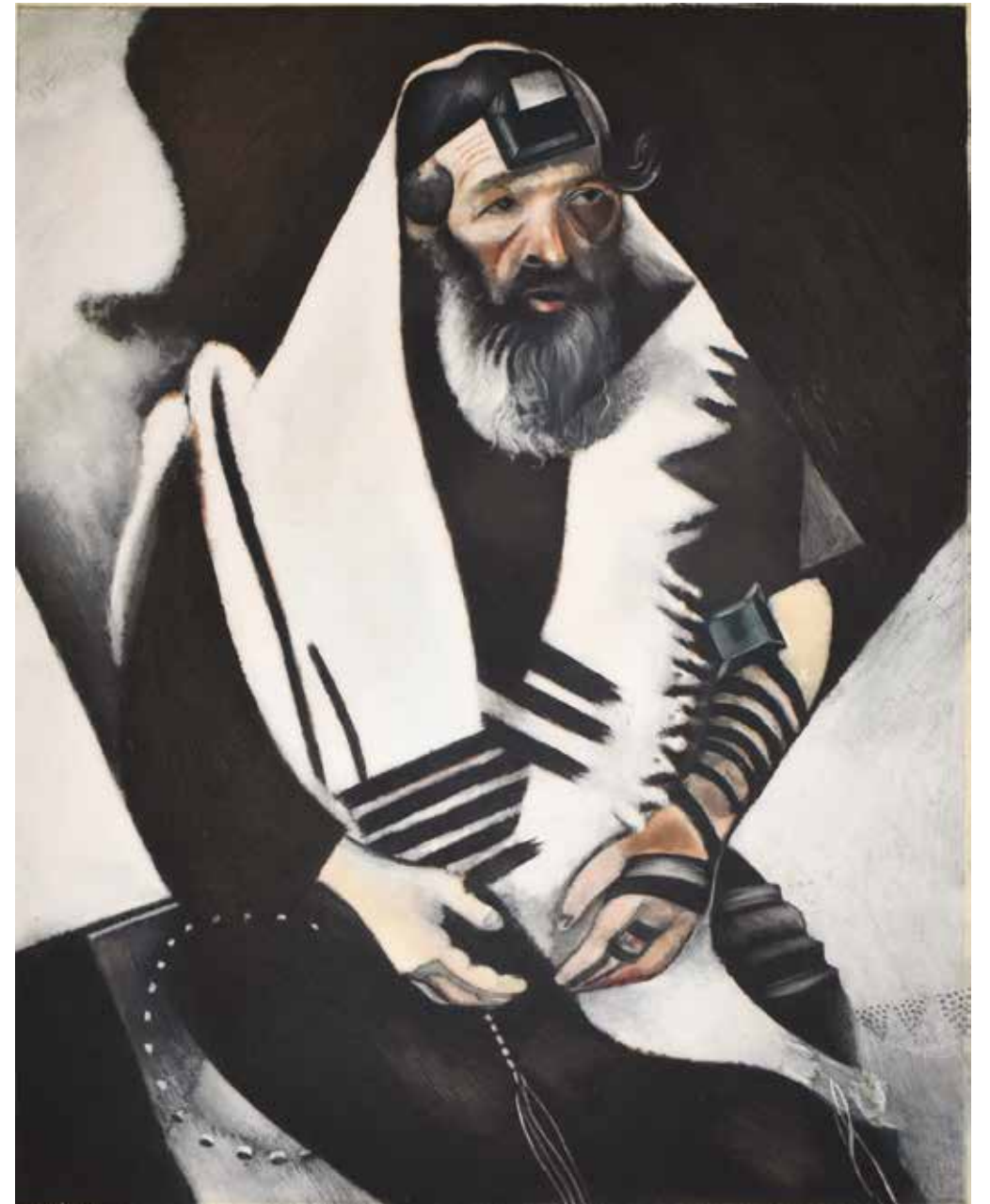
The central figure was a beggar in Vitebsk who the artist had paid to wear his father's prayer clothes in an attempt to capture what Chagall felt were fast disappearing traditions.

The composition although solemn in choice of palette shows the influence of Cubism on Chagall – proving that even the most traditional subjects from the artist's life in Vitebsk can be viewed alongside the burgeoning Parisian Avant-garde.

**The Rabbi of Vitebsk (The Praying Jew) | Le Rabbin de Vitebsk (Le Juif priant), 1924**

Hand Signed and Numbered Etching and Aquatint in Colours on chine-collé on Japan Paper

70 x 53.5 cm. / 27.6 x 21 in.







**Peasant with Bouquet |  
Paysan au Bouquet, 1968**

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

57.5 x 41 cm. / 22.6 x 16 in.

Reference: Mourlot 550



**Little Peasants II | Petit  
Paysans II, 1968**

Original Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Wove Paper

60 x 48 cm. / 23.6 x 18.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 547



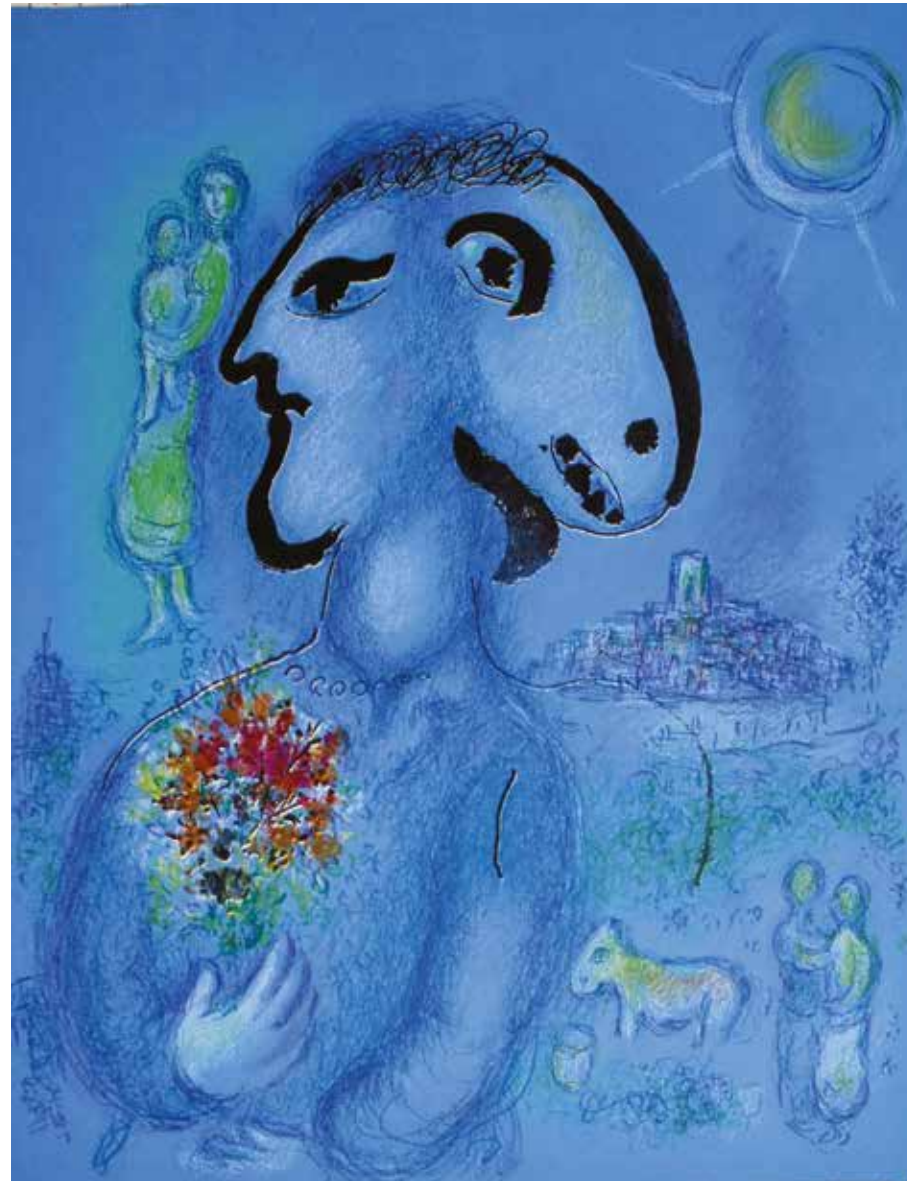


**After Winter, from:  
Beyond the Mirror | Après  
l'Hiver, from: Derrière le  
Miroir 1972**

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

51 x 66 cm. / 20.1 x 26 in.

Reference: Mourlot 651



**The Blue Village  
(Second State) | Le village  
bleu (2e état), 1974**

Original Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Japan Nacré  
Paper

56 x 43 cm. / 22 x 16.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 729



# Bella

It was on a late September afternoon of 1909 that Berta Rosenfeld first laid eyes on Marc Chagall. An aspiring actress and an accomplished writer she first described the artist's eyes in such a way that the reader can imagine clearly their affection and their love at first sight.

"When you did catch a glimpse of his eyes, they were as blue as if they'd fallen straight out of the sky. They were strange eyes - long, almond-shaped - each seemed to sail along by itself, like a little boat."

She was by the artist's side through the challenging relocations of their married life from Vitebsk, to Petrograd (Saint Petersburg), Vitebsk once more, spells in Lithuania, Paris and ultimately New York, where they had both fled with the help of Solomon Guggenheim in order to escape the spread of Nazism throughout Europe. It was in France, during the 1920s that she changed her name to Bella believing it to be more befitting of the wife of a French artist.

It is often recalled that Bella was not only Chagall's first wife but also his most inspiring muse and his unending love for her would see her portrait appear all through the rest of the artist's life even though Bella had departed this world in New York in September 1944. Her distinctive profile can be seen in many of the couple's portraits.

## **The Angel Violinist | L'Ange violoniste, 1975**

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

66 x 50 cm. / 26 x 19.7 in.

Reference: Mourlot 833







**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



**Easel with Flowers | Le  
Chevalet aux Fleurs, 1976**

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

76 x 51 cm. / 30 x 20 in.

Reference: Mourlot 838





**The Open Window | La Fenêtre ouverte, 1971**

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph on Arches  
Wove Paper

76 x 56 cm. / 29.9 x 22 in.

Reference: Mourlot 637

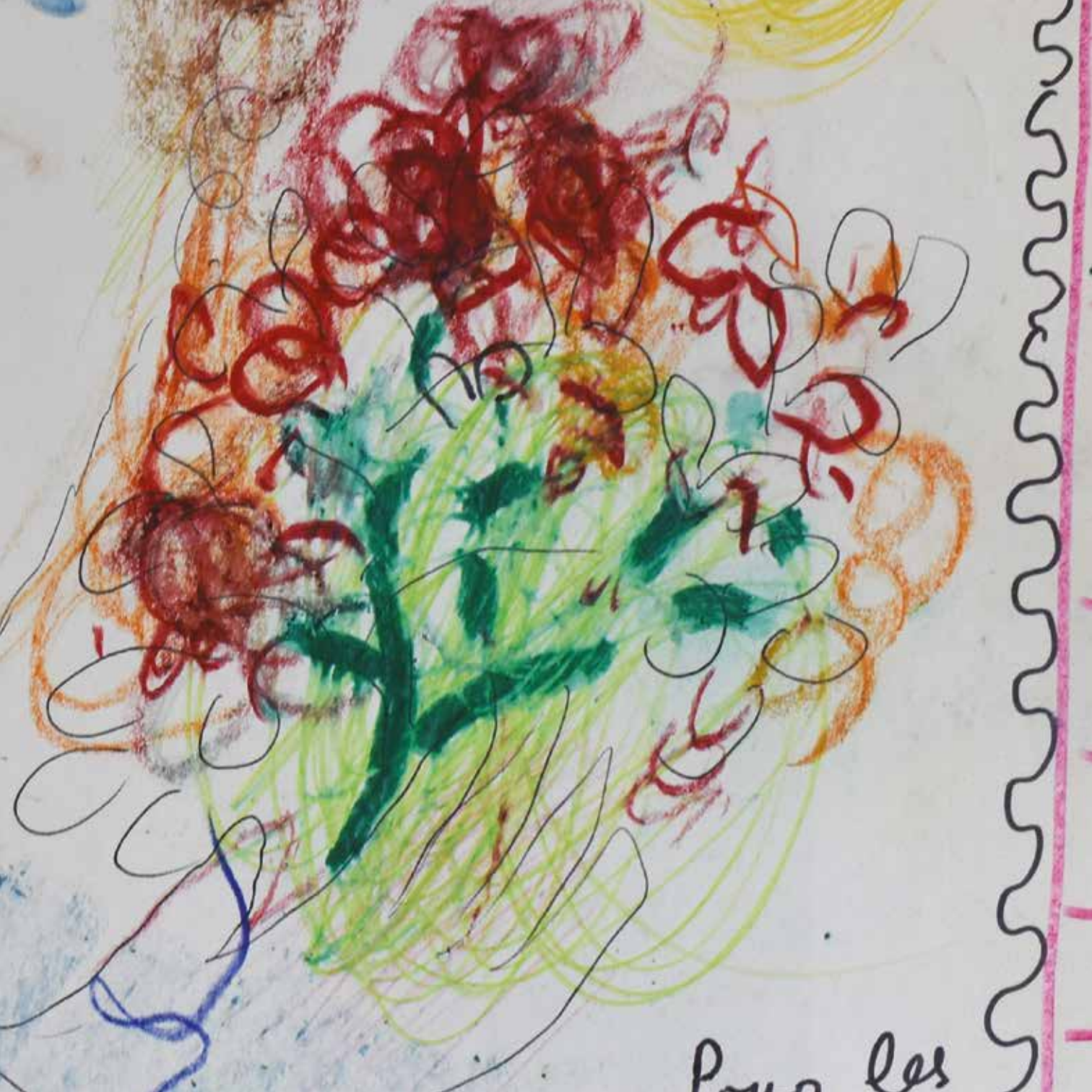


**Self-Portrait with Easel | Autoportrait au Chevalet, 1979**

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Etching on Wove Paper

64 x 49.5 cm. / 25.1 x 19.5 in.





**The Artist (self-portrait),  
with Bouquet of Flowers,  
1975**

Original Signed and Dedicated  
Drawing in Crayon with Pen and  
Ink on Paper and Original Colour  
Lithograph on Paper.

27.8 x 28.4 cm. / 10.9 x 11.2 in.

Reference: Mourlot 728

Provenance: Collection Neuman,  
St Paul de Vence;

Bequeathed by Neuman to the  
Leo Baeck College.





**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



**Dedication | Dédicace,  
1968**

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

62.5 x 47.5 cm. / 24.6 x 18.7 in.

Reference: Mourlot 557



## America: In Exile

Marc and Bella Chagall arrived in New York on the evening of 21st June 1941, having left behind their only daughter Ida and her husband Michel in France. Funds for their passage had been raised by Solomon Guggenheim and they began their new life in exile with much apprehension. Chagall repaid his sponsors by giving lectures on his early works and the son of Henri Matisse, Pierre, mounted numerous exhibitions of Chagall's paintings. Ida and Michel eventually made it to safety in New York to join her parents and quite incredibly was able to bring many of his paintings on the more than 40 day journey across the Atlantic.

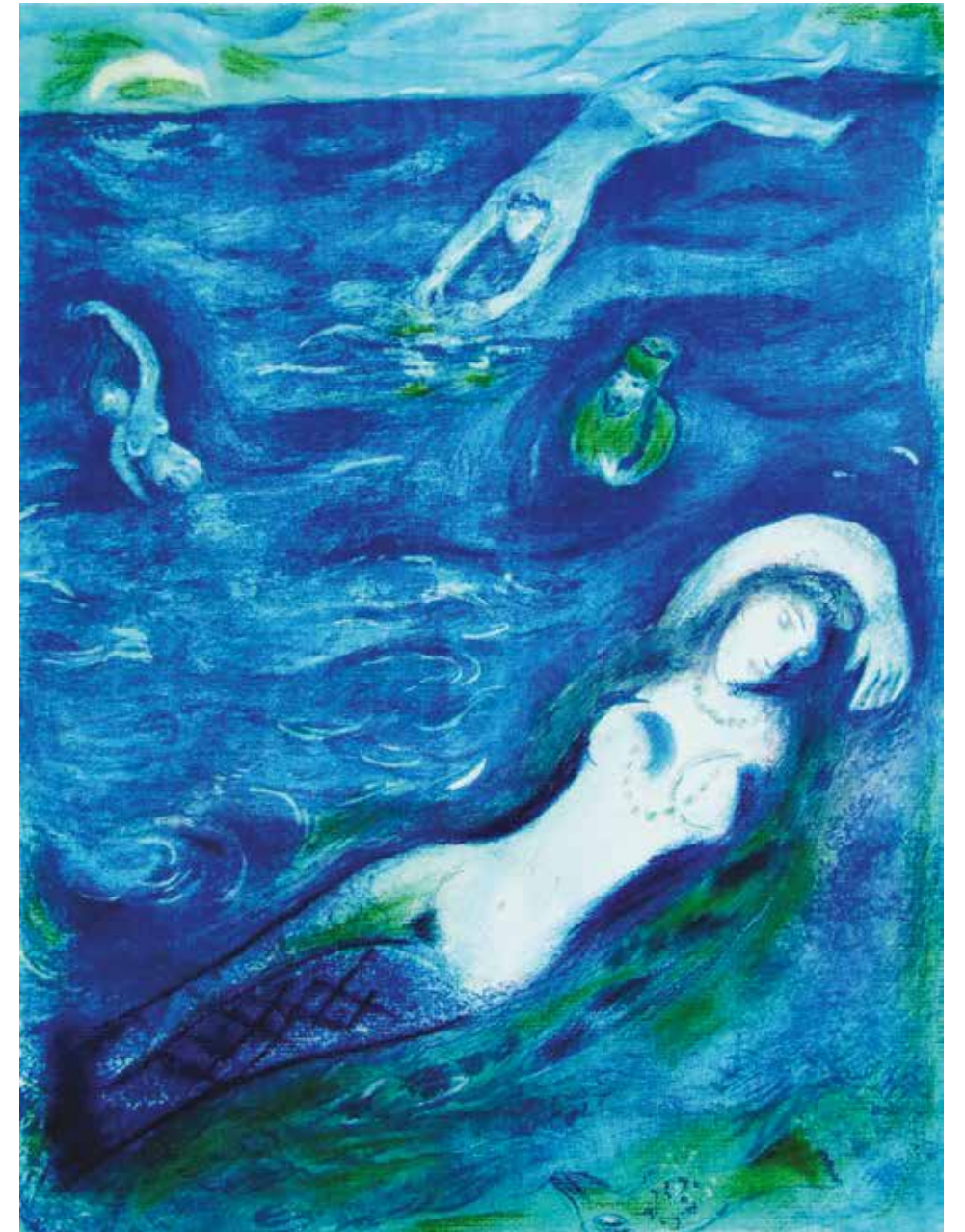
Whilst finding his feet in the unfamiliar city, Chagall was approached by another Jewish émigré from Europe – the publisher Kurt Wolff who had also fled with his wife Helen through the assistance of Varian Fry. Wolff enticed Chagall to illustrate the series "*Four Tales from the Arabian Nights*" for his newly founded publishing house, Pantheon Books. These were not only the first lithographs in colour created by the artist, who would later go on to be revered for his colour lithography, but were considered to be amongst the finest lithographs in colour ever created up to that point by any artist. They were so revered that they won the Graphic Prize at the Venice Biennial in 1948, the same year they were published.

**So I came Forth of the Sea..., from: Four Tales from the Arabian Nights, 1948**

Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours  
on Laid Paper

43 x 33 cm. / 16.9 x 12.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 40; Cramer 18





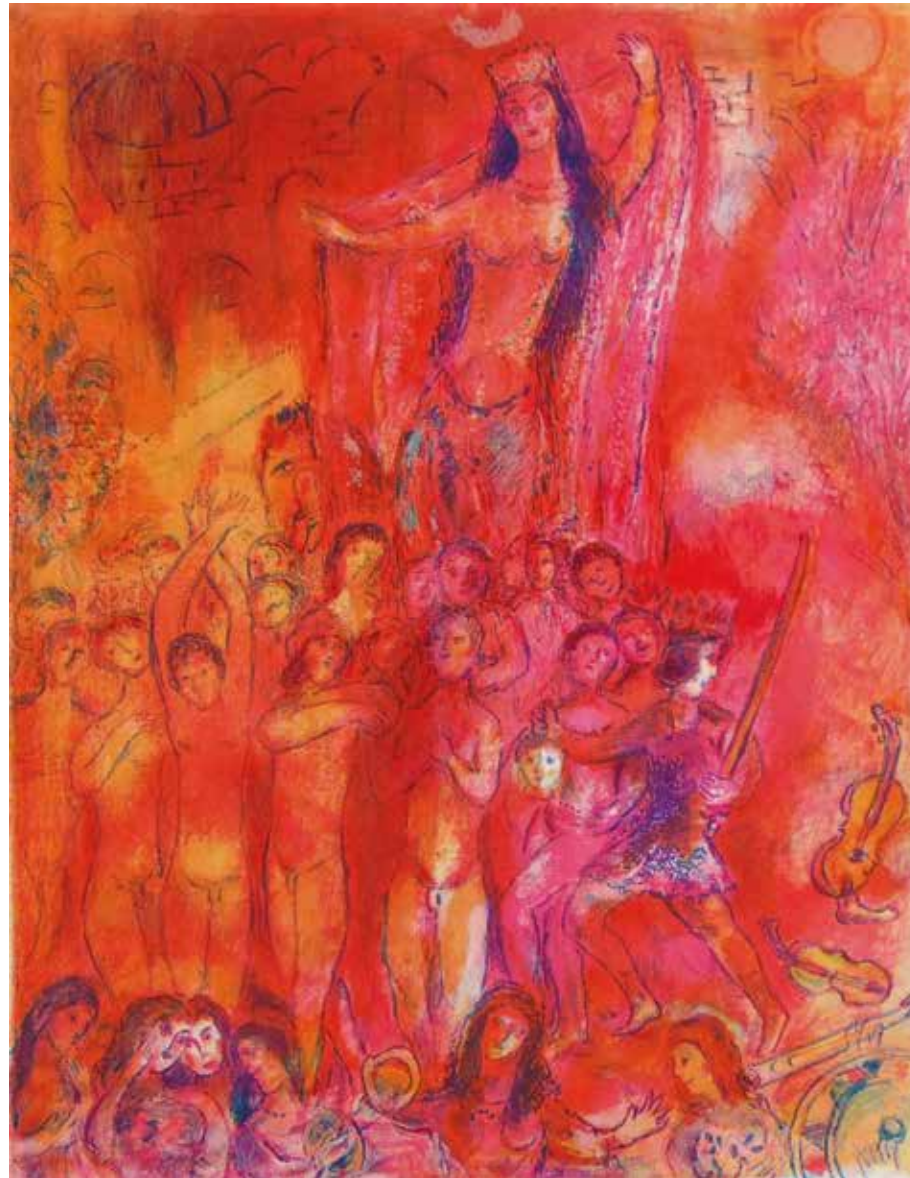


**Disrobing her with his own Hand..., from: Four Tales from the Arabian Nights, 1948**

Original Hand Signed and Numbered Lithograph in Colours on Laid Paper

43 x 33 cm. / 16.9 x 12.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 39; Cramer 18



**They were in Forty Pairs...., from: Four Tales from the Arabian Nights, 1948**

Original Hand Signed and Numbered Lithograph in Colours on Laid Paper

43 x 33 cm. / 16.9 x 12.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 37; Cramer 18





**Then the Boy displayed to the Dervish his Bosom..., from: Four Tales from the Arabian Nights, 1948**

Original Hand Signed and Numbered Lithograph in Colours on Laid Paper

43 x 33 cm. / 16.9 x 12.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 36; Cramer 18



**When Abdullah got the Net Ashore..., from: Four Tales from the Arabian Nights, 1948**

Original Hand Signed Lithograph in Colours on Laid Paper

43 x 33 cm. / 16.9 x 12.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 43; Cramer 18



## Return to Paris

Paris was Chagall's spiritual home in France. It was here that he and Bella had made their lives following the Russian Revolution and the city which it pained them to leave during the War. Chagall's return to his home was bittersweet, without Bella, but with a new wave of enthusiasm for the Modernists that had survived the war. Those that had survived, resisted, fled and returned were feted in the Post War Parisian art scene. This new embrace was precisely what Chagall had hoped for to heal his wounds and allowed him to begin to re-imagine the city around him. A retrospective in 1947, was built upon with greater vigour by the dealer Aimé Maeght – who mounted the now famous Paris Series exhibition in 1954.

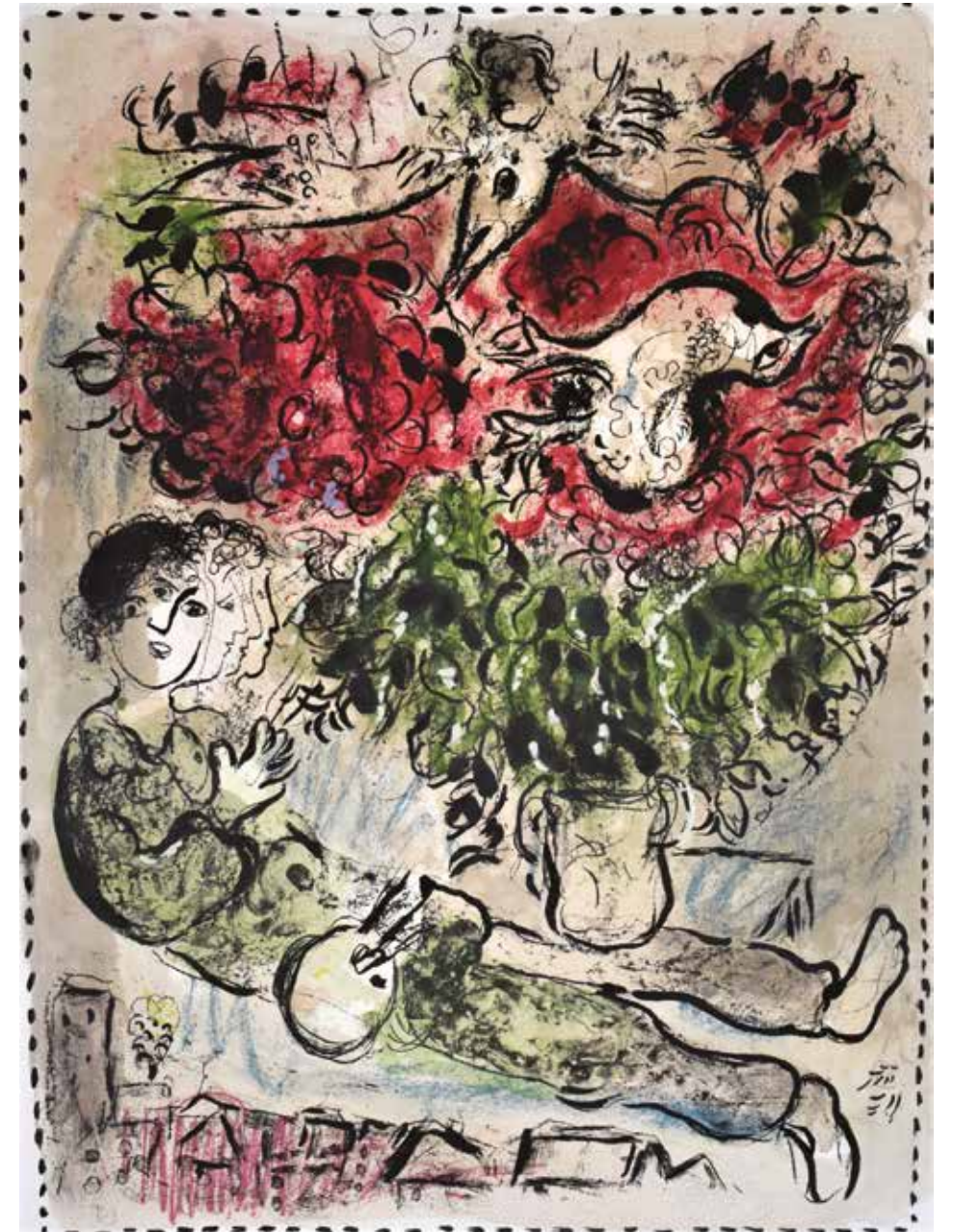
To coincide with this exhibition, Maeght published an edition of his celebrated *Derrière le Miroir*, which was dedicated exclusively to the works of Chagall's Paris Series. The lithographs within contain some of the most beautiful imagery of Chagall motifs against the backdrop of recognisable Parisian sights. Yet these sites occupy a smaller part of the composition than his pre-war works, now the figures were centre stage. The music, the bouquets, the circus characters were back to breathe new life into Paris, much as the city would rejuvenate Chagall.

### **The Painter's Bouquet | Le bouquet de peintre, 1967**

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

76 x 57.5 cm. / 29.9 x 22.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 483





# Monotypes

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 works "Femme-oiseau" and "Le Repos".

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".

Chagall would apply the printing inks directly onto either Perspex or copper in order to create the monotype. As it is only possible to make a single impression from this process, it was imperative that the artist was satisfied with the composition before proceeding to print.

## **Bird-Woman | Femme-oiseau, 1962**

Original Hand Signed Unique  
Monotype in Colours on Japan Nacré  
Paper

38.5 x 28 cm. / 15.1 x 11 in.

Literature: Leymarie, J. & Cramer,  
G. (1966) Marc Chagall, Monotypes  
1961-1965. Geneva: Cramer.

Illustrated: Illustrated Cramer 48 p. 76







**Mother and Child before  
Notre Dame, from: Visions  
of Paris | Visions de Paris,  
1952**

Original Lithograph in Colours on  
Wove Paper

35.5 x 26.5 cm. / 14 x 10.4 in.

Reference: Mourlot 82



**Place de la Concorde,  
from: Visions of Paris |  
Visions de Paris, 1952**

Original Lithograph in Colours on  
Wove Paper

35.5 x 26.5 cm. / 14 x 10.4 in.

Reference: Mourlot 83





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

Original Lithograph in Colours on  
Wove Paper  
38.2 x 27.6 cm. / 15 x 10.9 in.  
Reference: Mourlot 100



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

Original Lithograph in Colours on  
Wove Paper  
38.2 x 27.6 cm. / 15 x 10.9 in.  
Reference: Mourlot 103



**The Pantheon, from:  
Derrière le Miroir | Le  
Panthéon, 1954**

Original Lithograph on Wove Paper  
38.2 x 27.6 cm. / 15 x 10.9 in.  
Reference: Mourlot 95



**Mother and Child at  
the Eiffel Tower, from:  
Derrière le Miroir | Mère et  
enfant à la Tour Eiffel, 1954**

Original Lithograph on Wove Paper  
38.2 x 27.6 cm. / 15 x 10.9 in.  
Reference: Mourlot 94





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

Original Lithograph in Colours on  
Wove Paper

38.2 x 27.6 cm. / 15 x 10.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 97



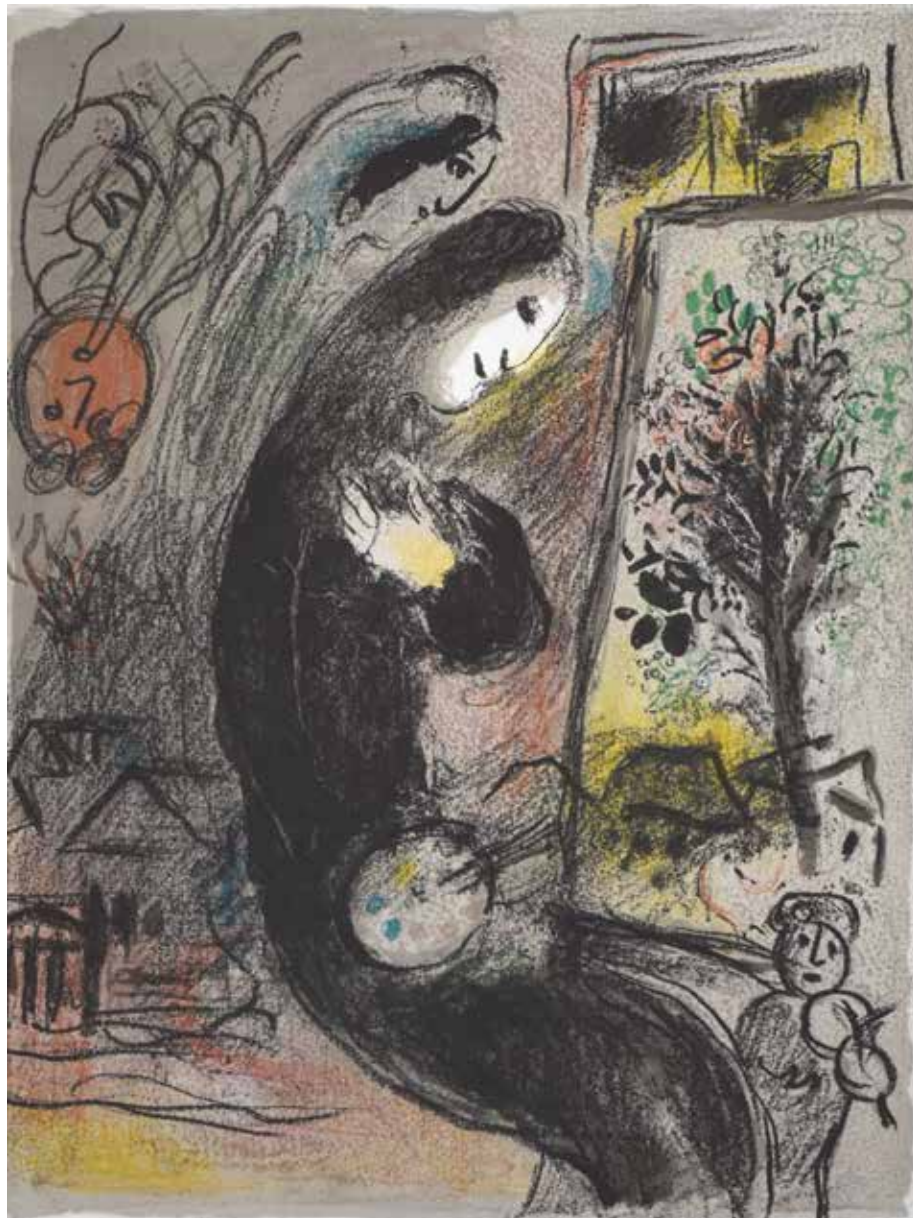
**Sunday, from: Derrière  
le Miroir | Le Dimanches,  
1954**

Original Lithograph in Colours on  
Wove Paper

38.2 x 27.6 cm. / 15 x 10.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 98





**Inspired | L'Inspiré, 1963**

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

46 x 32.5 cm. / 18.1 x 12.8 in.

Reference: Mourlot 398



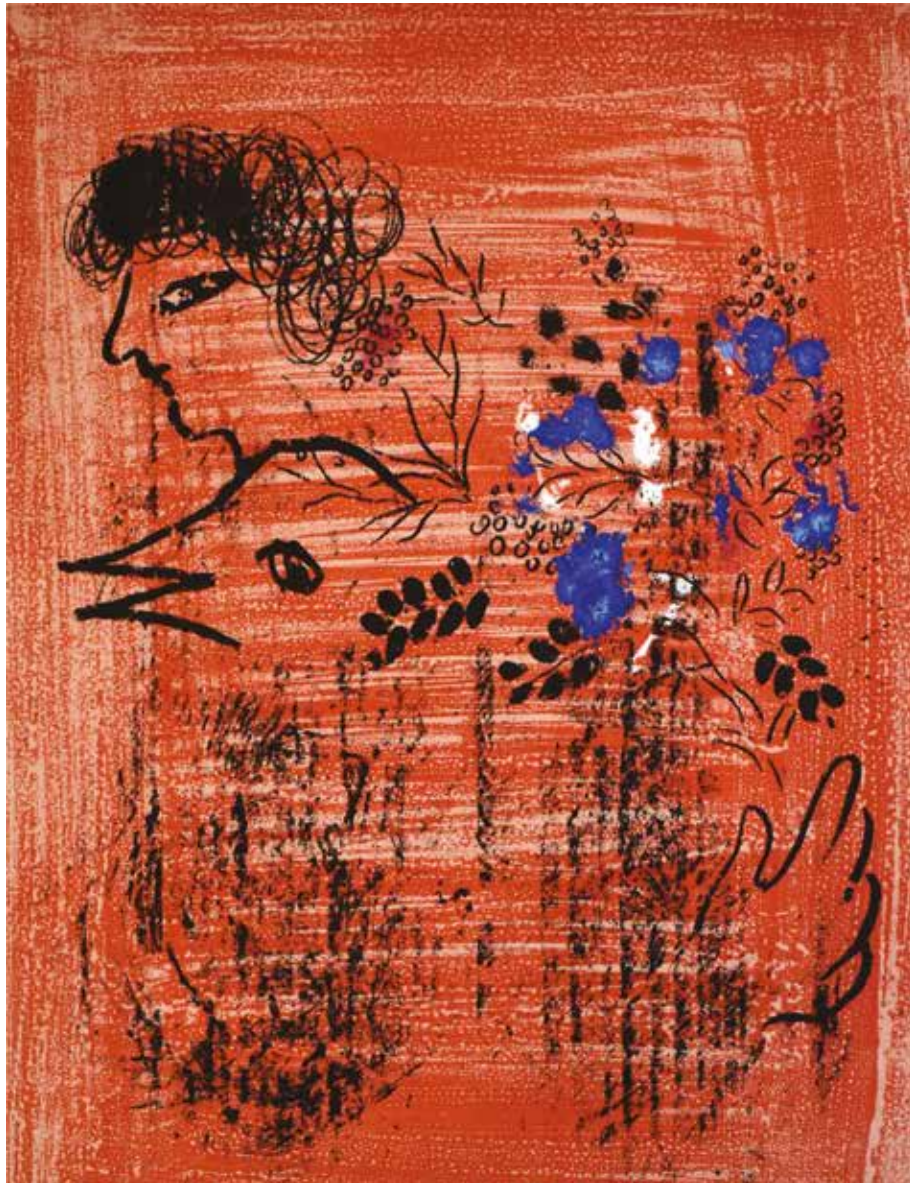
**Fantastic Composition  
1st State | Composition  
Fantastique 1ere Etat, 1976**

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

84 x 63 cm. / 33 x 24.8 in.

Reference: Mourlot 896





**Bouquet with Bird |  
Bouquet à l'Oiseau, 1960**

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

49 x 35 cm. / 19.3 x 13.8 in.

Reference: Mourlot 297



**The Poppies | Les  
Coquelicots, 1949**

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Arches  
Wove Paper

63 x 48.2 cm. / 24.8 x 19 in.

Reference: Charles Sorlier 2





**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.



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

Original Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph on Canson gray paper

65.3 x 50 cm. / 25.7 x 19.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 180



# The Mediterranean

When Chagall and his new wife Vava moved from Paris to Vence, he was following in the footsteps of a long line of Modernists who had sought comfort in the calmer Mediterranean coast. It was a short journey to Nice and Vallauris – both centres of creativity. The better weather and most importantly the light of the Mediterranean were gently nurturing for Chagall. It would be here that he created his famed series Nice and the Côte d'Azur, anchored around the beautiful Bay of Angels.

Prior to that, in 1959, Tériade persuaded Chagall to undertake a new project, the illustration of the prose romance Daphnis & Chloe. The idea of reviving and illustrating this story, which had been widely popular primarily in France and England throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, is one that greatly appealed to Chagall. He began his preparation by making two trips to Greece, travelling there to absorb the inspiration of the Greek landscape. It was an important and extended honeymoon with Vava and provided respite from Vence. Over the course of three years, Chagall worked on this project creating forty-two lithographs. These have since been heralded as one of Chagall's greatest graphic achievements. In the introduction to the set in the Mourlot catalogue raisonné it is referred to as "the most important graphic work that Marc Chagall has created thus far."

## Blue Landscape | Paysage bleu, 1958

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

58 x 75.5 cm. / 22.8 x 29.7 in.

Reference: Mourlot 221



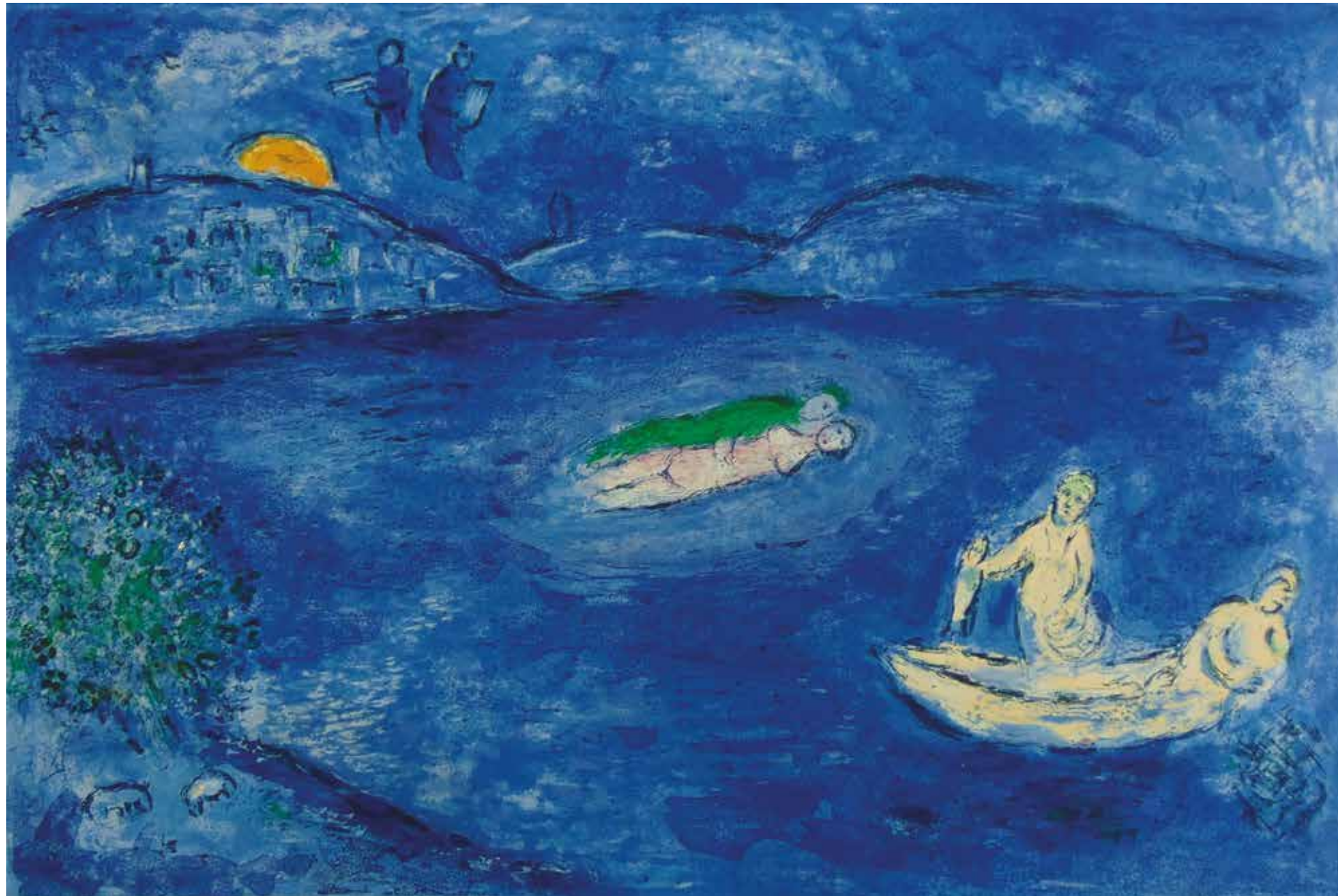


**Echo, from: Daphnis and  
Chloe | L'Echo, 1961**

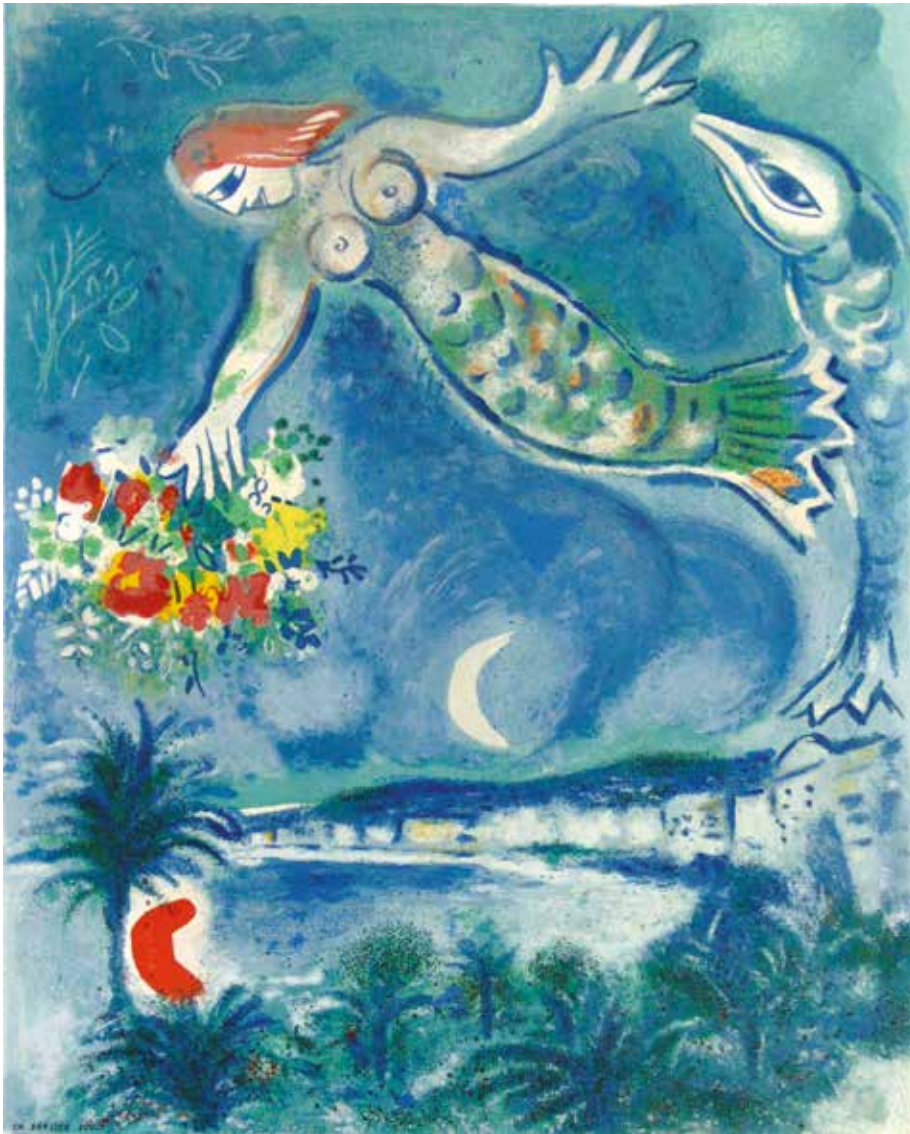
Original Hand Signed and  
Numbered Lithograph in Colours on  
Arches Wove Paper

53.6 x 75.5 cm. / 21.1 x 29.7 in.

Reference: Mourlot 340; Cramer 46







**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: Charles Sorlier 28



**The Bay | La baie, 1962**

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

48 x 65 cm. / 18.9 x 25.6 in.

Reference: Mourlot 356





And you tied around your  
Tender Neck Intoxicating  
Garlands ..., from: The Land  
of the Gods | Et tu nouais de  
ton tendre col d'enivrantes  
guirlandes... : Sur la terre  
des Dieux, 1967

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

65 x 50.5 cm. / 25.6 x 19.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 534; Cramer 72



Blessed Husband..., from:  
The Land of the Gods |  
Bienheureux époux...: Sur  
la terre des Dieux, 1967

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

65 x 50.5 cm. / 25.6 x 19.9 in.

Reference: Mourlot 540; Cramer 72



## Faith

The Vitebsk of Chagall's childhood was a thriving provincial centre, where Judaism and Christianity mingled side by side – the skyline dotted with the domes and towers of more than 30 churches and 60 synagogues. It is therefore unsurprising that the imagery of both cultures should mingle in Chagall's mind. The Abrahamic faiths linked with the stories of the Bible, the figures being recognisable to a wide audience and having layers of symbolism.

Chagall was invited to illustrate the Bible by both Ambroise Vollard and by Tériade – responding in very different ways to each project. Each project one in etching and the other in lithography have been regarded as a passion project for Chagall, imbued with meaning. He was also able to harness the most powerful stories from the Bible as well as figures such as the Angel of Judgement and the Prophet Moses to reflect on the turbulent and testing times of the twentieth century.

This work, '*Le Repos*', has many typical aspects of iconography associated with Chagall such as the mother and child, the village (shtetl), the bird and bull, all of which are framed by the warmth of the red sun. It is likely that the Christian story 'The Flight into Egypt', with which Chagall was familiar, would have been the basis of this composition, but as always the elements have been treated in such a way that he tells a story aside from heavy symbolism. '*The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*' is as much a visual story of a family journey, based in Christian narrative, but with a wider appeal, which is masterfully retold by Chagall.

### **The Rest | Le Repos, 1965**

Original Hand Signed Unique  
Monotype in Colours on Japan Nacré  
Paper

38.5 x 56.5 cm. / 15.2 x 22.2 in.

Reference: Illustrated Cramer 140 p. 116

Exhibitions:

Bouquinerie de l'Institut, Paris "Marc  
Chagall Monotypes" 20th October to  
23rd December 2011

Galerie Patrick Cramer, Geneva "Marc  
Chagall Monotypes" 19th November  
-21 January 2012.







**Angel with Sword, from:  
The Bible | L'ange à l'épée,  
1956**

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

38 x 27 cm. / 15 x 10.6 in.



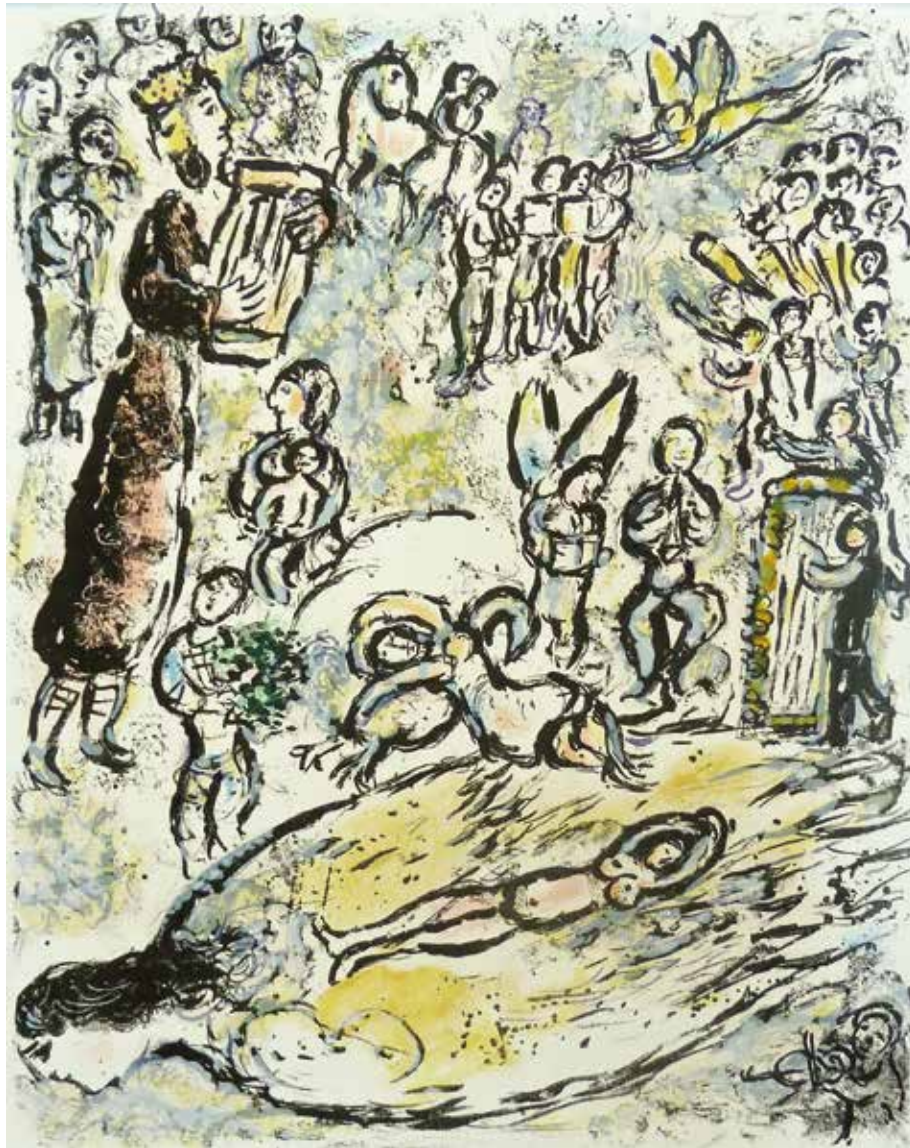
**The Angel of Judgement |  
L'Ange du jugement, 1974**

Hand Signed and Numbered  
Lithograph in Colours on Arches  
Wove Paper

72.5 x 55 cm. / 28.5 x 21.7 in.

Reference: Charles Sorlier 45



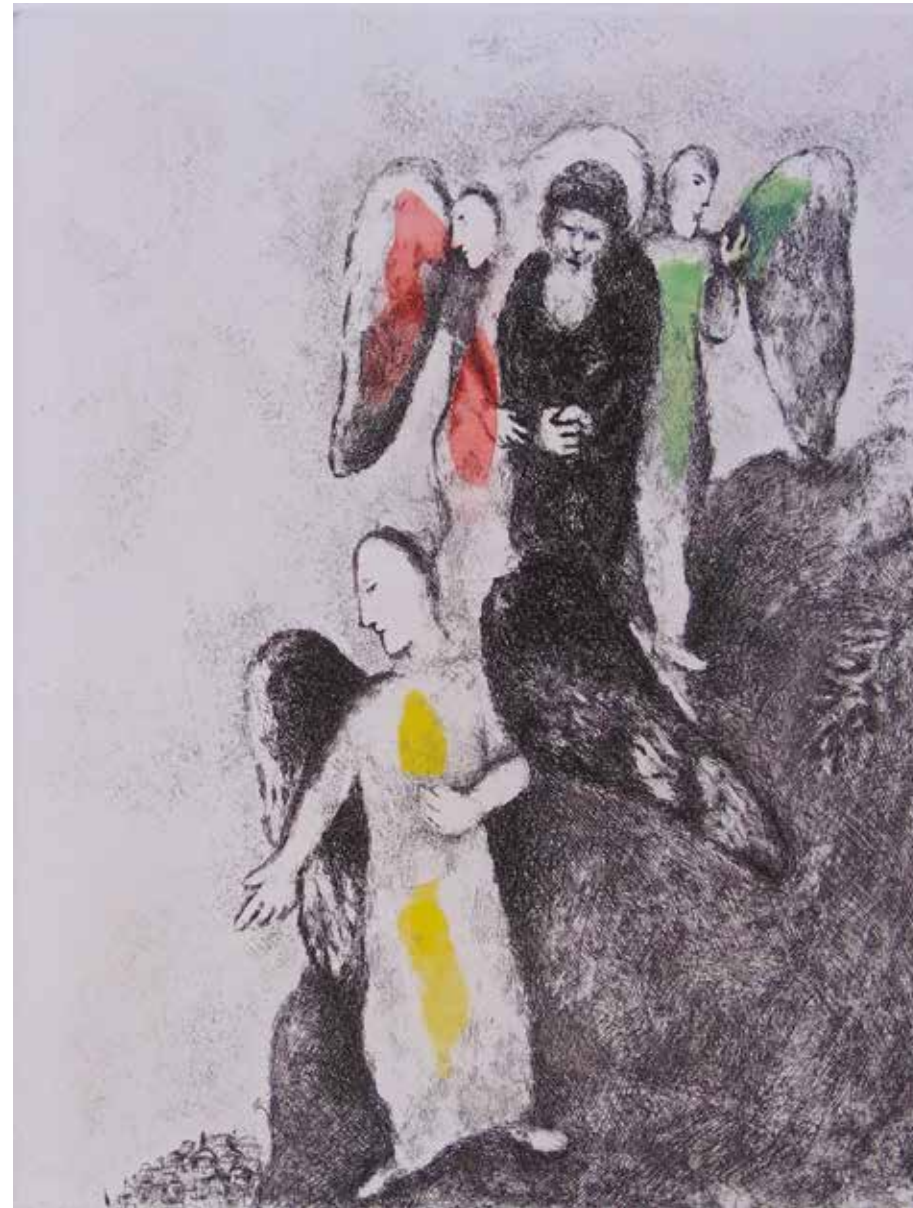


**The Magic Flute II | La Flûte Enchantée II, 1972**

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



**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: Vollard 206; Cramer 30



This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition

# Chagall a life

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**Front cover:**

The Angel Violinist | L'Ange violoniste, 1975



Chaf all



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