

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.
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FOR WEDNESDAY RELEASE

RECENT ACQUISITIONS - PRINTS BY MARC CHAGALL

Notes by William S. Lieberman, Associate Curator in Charge of Prints

The exhibition of prints by Marc Chagall at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street (October 25 - January 15), offers a retrospective of 30 years of work by one of the most important printmakers of the School of Paris. Chagall has used most graphic media, first drypoint, then etching and aquatint and most recently color lithography.

The exhibition opens with My Life, a series of drypoints drawn in 1922 to accompany an autobiography of his youth in Russia. A gallery features Chagall's most important published work, the illustrations to Nikolai Gogol's Dead Souls. These volumes were commissioned by Ambroise Vollard, the great French editor of books illustrated by modern painters. Although Chagall completed over one hundred illustrations by 1927, the book was not published until 1948. The exhibition concludes with selections from two unpublished works, the Fables of La Fontaine and the Bible, both commissioned by Vollard, illustrations to the Seven Deadly Sins and the Arabian Nights, and all Chagall's major independent prints.

Dead Souls has attracted many illustrators but none better suited than Chagall to describe the adventure of Tchitchikov, Gogol's hero. Although a century apart the artist achieved perfect collaboration with the author. Borrowing freely from his own knowledge of Russian provincial life, sharpening his fantasy on the humor and pathos, the warmth and wit of Gogol's text, Chagall produced a masterpiece of book illustration.

Dead Souls has been acquired by the Print Room through the Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund. Other recent acquisitions have been made from the A. Conger Goodyear Fund and through gifts by Leo Auerbach, Albert Carman, Harry C. Oppenheimer, Bernard J. Reis and the artist himself.

Check list of Prints by Marc Chagall:

My Life. Berlin, 1922-23

13 from a series of 20 drypoints illustrating the artist's autobiography. The plates were drawn in 1922 and issued as an album by Paul Cassirer, 1923.

Dead Souls. Paris, 1923-27

57 of 96 etchings to illustrate Nikolai Gogol's Dead Souls. Commissioned by Ambroise Vollard in 1923; published by

47
125

Tériade, 1948.

The Seven Deadly Sins. Paris, 1924-26

14 of 16 etchings to illustrate essays by Jean Giraudoux, Paul Morand, Pierre MacOrlan, André Salmon, Max Jacob, Jacques de Lacretelle, Joseph Kessel. Published by Simon Kra, 1926.

The Fables. Paris, 1927-31

The Lark and the Farmer. Etching and drypoint, trial proof. For La Fontaine's poems, IV:22. For an illustrated La Fontaine commissioned by Ambroise Vollard, unpublished.

The Bible. Paris, 1929-39

Joseph the Shepherd. Etching, trial proof. For an illustrated Bible commissioned by Ambroise Vollard, unpublished. In connection with this edition Chagall traveled to the Holy Land in 1931.

The Arabian Nights. New York, 1946-48

Kamaralkamar elopes with the Princess on the ebony horse. Color lithograph, trial proof. Ambroise Vollard first suggested that Chagall illustrate The Arabian Nights. This is one of 13 color lithographs commissioned and published by Pantheon Books in 1948.

Independent Prints. Berlin, 1922; Paris, 1924-25; New York, 1942

The Circus Performer. 1922. Drypoint

* The Musician. 1922. Drypoint

Acrobat with Violin. 1924. Etching and drypoint
For Ambroise Vollard's third and unpublished Album des peintres-graveurs

The Angel and the Artist. 1924. Etching and aquatint

Self Portrait with Grimace. 1924-25. Etching and aquatint

* The Artist's Wife. 1925. Etching and drypoint

The Eiffel Tower. 1942. Etching, trial proof.
For a portfolio of prints by various artists published by VVV magazine

Note: With the exception of the 2 items starred, all prints in the exhibition have been acquired since 1947.

Additional prints and illustrated books by Chagall may be seen in the Print Room on the fourth floor of the Museum, open afternoons Monday through Friday, 2 to 5.