

# CHRISTIE'S

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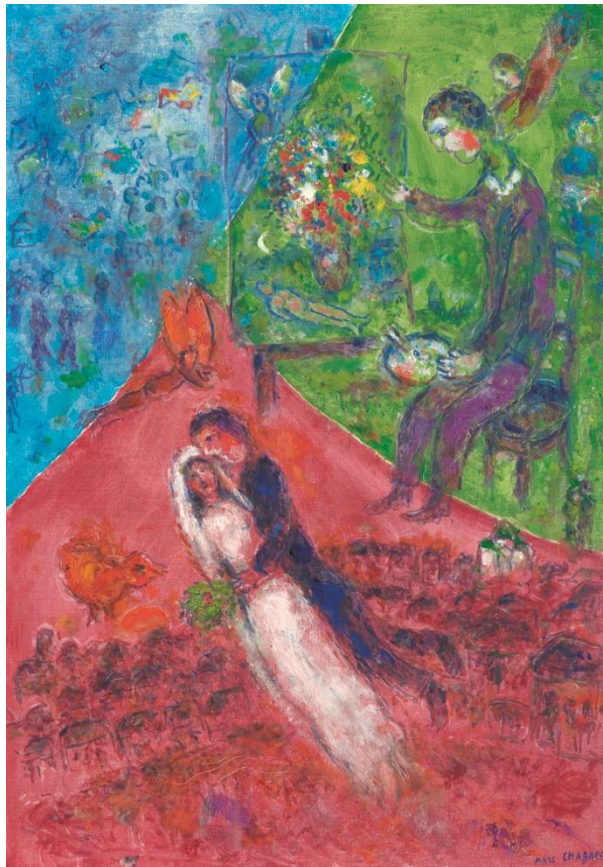
20/21

LONDON TO PARIS

## CHRISTIE'S TO LAUNCH 20/21 LONDON TO PARIS SALE SERIES WITH MARC CHAGALL, COLOUR OF LIFE: WORKS FORMERLY FROM THE ARTIST'S ESTATE

FIRST TIME TO MARKET

28 JUNE 2022



Marc Chagall, *Le peintre et les mariés aux trois couleurs* (1984, estimate: £1,000,000 - 1,500,000)

- A selection of artworks by Marc Chagall, one of the leading, internationally renowned European artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will launch the 20/21 London to Paris sale series on 28 June, and the first in a series of sales at Christie's dedicated to the artist's work
- These works, including oils, works on paper, prints and artist's books, were all formerly in the artist's estate and have never been offered for sale before
- The auction of this prestigious collection, entitled 'Marc Chagall, Colour of Life: Works Formerly From the Artist's Estate', will be the first in a series of sales engaging clients globally, across our international salerooms

- Five themes from the artist's oeuvre will be represented: The Poetry of Love; The Song of Vitebsk; The Circus; My Art, My Life; and, Legends and Traditions
- Estimates range from £800 - £1,800,000, offering collectors of all stages an opportunity to acquire these superb artworks by Marc Chagall
- An online sale of Chagall Prints and Artist's Books highlighting the artist's life-long love of the art of printmaking will run concurrently out of London, open for bidding from 14 June to 1 July
- Further works from the collection will be offered in the autumn sale seasons

**LONDON AND PARIS** – 'Marc Chagall, Colour of Life: Works Formerly from the Artist's Estate' will launch Christie's June **20/21 London to Paris** sale series. Originating from the artist's estate, the 22 works presented in the sale will be offered for the first time. The collection will be unveiled with six lots in Paris. Highlights will travel to Hong Kong from 21 to 26 May then on to New York, before returning to London where the full selection will then be on view from 22 to 28 June 2022.

The sale on 28 June will be the first in a series of global sales, offering the artist's work in dedicated platforms in Christie's international salerooms as well as online-only auctions. Central to Chagall's vision were a number of recurring themes, concerns and leitmotifs, which fascinated and beguiled him endlessly, reappearing in various forms and guises across the decades. The selection of works in 'Marc Chagall, Colour of Life: Works Formerly from the Artist's Estate' explores several key strands that dominated his oeuvre: the rhythms and rituals of the town of his youth; the dazzling, tragicomic world of the circus; the heroic figures of myth, legend and religion; the universal questions of identity and legacy; and above all else, the enduring power of love, which was transformative for his own life.

**Michelle McMullan, Senior Specialist, Impressionist and Modern Art, London:** "Christie's is thrilled to present the first in a series of global sales dedicated to the work of one of the most acclaimed European artists on the world stage. Throughout his long and storied career, Marc Chagall forged a bold path within modern art, conjuring fantastical, dream-like scenes, rooted in his own personal life and rich memories filtered through a highly idiosyncratic painterly vocabulary. Chagall's singular vision and unique approach to the world earned him a place at the very forefront of the avant-garde throughout the twentieth century. Five key themes are explored in 'Marc Chagall, Colour of Life: Works Formerly from the Artist's Estate' and this encyclopaedic display will offer collectors a rare opportunity to acquire works that have never been offered for sale before by this legendary artist. There is no greater way to launch the 20/21 London to Paris season in June."

**Bertold Mueller, Managing Director, Christie's Continental Europe, Middle East and Africa:** "It is a great honour for Christie's to be entrusted with this rare grouping of work, which was formerly in the artist's estate. The quality will be unrivalled this season and the presentation will demonstrate the breadth of themes that captivated one of the greatest painters of all time. Chagall's distinctive blend of whimsy, intense emotion, and highly personal imagery has captivated and enchanted generations of viewers, and we look forward to offering our clients a rare insight to his career, and an opportunity to explore the vibrancy of such a bold vision."



Marc Chagall, *Coq sur fond rouge entre Paris et Vitebsk* (1981, estimate: £120,000 - 180,000)

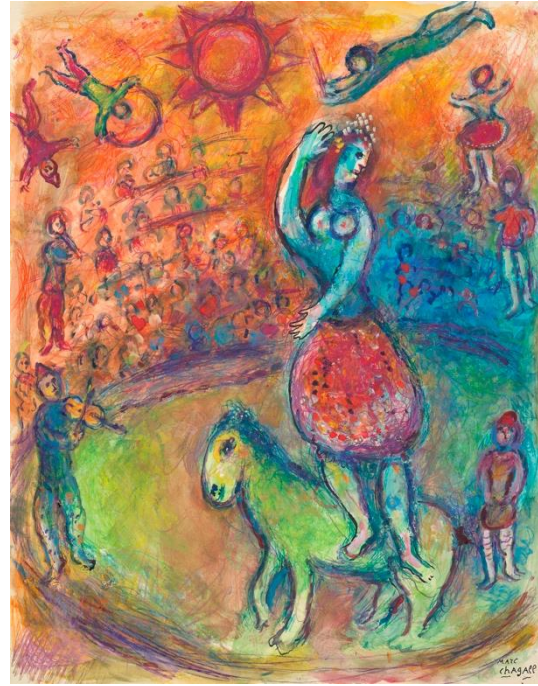
### **The Poetry of Love**

From his youth through to his final golden years, love remained a principal driving force in Chagall's oeuvre. The origins of this strand within Chagall's art can be traced back to the beginnings of his relationship with his first wife Bella, who had quickly become his muse and guiding light, transforming his paintings with her presence. From the earliest stages of their passionate relationship, Chagall's paintings were dominated by a palpable romance, often channelled through portraits of Bella herself, or seen in the form of two lovers, or a bride and groom. The prominence of the theme only came to increase as the years passed, evolving to include floral still-lives and intimate, personal iconography that symbolised the artist's ardour and abiding passion. Even after the untimely loss of Bella, love remained the most powerful force that underpinned his art, continuing to find expression in a myriad of subjects and forms

throughout the rest of his career. For Chagall, happiness, love and painting remained inextricably intertwined, the very foundation of his creative inspiration.

### ***The Song of Vitebsk***

Among the most enduring of Chagall's favourite subjects was the play of life within the town of Vitebsk, where he was born and spent his youth. It was here that the artist first discovered his passion for art, and he often traced his unique style to his formative years there, referring to the town as 'the soil that nourished the roots of my art' (Chagall, quoted in J. Baal-Teshuva, *Marc Chagall 1887-1985*, Cologne, 1998, p. 19). In many of his compositions, the distinctive architecture of Vitebsk appears as the setting for an array of fantastical, semi-autobiographical scenes, while the rituals that governed life in the town became an important and recurring source of inspiration. From the 1920s onwards, Chagall's visions of Vitebsk became an important source of strength for the artist, its power amplified by distance, as he recalled a home he never saw again after his departure for Paris in 1922.



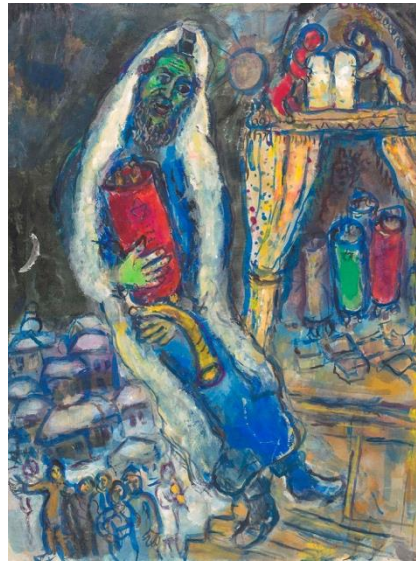
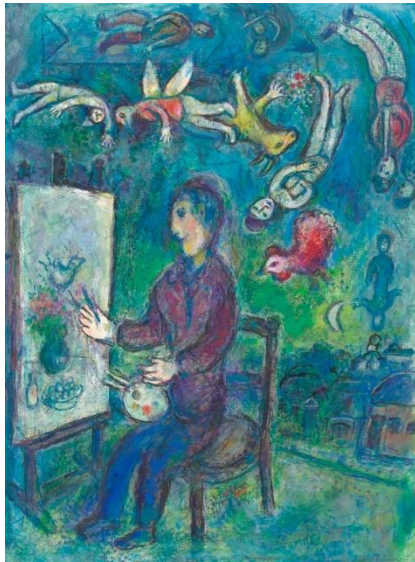
Marc Chagall, *Etude pour "Le Cheval rouge"* (1938-44, estimate: £200,000 - 300,000) and Marc Chagall, *Ecuyère sur cheval vert au cirque* (1979-80, estimate: £200,000 - 300,000)

### ***The Circus***

The dazzling spectacle of the circus, with its daring performers, colourful costumes and tragicomic cast of characters, became an important subject within Chagall's work. While the artist had encountered traveling troupes of acrobats growing up in Vitebsk, upon his arrival in Paris he experienced an entirely new style of performance, filled with colour and dynamism, drama and excitement. During the late 1920s, he frequented the Cirque d'Hiver, using the personal box of Ambroise Vollard, and he would draw on his memories of these performances on a regular basis over the following half century, exploring the fantastical nature and irrepressible spirit of the circus in numerous compositions. Enthralled by the pageantry of the performances, with their play of action and colourful variety, Chagall found in the circus a metaphor for life itself. As a result, he sought to imbue his visions of the circus with an element of the profound, explaining: 'I did not want to spare any of the more moving, tender feelings in a picture of a clown or a circus rider, feelings which one would experience in painting a Madonna, a Christ, a rabbi with the Torah, or a pair of lovers' (Chagall, quoted in W. Erben, *Marc Chagall*, New York, 1957, p. 93).

### ***My Art, My Life***

Over the course of his long artistic career, Chagall painted a large number of self-portraits, each composition providing a revealing insight into his developing sense of artistic and personal identity at important junctures in his life, reflecting the ways in which he wished to be seen by the wider world. While in many examples, Chagall presents himself in the quintessential pose of an artist – positioned in front of his easel, with his palette on his lap and his brushes conjoined to his hand – in others, the artist adopts the guise of fantastical characters or hybrid creatures, which revealed different aspects of his personality and energy. With these self-portraits, Chagall outlined the key events, moments, experiences and elements that had shaped him as a human and an artist, revealing the many layers of personal history which underpinned his sense of the world.



Marc Chagall, *L'inspiration du peintre au chevalet* (1977, estimate: £150,000 - 200,000) and Marc Chagall *Juif à la thora* (1971, estimate: £60,000 - 80,000)

### **Legends and Traditions**

Inspired by multiple cultures and traditions, including both Christian and Jewish iconography, Chagall explored a variety of legends, characters and heroes in his work, highlighting the many different cross-currents which he had discovered through his years of journeying. From his Hassidic Jewish upbringing in Vitebsk, to the traditions of Russian culture, French fables and the Christian imagery of Western Europe, the artist delved into various tales, stories and teachings in search of inspiration. The repercussions of his varied interests were works that challenged familiar cultural boundaries and allowed Chagall's artistic voice a singular place in the history of modernism.

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Founded in 1766, Christie's is a world-leading art and luxury business. Renowned and trusted for its expert live and online auctions, as well as its bespoke private sales, Christie's offers a full portfolio of [global services](#) to its clients, including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie's has a physical presence in 46 countries, throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, with flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. It also is the only international auction house authorized to hold sales in mainland China (Shanghai).

Christie's [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$200 to over \$100 million. In recent years, Christie's has achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction (Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi*, 2017), for a single collection sale (the Collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller, 2018), and for a work by a living artist (Jeff Koons' *Rabbit*, 2019).

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Recent innovations at Christie's include the groundbreaking sale of the first NFT for a digital work of art ever offered at a major auction house (Beeple's *Everydays*, March 2021), with the unprecedented acceptance of cryptocurrency as a means of payment. As an industry leader in digital innovation, Christie's also continues to pioneer new technologies that are redefining the business of art, including the creation of viewing and bidding experiences that integrate augmented reality, global livestreaming, buy-now channels, and hybrid sales formats.

Christie's is dedicated to advancing [responsible culture](#) throughout its business and communities worldwide, including achieving sustainability through net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and actively using its platform in the art world to amplify under-represented voices and support positive change.

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