

## Interview of Marc Chagall at an Exhibition of his Drawings at the Maeght Gallery – 06/19/1964

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*André Parinaud:* Marc Chagall, this is your first exhibition of drawings and washes that we know of and that can be viewed currently at the Maeght gallery. I'd like it if you could tell us about how important drawing is to you. We know about your magic in handling color, your world. But drawings is a kind of revelation.

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*Marc Chagall:* Honestly, I never thought that one day I would have a drawing exhibition, but someone asked me to and maybe since it's an era of drawing, people are experimenting with drawing, I thought it was perhaps useful to accept this exhibition that Maeght asked of me. I've drawn in my life, you know [sketches] for paintings, small drawings, but I didn't design drawings like I would design a painting, if you will. And during the exhibition, there were drawings like I imagined them maybe 50 years ago.

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*André Parinaud:* You draw every day. Do you enjoy drawing as an exercise for painting?

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*Marc Chagall:* I draw every day because, truly, it feels like I have nothing [else] to do.

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*André Parinaud:* Do you notice a change of inspiration between your drawings and your paintings? Are the motifs always the same? Does what tempts you for drawing also tempt you for painting, Marc Chagall?

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*Marc Chagall:* You know, it's [as if] someone would say to you: in the morning or at night or in the middle of the day are you a different man, and do you shed your nightmares, your dreams, and your family? Is that possible? I'd like to know if I can get out of myself, only maybe when I'll be dead, I'll come out of myself, but I'll enter something else. No, I can't answer that question. We're still ourselves and I think it's a good thing that we're ourselves. Because if we aren't ourselves, we're something else, uselessly something else.

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*André Parinaud:* In these drawings, it seems like there's another kind of temptation according to the quality of the paper. For example, the drawings on Auvergne paper are never the same as on Japanese paper. Am I right, Marc Chagall?

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*Marc Chagall:* It's true that the medium tells me a lot. It's like [all] physical things. [For example] if you see a man you like, you speak differently. If you're in front of a man or a woman, you speak differently. The medium is a whole lot of things.

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*André Parinaud:* And does the paper tempt you sometimes?

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*Marc Chagall:* Yes, however, when I was very young and very poor, I didn't have paper. I made do with any old paper. They say it was pretty good as well.

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*André Parinaud:* With time and quality, paper has become a necessity. I think your drawings on Japanese paper, for example, are quite admirable. I mean, it's a graceful Chagall.

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*Marc Chagall:* Japan's fault, maybe? [laughs]

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*André Parinaud:* It's thanks to Japan! At the Rouen city museum, we can also see your stained glass windows, which are on display before they'll light, if I may, the cathedral of Metz. How many months of work did those stained glass windows involve, Marc Chagall?

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*Marc Chagall:* Oh, you know, those windows maybe... I've been working on them for five or six years. The first window is already in place at the Metz cathedral and these two, before installing them for good, the cities of Rouen and the museum of Rouen showed them there, surrounded by biblical and religious paintings, and sketches for the Bible, which [were] never exhibited. I must say that it's hung wonderfully.

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*André Parinaud:* The Bible constantly inspired you, didn't it, Marc Chagall?

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*Marc Chagall:* The discovery of the Bible, when Vollard asked me [to illustrate] the Bible in 1930, I went for it. Surely, it's the philosophy and the poetry that struck me. I'm not talking about religiosity because everything is religious, so-called mystic. But the poetry of the Bible is huge and to me, Shakespeare is what comes next.

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*André Parinaud:* At any rate, love is what comes through in all your paintings, love by itself.

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*Marc Chagall:* It's needed, nothing else. You can't do anything without love, but what love, of course... That's the question.