

Marc Chagall Donates 60 of His Paintings to France – 07/18/1966

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Host: There's an event today in Nice. I told you at the beginning of the show that the painter Marc Chagall has just donated 60 of his paintings to France.

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Pierre-Jean Moatti: Marc Chagall, who was born in Russia in 1887, has spent much of his life in France, where, in 1910, he befriended Apollinaire, Max Jacob, and Modigliani. He created the stained glass windows for the temple in Jerusalem, as well as the new ceiling at the Paris Opera House. He currently lives in Vence, in southeastern France, where he finished the series of 60 paintings he has just donated to France, which he entitled *The Biblical Message*. His paintings will be displayed in a museum soon to be built in the city of Nice.

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Host: This morning in Nice, the donation was made official, as witnessed by Mr. Pierre-Jean Moatti, prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes county.

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Pierre-Jean Moatti: This is the largest donation that has ever been made by a living artist. We and future generations owe our warmest gratitude to both the artist, great master Marc Chagall, and to his wife, Vava Chagall. For the city of Nice, as well as for the Alpes-Maritimes county, this day will stay with us because it means there's no doubt that now, in this county, in Nice itself, the very important Marc Chagall museum will come to be, and it will be known as Marc Chagall's Biblical Message.

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Host: During the ceremony, our correspondent Jacqueline Mariel interviewed painter Marc Chagall. But first she interviewed Mr. Chatelain, director of the museums of France.

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Jean Chatelain: I came to approve this donation with great joy, because, legally, it's a museum. But right now I'd like to specify, in reply to Marc Chagall's concerns, that this is a very special museum that we'll be building thanks to him. Indeed, it isn't just about presenting his art, an extremely prestigious body of work. It's about displaying the artwork but also about creating a house of culture, of thought, of meditation. A place where I believe I can respond to Marc Chagall's line of thinking, a place where people are given both to thought and to happiness, to joy, to thoughtful joy. Master, isn't that what you intended to do?

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Marc Chagall: It's true. And I'm very surprised and moved to be here, on this royal chair, surrounded by great Frenchmen. But I remember that, it's true, I've been working on this biblical message for 14 years and I'm happy to donate them to this world, in France, here where we work. I can't judge what that is. Only the future will tell. That's all I can say and just thank you for the immense kindness and hospitality you're providing for my work. And we'll find out later, in 30, 40, 50 years. How it turns out.