

The Works of Marc Chagall

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Introduction

Marc Chagall was born in Vitebsk, Belarus on July 7, 1887. He was part of a large Jewish family with nine children! His father worked in a fish factory, and his mother had a small shop. His family had little interest in art. He first learned about art in school from a friend.

A photograph of Marc Chagall



Belarus is in the eastern part of Europe. When Chagall was born, it was part of the Russian Empire.





I and the Village
by Chagall (1911)

In 1908, Chagall went to study at the Zvantseva School of Drawing and Painting. During the time he was there, he was introduced to the bright colors of Matisse and other artists. He also studied the works of the classic Dutch masters such as Rembrandt.



A self-portrait
(1914)



Audio

Paris

In 1910, Chagall moved to Paris. At that time, Paris was the center of the modern art world. Cubism was the dominant art form. Chagall saw art as something that connected objects with thought. This was the opposite of Cubism.

Paris is the capital of France.



Harlequin by Picasso (1918)—Picasso was one of the artists who started Cubism.



Chagall found his early days in Paris very difficult. He felt lonely and could not speak French. He slowly became part of the art community and met a lot of important artists. He became interested in Cubism, so he started to use it in his paintings. While he painted, he would often think about his family and the traditions at home.

Can you speak French?



Cubist Landscape
by Chagall (1918)

Paris Through the Window by Chagall (1913) ➡



Chagall often painted Paris, but he also painted life from his old days in Vitebsk. He was fascinated by the colors and shapes in works by French artists. He often included floating figures in his paintings. These floating figures were a symbol of how the Jewish people had survived over thousands of years by being wanderers with no true homeland.

The Birthday by Chagall (1915) ➡
shows an example of floating figures.



Chagall would often stay up at night, painting until the sun came up. Sometimes, he would only sleep for a few hours. He continued to paint subjects and memories from Vitebsk but included scenes from Paris in them.

Some people choose to work all night. ➡

The Marketplace, Vitebsk
by Chagall (1917) ➡

