



1978.238

Nine Windows by Chagall

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

April 13 - May 30, 1978



1978.254

8. Study for *Isaiab*. (Cat. 25.) A tribute to Ray B. and Nelié C. Walker

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take bold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

But now, O LORD, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

Isaiab 64:6-11

and the collaborative procedure perfected with Marq for the windows of the Metz Cathedral.

Chagall used white or tinted glass covered with a thin film of color that can be partially removed with acid for toning and lightening. Preparatory sketches are made, like those illustrated here, initially simply in pencil or brush and ink to establish the iconography, then in more detail to establish contrasts and tonalities in black and white and gray. The gouache drawings are worked and reworked until a more or less final scheme is realized. Nonfigurative sketches with scraps of fabric and patches of color are an intermediate step that establishes broad color positions. Finally the gouaches form the basis for cartoons for Charles Marq; following the rhythm of lines and colors, Marq lays out the lines of the lead framework that holds the panes of glass together. Next the tinted glass is treated with acid to obtain the lighter areas and clear areas indicated by the gouaches. Chagall then begins work directly on the mounted glass, working with paint and acid, "exchanging colors and modifying highlights; but chiefly he uses grisaille, drawing lines, spreading the pigment, diluting, dabbing it with a rag, adding accents, hammering, scratching with the brush handle. He treats the glass as he does the paper in his India ink drawings . . ."⁸ Now he is no longer working to produce light and color, as he did in the Bible etchings, but rather to modify existing light and color.

As James Johnson Sweeney has observed, if Chagall is "an artist who has been content with a limited repertory of representational forms," he has shown a persistent effort to deepen and enrich his effects "by a steady development of more complex techniques."⁹ Glass painting has been Chagall's most recent and dramatic move in this sense. Concerned earlier with light as it emanated from reflected sources, Chagall has become involved with the modulation of light as a direct source. In medieval times light was understood as God's messenger; the windows of the medieval cathedral shed the light of God's word on the assembled people. Chagall's involvement with light generates its own subtle and complex poetry of tone, texture, color, and space, bringing a new dimension to both his art and the ancient craft of stained glass.

Since Chagall sees the artist's role as transmitting an untranslatable message, the mingling of that message with the light of God in his windows must be a source of satisfaction to him—an intimation that the message will indeed find its way.

B.R.

Notes

1. Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), p. 384.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 386.
3. Quoted in James Johnson Sweeney, *Marc Chagall* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), p. 7.
4. Quoted in *The Rockefeller Memorial Windows* (Pocantico Hills: The Union Church of Pocantico Hills, n.d.), p. 20.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
6. For a complete discussion see William S. Rubin, *Modern Sacred Art and the Church of Assy* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 134-49.
7. Meyer, p. 490.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 589.
9. Sweeney, p. 71.

MARC CHAGALL, French

Born Vitebsk, Russia, 1887
In France 1910-14, 1923-41; in U.S.A. 1941-48
Returned to France 1948

Catalog

In this exhibition of studies for the Union Church windows, presented at The Museum of Modern Art from April 13 to May 30, 1978, all the works are purchases from the artist and are in The Rockefeller University Collection. In the listings below, the dates indicated for the works do not appear on the drawings themselves. Dimensions are for sheet size and are given in inches and centimeters, height preceding width.

- 1978.231 1. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Pen, brush and ink, and pencil, 7¹/₂ x 4⁵/₁₆" (18.9 x 11.8 cm) (irreg.) NOT EXHIBITED
- 1978.232 2. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Pen, brush and ink, and pencil, touched with gouache, 9¹/₁₆ x 7³/₁₆" (23 x 18.8 cm) (irreg.)
- 1978.233 3. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Red crayon on reverse of book page, 12 x 8⁵/₁₆" (30.5 x 22.1 cm).
- 1978.234 4. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Red crayon on reverse of book page, 12 x 8⁵/₁₆" (30.5 x 22.1 cm).
- 1978.235 5. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Watercolor and pencil, 15³/₁₆ x 10⁹/₁₆" (38.5 x 26.8 cm).
- 1978.236 6. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Gouache, pastel, pen, brush and ink, 20³/₁₆ x 13³/₁₆" (51.1 x 33.5 cm).
- 1978.237 7. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Collage of cut, torn, and pasted papers with gouache, watercolor, crayon, and brush and ink, 10⁷/₈ x 7⁵/₈" (27.7 x 19.4 cm).
- 1978.238 8. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Gouache, wash, pen, brush and ink, 29¹³/₁₆ x 22³/₁₆" (75.8 x 56.4 cm).
- 1978.239 9. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Gouache, wash, pen, brush and ink, 30 x 22¹/₈" (76 x 56.2 cm).
- 1978.240 10. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Pencil, 22¹/₂ x 15³/₁₆" (57.3 x 38.5 cm).
- 1978.241 11. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Pen and ink, and pencil, touched with gouache, 19³/₄ x 12¹³/₁₆" (50.3 x 32.5 cm).
- 1978.242 12. *The Good Samaritan*. (1963-64.) Pastel, pen, brush and ink, pencil, 20¹/₈ x 13³/₁₆" (51.1 x 33.3 cm).
- 1978.243 13. *The Crucifixion (Seek and Ye Shall Find)*. (1965-66.) Pastel and pencil, 7⁹/₁₆ x 5¹/₄" (19.2 x 13.4 cm) (irreg.) NOT EXHIBITED
- 1978.244 14. *The Crucifixion (Seek and Ye Shall Find)*. (1965-66.) Pencil, pen, brush and ink, 16⁹/₁₆ x 10⁷/₁₆" (42.1 x 26.5 cm).
- 1978.245 15. *The Crucifixion (Seek and Ye Shall Find)*. (1965-66.) Pen and ink, and pencil, 16⁹/₁₆ x 11¹/₁₆" (42.1 x 28 cm).
- 1978.246 16. *The Crucifixion (Seek and Ye Shall Find)*. (1965-66.) Pen and ink, and pencil, 16⁵/₈ x 10¹/₂" (42.1 x 26.8 cm).
- 1978.247 17. *The Crucifixion (Seek and Ye Shall Find)*. (1965-66.) Gouache, wash, pen, brush and ink, and collage of scraps of fabric and painted paper, 16¹/₂ x 10⁷/₈" (42 x 27.7 cm).
- 1978.248 18. *The Crucifixion (Seek and Ye Shall Find)*. (1965-66.) Pastel, pen, brush and ink, and pencil, 16³/₈ x 10¹¹/₁₆" (42.1 x 27.2 cm).
- 1978.249 19. *Joel*. (1965-66.) Watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, touched with gouache, 22¹/₄ x 14¹³/₁₆" (56.5 x 37.9 cm).
- 1978.250 20. *Elijah*. (1965-66.) Gouache, watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, 22¹/₄ x 15" (56.6 x 37.9 cm).
- 1978.251 21. *Daniel*. (1965-66.) Gouache, wash, watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, 22³/₁₆ x 15" (56.4 x 38 cm).
- 1978.252 22. *Cberubim*. (1965-66.) Gouache, watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, 22¹/₄ x 15" (56.5 x 38 cm).
- 1978.253 23. *Ezekiel*. (1965-66.) Gouache, wash, watercolor, pen, brush and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, 22¹/₄ x 14³/₄" (56.5 x 37.5 cm).
- 1978.230 24. *Jeremiah*. (1965-66.) Gouache, wash, watercolor, pen, brush and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, 22¹/₄ x 15¹/₈" (56.5 x 38.5 cm).
- 1978.254 25. *Isaiab*. (1965-66.) Gouache, pen and ink, pencil, and collage of fabric, 22¹/₈ x 15" (56.1 x 38 cm).
- 1978.255 26. Color studies for four windows: 1, 2, 3, 4. (1965-66.) Gouache, pencil, and collage of fabric, silver and gold paper, 8⁷/₈ x 25⁷/₁₆" (22.5 x 64.7 cm). NOT EXHIBITED
- 1978.256 27. Color studies for three windows: 5, 6, 7. (1965-66.) Gouache, watercolor, pencil, and collage of fabric, 9 x 19³/₈" (22.8 x 49.8 cm). NOT EXHIBITED

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Acknowledgments

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