



Life, Love, and Art

A new exhibition looks at the private life of Marc Chagall, and how it deeply affected his unique artistic vision. **Tiffany Parks** takes a look.

Picasso once said, “When Matisse dies, Chagall will be the only painter left who understands what color really is.”

After the resounding success of the recent Matisse exhibit, *Arabesque*, still on now at the Scuderie del Quirinale (p56), a new show celebrating Chagall’s vision of life and love has just opened at the Chiostro del Bramante.

Chagall was labeled by art critic Richard Hughes “the quintessential Jewish artist of the 20th century,” and as such, it’s not surprising that many of his works are housed permanently in Israel, at the Museum of Jerusalem. 150 Chagall pieces from this museum’s collection, including paintings, drawings, and prints, are now on temporary display at the Chiostro del Bramante. They tell of the profound connection between the great painter and his wife Bella Rosenfeld, who was his constant source of inspiration and helped to link the life of this great artist directly to his work.

The exhibition, aptly named *Love and Life*, revolves around Chagall’s personal experiences and the central themes of his one-of-a-kind artistic vision. Strong references to Jewish culture abound in these works, symbols such as the goat, representing hope and faith, the hut, recalling the feast after the Exodus, the donkey, significant to key moments of the Bible, and the fiddler, a figure often represented in major Jewish holidays. Also apparent in his works is the influence of the French avant-garde, which he was able to reinterpret in his own original way, and of course the ever-present figures of the two lovers as well as depictions of his beloved wife.

The exhibition demonstrates how deeply Chagall’s work was affected by Jewish culture and the universal poetry of the Bible. Nevertheless, Chagall declared that his art depicted “not the dream of one people but of all humanity.” (p55)

MARC CHAGALL: LOVERS AND FLOWERS, 1949, COLOR LITHOGRAPH, 64.9 X 48.1 CM; GIFT OF IDA CHAGALL. PARIS © CHAGALL. © BY SIAE 2015 / MARC CHAGALL: DAVID, 1956 ILLUSTRATION FOR VERVE BIBLE EDITION (NOS. 33-34) CHINA INK, GOUACHE, WATERCOLOR AND GRAPHITE ON PAPER, 35.6 X 26.5 CM, GIFT OF IDA CHAGALL, PARIS © CHAGALL. © BY SIAE 2015