

Rain

by Marc Chagall

Print Facts

- Medium: Oil and charcoal on canvas
- Date: 1911
- Size: 34 1/8 x 42 1/2 inches
- Location: Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, NY
- Style: Cubism
- Genre: Landscape
- People and animals live in fraternal unity, belonging both to the earth and the cosmos.
- There is no sense of gravity; they are equally at home on the rooftops of houses or moving freely about the sky.
- The heads of people caught up in their everyday concerns also appear.

Artist Facts

- Pronounced (sha-GAHL)
- Born July 7, 1887 in Liozna, Russia which is near the city of Vitebsk (v uh t EH b s k)
- Died March 28, 1985 (age 97)
- Married Bella Rosenfeld who he said was his inspiration.
- Chagall was the oldest of nine children.
- His mother bribed a professor to let Chagall attend a high school that did not allow Jews.
- A turning point of his artistic life came when he first noticed a fellow student drawing. Chagall would later say that there was no art of any kind in his family's home and the concept was totally alien to him. When Chagall asked the schoolmate how he learned to draw, his friend replied, "Go and find a book in the library, idiot, choose any picture you like, and just copy it." He soon began copying images from books and found the experience so rewarding he then decided he wanted to become an artist. (From Wikipedia)
- Chagall wanted to study art in Petersburg, Russia. He had to get a temporary visa from a friend to even get into the city because Jews were not allowed there without an internal passport.
- In 1910 Chagall left Russia to study art in France. He spent the next 30 years mostly in France, Germany and Russia painting and working.
- In 1941 Chagall was trapped in France when the borders were closed. He was saved by having his name added to the list of prominent artists whose lives were at risk, who the United States should try to extricate. Varian Fry, the American journalist, and Hiram Bingham IV, the American Vice-Consul in Marseilles, ran a rescue operation to smuggle artists and intellectuals out of Europe to the US by providing them with forged visas to the US. Chagall was one of over 2,000 who were rescued by this operation. He left France in May 1941, "when it was almost too late". Picasso and Matisse were also among artists invited to come to America but they decided to remain in France. Chagall and Bella arrived in New York on June 23, 1941. His daughter Ida and her husband followed on the refugee ship SS Navemar with a large case of Chagall's work.
- After the war, Chagall returned to France where he lived for the remainder of his life.
- Chagall is said to be one of the most successful artists of the 20th century.
- It is believed that he created art in every artistic medium including painting, book illustrations, stained glass for cathedrals, stage sets, ceramic, and tapestries.

- He is considered to be an early modernist, and his paintings had a fantasy feel to them.
- His work "was one long dreamy reverie of life in his native village of Vitebsk".
- He painted his memories of life growing up in Russia along with other things inserted in (like the Eiffel Tower or a portrait).
- He had an amazing ability to use color when he painted.
- In 2010 one of his paintings sold for \$4.1 million.

Key Element of Design to Teach

- **Line** is a mark on a surface that defines a shape or outline. Lines may be drawn or implied. They may be straight or curvilinear. They can create texture and be made thick or thin. Lines are often used to wrap around objects to make shapes. They can be horizontal, vertical and diagonal. Lines are usually used to take the viewer's eye around and through a composition.

Possible Questions to Teach Line

- What lines do you see in this painting? Where do you see them? (diagonal lines on the house, roof, stairs; horizontal lines on the barn; vertical lines on the house, barn stairs; curvilinear lines in the clouds and leaves; thick lines in the house and the umbrella...)
- How do these lines draw your eye around the painting? (The tree points to the man's heel, the man points to the house, the line of the edge of the house takes you up to the roof line which points back to the tree.)
- The leaves and wood have lines in them to create texture. Why does the artist do this? Does it make the painting more interesting?
- Is the wind blowing in this painting? How can you tell?
- Consider asking a student to come to the board to draw a straight line, a curvilinear line, a horizontal line, a vertical line and a diagonal line. Point out all of these types of lines in the painting.

Keywords

- Line, Texture, Movement

Other Possible Questions

- What colors do you see in this painting?
- Do you see neutral colors? Warm colors? Where?
- Do you see primary colors in this painting? Where?
- Where do you see dark values in this painting? Light?
- What shapes do you see in this painting? Do you see triangles? Circles? Squares? Rectangles?
- Do any of the objects seem out of place?
- Would you say this painting is abstract or realistic? Why?
- Why do you think the artist put things in the sky?
- Why do you think some of the shapes are upside down?
- Do you see people in this painting? Where? What are they doing?
- This is a painting of Chagall's memories of the village he grew up in and dreamed about when he left it. Do you ever have crazy dreams that are all mixed up? Does this painting remind you of a dream? Do your memories ever start to get fuzzy? Do you ever start to forget exactly how something was when you were little? Sometimes memories affect other memories or are a part of other memories. This is why Chagall painted so many different, separate things that in the end still managed to create a whole scene.