

Approfondimenti di Storia dell'arte sulla religione ebraica.

Artista scelto Marc Chagall

Autoritratto con sette dita

Two of Marc Chagall's most famous paintings, *Me and My Village* (1911) and *Self-Portrait with Seven Fingers* (1912-13) represent the artist's early attempts to incorporate Cubism — with its multiple points of view and geometrical shapes — into his compositions. So, too, are these two paintings emblematic of the expatriate condition of the traditional Jew in the modern world.

Chagall (1887-1985) grew up in the Belarusian village of Vitebsk, the eldest son of a Hassidic laborer. While he spent most of his life in France, he never stopped returning to Vitebsk in his mind and in his art. In *Self-Portrait with Seven Fingers* two landscapes hover above the painter, the modernity of Paris meeting the timelessness of Vitebsk.

In *Study for Self Portrait with Seven Fingers*, Chagall presents us with the Jewish fascination with numbers. Art historian Sandor Kuthy suggests that the Yiddish folk expression *Mit alle zibn finger*, used to indicate the entirety of energy used in completion of a task, explains this strange physical anomaly in the painting.

Writes art student Marleene Rubenstein, "An enriched reading is gained in knowing that the number seven is heavy with mystical overtones in Jewish expression, figuring strongly with the concept of creation. God created the world in seven days. The Kabbalah states that God created seven parallel universes to our physical one. The three fathers and the four mothers in the Bible gave birth to the Jewish nation. With his seven fingers, Chagall creates new worlds with paint on canvas."

Self-Portrait with Seven Fingers was Chagall's first self-portrait. It was painted in his first Paris studio at La Ruche, Montparnasse where he and 200 fellow artists lived in total squalor. The painting is now shown in the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

CROCE BIANCA

The 1938 painting *White Crucifixion* represents a critical turning point for the artist Marc Chagall: it was the first of an important series of compositions that feature the image of Christ as a Jewish martyr and dramatically call attention to the persecution and suffering of European Jews in the 1930s.

In *White Crucifixion*, his first and largest work on the subject, Chagall stressed the Jewish identity of Jesus in several ways: he replaced his traditional loincloth with a prayer shawl, his crown of thorns with a headcloth, and the mourning angels that customarily surround him with three biblical patriarchs and a matriarch, clad in traditional Jewish garments. At either side of the cross, Chagall illustrated the devastation of pogroms: On the left, a village is pillaged and burned, forcing refugees to flee by boat and the three bearded figures below them—one of whom clutches the Torah—to escape on foot. On the right, a synagogue and its Torah ark go up in flames, while below a mother comforts her child. By linking the martyred Jesus with the persecuted Jews and the Crucifixion with contemporary events, Chagall's painting passionately identifies the Nazis with Christ's tormentors and warns of the moral implications of their actions.

I and the Village is a 1911 painting by the Russian-French artist Marc Chagall. It is exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.[1]

The work contains many soft, dreamlike images overlapping one another in a continuous space.[2] In the foreground, a cap-wearing green-faced man stares at a goat or sheep with the image of a smaller goat being milked on its cheek. In the foreground is a glowing tree held in the man's dark hand. The background features a collection of houses next to an Orthodox church, and an upside-down female violinist in front of a black-clothed man holding a scythe. Note that the green-faced man wears a necklace with St. Andrew's cross, indicating that the man is a Christian. As the title suggests,

I and the Village is influenced by memories of the artist's place of birth and his relationship to it.

The significance of the painting lies in its seamless integration of various elements of Eastern European folktales and culture, both Russian and Yiddish. Its clearly defined semiotic elements (e.g. The Tree of Life) and daringly whimsical style were at the time considered groundbreaking. Its frenetic, fanciful style is credited to Chagall's childhood memories becoming, in the words of scholar W. Janson, a "cubist fairy tale" reshaped by his imagination, without regard to natural color, size or even the laws of gravity.





