

NADFAS LECTURE
THEODORA CLARKE

MARC CHAGALL: ART AND RELIGION

Marc Chagall, the iconic modernist painter, is considered the foremost Jewish artist of the twentieth century. This lecture will explore the artist's universal appeal, his unparalleled use of colour and the influences on his imagery, including Yiddish and Biblical imagery. It will explore the challenges Chagall faced as an artist in pre-Revolutionary Russia, such as the anti-Semitic regulations that prohibited Jews from attending art schools.

During his lifetime he created a huge and varied body of work which included paintings, prints, theatre sets and stained-glass windows. Chagall created many images of the theme of suffering such as his Crucifixion series. This lecture will explore the artist's use of religious iconography and consider different interpretations of these works on Biblical themes.

This lecture will also explore how Chagall's style evolved during the different periods of his artistic career spent in Russia and then France. We will then chart the development of Chagall's art following his emigration to the West. We will follow his journey as he experiments with different artistic mediums including his famous stained-glass windows. We will examine recurrent visual themes such as his Jewish heritage.

We will investigate key works and look at the artist's innovative use of colour. Picasso once said: "When Matisse dies, Chagall will be the only painter left who understands what colour really is." Specific case studies will include Chagall's stained glass windows at the All Saints Church in Tudeley, Kent, his series of Crucifixion paintings and images relating to Judaism. Using elements of biography, pictorial analysis and cultural history we will trace how Chagall became a pioneering artist of the twentieth century.

Theodora Clarke is an expert and lecturer on Russian art and twentieth century modernism. Visit her website: www.theodoraclarke.co.uk.

