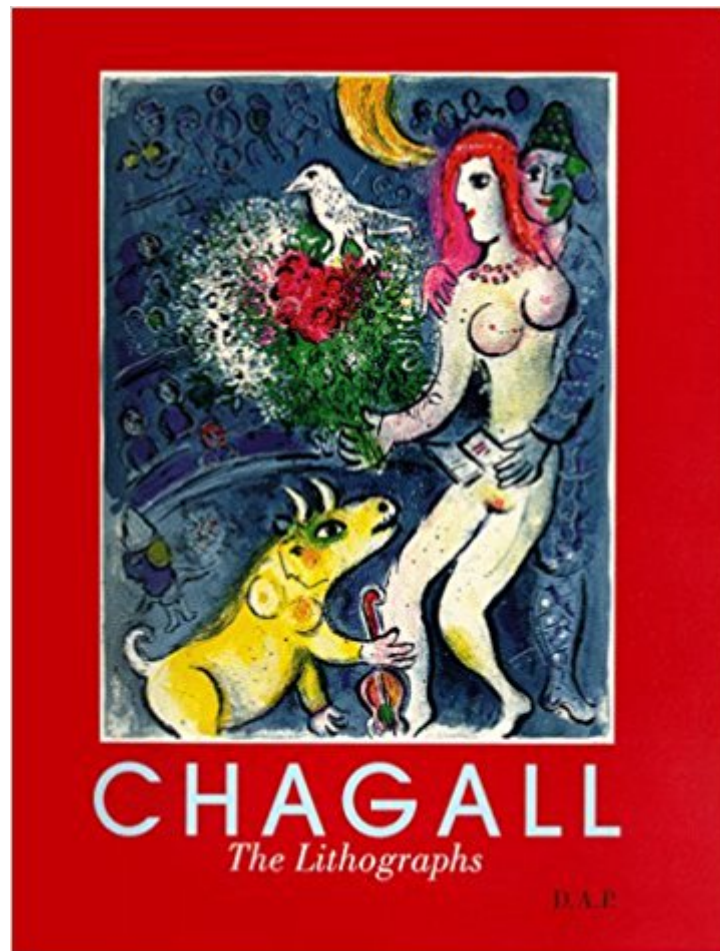




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# Chagall: The Lithographs, The Sorlier Collection - A Catalogue Raisonne



## Synopsis

Lavishly produced using impeccable digital color separations and the finest printing, this catalogue raisonne of Chagall's lithographs documents 1050 works, each with complete identifying signature and edition information.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Chagall: The Lithographs is a vast collection (1,050 individual pieces) dating from 1922 to 1985. The Russian-born artist lived most of his adulthood in France and is well known for his colorful and exuberant depictions of Jewish life. His work often addresses personal themes and intimate visions, such as his marriage and his deeply held faith. He worked in many media, but, "Lithography soon became his favored printing technique. This is certainly due primarily to the one element he had previously always missed in his graphic art: color. Color is employed in Chagall's work with greatly varying intensity, from watercolor-like washes and fragile crayon lines to opaque layers whose effect closely resembles that of his luminescent gouaches." This beautifully produced catalogue raisonné includes descriptions of Chagall's lithographic process, which utilized stone or zinc plates and acid, and interviews with the printers who worked with Chagall to produce these pieces. This is a lovely, colorful book that reproduces many of the best examples of this important artist's favorite works.

This sumptuous production succeeds as both an exhibition catalog (for a show in Stuttgart to Hamburg this spring) and a catalogue raisonné of 1050 Chagall lithographs drawn from the

incomparable collection of his printer for 35 years, Charles Sorlier (1921-1990). Fernand Mourlot and Sorlier authored the definitive six-volume lithograph oeuvre catalog (1960-1986). The present catalog describes and reproduces, often in resonant colors, each print in the Sorlier collection, which date from 1922 to 1985. Descriptions update and enhance information from Mourlot/Sorlier, thus creating the most complete entries for prints included in both sources. Many prints carry dedications and playful doodles by Chagall. Interspersed are one-page critical texts on trademark series such as *Daphnis and Chloe* and *The Circus*. Interviews with Chagall, texts on his lithography, and writings on the Sorlier collaboration and collection serve as an introduction; a biographical chronology, bibliography, and interviews in their original versions complete the work. This monumental undertaking is of supreme importance to research collections. Russell T. Clement, Univ. of Tennessee Lib., Knoxville

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THIS DOES NOT CONTAIN THE COMPLETE LITHOGRAPHIC WORKS OF CHAGALL. THERE IS NO INDEX. After your third or fourth search, you will find 2 out of 3 lithographs, and never the one that's really important to you. The information is cryptic, but very complete when it's there. You will see the lithographs in better shape than you could possibly hope for, with personal messages to those lucky Sorliers. I almost returned it -- I even printed out the return label -- but sometimes I found what I needed to know, knowing that I could never find that crucial detail anywhere else. And the print job is way above and beyond. I'm still stunned that it's available for under \$100!

A thing that has puzzled me for years is the Japanese affection for the artworks of Marc Chagall. In general I respect the Japanese aesthetic but I just don't get this, unless one puts it down to a pleasantness thing. In my mind Chagall is "The World's Greatest Decorative Artist," Nevertheless, one of my most prized possessions is the *Teriade* published, Chagall illustrated, '*Daphnis & Chloe*': The kind of book that should be a book pirate's most-treasured plunder. Along these lines, although this is a beautifully made book, its contents are as problematic in areas to me as Chagall's artwork is. One of the coolest and most important books by and about Chagall is the *Catalogue Raisonné* published by Mourlot in six volumes, not least because numerous original lithographs were tipped in throughout the first five volumes. This book is kind of a reprint of that book, but it goes further by including all of the Chagall lithographs in the collection of Sorlier, his longtime printer. It was published in conjunction with a Stuttgart, Germany museum exhibit in 1998. What I love about this German-made book is its luxuriant paper stock (as befitting such an exhibition/artist); the stout, functional, elegant binding, and its surprisingly lush digital reproductions. I also love the preface

articles which are jam-packed with trenchant, pithy information. The composition of the print information is as follows: The entire Chagall lithographic collection held by Sorlier with some additional prints as noted. Each entry is accompanied by a description of the underlying print with notations about edition size/numbering/lettering/signature/ paper-size/composition, etc. Additionally, where relevant, print information as it appeared in the Mourlot Raisonne. Note: Mourlot's measurements were of the image and not the paper size, unless otherwise noted, making the present book even more helpful to the collector, gallery, museum as its measurements are of the paper stock. Alas, this additional info, makes the present book merely the most comprehensive catalog raisonne of Chagall's lithographic work available and not the definitive raisonne: Unfortunately that book does not exist. Another nit I have to pick is that all of the technical information about the prints remains untranslated in the original French. This makes it a chore to cipher vital archival information. As to the image reproductions themselves, sadly, most of these are the size of a large postage stamp or small poster stamp. There are very few oversize images and this absence is sorely felt. The book's editors likely felt comfortable doing this because the museum show was right there, forgetting that the present book would become the show's reliquary. As such, they fell down badly on their task of both recording this show for posterity and making this the official book of record. Having said all that, I find that like the artist's works themselves, I can't help myself liking this flawed instrument.

I never thought that I would own that book one day because of its price. But as a HUGE fan of this artist, I have finally decided to buy it... and I don't regret it! I bought many books on Chagall's painting, and this one is undoubtedly a masterpiece. It is beautifully illustrated and excellently documented. The interviews at the beginning of the book (for example, the one with Henri Deschamps) are quite interesting, and the global "presentation" of the book is simple but beautiful. The only thing that disappointed me a little is that I was kind of hoping to see more full-page lithographs. I knew that this was a catalogue raisonn  before I bought it, but was hoping just the same to see more one-page illustrations, although the ones that are there (for example, the complete paintings for Daphnis and Chlo ) are wonderful. The quality of printing is just superb and this book is definitely a good buy for any Chagall aficionado. In fact, I would say that this book, completed with "Chagall" by Jacob Baal-Teshuva (Taschen)-- if you could find it!-- would be the best two buys you could do. Trust me! :)

Chagall was such a prolific artist that of course any book that is a complete catalog of anything he

did, let alone lithography, would have to have small pictures or require a forklift. Nonetheless, it's a pity that so many of the lithographs in this book are reproduced in a size not much bigger than a postage stamp. And while I found the text and interviews at the front somewhat interesting, I thought parts of the interviews seemed like name-dropping exercises. The book was originally written in French, I believe, and some of the translation throughout was unevenly done, if at all. But hey -- it's Chagall! To see page after page of his brilliant works is still a pure joy, even if you suffer eyestrain as a result. And the many page-size reproductions were certainly treats for the eye. And to have a complete collection to look at, well, that almost makes up for the tiny reproductions.

I wish this well illustrated catalogue raisonne included the information for all prints in the editions rather than just the ones belonging to Sorlier. Many of Sorlier's prints are "HC" prints or "Epreuve de collaborateur" prints in which case you may have to seek another source to discover the edition numbers for the specific print you're researching. Other than that - nicely illustrated (though the illustrations are small, it is not designed as a book to showcase the prints as reproductions) and chronologically arranged.

This book is a must for any Chagall collector or just those who enjoy his work. The quality of the pictures is great. The information nearly flawless.

This was the most wonderful book I have ever seen on Chagall, and believe me, I've seen them all. Where as most books take away from his pictures with a crowded setup, this book gives his paintings all the credit they deserve. When I saw Chagall's paintings they made me all wet and excited, definitely a keeper.

I have seen many, many Chagall Litographs and books on them and this one is the BEST! It lists every single Litograph ever made by Chagall, it's worth every penny.

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