

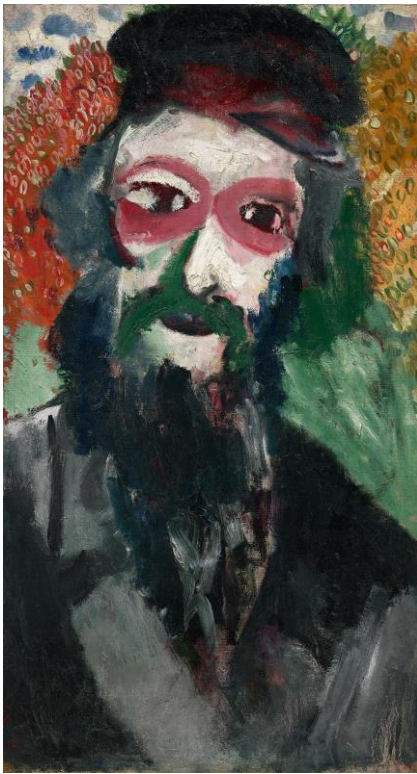
# PHILLIPS

PRESS RELEASE

## Phillips to Offer Marc Chagall's *Le Père* in the New York Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art

The Most Significant Early Painting by the Artist to Appear on the Market in Decades

Recently Restituted to the Heirs of David Cender in a Landmark Decision by the French National Assembly



**Marc Chagall**  
*Le Père*, 1911  
Estimate: \$6-8 Million

NEW YORK – 6 OCTOBER 2022 – On 15 November, Phillips will offer Marc Chagall's *Le Père* in the New York Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art. Executed in 1911, during a transformative period in the artist's career, the painting is among fifteen works of art that the French Government have restituted earlier this year — part of an ongoing effort to return works in its museums that were wrongfully seized by the Nazi Party during World War II. A long-treasured part of the collection of David Cender, a musical instrument-maker from Łódź, Poland, the work was taken from him in 1940 before he was sent to Auschwitz with his family. By 1966, it had been reacquired by Chagall himself, who held a particular affinity for the painting, as it portrays his beloved father. In 1988, the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou in Paris received the painting by donation from Chagall's estate. Estimated at \$6-8 million, this is the first work from this group of fifteen restituted artworks to appear at auction.

**Jeremiah Evarts, Deputy Chairman, Americas, and Senior International Specialist, 20th Century & Contemporary Art**, said, “Phillips is honored to play a role in the incredible journey that this painting has taken over the last century. Chagall’s legacy is vital to the history of Western art, with *Le Père* standing as a masterwork within the art historical canon. The heart-wrenching and compelling history of the painting after its completion, all leading to the wonderful news of its return to the Cender Family makes the story of *Le Père* all the more fascinating. We commend the French government for their dedication in returning such important works in their collection to the families of their rightful owners.”

*Le Père* is a rare, dynamic portrait which signifies the artist’s pivotal transition from art student in Saint Petersburg to one of the defining figures of European Modernism. During the winter of 1911-1912, Chagall moved into La Ruche, an artists’ commune on the outskirts of Montparnasse. The works he created over the next three years are among the most highly regarded of his career, with his portraits bearing particular significance. Throughout his lifetime, Chagall revitalized the inherited traditions of portrait painting. He painted dreamy and fantastical portraits of lovers, religious figures, villagers, and his beloved family throughout his seven-decade career. *Le Père* is an intimate portrait of the artist’s father Zahar, a quiet and shy man who spent his entire life working in the same manual labor job. Portraits of the artist’s father are rare within Chagall’s oeuvre. Far from the generalized symbols of lovers that dominated much of his later paintings, this early work is a remarkably personal and heartfelt depiction.

The early owner of this painting, David Cender, was a prominent musical instrument maker in Łódź, Poland who created pieces of the highest class for the eminent musicians of the era, as well as being a musician and music teacher in his own right. In 1939, David married Ruta Zylbersztajn and soon after their daughter Bluma was born. Prior to 1939, 34% of Łódź’s 665,000 inhabitants were Jewish, and the city was a thriving center of Jewish culture. In the spring of 1940, David Cender and his family were forced to leave their home and move into the ghetto, leaving behind numerous valuable possessions including their collection of artwork and musical instruments. While David survived the war, his wife, daughter, and other relatives were killed at Auschwitz.

Chagall reacquired the work by 1966 and it remained in his personal collection through the remainder of his life. In 1988, Musée national d’art moderne, Centre national d’art et de culture Georges-Pompidou in Paris received by donation from the Chagall estate *Le Père* along with 45 paintings and 406 drawings and gouaches. Ten years later, the work was deposited into the Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme in Paris, where it was been on view for twenty-four years.

Earlier this year, on 25 January 2022, the French National Assembly unanimously passed a bill approving the return of the fifteen works of art; the bill was then passed by its Senate on 15 February. The Minister of Culture, Roselyne Bachelot, praised the decision saying that not restituting the works was “the denial of the humanity [of these Jewish families], their memory, their memories.” The historic passing of this bill marks the first time in more than seventy years that a government initiated the restitution of works in public collections looted during World War II or acquired through anti-Semitic persecutions.

On April 1, 2022, *Le Père* was returned to the heirs of David Cender by the Parlement français in Paris.

Coming to auction for the first time, *Le Père* is a treasured and rare example from the artist’s early oeuvre. It’s inclusion in this landmark restitution signifies a historic moment in cultural history.

**Auction:** 15 November 2022, 432 Park Avenue, New York, NY

**Click here for more information:** <https://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/NY010722>

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