

Vitebsk People's Art School

Series of photographs mounted on an album

Marc and Ida Chagall Archive, Paris

1. Marc Chagall facing the entrance of the Vitebsk People's Art School, circa 1919.
2. Members of the Vitebsk People's Art School artistic committee, summer or 1919. Front row, from left to right: Lazar Lissitzky, Vera Ermolaeva, Marc Chagall, David Yakerson, Yuri Pen, Nina Kogan, and Aleksander Romm; standing up, Rosalia Rosenfeld.
3. Installation views of works at the Vitebsk People's Art School, ca. 1919.

Letter from Kazimir Malevich to Marc Chagall

April 8th 1920

Letter in Russian

Marc and Ida Chagall Archive, Paris

Kazimir Malevich asks Marc Chagall for permission to attend his workshop whose students have invited him to speak of his artistic theory.

AMIC-2A-0086-104

My dearest Marc Zakharovich

Given that the students at your workshop have invited me to clear up a few aspects of Cubism and its theory as a system for the construction of a pictorial organism, system in which painting is freed of its utilitarian figurative dependency toward the object in order to arrive to a causality of its own that engenders the pure pictorial act of the creator taking the path of creation, following the natural law of organization and of the interaction of forms.

On my part, I consider this meeting essential, and would like to know if there is any inconvenient in me visiting your workshop.

K. Malevich

8 / IV / 20

Letter from Mstislav Dobuzhinsky to Marc Chagall

January 5th 1919

Letter in Russian

Marc and Ida Chagall Archive, Paris

Mstislav Dobuzhinsky presented a few proposals to Marc Chagall regarding the organization of the Vitebsk People's Art School: the creation of a "school" that could be presided by the latter and the establishment of educational departments.

AMIC-2A-0100-031

5 / I / 1919

Dear Marc Zakharovich

I wanted to write a few preliminary comments before I leave. Firstly, it is necessary to create a school with departments or sections: educational (including the school's administration), theatrical, and the museum. Evidently, the president of said school must be you. For the theatrical section I envision Annenkov [Illegible] and yourself, of course. We must certainly invite Malko [?]. For the museum section we need Gaush. I have spoken with him and he may have a mission order of [illegible] around the 15th-20th. For this section we must count on Radlov, [who will arrive at the same time as I; also I would ask that you include my father, although he is busy at the school [?].

In reference to the museum I have many proposals and ideas. We will discuss them in person. By the way, for the school (and also the museum?) a library is essential (I will speak with the department of culture about this matter before leaving [?]; could we not receive books about art in kind from the People's Commissariat for Education?).

I am delighted for Annenkov's arrival, he is a [illegible] man and, simply, a comrade. I think he could be my assistant at the theater and set workshop. Radlov is still unsure of directing the drawing workshop, but I have the impression that his doubts regarding his relocation are only temporary, and he will eventually decide. In any case, he is with us. Farewell, and my best wishes!

One cannot describe the state of the stations [illegible], people everywhere, impossible to find tickets, we must wait [illegible].

Please send my regards to your wife. Greetings. M. [Dobuzhinsky.]