



16<sup>th</sup> January 2014

*Marc Chagall*

**Brook Gallery is delighted showcase a selection of beautiful historic original hand coloured etchings from *The Fables of La Fontaine* by Marc Chagall. Considered one of the great suites of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Chagall's etching for this collection were issued in 1952 in an edition of just 200. Those on show and for sale at the Brook Gallery are from just one of 85 sets which were hand painted by Chagall himself. They are approximately 29 x 24cm and most are signed in the plate.**

The etchings for La Fontaine's Fables were commissioned by the famous art dealer Ambroise Vollard and his choice of the 'romantic' artist Chagall to illustrate the 'classical' French masterpiece created and considerable furore at the time, even being debated in the Chamber of Deputies. Vollard answered the question of *Why Chagall?* By saying, *Simply because his aesthetic seems to me in a certain sense akin to La Fontaine's, at once sound and delicate, realistic and fantastic.*

Initially Chagall painted preparatory gouaches or translation to etching plates but finding that even master painters could match the gradations of colour he required he actually prepared the plates himself employing a drypoint technique. He worked on plates between 1928-31, more than twenty years before they were issued.

The art historian Susan Compton summed up Chagall's achievements by saying, *Chagall did not illustrate in a conventional sense, preferring always to convey the essence of the fable...The illustrations for the Fables draw a moral for the viewer as much about art as the human condition. La Fontaine had fashioned poems from the myths and legends of Aesop: Chagall...created visual reminders which are outstanding by the richness and variety of his imagination and technique.*

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Open 10.30am to 5pm, closed Sunday mornings and Mondays

**For more information on this and more images, please Angela on 01395 443 004 or email [angela@brookgallery.co.uk](mailto:angela@brookgallery.co.uk)**