

Jill Newhouse Gallery
in association with Christian Neffe Degandt, London

Édouard Vuillard: Selected Works on Paper

For **Édouard Vuillard**, works on paper were not merely preparatory studies for larger works; they were at the very core of his artistic production. An astute observer of daily life, Vuillard drew constantly, using a wide variety of mediums including pencil, ink, watercolor, and pastel in order to depict the day to day world he inhabited.

While Vuillard's **passion for observation** suggests that he was a kind of **Realist**, the art he produced was **simultaneously very abstract**. In depictions of interiors, Vuillard relegates the precisely observed details of domestic scenes into densely patterned compositions, so that glimpses of figures and objects become **psychologically charged narratives**. Landscapes likewise are observed, and recreated as abstract spatial arrangements of color and form, with Vuillard often flattening shapes to reflect the reality of the picture plane.

This selection of **28 works on paper**, spanning the late 1880s through the 1930s, provides an invaluable window into Vuillard's creative process, and reveals the **spontaneous shorthand** that is sometimes obscured in larger oil paintings. Pastels, in particular, offered Vuillard a unique technical bridge, combining the precision of drawing with rich, textured color. Throughout all the works, Vuillard renders everyday scenes into **a profound visual poetry that is unique and timeless**.

Included in the exhibition



“L'Accord parfait” (The Home of Madame Gillou), 1932-1933

Pastel on grey paper
9 7/8 x 12 3/4 inches

A study for a painting in a private collection, this pastel depicts Madame Louise Gillou, seated at left in her well decorated living room. Gillou was a prominent collector of 19th-century art and an important client of art dealer Joseph Hessel, who was in turn a close friend and important figure in the life of Vuillard. Vuillard and Gillou had met in Normandy in 1912, where the artist often vacationed with the Hessel's, though it would take many years after their first meeting for a painting commission to come to fruition. Vuillard worked on the commission from May to July 1932, and his process is most clearly revealed in this highly finished pastel. The artist added an additional strip of paper along the right hand vertical side of the composition, a change he retained in the final painting, showing the importance of this preliminary work to his working process.

The title *L'Accord Parfait (The Perfect Match)*, refers to a still existent live music venue in Paris where the music of composer Reynaldo Hahn, the figure seen at right, was regularly performed in the 1930s and 40s.



Female Silhouette and Green Cupboard (Femme entrant dans la salon),
c. 1896
Pastel on paper
13 3/4 x 15 1/8 inches

Vuillard's depictions of interiors during the 1890s are imbued with the psychological tension of implied narratives, created by the surprising cropping and placement of people and objects.

In this pastel, the figure entering the room to the left of the green cupboard is probably the infamous Misia Natanson (née Misia Gobedska), nicknamed *The Queen of Paris (la Reine de Paris)* whose well-known red hair was typically tied in an Edwardian chignon at the top of her head. Vuillard allegedly declared his love for her later in life, a devotion that is poignantly expressed in his many renderings of her figure. Her inspiration – or at the very least, a trace of it just peeking through the doorway – is palpable even in silhouette.



The Artist's Grandmother (La grandmere Michaud), 1887-91

Watercolor on paper

7 1/8 x 6 1/4 inches

Vuillard's maternal grandmother, Marie Antoinette Desirée Michaud (1818-1893), known as Grandmère Michaud, was one of the artist's primary muses and the subject of the fascinating 1890 painting *Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light* (in the collection of the Hirshhorn Museum), to which this watercolor is clearly related. The importance of family relations in Vuillard's art and life, particularly that of women - his grandmother, mother, and sister - cannot be underestimated.



The Stock Exchange (La Bourse), c. 1892

Oil on paper

8 1/8 x 8 5/8 inches

This painting is Vuillard's only known depiction of the Palais Brongniart, a neoclassical building built under the direction of Napoleon to house the Paris Stock Exchange (*La Bourse de Paris*). It was operated by stockbrokers (*Compagnie des agents de change*) for the second half of the 19th century until the trading floor was relocated in 1987. The painting itself is notable not only for its unique subject matter – the Stock Exchange was an unusual muse for Vuillard, often so infatuated with beautiful women and natural landscapes – but also for its featured text, with the word “*bourse*” clearly spelled out at the top of the building.



Tree in L'Étang-la-Ville (L'Arbre à L'Étang-la-Ville), 1899
Pastel and Chinese ink on paper
3 7/8 x 5 1/4 inches

In 1899, Vuillard's good friend and patron Adam Natanson commissioned a series of murals called the *Île-de-France Landscapes*. In order to compose this massive, nearly twelve foot long and four panel wide work of the natural landscape, Vuillard spent the summer at L'Étang-la-Ville, studying the beauty of the French countryside. This drawing, *Tree in L'Étang-la-Ville*, is one of Vuillard's many studies from that fateful summer of 1899, when the city-dweller became fascinated once again with the lure of nature and the rural landscape. The particular green hues and the short, wide-topped structure of the tree is similar to many of the trees in the final *Île-de-France Landscapes*, highlighting the way the artist relied on works on paper in the development of larger projects.



Stormy Sky at Les Clayes (Ciel d'orage aux Clayes), c. 1933-1938

Pastel on paper
10 x 8 7/8 inches

The Château des Clayes was the country home of Vuillard's dealer and friend Joseph Hessel and his wife Lucie Hessel (who was Vuillard's frequent model and great love). The Hessels moved there in 1926 and Vuillard maintained a room, which he often depicted. In *Stormy Sky at Les Clayes*, Vuillard experiments with pastel on dark paper, the medium aptly chosen to illustrate an afternoon thunderstorm. The windy, leafless trees and their interplay with the sky and surrounding structures are motifs that also appear in our work.

At Jill Newhouse Gallery
4 East 81st Street, 1B
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