

# Edouard Vuillard

Pastels and Drawings





# Edouard Vuillard

(1868–1940)

Pastels and Drawings

Introduction by Belinda Thomson

*Exhibition dates*

3 June–19 July 2003

## WOLSELEY FINE ARTS

12 Needham Road, Westbourne Grove, London W11 2RP

Tel: +44(0)20 7792 2788, Fax: +44(0)20 7792 2988

E-mail: [info@wolseleyfinearts.com](mailto:info@wolseleyfinearts.com)

[www.wolseleyfinearts.com](http://www.wolseleyfinearts.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The year 2003 is a momentous year for Vuillard with the publication of the long awaited catalogue raisonné of paintings and pastels and the inauguration of the touring exhibition *Edouard Vuillard – Post-Impressionist Master*. The exhibition opened earlier this year at The National Gallery of Art, Washington, and is currently being shown at The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts before coming to Paris and London in late 2003 and early 2004.

I would like to express my appreciation to Belinda Thomson for agreeing to write an introductory essay for this catalogue, despite a busy schedule.

I would like to thank Anisabelle Bères and her staff at the Galerie Bères for their assistance in mounting this exhibition and to my colleague Hanneke van der Werf for her invaluable support in preparing this catalogue.

*Rupert Otten* April 2003

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Back cover: Cat. no. 18, **Le repas au Château des Clayes**, c1927-28, pencil and pastel on paper,  
13.3 x 11.5 cm

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### NOTES

1. All works are for sale
2. The authenticity of all works is guaranteed
3. Certificates of authenticity are available but an additional charge may be made to cover any costs incurred.

# Edouard Vuillard

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Cat. no. 9: *Etude de nus*, 1890s

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## VUILLARD AS A DRAUGHTSMAN

2003 will surely go down in the history of art as a milestone year as far as the reputation of Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940) is concerned, marked by two long-awaited events: the opening of a major retrospective exhibition devoted to Vuillard's wide-ranging and considerable oeuvre, and the publication of the *catalogue raisonné* of his paintings and pastels (Guy Cogeval & Antoine Salomon), Paris, Wildenstein/Milan, Skira. The exhibition tour covers Washington, Montreal, Paris and London, opening at the Royal Academy in January 2004. As well as providing a taster for that comprehensive show, the present exhibition, with its fascinating and representative selection of Vuillard's works on paper, reminds us what a prolific, varied and sensitive draughtsman he was.

Throughout Vuillard's long and prolific career, drawing formed an integral part of his creative process. Sketching was second nature to him and he was never without a *carnet d'esquisses*. Indeed drawings play an important part in the Washington retrospective too, whether as free-standing studies, works related to Vuillard's intense and lifelong involvement with the theatre, or preparatory sketches informing more complex painted compositions. From the later 1890s on Vuillard was an equally assiduous photographer; however the camera served him as an additional recording tool, in no way replacing the vital practice of drawing.

The drawings in the Wolseley exhibition span a career that lasted from the late 1880s, when Vuillard was starting out as an impecunious student, to the 1930s when he was a respected, newly-elected member of the Institut. Not only do they reflect every phase of Vuillard's working life and deal with his favourite subjects – individual figures, theatre themes, still lifes, interiors and landscapes – they also feature most of the women who were closest to him, his widowed mother, his niece Annette, his adored muses Misia Natanson and Lucie Hessel. Additionally they demonstrate his remarkable capacity to draw in different media.

At one level drawing was a semi-automatic activity for Vuillard, comparable to his disciplined practice of keeping a regular journal. Like his drawings the journal spans the length of his career, with a few notable lacunae for the years around 1900. (As the entries often dealt with personal relationships, these years' journals may have been destroyed to spare his own or others' feelings.) Although there are occasional reflections of a more extended kind, the entries deal essentially with his day-to-day round of appointments with portrait clients, meetings with friends and art dealers (often one and the same people), and visits to the theatre. In a rather similar way, while some of the drawings seem to function as one-off ideas, experiments in form, most are jottings of things observed and people encountered during his day-to-day life.

The earliest datable examples in this exhibition are the pen, ink and wash studies of *Personnages assis*, c.1889, sketched on the recto and verso of a single sheet, miscellaneous figures of varying ages. The two younger women seen on the reverse of the sheet, the model possibly identifiable as Vuillard's sister Marie, offer amusing contrasts in body language: on the left, contained and listening, hand to ear, on the right leaning forward to interject or argue. On the recto Vuillard has made two sketches of the same stolid, elderly woman (possibly his grandmother), one in brush and wash the other in pen and ink; in both studies he includes the binoculars or opera glasses she is holding. This detail suggests the figures were probably spectators at a theatrical performance, although the unhindered view he has of them may suggest a rehearsal or perhaps an open-air performance. Repeated studies such as these informed Vuillard's later paintings, both his small intimiste interiors and conversation pieces and his large decorative series, notably *Jardins publics*, 1894, where women grouped in conversation are a leitmotif. If this particular naturalistic and humorous drawing, whose style verges on caricatural in the case of the man to the right, may predate Vuillard's joining the Nabi group around 1890, several others reveal the impact of the new synthetist ideas being disseminated by Maurice Denis and Paul Sérusier.

*Visage de jeune femme* c.1890 and *Scène de théâtre*, c.1890, show Vuillard the Nabi beginning to experiment with simplified form and flat colour. The sanguine outline of the young woman seen full face recalls a number of caricatural drawings of around this date. Like Bonnard and other Nabis, Vuillard was emboldened to try out this more fluid outline style of drawing by a major exhibition of Japanese prints held in 1890 at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he had been a student. The unusual cartouche format of *Scène de théâtre* also reflects Japanese design and could have been intended to accommodate lettering if, as seems likely, the drawing was a design for a theatre programme or poster. Vuillard used a similar technique and range of colours in a contemporary study of the actor Coquelin Cadet in "L'Ami Fritz" (Paris, Cabinet des dessins, Musée du Louvre, Fonds Orsay). Between 1890-2 the Nabis' decorative talents were regularly enlisted by the theatre director Paul Fort, who ran a short-lived experimental theatre, the Théâtre d'Art. Vuillard in particular threw himself into theatrical activity. He was also intimately involved in the early career of another actor manager, a former schoolfriend Aurélien Lugné-Poe, later designing stage sets and programmes for his Théâtre de l'Oeuvre.

*Deux personnages sous la lampe à pétrole* c.1895, for instance, almost certainly records an evening Vuillard spent with two identifiable friends, Thadée and Misia Natanson, whom he shows, respectively, reading over a cup of coffee and sewing. The observed scene is concentrated and isolated in the centre of the sheet, possibly an idea for a *cul de lampe*. This would certainly have been an appropriate destination for around this date Thadée Natanson was writing a regular art column for the *Revue blanche*, the eclectic

journal for which the Nabis provided illustrations. *Madame Hessel chez elle*, c.1900 is a rapid notation of how his dealer's wife and *amie intime* looked on a specific day, at a specific moment; indeed *chez elle* she surely is not, for in her hat and furs she looks as though she has just dropped in, on one of her regular visits to the artist. We recognise her less from her sketchily indicated features than from her characteristic pose, legs crossed, relaxed and confiding, a pose which recurs in the 1920s drawing, *Madame Hessel accoudée*. Thus Lucie Hessel's very body language sets her apart, as she was set apart by age, money and class, from the image of rectitude that was Vuillard's mother. In *Madame Vuillard assise* c.1905-8 for instance, the model sits erect, holding her pose patiently, as she had done so many times before. This work is a good example of the delight Vuillard took in incorporating pictures within pictures. Behind Mme Vuillard's head hangs an unframed painting of a conversation piece where she is represented again, with her extended family, seated by the fireplace at her daughter's home in L'Etang-la-Ville. Indeed *La Famille*, c.1901-2, hung in Vuillard's home for many years and is seen in photographs of 1910.

If the interest in silhouette and elegant arabesque outline comes to the fore in two of the nude studies, many of the black-and-white drawings are typical of Vuillard's more mature style when he once again allowed his attention to become absorbed in detail, texture and the form of decorative objects. Many of these sheets consist of a dense web of complex, nervous markings – *Dahlias*, c.1932-7 for example – as the artist defines the limits of a composition and translates his observations of his material surroundings. Many of Vuillard's drawn studies are of partial details that relate very specifically to a projected painting. Interestingly



*La Famille. Peinture à la colle,*  
66 x 107cm. Private collection

the small drawing of *Yvonne Printemps dans le canapé-lit*, c.1920, can be seen to be the final study for the overall composition of a portrait commission. Laurence des Cars, who analyses this portrait commission in the Washington catalogue (entries 310-315), explains that it was undertaken shortly after the glamorous actress and singer Yvonne Printemps, then at the height of her career, became the second wife of Sacha Guitry in April 1919. Vuillard visited the couple in their dressing room at the Théâtre du Vaudeville a month later, as he recorded in his diary, and soon after began work on the portrait, a project that would continue to occupy him for almost two years. He opted not to paint Printemps in her dressing

room as he had painted Guitry in 1911-12, but in her salon, and embarked more or less simultaneously upon two paintings of the sitter, each time curled up on her canapé-lit. A horizontal version views the sitter's head and shoulders from close quarters but looking away from the spectator and teasingly up at Guitry. It is by no means a conventional portrait composition. The vertical version to which this sketch relates and that Yvonne chose to keep is hardly a conventional portrait either, adopting as it does an extraordinarily oblique angle. The immediate impression on looking at the drawing and its array of different marks is of visual confusion: we see swirls and hatchings in soft pencil applied with varying degrees of pressure, and in the upper part of the composition, more precise and spidery outlines in pen and ink. But on comparing it with the painting their function becomes clear. The black diagonal wedge shape in the drawing indicates the shadow on the red carpet cast by the Louis XVI canapé-lit. If in the drawing Yvonne Printemps herself almost disappears from view, in the painting (over a metre in height and currently on show in the Vuillard retrospective, cat.310), Vuillard uses the brilliant coral of her peignoir to make her stand out from her surroundings.

A final theme of the drawings in this exhibition is landscape, which Vuillard studied throughout his career. Two examples here date from the 1930s. One is a sober architectural drawing in pencil of the *communes*, or stables and farm buildings, attached to the Château des Clayes. The larger drawing, *Sous-bois au printemps, Château des Clayes*, using the much more sensuous technique of pastel, evokes the stately park and trees surrounding the property. Vuillard was a regular guest at this gracious château recently acquired by the Hessels whose business success allowed them to emulate an aristocratic life style. He used the rooms of the chateau for several later interiors, and the grand trees in the park as decorative setting for his large panel on the theme of Comedy for the Théâtre de Chaillot.

As we see from this exhibition, Vuillard's drawings were often made for a specific purpose, but always they functioned as *aides-mémoire*, marking a figure or figures, a place, a conjunction of buildings or trees. He observed and recorded assiduously, not just, one senses, with a view to accumulating studies that would be of possible use at a later date, but also as a function of the role he played in the society in which he moved, and an essential expression of the pleasure he took in his day-to-day surroundings.

*Belinda Thomson*

Edinburgh, March 2003

## NABIS PERIOD

### 9. Recto: **Quatre personnages assis** c.1889

Ink and wash

11 x 17.5 cm, 4¼ x 6⅞ ins

Studio stamp lower left

Exhibited: Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (date not known)



Verso: **Deux personnages assis** c.1889



2. Recto: **Visage de jeune femme** c.1890

Sanguine

27.7 x 19 cm, 11 x 7½ ins

Studio stamp recto lower right

Verso: **Nu de dos** c.1890



Recto



Verso

3. Recto: **Portrait de Coquelin Cadet** c.1890

Chinese ink

11.7 x 8.7 cm, 4½ x 3½ ins

Studio stamp recto lower right

Verso: **Coquelin Cadet** c.1890



Recto



Verso

4 **Couple dansant** c.1890

Chinese ink

11.6 x 9.8 cm, 4½ x 3⅞ ins

There is a sketch of a standing man on the reverse



5. **Scène de théâtre** c.1890  
Watercolour, pen and ink  
11.2 x 5.5 cm, 4½ x 2¼ ins  
Studio stamp lower right



6. **Paysage au chien** c.1890

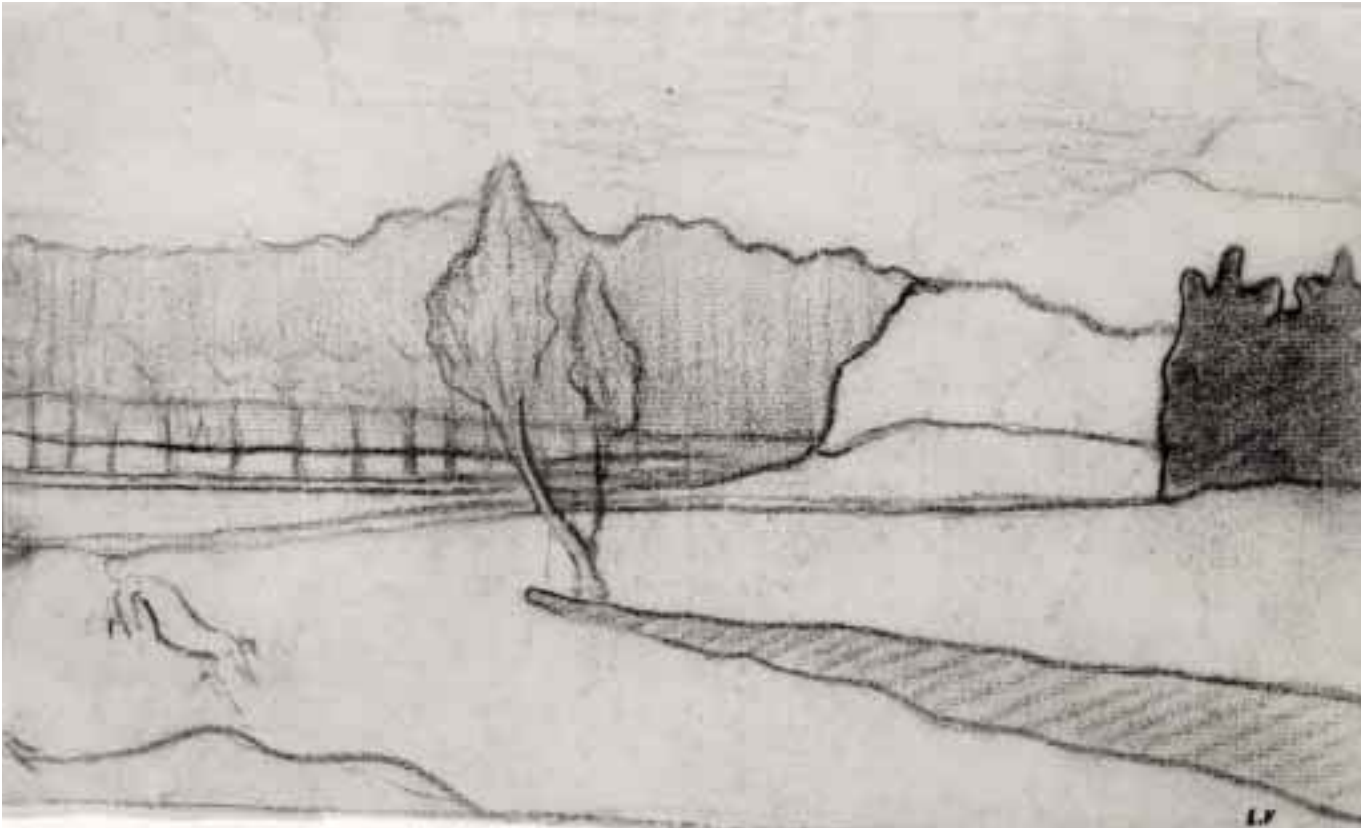
Black crayon

18 x 31.3 cm, 7 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 12 $\frac{3}{8}$  ins

Studio stamp lower right

Exhibited: E Vuillard, Galerie Salis and JPL Fine Arts 1991, No VI

Edouard Vuillard Drawings, Wolseley Fine Arts and touring to The Victoria Art Gallery, Bath  
and The Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield 1998, no 12



7. **La robe verte** c.1891

Pastel and charcoal on paper

30 x 17.5 cm, 12 x 7 ins

Studio stamp lower left

Exhibited: JPL Fine Arts, Edouard Vuillard 1995, No. 34



8. **Deux personnages sous la lampe à pétrole** c.1895

Ink and wash on paper

10.2 x 13 cm, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  ins

Studio stamp lower right

Exhibited: JPL Fine Arts, E Vuillard 1983, No.13



9. Recto: **Etude de nus** 1890s  
Charcoal on paper  
31 x 19.4 cm, 12¼ x 7⅞ ins  
Studio stamp lower right  
*Illustrated on contents page*

Verso: **Etude de nu** 1890s



## LANDSCAPES

### 10. **Paysage** c.1920

Pastel on paper

24 x 32 cm, 9½ x 12½ ins

Studio signature lower right

Provenance: Alex Reid and Lefevre Ltd, London

Exhibited: Vuillard, Paris 1938 (possibly Musée des Arts décoratifs)



11. **Le chemin ombragé** c.1920

Pencil on paper

20.4 x 12 cm, 8 x 4¾ ins

Studio stamp lower right



12. **Sous-bois au printemps, Chateau des Clayes** c.1932-8

Pastel on paper

25.5 x 33 cm, 10 x 13 ins

Studio stamp lower right

Literature: Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval Vuillard, *Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*,  
Editions du Seuil & The Wildenstein Institute Reference XII-387

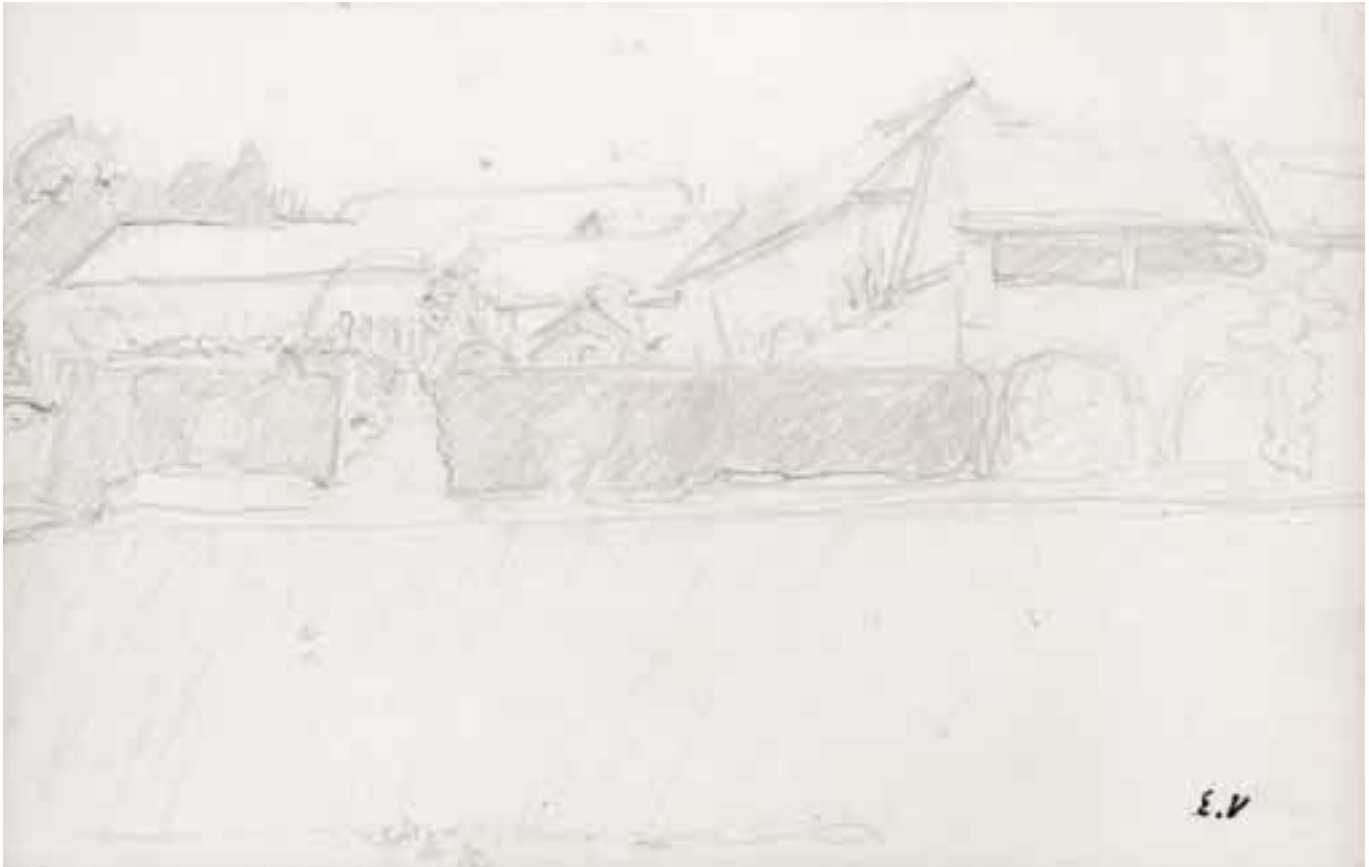


13. **Communs du Chateau des Clayes** c1933-8

Pencil on paper

11.1 x 18 cm, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 7 ins

Studio stamp lower right



14. **Rue de village** 1935

Pastel on paper

37 x 46.5 cm, 14½ x 18¼ ins

Studio signature lower right

Provenance: Jean-Claude Bellier Inc.

Private collection New York, acquired from above in 1986



## INTERIORS

### 15. **Trois femmes dans un intérieur** c.1905

Black crayon

17 x 9.8 cm, 6<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 3<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> ins

Studio stamp lower left



16. **Balcons au théâtre** c.1910

Pencil on paper

16 x 10 cm, 6¼ x 4 ins

Studio stamp lower right



17. **Intérieur** c.1920

Charcoal on paper

11 x 15.5 cm, 4½ x 6⅞ ins

Studio stamp lower right



18. **Le repas au Château des Clayes** c.1927-28

Pencil and pastel on paper

13.3 x 11.5 cm, 5¼ x 4½ ins

Studio stamp upper right

*Illustrated on back cover*

19. Study for *Yvonne Printemps dans le canapé* c.1920

Pencil and pen and ink

19.5 x 11 cm, 7¾ x 4⅜ ins

Studio stamp lower right

Yvonne Printemps (1894-1977) was a French actress and was married to the theatre director, Sasha Guitry. This is a precise study for a painting reference XI-182.



*Yvonne Printemps dans le canapé-lit*, distemper on canvas, 116 x 79cm. Private collection

20. **Intérieur avec deux personnages**

Charcoal on toned paper

38 x 53 cm, 15 x 20 7/8 ins

Studio signature lower right

Exhibited: Albert Loeb and Krugier, New York



21. **Femme sur un divan** 1930s

Pencil on paper

19.5 x 12.1 cm, 7<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins

Studio stamp lower right



22. **Femme au lit** 1930s

Pencil on paper

12 x 21.2 cm, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  ins

Studio stamp lower right



## FIGURE STUDIES

### 23. **Madame Hessel chez elle** c.1900

Black crayon on paper

22 x 12.5 cm, 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>

Studio stamp lower right



24. **La petite Annette Natanson** c.1904

Pencil on paper

13.2 x 8.5 cm, 5¼ x 3¼ ins

Studio stamp lower right

Annette Natanson was the the daughter of Marthe Mellot and Alfred Natanson.



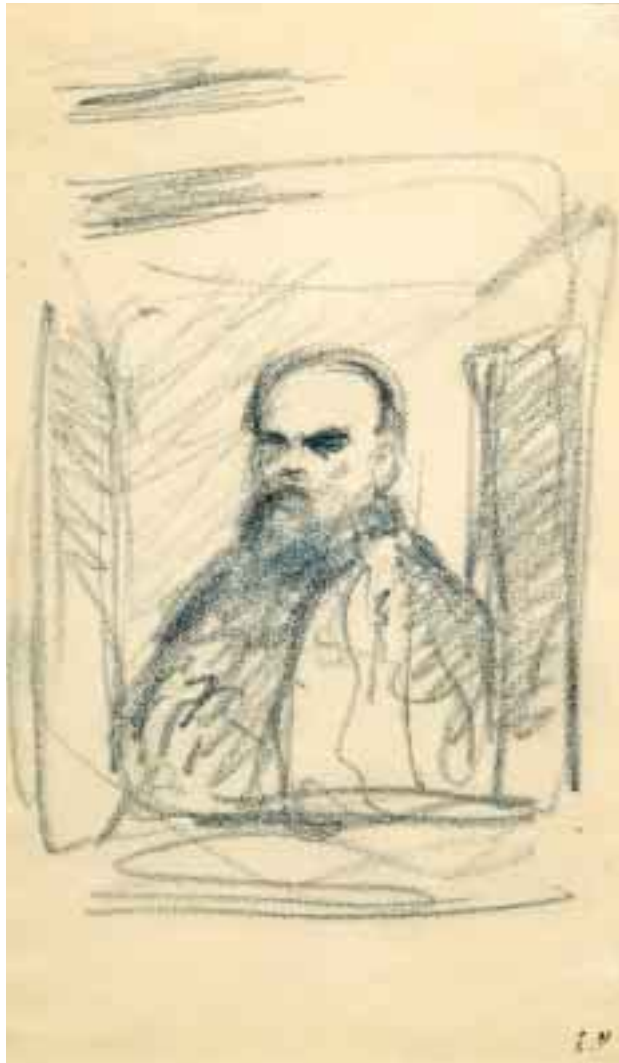
25. **Portrait de Verlaine** 1905-7

Black crayon

19 x 11.5 cm, 7½ x 4½ ins

Studio stamp lower right

The drawing was made posthumously from a photograph.



26. **Madame Vuillard assise** c.1905-8

Pencil on paper

12.8 cm x 7.7 cm, 5¼ x 3¾ ins

Studio stamp lower right, indistinctly inscribed lower centre and numbered 30 verso



27. **Nu** c1909

Pencil

15 x 8.6 cm, 6 x 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  ins

Stamped with initials lower right

It is believed that the model is Claire Cala who sat for Vuillard in 1909



28. **Amateur de tableaux** c.1917

Black crayon on paper

15.7 x 9 cm, 6¼ x 3½ ins

Studio stamp lower right

The drawing shows a collector, Michel Bréal, in the artist's studio looking at paintings leaning against a wall.



29. **Annette et Madame Vuillard dans l'atelier** 1920s

Pencil on paper

19.5 x 11.4 cm, 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ins

Studio stamp lower right

The drawing shows Annette Roussel, Vuillard's niece and his mother. The studio could be that of Ker Xavier Roussel or his own.



30. **Portrait de Annette** 1920s

Pencil and coloured crayon

20.5 x 11.5 cm, 8 x 4½ ins

Studio stamp lower right

This is a portrait of Annette Salomon (née Roussel).



31. **Madame Hessel accoudée** 1920s

Pencil on paper

20.6 x 13 cm, 8 1/8 x 5 1/8 ins

Studio stamp lower right



32. **Visages de jeune femme, de profil** c.1920

Pencil and pen & ink on paper

16.7 x 9.9 cm, 6½ x 3 ⅞ ins

Studio stamp lower right



33. **Femme lisant** c.1920

Pen and ink and pencil on paper

19.9 x 11.2 cm, 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> ins

Studio stamp lower right



34. **Trois personnages étendus** c.1921

Pencil on paper

12 x 19.8 cm, 4¾ x 7⅞ ins

Studio stamp lower right

Exhibited: JPL Fine Arts, Impressionist and Modern Drawings and Watercolours 1982, no.25

One of the figures may be Lucy Hessel and another could be Lotte, Tristan Bernard's first wife. The drawing was made at Le Clos Cézanne.



35. **Yvonne Printemps** c.1921

Black crayon

20.7 x 12.3 cm, 8 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$  ins

Studio stamp lower right

The drawing is of the actress, Yvonne Printemps, in an unidentified role. Yvonne Printemps (1894-1977) was married to the theatre director, Sasha Guitry.



36. **Etude de femmes – Madame Vuillard et Lulu Hessel** c.1925

Pencil on paper

18.3 x 11.4 cm, 7¼ x 4½ ins

Studio stamp lower right



37. **Personnage assise** c.1925-35

Pencil on paper

16 x 9.2 cm, 6¼ x 3⅝ ins

Studio stamp lower right



## STILL LIFE

### 38. Bouquet de fleurs aux Château des Clays c.1930

Black crayon

17 x 10.7 cm, 6<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins

Studio stamp lower right



39. **Bouquet de fleurs** c.1930  
Pencil on paper  
20 x 12 cm, 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins  
Studio stamp lower right



40. **Vase de fleurs** c.1920

Pencil

21 x 12.4 cm, 8¼ x 4⅞ ins

Stamped with initials lower right

Exhibited: Edouard Vuillard Drawings, Wolseley Fine Arts and touring to The Victoria Art Gallery, Bath and The Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield 1998, no 35



41. **Pot de fleurs**

Pastel and charcoal on paper

24.8 x 32.5 cm, 9⅞ x 12¾ ins

Studio stamp lower right

Literature: Antoine Salomon and Guy  
Cogeval Vuillard, *Critical  
Catalogue of Paintings and  
Pastels*, Editions du Seuil &  
The Wildenstein Institute  
Reference XI-152



42. **Dahlias** c.1932-7

Pencil on paper

19.5 x 12 cm, 7<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins

Studio stamp lower right (Lugt 909c)

The drawing was made in the Chateau des Clayes, the home of Vuillard's dealer and friend Jos Hessel.



## ILLUSTRATED BOOK

### 43. Douze pastels présentés et commentés par Jacques Salomon

La Bibliothèque des Arts, Paris 1966

Number XVIII of XXV specials containing an original drawings by Vuillard housed in a solander box, in excellent condition.

This copy dedicated by Jacques Salomon to Madame Joan Payson.

Reproductions of twelve pastels as follows:

- Les communs au château des Clayes
- La chambre de Vuillard aux Clayes
- Les sapins
- La passerelle
- Le salon aux Clayes
- Dans le bois des Clayes
- La Tourelle
- Le parasol orange
- Madame Vuillard à table
- Bouquet de fleurs
- Le square Vintimille
- La vague

The drawing housed in a special compartment within the solander box, details below:

#### **Nu debout** c.1910

Pencil on paper

13 x 9.8 cm, 5 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  ins

Studio stamp lower right







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