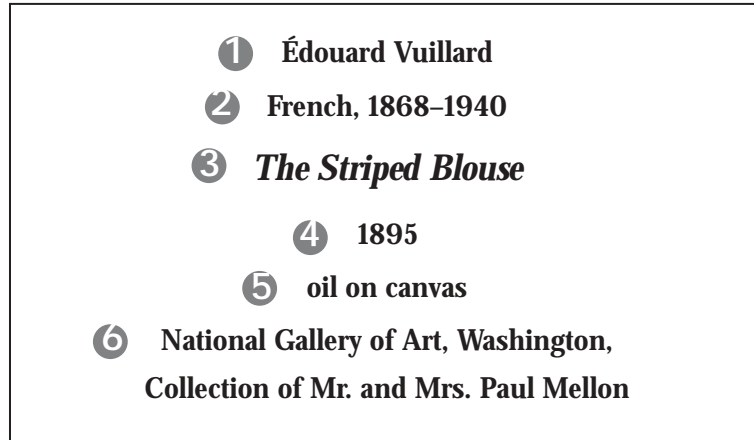


## Édouard Vuillard Family Guide

National Gallery of Art, Washington  
19 January–20 April 2003

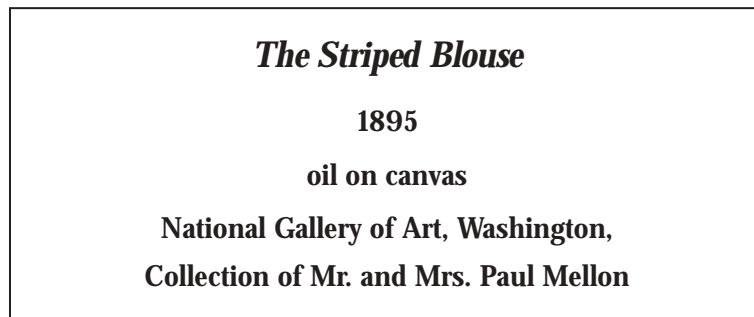
**The exhibition is made possible by  
generous support from Airbus**

## what's on a museum label?



- ① the artist's name
- ② the artist's nationality and the time when he lived
- ③ the title of the work
- ④ the date the work was created
- ⑤ what materials the artist used
- ⑥ credit for lending, donating, or supporting the purchase of the work

In a special exhibition focusing on a single artist, such as *Édouard Vuillard*, labels do not repeat the artist's name.

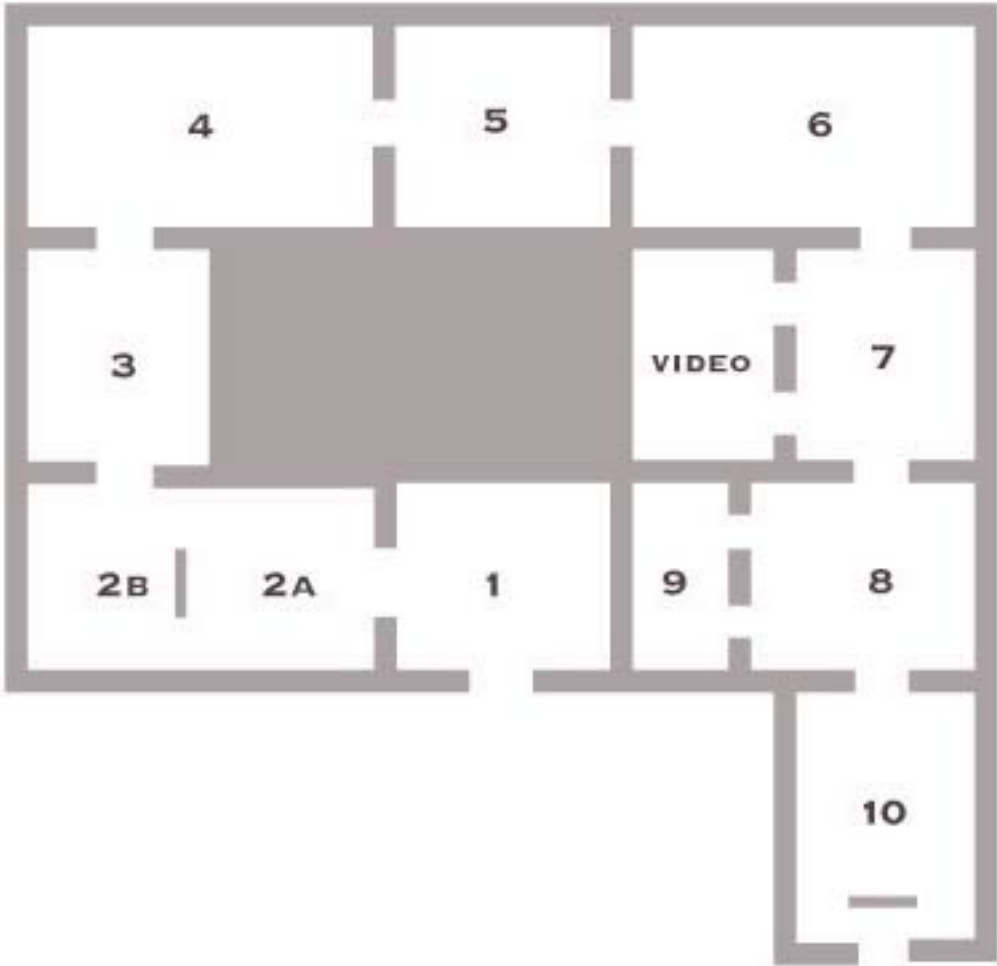


(This is the cover image)

# Introduction

**W**elcome to the National Gallery of Art! Through the generous support of Airbus, the National Gallery presents the world premiere of *Édouard Vuillard*, the most comprehensive exhibition ever devoted to

the artist. Use this guide as you walk through the exhibition. Themes are highlighted to help children learn more about Édouard Vuillard and his art.



**Look closely, but please remember not to touch the works of art.**

## Meet Édouard Vuillard

**É**douard Vuillard was born in 1868 in Cuiseaux, a tiny French town near the Swiss border. At age nine he moved with his family to Paris, where his mother opened a dress-making business, soon located in the family apartment. Vuillard studied painting in Paris, but he preferred to visit the city's encyclopedic museum, the Louvre, to learn about art.

1. *Vuillard and Waroquy*, 1889, oil on canvas, Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Alex M. Lewyt, 1955 (55.173)

2. *Self-Portrait with Cane and Straw Hat*, c. 1891, oil on board mounted on canvas, Collection William Kelly Simpson, New York

3. *Octagonal Self-Portrait*, c. 1890, oil on board, private collection

Vuillard's art would soon show what a strong influence the fabrics, patterns, and presence of family had on him. This exhibition includes more than 200 works that he made throughout his life.

In room 1, you'll find five self-portraits. A *self-portrait* is a picture that an artist makes of him/herself.

Which self-portrait did Vuillard paint first?

Which self-portrait gives you clues that Vuillard is an artist?

Which self-portrait is your favorite? Why?



1



2



3



4

In this room, there are two paintings of Vuillard's grandmother. Compare them.

Vuillard and his grandmother were very close. As you will discover in this exhibition, Vuillard enjoyed painting pictures of his family and friends.

Look closely at *Grandmother at the Sink*. Can you guess how Vuillard painted it? Throughout his career, Vuillard experimented with different painting techniques. This work was made by painting tiny dots of color. Look at the painting up close, then take three big steps back. How does the painting change as you move away from it?

Can you find another work in this room that was painted in the same way? Write the title of that painting here:

In *Grandmother Michaud in Silhouette*, Vuillard chose to paint his grandmother with dark-colored paints. The contrast between her dark figure and the pink and yellow background emphasizes the profile of her face as she concentrates on reading a letter.

4. *Grandmother at the Sink*, c. 1890, oil on board mounted on panel, private collection, courtesy Galerie Bellier, Paris

5. *Grandmother Michaud in Silhouette*, c. 1890, oil on canvas, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, Gift of the Marion L. Ring Estate, 1987



5

## The Nabi Years



1

1. *Lilacs*, c. 1890, oil on board mounted on cradled panel, Collection William Kelly Simpson, New York

2. *The Striped Blouse*, 1895 (detail), oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1983.1.38

3. *Mademoiselle Jacqueline Fontaine*, 1911–1912 (detail), oil on canvas, Tom James Company/Oxford Clothes

4. *The Widow's Visit (The Conversation)*, 1898 (detail), oil on paper mounted on panel, Collection Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchase 1937

5. *The Mantelpiece*, 1905 (detail), oil on board, The National Gallery, London

6. *Misia and Vallotton at Villeneuve*, 1899 (detail), oil on board, Collection William Kelly Simpson, New York

**V**uillard joined a group of painters who called themselves the Nabis (an Arabic and Hebrew word meaning “prophet”). The Nabi artists were interested in using simple lines, bold patterns, and pure colors. During this time, Vuillard liked to use his paints straight from the tube without mixing them together.

As you tour this exhibition, you’ll notice that many of Vuillard’s paintings are filled with flowers. Below are details from five different paintings in this exhibition. If you examine these paintings, you can see how Vuillard experimented with different ways of painting flowers. Which bouquet would you like to receive?

*Lilacs* shows how Vuillard used flat patches of color to create light and shadow.

On the next page, draw your own bouquet of flowers!

List all the colors that Vuillard used to create the shadows in *Lilacs*.

2 (room 4)



3 (room 10)



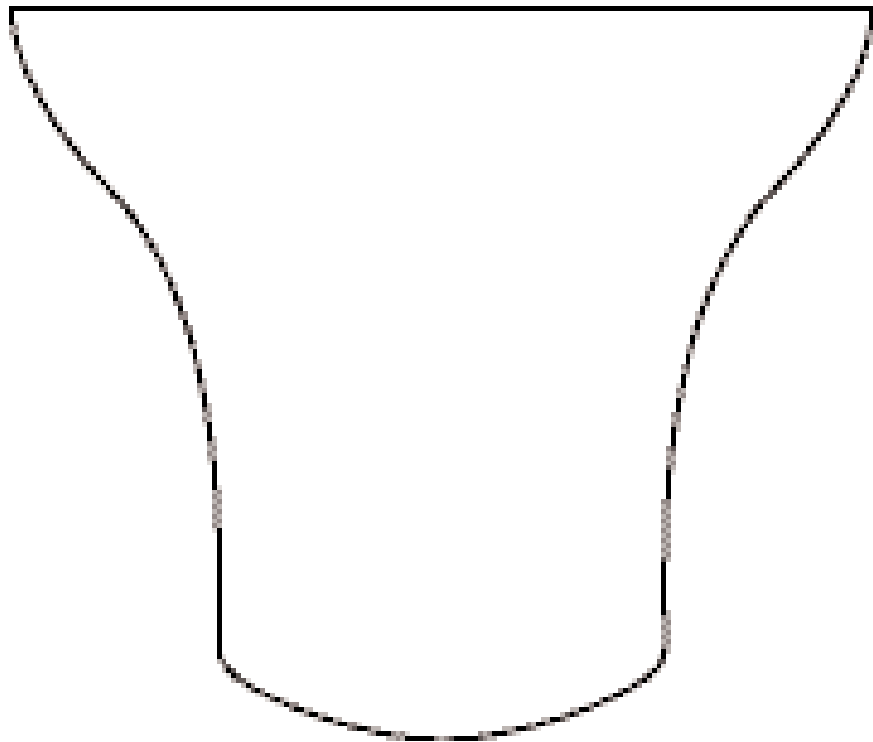
4 (room 5)



5 (room 5)



6 (room 5)



## The Early Interiors

**V**uillard liked to create works of art about the world around him, especially his home and family. We can often find his mother, Madame Vuillard, and his sister Marie engaged in moments of everyday life.

*The Stitch*, 1893, oil on canvas, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, B.A., 1929

*The Stitch* depicts three seamstresses absorbed in their work, probably a scene from Vuillard's home.

As Vuillard's mother was a dress-maker and ran her business in the family's home, Vuillard was surrounded by fabric and lace. He became very interested in the patterns of the different fabrics. Vuillard's paintings are filled with richly patterned clothes, tablecloths, wallpaper, curtains, and floors.

How many of the paintings in this room show someone sewing?



If you were to make a painting of your family involved in their everyday activities, what would you include in your picture?



In the painting *Mother and Sister of the Artist*, Vuillard has painted his mother in a black dress and Marie in a plaid dress.

Which person do you think Vuillard wants you to notice first?

Marie is standing in front of a wall that is covered with decorative wallpaper, and her body looks as though it is blending into the wall behind her. Vuillard painted his mother in black, which makes her figure stand out from the background.

If you look closely, you will see that Vuillard made the patterns with quick little dabs of paint.

Turn the page and hunt for patterns!



*Mother and Sister of the Artist*, c. 1893, oil on canvas, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Saidie A. May, 141.1934

## The Early Interiors

**Hunt for patterns and decoration in  
Vuillard's paintings!**

**Below are details of patterns and  
decoration in paintings located in  
room 3. Find each painting and  
answer the questions below.**



2

**What is this a detail of?**



1

**What is this a detail of?**

**How many women are in this  
painting?**



3

**What color is Marie's dress in this  
painting?**



4

What color is the curtain in this painting?

What is the woman doing in this picture?



6

What is this a detail of?

What is on the table?



5

What is this a detail of?

Where is the woman looking?



7

What is under the table?

What color are the window panes?

1. *The Flowered Dress*, 1891 (detail), oil on canvas, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo, Brazil 129/1958

2. *Interior with Red Bed*, also known as "*The Bridal Chamber*," 1893 (detail), oil on board mounted on cradled panel, private collection

3. *Interior (Marie Leaning over Her Work)*, c. 1892–1893 (detail), oil on board mounted on cradled panel, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, Bequest of Edith Malvina K. Wetmore

4. *The Yellow Curtain*, c. 1893 (detail), oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection, 1970.17.95

5. *The Blue Sleeve*, 1893 (detail), oil on board mounted on cradled panel, Collection Malcolm Wiener

6. *Mother and Daughter at the Table*, c. 1891–1892, oil on panel, private collection

7. *Seamstress with Scraps*, 1893 (detail), oil on board, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift of Blanche Stillson in memory of Caroline Marmon Fesler

# The Decorations

1. *Ile-de-France Landscape: The Window Overlooking the Woods*, 1899, oil on canvas, The Art Institute of Chicago, L.L. and A.S. Coburn Fund, Martha E. Leverone Fund, Charles Norton Owen Fund, and anonymous restricted gift, 1981.77

2. *The Public Gardens: The Nursemaids, The Conversation, The Red Parasol*, 1894, distemper on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

This room is filled with examples of Vuillard's large decorative projects. Vuillard designed panels and screens to decorate the homes of wealthy Parisians.



1

Stand in front of *Ile-de-France Landscape: The Window Overlooking the Woods* and pretend you are looking outside the window into the countryside. What do you see?

What season do you think it is?

How many people do you see?



2

*The Public Gardens* is the most famous of Vuillard's decorative projects. It consists of nine panels with scenes from public parks in Paris. The work is a celebration of childhood and the daily enjoyment that goes on in the parks.

Pictured below are three of the nine panels of *The Public Gardens*.

Imagine that you could walk into the scenes on these panels...

Who would you talk to?

What activities would you enjoy doing in this garden?

What is the weather like on this day in the park?

Vuillard made *The Public Gardens* to decorate a friend's living room. Later, the individual panels were sold to different people. This is the first time that eight of the nine panels have been seen together in nearly 100 years.

On the next page, design a triple panel to decorate your home!

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## City and Country



1

**A**fter painting interiors and decorations, Vuillard wanted to try something new. He began to observe nature more closely, particularly natural light, and painted landscapes. *Landscapes* are paintings of outdoor scenes.

This room has several examples of Vuillard's light-filled landscapes, including *Swiss Landscape*, which he painted while on vacation in Switzerland.

Vuillard traveled the French countryside and stayed in the country homes of friends. This painting shows his friends gathered at the breakfast table.

What details in the painting suggest that they are in the country? List three here:

1. *Swiss Landscape*, 1900, oil on board mounted on panel, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Hugo N. Dixon

2. *Decoration for Bois-Lurette. At La Divette, Cabourg: Annette Natanson, Lucy Hessel and Miche Savoie at Breakfast*, 1913, reworked in 1934, distemper on canvas, private collection

How many people are at the table?

How many mirrors are in the room?

Vuillard often includes mirrors in his paintings because the reflections allow you to see more of what is going on in the room. Pay close attention to Vuillard's use of mirrors, particularly in the portraits in rooms 9 and 10.



2



3

**Cityscapes** are paintings of outdoor city scenes. Vuillard loved his neighborhood in Paris and painted several scenes that describe what life was like there.

*Place Vintimille*, a cityscape painted on a five-panel screen, pictures the busy, oval-shaped park where Vuillard spent a lot of his time.

This is a view from Vuillard's fifth-floor apartment. Imagine that you are visiting Vuillard and you are looking outside his window.

**What season do you think it was when Vuillard painted this?**

**What sounds would you hear from the park below?**

**List three sounds here:**

3. *Five-Panel Screen for Miss Marguerite Chapin: Place Vintimille*, 1911, five-panel screen, distemper on paper laid down on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Enid A. Haupt, 1998.47.1

room 7

## Photographs

**T**he camera was a new invention during Vuillard's lifetime, and he enjoyed experimenting with photography.

Do any of the photographs remind you of things you've seen in Vuillard's paintings?

In room 7, you'll find some of Vuillard's photographs. As with his paintings, he liked to capture his friends and family in everyday activities.



1

1. *Vuillard seated at the dining-room table, Rue de la Tour, 1908, original gelatin silver print, private collection*



2

2. *Madame Vuillard, Rue Truffaut, 1899-1904, original gelatin silver print, private collection*



## Portraits

**D**uring the last thirty years of his long career, Vuillard painted many portraits. His portraits always included detailed backgrounds of the person's office or home.

Vuillard believed that rooms can tell you a lot about people. The backgrounds of his portraits are filled with books, furniture, and the everyday objects that make each person unique.

On the next page, learn more about the people in Vuillard's portraits.



3



4

3. *The "Voiles de Gènes" Boudoir*, 1931, oil on canvas, private collection

4. *Marcel Kapferer*, 1926-1927, oil on canvas, private collection

## Portraits

**D**iscover who these people are by matching their description with their portrait in rooms 8, 9, or 10.

I am very proud to be a dentist. Would you like to take a seat in the chair by the window? Vuillard made many sketches of my surgical equipment before painting this picture. I am Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

You have seen me before. Here I am lighting the stove so that Édouard will be warm while he works. People call me \_\_\_\_\_

I am an actor and playwright. Vuillard decided to paint me in my dressing room, with its blue striped wallpaper, as I applied my makeup before a performance. I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am a famous actress and singer. While Vuillard painted me, I rested on my green sofa, coiled up among the cushions, surrounded by pink flowers. Sacha Guitry is my husband, and I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am a successful fashion designer. In my office the books are arranged neatly on the shelves, and samples of fabric are spread across my desk. Vuillard painted me wearing a green jacket, to brighten up the picture. My name is \_\_\_\_\_

Born in Romania, I moved to Paris and became a poet. I write my poems while sitting in bed. I am the Countess \_\_\_\_\_

We are brothers and share an apartment in Paris. We enjoy reading the newspaper together while the morning light shines through the breakfast room window. Vuillard had fun painting our telephone and its long, coiling cord. We are \_\_\_\_\_

I am a glamorous star of the musical theater. I posed for Vuillard in a stage set of a bathroom. Vuillard had to stand in the bathtub while he worked on my portrait! Surrounded by red velvet drapes and mirrors, I am wearing an evening gown. My stage name is \_\_\_\_\_

Vuillard painted me in my study, surrounded by all my papers. I am a historian and art collector. My art collection hangs on the walls behind me. My cat likes to sit on my lap while I work. I am \_\_\_\_\_

# Now it's your turn...

**W**e hope you enjoyed touring *Édouard Vuillard*. As you exit the exhibition, make sure to say goodbye to Vuillard. In this final self-portrait, Vuillard arranged works of art that inspired him around his mirror so that he could think about them while he painted.

What kinds of works of art do you like to look at?

Did you find a favorite in this exhibition?



**Now it's your turn!**

**Use the last page of this booklet to make your own portrait.**

**Will you think of Vuillard as you work?**

*Self-Portrait in the Dressing-Room Mirror*, 1923–1924, oil on board, Dian Woodner and Andrea Woodner, New York

