

Release Date: October 25, 2002

## **NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PRESENTS MOST COMPREHENSIVE EXHIBITION EVER OF RENOWNED FRENCH ARTIST ÉDOUARD VUILLARD; WORLD TOUR BEGINS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. JANUARY 19, 2003**

Washington, DC -- The most comprehensive exhibition ever devoted to the work of Édouard Vuillard, the quintessential Parisian artist whose work spans the fin-de-siècle through the 1930s, will have its world premiere in Washington at the National Gallery of Art, West Building, January 19, 2003 through April 20, 2003. It includes works that have never been on public display and many that have not been seen for decades. **Édouard Vuillard** will travel to Montreal, Paris, and London. The last Vuillard exhibition on this scale was a 1938 retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, where it will be on view May 15 - August 24, 2003; the Réunion des musées nationaux/Musée d'Orsay, Paris, where it will be presented at the Galeries nationales du Grand Palais September 23, 2003 -January 4, 2004; and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, where it will be seen January 31 - April 18, 2004.

Approximately 230 works will demonstrate the full range of Vuillard's (1868-1940) prolific career and his embrace of unconventional media. In addition to his luminous paintings, the exhibition includes innovative folding screens, theatre programs, prints, drawings, photographs, and ceramics. A highlight of the exhibition is the reunion of *The Public Gardens* (1894), a series of decorative panels not seen together publicly since

1906 and dispersed at auction in 1929.

"This once-in-a lifetime exhibition demonstrating the breadth of Vuillard's talents is the result of an unusual and sustained collaboration between four institutions, the generosity of Airbus, the indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, and many wonderful lenders from around the world," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art.

### **Exhibition Support**

The exhibition is made possible by generous support from Airbus.

"The people of Airbus are honored to present another remarkable exhibition at the Gallery, and there is much for us all to admire in these works of Édouard Vuillard," said Noël Forgeard, Airbus president and chief executive officer. "Fittingly, the timing of this exhibition will coincide with the centennial year of the birth of our industry. At the same time Vuillard was helping usher in the artistic revolution of the 1900s, the Wright brothers launched a century of progress in aviation. As a leader today in commercial aircraft manufacture, Airbus is committed to supporting the arts and to promoting the same spirit of innovation and creativity embodied a century ago by Vuillard and the Wrights."

The exhibition is also supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

### **The Artist**

Vuillard's work straddles two centuries: he was a major post-impressionist in the 1890s, as well as a participant in the renewal of decorative art before and after 1900. Vuillard was one of the central figures of "Les Nabis" ("Nabi" means "prophet" in Arabic and Hebrew), a group of Parisian avant-garde artists whose members included Pierre Bonnard and Félix Vallotton, among others. During the Nabi period Vuillard produced some of his best-known work—provocative paintings of middle-class interiors and contributions to avant-garde theater.

Vuillard also worked steadily through his post-Nabi years, from 1900 until his death in 1940. He experimented increasingly with abstraction and powerful color in a manner

that bears comparison with Henri Matisse and the Fauves. In the latter decades of his life he expanded his range in natural light, landscape, and portraiture.

### **The Exhibition**

The exhibition will be organized chronologically. Among the works in the exhibition are: the bold *Octagonal Self-Portrait* (1890) and the colorful abstract *Lilacs* (c.1890); the sumptuously-detailed *Interior (Marie Leaning Over her Work)* (c.1892-93), *The Striped Blouse* (1895), and *Misia and Valloton at Villeneuve* (1899), all emphasizing textile-like surroundings as well as their subjects; Vuillard's dramatic group portrait, *The Surgeons* (1912-14; reworked 1925 and 1937); and his tribute to the classic beauty of Versailles during a time of war, *The Chapel at the Château de Versailles* (1917, 1919; reworked 1926-1928).

The exhibition will feature *The Public Gardens* (1894), a series of large panels considered the grandest and most complex of Vuillard's decorative projects. Created for a private salon, *The Public Gardens* has appeared publicly in its entirety only once, at a Paris exhibition in 1906; the panels were dispersed at auction in 1929. Eight of the nine panels are being brought back together as part of this exhibition.

The exhibition will also break new ground with a selection of photographs by Vuillard, who enthusiastically embraced the new technology of photography in 1897. A gallery of Vuillard's photographs of family and friends will offer a rare glimpse into his intimate circle and illuminate the ways photography informed his painting. The majority of photos in the exhibition have never been seen publicly or published.

### **Exhibition Curators, Catalogue, Programs and Resources**

Guy Cogeval, director, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, is the chief curator of the exhibition, with co-curators: Kimberly Jones, assistant curator, department of French paintings, National Gallery of Art; Laurence des Cars, curator, Musée d'Orsay, Paris; and MaryAnne Stevens, collections secretary and senior curator, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

*Édouard Vuillard*, the exhibition catalogue, will be copublished by The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery of Art, Washington. Authored by Guy

Cogeval with Kimberly Jones, Laurence des Cars and MaryAnne Stevens, and with contributions by Dario Gamboni, Elizabeth Easton and Mathias Chivot, the catalogue contains five essays on aspects of the artist's work, from his fascination with photography to the impact of country sojourns on his painting (520 pages, 463 color, 95 b/w).

Cogeval is also the author of the catalogue raisonné, *Vuillard: Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, scheduled for publication in 2003.

A film, *Édouard Vuillard*, is being produced by the National Gallery of Art and is made possible by the HRH Foundation. The film explores Vuillard's career, including his early designs for the theater, evocative interior scenes, and passion for photography.

An exhibition brochure will be available free of charge to all visitors. An audio tour will be available for \$6, \$5 for students with ID, groups of ten or more, and senior citizens. Information regarding tours, lectures, special programs for the public and students, and educational materials related to Vuillard will be posted on the Gallery's Web site, [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov) (<http://www.nga.gov/>).

###

## General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit [www.nga.gov/renovation](http://www.nga.gov/renovation) (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) and on [Twitter](http://twitter.com/ngadc) at [twitter.com/ngadc](http://twitter.com/ngadc).

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Press Office

National Gallery of Art

2000B South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785

phone: (202) 842-6353 e-mail: [pressinfo@nga.gov](mailto:pressinfo@nga.gov)

Deborah Ziska

Chief of Press and Public Information

(202) 842-6353

[ds-ziska@nga.gov](mailto:ds-ziska@nga.gov)