

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Edouard Vuillard (1868 - 1940)

Gabrielle Jonas devant sa coiffeuse, 1927

19 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (50 x 50 cm.)

signed *E. Vuillard* lower right pastel on paper

PROVENANCE:

Gabrielle Jonas, Paris;

Private Collection, Paris;

Matthiesen Fine Art, London (in 1952);

Jean-Pierre Durand, Geneva (in 1955);

JPL Fine Arts, London;

acquired from the above in 1989, thence by descent.

EXHIBITION:

London, Matthiesen Gallery, *French Paintings of the XIXth and XXth Centuries*, June - July 1952, no.

39

LITERATURE:

A. Salomon and G. Cogeval, Vuillard, *The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical catalogue critique of paintings and pastels*. Paris, 2003, vol. III, p. 1430 and 1700, no. XI-242 (illustrated, p. 1430)

The final exhibition of *Les Nabis* took place at the Galerie Bernheim in 1900, at which point Vuillard began to move away from his close, stylized interiors, and employ a greater degree of naturalism in his work. His style softened, and he preoccupied himself with the effects of light and colour, rather than systematic distortions. No longer at the forefront of the avant-garde, Vuillard travelled widely and enjoyed a close rapport with many of his clients who hosted him on extended sojourns in the country and abroad. He became especially close to the art dealer Jos Hessel and his wife Lucy, who would often have him to stay at their apartment in Paris, and from 1926 onwards at the *Château des Clayes*, a seventeenth-century chateau near Versailles. In the last decade of his life the chateau became a near permanent rural retreat for Vuillard. Madame Hessel features in two of the pastels here, once with her dogs on a walk, perhaps in the grounds of the chateau which were laid out by André Le Nôtre, and again at the dining table with her daughter.

Vuillard's travels around Europe and the French countryside provided him with new vistas to explore, and led to an increased interest in landscape painting. He no longer suppressed three-dimensional space, and used the effects of natural light as a dynamic and unifying force within the composition. These three later period pastels from the 1920s and 1930s illustrate this shift, with the use of bright colour, a hallmark of Vuillard's art since the early 1890s, still in effect but with a greater variety of application. Rather than blocks of solid colour he used a mix of coloured pastels to convey different light sources. A good example of this technique is seen in *Gabrielle Jonas devant sa coiffeuse* where the scene is lit from both the blue daylight that streams through the window on the right, striking Gabrielle, her chair and the far wall, and the warm glow of the interior lighting made up of pinks, reds and yellows seen in the room beyond. In *Le Déjeuner au Château des Clayes* too, Vuillard used the brown tone of the paper combined with warm red and orange pastels to create a comforting interior atmosphere, and then the highlights on the glassware were picked out with touches of white pastel to suggest the light from the window on the left.