Jean-Édouard Vuillard was born November 11, 1868 to a retired captain and spent his youth at Cuiseaux (Saône-et-Loire); in 1878 his family moved to Paris in modest circumstances. After his father's death in 1884, Vuillard received a scholarship to continue his education.

In the Lycée Condorcet Vuillard met Ker Xavier Roussel (also a future painter and Vuillard's future brother in law), Maurice Denis, musician Pierre Hermant and the writer Pierre Véber.

In 1885, Vuillard left the Lycée Condorcet. On the advice of his closest friend, Roussel, he refused a military career and joined Roussel at the studio of painter Diogène Maillart. There, Roussel and Vuillard received the rudiments of artistic training.

In 1887, after three unsuccessful attempts, Vuillard passed the entrance examination for the École des Beaux-Arts.

By 1890, the year in which Vuillard met Pierre Bonnard and Paul Sérusier, he had joined the Nabis, a group of art students inspired by the synthetism of Gauguin. He contributed to their exhibitions at the Gallery of Le Barc de Boutteville, and later shared a studio with fellow Nabis Bonnard and Maurice Denis.

In the early 1890s he worked for the Théâtre de l'Œuvre of Lugné-Poe designing settings and programs.

In the 1890s Vuillard met the brothers Alexandre and Thadée Natanson, the founders of La Revue Blanche, a cultural review. Vuillards graphics appeared in the journal, together with Pierre Bonnard, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Félix Vallotton and others.

In 1992, on the advice of the Natanson brothers, Vuillard painted his first decorations ("apartment frescoes") for the house of Mme Desmarais. Subsequently he fulfilled many other commissions of this kind: in 1894 for Alexandre Natanson, in 1898 for Claude Anet, in 1908 for Bernstein, and in 1913 for Bernheim and for the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The last commissions he received date to 1937 (Palais de Chaillot in Paris, with Bonnard) and 1939 (Palais des Nations in Geneva, with Denis, Roussel and Chastel).

In 1898 Vuillard visited Venice and Florence. The following year he made a trip to London. Later he went to Milan, Venice and Spain. Vuillard also traveled in Brittany and Normandy.

Vuillard first exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants of 1901 and at the Salon d'Automne in 1903.
In his paintings and decorative pieces Vuillard depicted mostly interiors, streets and gardens. Marked by a gentle humor, they are executed in the delicate range of soft, blurred colors characteristic of his art. Living with his mother, a dressmaker, until the age of sixty, Vuillard was very familiar with interior and domestic spaces. Much of his art reflected this influence, largely decorative and often depicting very intricate patterns.

In 1912 Vuillard painted Théodore Duret in his Study, a commissioned portrait that signalled a new phase in Vuillard's work, which was dominated by portraiture from 1920 onwards.

Vuillard died in La Baule, near Saint-Nazaire, 21 June 1940.

Oil paintings in museum collections (work in progress)

Cambridge, UK, The Fitzwilliam Museum

- Seated woman: cup of coffee, 1893. Distemper on card. Inventory PD.1-1994

Chicago / USA, Art Institute

- Landscape: Window Overlooking the Woods, 1899
  Oil on canvas, 96 1/8 x 149 in. (249.2 x 378.5 cm) Inventory 1981.77

Dallas Museum of Art, USA

- The Tent, 1908
  Distemper on paper, on canvas, 39 3/4 x 56 1/2 x 5 in. (100.965 x 143.51 x 12.7 cm)
  Inventory 1985.R.83

- The Little Restaurant (Le petit restaurant), c.1900-1901
  Oil on paper board panel, 19 x 16 1/2 x 3 in. (48.26 x 41.91 x 7.62 cm)
  Inventory 1985.R.85

- The Garden of La Muette à Passy, Paris (La Muette), c. 1906-1907
  Distemper on paper on canvas, 78 x 26 3/4 in. (1 m 98.12 cm x 67.94 cm)
  Inventory 1982.100

- The First Steps (Les Premier Pas), 1900-1901
  Oil on canvas, 20 3/8 x 14 3/8 in. (51.75 x 36.51 cm)
  Inventory 1994.220

- Interior (Madame Vuillard and Grand-Mère Roussel at L'Étang-la-Ville), c. 1900-1901
  Oil on cardboard, 19 15/16 x 26 3/8 in. (50.641 x 67.01 cm)
  Inventory 1981.137

- Chestnut Trees, a Cartoon for a Tiffany Stained-Glass Window, 1894–1895
  Glue-based distemper on cardboard, mounted on canvas, 43 1/4 x 27 1/2 in. (109.855 x 69.85 cm)
  Inventory 2010.15.McD

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA

- Self-Portrait with Waroquy, 1889
  Accession Number: 55.173

- The Album, 1895
Accession Number: 2000.93.2
- Mme Vuillard in a Set Designer’s Studio, 1893–94
  Accession Number: 1975.1.223

- Mme Vuillard Sewing by the Window, rue Truffaut, ca. 1899
  Accession Number: 1975.1.225

- Garden at Vaucresson, 1920; reworked 1926, 1935, 1936
  Accession Number: 52.183

- Interior with Paintings and a Pheasant, 1928
  Accession Number: 48.162.4

- Conversation, 1897–98
  Accession Number: 1999.363.85

- Jos and Lucie Hessel in the Small Salon, Rue de Rivoli, ca. 1900–1905
  Accession Number: 2003.20.18

- Luncheon, 1901
  Accession Number: 1979.135.28

- Interior, ca. 1900–1905
  Accession Number: 67.187.118

- View of a Park during Rain, 1907
  Accession Number: 67.187.42

- At Table, 1893
  Accession Number: 1984.433.25

- The Green Interior (Figure Seated by a Curtained Window), 1891
  Accession Number: 1975.1.222

- Misia at the Piano, 1895 or early 1896
  Accession Number: 1975.1.224

- The Small Drawing-Room: Mme Hessel at Her Sewing Table, 1917
  Accession Number: 1975.1.226

St. Petersbourg, State Hermitage Museum

- Madame Vuillard by the Fireplace, c. 1895
  Oil on cardboard. 29.5 x 23.5 cm

- Madame Vuillard in the Drawing-Room, ca. 1893
  Oil on cardboard. 27.5 x 22.8 cm

- In a Room , 1899
  Oil on cardboard pasted on panel. 52 x 79 cm

Washington, DC, USA. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution.

- Grandmother Michaud Seen against the Light, (1890)
  Oil on canvas, 25 5/8 X 21 1/4 IN. (65.0 X 54.0 CM.) Accession Number: 87.32
to be continued

Cleveland Museum of Art

Indianapolis Museum of Art

Washington D.C, National Gallery of Art

Exhibitions

May 4, 2012 - September 23, 2012 Édouard Vuillard: A Painter and His Muses, 1890-1940 at The Jewish Museum in New York

March 5, 2003 – August 24, 2003 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

The Lyon Musée des Beaux-Arts showed a retrospective of his works in 1990.

Bibliography

Édouard Vuillard & Claude Roger-Marx, Vuillard: His Life & Work, Paul Elek 1946 ASIN B00MJ4444M

