

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

411 West Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91105 www.nortonsimon.org

Public Affairs Department 626.844.6941 media@nortonsimon.org

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Media Contact:

Leslie C. Denk, Director of Public Affairs

ldenk@nortonsimon.org | (626) 844-6941

Indoor/Outdoor: Vuillard's *Landscapes and Interiors*

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Pasadena, CA—The Norton Simon Museum presents an exhibition of *Paysages et Intérieurs (Landscapes and Interiors)*, Édouard Vuillard's exquisite print album of 1899. The thirteen prints in the series—comprising views of parks, boulevards and cafés, scenes of domestic interiors, and an album cover—give us a glimpse of Vuillard's Paris through a thicket of pattern and color. Financed and published by the avant-garde dealer Ambroise Vollard, *Landscapes and Interiors* was a commercial failure—20 years after its printing, Vollard had still not sold out the original edition of 100 sets. Today, however, individual prints from the series are so sought after that intact suites like the Norton Simon's have become a rarity. The exhibition also marks the return of the artist's monumental *First Fruits*, also from 1899, following its conservation work at the J. Paul Getty Museum and its subsequent loans to the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the Art Institute of Chicago.



The Pastry Shop
(from *Landscapes and Interiors*, 1899)
Édouard Vuillard (French, 1868–1940)
Color ink on paper
16 x 13 in. (40.6 x 33.0 cm)
Norton Simon Art Foundation

Vuillard as Printmaker

One of the most innovative artists in turn-of-the-century Paris, Édouard Vuillard (French, 1868–1940) is best known for small-scale paintings of domestic interiors, populated by friends and family members and crowded with competing patterns: wallpapers, textiles, latticed windows. These patterns contribute to the emphatic flatness of his work, a sense that space recedes not into his pictures but up and across their surfaces, erecting a kind of screen or protective barrier between beholder and beheld. Like many of his contemporaries, Vuillard became fascinated with Japanese woodblock prints and used the new medium of color lithography to mimic their coloristic effects. The single-color lithographic process, invented at the end of the 19th century, had transformed print-making and -marketing in modern Europe, allowing printers to pull large editions without wearing down the original matrix. By the turn of

the 20th century, commercial advertising—circus posters, champagne ads, and so on—had driven the development of multi-color lithography, granting artists a new range of expressive possibilities in the medium.

As in Japanese woodblock printing, each of Vuillard's colors required a separately inked matrix. Hence, an image as richly colored as *The Pastry Shop* could require seven separate lithographic stones, inked and printed in precise sequence. To aid in this process, the artist turned to master printer Auguste Clot, who produced prints for such other members of the avant-garde as Bonnard, Redon, Toulouse-Lautrec and Munch. In *Landscapes and Interiors*, Clot helped Vuillard achieve effects of unprecedented subtlety and virtuosity. Form and space are described with color alone, applied in transparent, overlapping layers: green laid down over yellow, red laid over pink, and so on.

For all their technical sophistication, though, Vuillard's prints describe an ordinary world, places and people intimately known by the artist: a sunny avenue bustling with pedestrians, the corner table of a café, Vuillard's mother sitting by her kitchen stove, his friends intent on a game of checkers. Despite their cozy familiarity, these scenes grant us no access to the inner thoughts of those they portray. Vuillard's approach, in the end, is perhaps less intimate than intensely *private*, veiling the world he describes in pattern and color.

Vuillard's *First Fruits*

In the same year that he produced his intimate *Landscapes and Interiors*, Vuillard also completed two decorative panels for a private residence, one of which, *First Fruits*, is now part of the Norton Simon collection. Splendidly cleaned and conserved at the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2014, *First Fruits* returns to the Norton Simon Museum this October, having spent the spring in Paris at the Musée d'Orsay and the summer at the Art Institute of Chicago, where it was reunited with its pendant (*Landscape: Window Overlooking the Woods*) for the first time in half a century. Portraying a landscape near the country house where Vuillard spent his summer holidays in 1899, the richly patterned surface and endlessly varied greens of *First Fruits* make it a kind of "*verdure*" as the artist called the picture; generally translated as "greenery," the word carries an additional and more specific meaning in French, referring to a style of tapestry produced during the Renaissance. With vegetal borders and densely patterned leaves, *First Fruits* makes explicit reference to the *verdure* tradition and seems to have played the part of a tapestry in the room where it was first displayed: the private library of a Parisian townhouse.

"Indoor/Outdoor: Vuillard's *Landscapes and Interiors*" is organized by Associate Curator Emily A. Beeny. A series of events is organized in conjunction with the exhibition, including the lecture *Vuillard's First Fruits: Cleaning and Context* by Beeny and Devi Ormond, Associate Paintings Conservator, J. Paul Getty Museum, on Saturday, November 7, at 4:00 p.m. More information is at www.nortonsimon.org.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum's collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Two temporary exhibition spaces feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 W. Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena, Calif., at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit www.nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from noon to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed on Tuesday. **Admission:** General admission is \$12 for adults and \$9 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free with admission. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free, and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** The City of Pasadena provides a shuttle bus to transport passengers through the Pasadena Playhouse district, the Lake Avenue shopping district and Old Pasadena. A shuttle stop is located in front of the Museum. Please visit www.cityofpasadena.net/artsbus for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 E. Holly St. at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules.