

# LE CLAIRE KUNST SEIT 1982

ÉDOUARD VUILLARD

1868 Cuiseaux (Saône-et-Loire) - La Baule 1940

## *Effet matinal sur la place Vintimille*

Pastel and charcoal on beige paper; c.1928.  
474 x 290 mm

PROVENANCE: The artist's studio. - J. H. Scott Mason. - The Hanover Gallery, London. - H. E. Kent, London. - Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 June 1972, lot 30 (repr.)

LITERATURE: Antoine Salomon and Guy Cogeval, *Vuillard, The Inexhaustible Glance, Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*, III, Milan/Paris, 2003, no. XII-14, repr. p.1462

EXHIBITION: *Édouard Vuillard*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, 2008-9, no. 116

Vuillard probably based this fine pastel with its striking vertical format on one of his own photographs. After the move from 26 rue de Calais to 6 Place Vintimille he had only a limited view of the park in contrast to the panoramic view he had enjoyed before. The format of the sheet recalls the vertical format of the large decorative panels depicting Place Vintimille commissioned by his patron, the successful theatre author Henry Bernstein, the playwright.<sup>1</sup> Vuillard worked on the group from 1909 to 1910.

Vuillard depicts the square at the awakening day, still veiled in haze after a cool night. Above the sunlit houses is a vast blue and grey sky swept by ribbons of clouds. Patches of light and shadow create contrasts among grey and light green tinged foliage of the trees. Here the main focus of Vuillard's favourite motif is not the park with its trees, bushes and visitors but the intense play of light over the bright expanse of morning sky that occupies the entire upper half of the sheet. It is a truly impressionistic work that eloquently conveys the atmosphere of the square at first light. A few barely discernible strollers are glimpsed, enjoying the stillness of the moment before the busy city comes to life.

Vuillard's paintings and especially his intimate pastels of the Place Vintimille are far from being mere topographical records of the motif at different times of the day or year. There is always an element of mystery, something secretive - like the blurred form of a stroller, children playing, figures partly hidden behind the trees and the shrubbery. The play of light on the foliage and the buildings gives an indication of the life that is hidden from direct view. Seldom is the complete motif visible, as if to demonstrate the limited capacity of human beings to fully comprehend the complexity of the modern world.

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<sup>1</sup> *Panels for Henry Bernstein, The Streets of Paris. Second Series: Place Vintimille. 1909/10.* Set of four panels, each glue-based distemper on cardboard, 200 x 69,5 and 200 x 49,7 cm. Salomon/Cogeval 2003, VII-516.1-4; Salomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, inv.-no. 78.2514.74a and b; two are in private collections, New York.