

Basic Detail Report



The Vuillard Family

Date

c. 1902-04 or 1910-12

Primary Maker

Édouard Vuillard

Medium

Oil on card

Dimensions

25.7 x 32.2 cm

Description

Born in 1868 in Cuiseaux, France, Édouard Vuillard is regarded as one of the most innovative painters and printmakers of the modern period. Vuillard formed part of Les Nabis (from the Hebrew and Arabic words for "prophets"), a Symbolist group of painters which also included French artists Maurice Denis and Pierre Bonnard. Along with his fellow 'Intimist' Pierre Bonnard, he is renowned for his depictions of intimate interior scenes in domestic settings, frequently of his own family, as in his work. The Vuillard family group portrait was not exhibited during the artist's lifetime, and given the subject matter was probably intended as a private work. Vuillard Family is one of a small number of self-portraits by Vuillard, which also, uniquely, depicts the artist with his mother and sister. The complex relationship between Vuillard and his mother is documented in many paintings by the artist. For many years, Vuillard and his mother shared modest rented apartments, from which his mother ran a sewing business, where she employed his sister. The artist's bedroom doubled as a studio. Madame Vuillard is usually a dominant presence in the paintings in which she appears. For example, in *Interior - Mother and Sister of the Artist* (1893, MoMA) the dark silhouette of Madame Vuillard dominates the image, while Marie presses against the wall, fading into the patterned wallpaper. In *The Vuillard Family*, the three figures occupy most of the painting, creating a claustrophobic effect. The artist himself is on the left. The figures and the space they occupy are loosely sketched in paint. Despite its small scale, it is a work of psychological power. Vuillard is also represented in the collection by La Cheminée (*The Mantlepiece*), which was purchased by Hugh Lane from the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in Paris. La Cheminée is a combination of an interior scene and a still-life, showing Vuillard's emphasis on pattern and decoration, which are also distinctive features in *The Vuillard Family*.