

# SKARSTEDT

## The New York Times

### Art Gallery Shows to See in April

By Andrew Russeth, Jillian Steinhauer and Travis Diehl

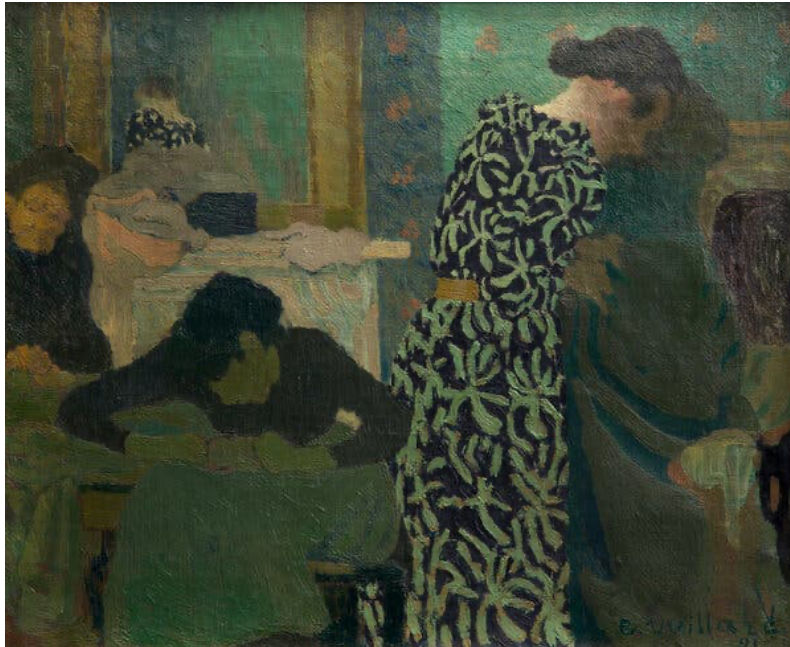
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*This week in Newly Reviewed, Andrew Russeth covers Édouard Vuillard's thorny encounters, Domenico Gnoli's zesty paintings and Nina Beier's ice cream cones.*

CHELSEA

#### Édouard Vuillard

Through April 25. Skarstedt, 547 West 25th Street; 212-517-5259, skarstedt.com.



Édouard Vuillard, “The Flowered Dress” (1891), oil on canvas.  
The Museu de Arte de São Paulo, via Skarstedt, New York

Acquavella’s new Henri Matisse show is a feast of radiant color, with paintings of flowers, fruits and prepossessing women, all sweetness and light. But after a visit, you may yearn for darker, thornier encounters. Skarstedt has them: 19 compact pictures by a contemporary, Édouard Vuillard, a master of smoldering interiors, alluring but fraught.

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These pieces are from about 1890 to 1905. Vuillard was in his early 20s into his 30s then, a member of the vanguard Nabis group in Paris, which also included Pierre Bonnard and Félix Vallotton.

Interlocking patches of flat color and near-abstraction, he caught figures at quiet moments in rooms that tend toward the claustrophobic. A cook works in a kitchen, amid an olive-brown haze, illuminated by a candle, in a painting on cardboard from around 1892. A mother with a red ocher smudge for a face holds a baby in a painting from about 1900 that is shadowy and a little lonely but also alive with nuanced shifts in color.

A veil of quick, mysterious red dots hovers over “Grandmother at the Sink” (circa 1890), whose hunched protagonist stares down the viewer, looking as if she is about to wield a dish. Vuillard lived with his maternal grandmother, as well as his mother, a corset maker who worked at home, and his older sister Marie. (His father died when the artist was a teenager.)

In “The Flowered Dress” (1891), seamstresses labor inside a menagerie of greens, alone together. It looks cramped there but not entirely unpleasant, as the artist’s variegated surfaces interact.

A fugitive sense of satisfaction can be detected in Vuillard’s art, but did the man actually have any fun? One worries, especially looking at the latest painting here. A half-dozen figures stand sentinel in an airless salon gathering that looks less like a social occasion than an interrogation.

But glance elsewhere for a breather, at the elegant “Young Women in Bed” (1894). She’s buried within a billowing white cloud, resting her arm atop it, perhaps sizing us up. Will she reach out?

*ANDREW RUSSETH*