

THE ARTIST PROJECT

WHAT
ARTISTS SEE
WHEN
THEY LOOK
AT ART

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

PHAIDON



**“The more you look at them,
the more quietly provocative
they are.”**

I would not be considered a modest painter, I suppose, because of the scale and subject matter of my work. One of the things I really love about Édouard Vuillard is that his paintings are often small, with domestic and rarely provocative subjects, but the more you look at them, the more quietly provocative they are.

You could say that the content of this painting is not that interesting—his mother is darning in a green room. What makes the painting truly interesting is how it's painted. The painting is screaming, that color is screaming. It feels like the green is advancing. I think you actually turn green, you're illuminated before it.

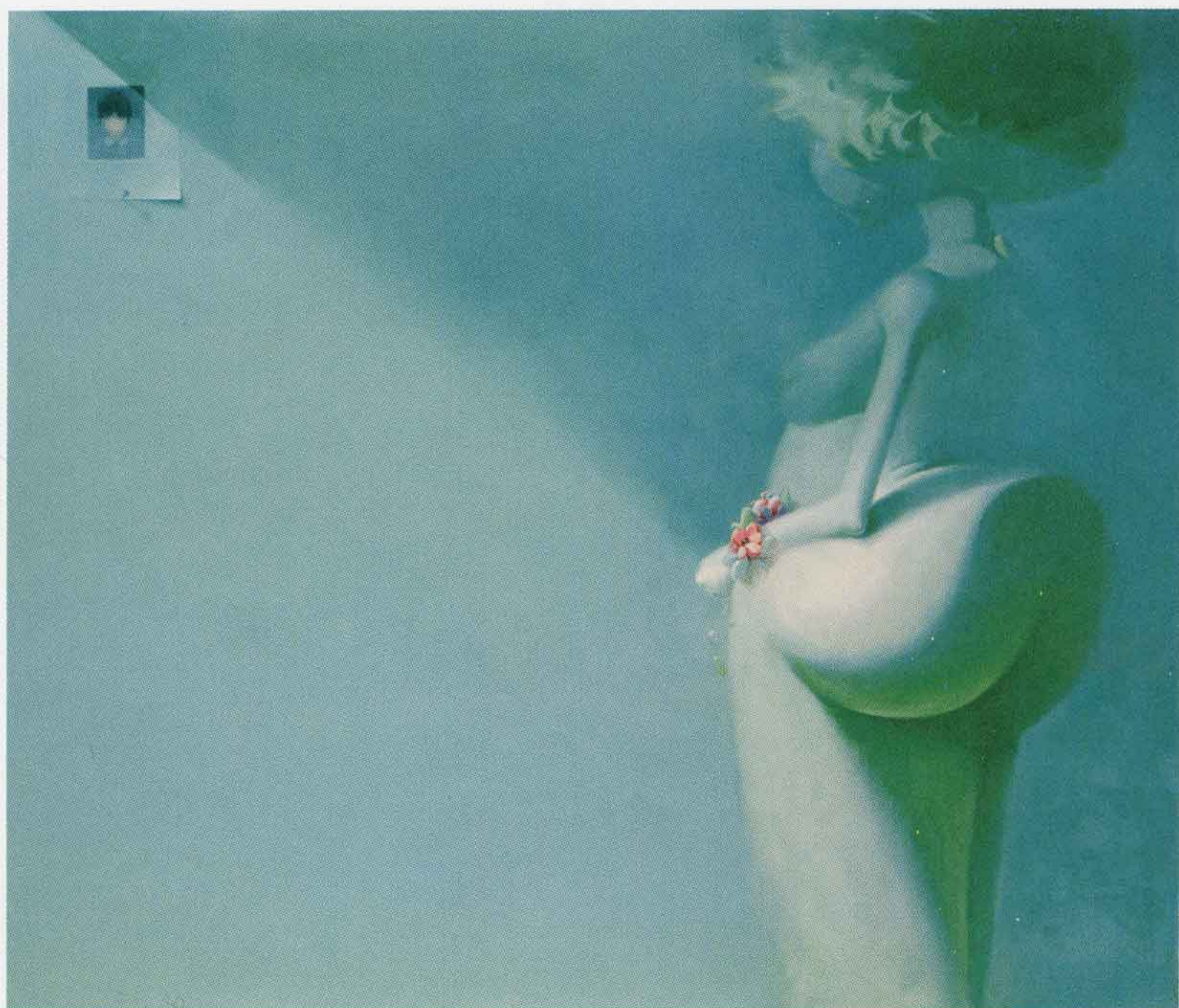
The mother creates the contrast to the illumination. She holds the picture together and gives weight to the picture. You could imagine that she is not a pleasant figure. I mean, it would never be that pleasant to live with your mom until you're an old man, but it seems like they had a pleasant relationship. But this picture is ominous. That color is never a good omen.

Vuillard's paintings are often about voyeurism. Those two panels—we assume they are windows—just hover there, kind of like eyes looking at us. They become confrontational.

There's also the sense of touch, the sensitivity that he has to putting the paint on—that piling up of various related colors definitely creates a buzzing. Space is created through the overlap of shapes, like the way her knee overlaps with that green thing laying on the floor. That type of tiny overlap creates an incredible amount of depth in this painting.

Paintings are silent: a thing that has to be taken in through the eye. I think every artwork deserves to be looked at in person. It's like when the person in the front row who's asleep the whole time I'm giving a lecture wakes up during the question and answer to say, “I hate your paintings.” I'll say, “Well, have you ever seen one in person? It's like a human being. You can tell me you hate them after you've been with one.”

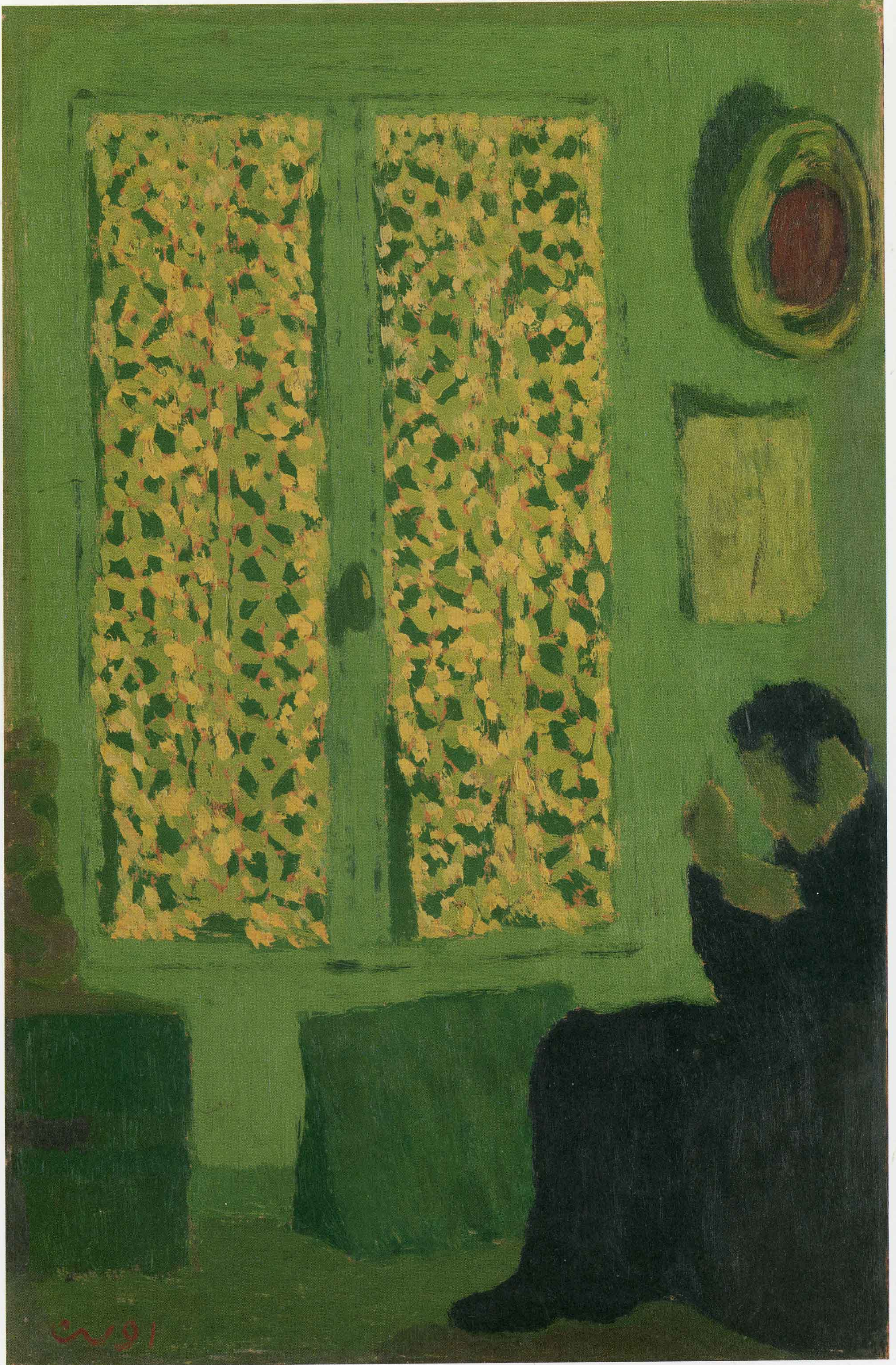
You're peering into another world, but it's an otherworldly experience that doesn't exist anywhere else but there.



LISA YUSKAVAGE, *WRIST CORSAGE*, 1996 ←

ÉDOUARD VUILLARD, *THE GREEN INTERIOR*
(*FIGURE SEATED BY A CURTAINED WINDOW*), 1891 →

In 1891 Vuillard rented a tiny studio with fellow Nabi artists Pierre Bonnard and Maurice Denis. It is likely that this studio is the setting of the painting. Abandoning perspective and emphasizing surface texture, the artist embeds the shadowy figure in a thickly painted apple-green surround. Only the light-filled patterned curtains relieve the dense green palette. An air of mystery, of refusing narrative explication, pervades Vuillard's *intimiste* small interiors.



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FRED TOMASELLI
JACQUES VILLEGLÉ
MARY WEATHERFORD
WILLIAM WEGMAN
KEHINDE WILEY
BETTY WOODMAN
XU BING
DUSTIN YELLIN
LISA YUSKAVAGE
ZHANG XIAOGANG

PHAIDON

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

FRED TOMASELLI, born in 1956, is an American painter. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn.

JACQUES VILLEGLÉ, born in 1926, is a French mixed-media artist and *affichiste* (poster designer). He currently lives and works in Paris.

MARY WEATHERFORD, born in 1963, is an American painter who sometimes incorporates neon lighting tubes in her work. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

WILLIAM WEGMAN, born in 1943, is an American artist who works in a variety of mediums, including painting, photography, and video. He currently lives and works in New York.

KEHINDE WILEY, born in 1977, is an American portrait painter who is currently based in Brooklyn.

BETTY WOODMAN, born in 1930, is an American artist. The vessel and ceramics have been at the center of her practice for the past sixty years. She lives and works in New York and outside Florence, Italy.

XU BING, born in 1955, is a Chinese printmaker and installation artist who currently lives in Beijing and New York.

DUSTIN YELLIN, born in 1975, is an American artist living in Brooklyn who is best known for his sculptural paintings using glass. Yellin is the founder of Pioneer Works, a nonprofit institute for art and innovation in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

LISA YUSKAVAGE, born in 1962, is an American painter who currently lives and works in New York.

ZHANG XIAOGANG, born in 1958, is a Chinese painter. He currently lives and works in Beijing.

pp. 240–41:

Mary Weatherford, *Coney Island II*, 2012. Synthetic polymer paint on linen with neon lights and transformer. 103 × 83 in. (261.6 × 210.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art; Fund for the Twenty-First Century (61.2013.a–e). © Mary Weatherford. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

*Goya (Francisco de Goya y Lucientes), *Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zuñiga* (1784–1792), 1787–88. Oil on canvas. 50 × 40 in. (127 × 101.6 cm). The Jules Bache Collection, 1949. (49.7.41)

pp. 242–43:

William Wegman, *Lobby Abstract*, 2015. Oil, postcards on wood panel. 30 × 40 in. (76 × 101.5 cm). Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

© William Wegman

*145 *Postcards of Railroad Stations Collected by Walker Evans*, 1900s–1930s. Photomechanical reproductions; gelatin silver prints. Each approx. 3 1/16 × 5 1/2 in. (9 × 14 cm). Walker Evans Archive, 1994 (1994.264.1.1–.145)

pp. 244–45:

Kehinde Wiley, *The Two Sisters*, 2012. Oil on linen. 96 × 72 in. (243.84 × 182.88 cm). Private collection. Courtesy the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York. © Kehinde Wiley

*John Singer Sargent, *The Wyndham Sisters: Lady Elcho, Mrs. Adeane, and Mrs. Tennant*, 1899. Oil on canvas. 115 × 84 1/8 in. (292.1 × 213.7 cm). Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1927 (27.67)

pp. 246–47:

*Betty Woodman, *The Ming Sisters*, 2003. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, paint. 32 × 81 × 8 in. (81.3 × 205.7 × 20.3 cm). Purchase, Gift of The A. L. Levine Family Foundation, by exchange, 2003 (2003.413a–c). © Betty Woodman

**Terracotta Larnax (Chest-Shaped Coffin)*, mid-13th century BC, Minoan. Terracotta. Overall with lid: 40 × 18 × 42 1/4 in. (101.6 × 45.7 × 107.3 cm); H. of body: 30 1/2 in. (77.5 cm); H. of lid: 9 1/2 in. (24.1 cm). Anonymous Gift, in memory of Nicolas and Mireille Koutoulakis, 1996 (1996.521a, b)

pp. 248–49:

Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky (Tianshu)*, ca. 1987–91. Box set of four hand-printed books with thread binding, ink on paper plus wood box. Books (each): 18 1/16 × 11 3/4 in. (45.9 × 29.9 cm); box: 19 1/4 × 13 1/16 × 4 in. (48.9 × 33.2 × 10.2 cm). Princeton University Art Museum; Purchase of the East Asian Studies Program, Princeton University Art Museum, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund; and the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art (2002-281.1–.5). © 1991 Xu Bing. Photo. Bruce M. White. Photo credit: Princeton University Art Museum / Art Resource, New York

*Jean-François Millet, *Haystacks: Autumn*, ca. 1874. Oil on canvas. 33 1/2 × 43 3/8 in. (85.1 × 110.2 cm). Bequest of Lillian S. Timken, 1959 (60.71.12)

pp. 250–51:

Dustin Yellin, *The Triptych*, 2012. Glass, collage, acrylic. 212 1/2 × 46 1/2 × 27 in. (539.75 × 118.11 × 68.58 cm). Courtesy the artist. © Dustin Yellin. Photo: David Deng

*Cylinder Seal: *Worshipper with an Animal Offering before a Seated Deity*, ca. 1480–1450 BC, Elamite (Iran, Luristan, Surkh Dum). Apatite. 1 5/16 in. (2.49 cm). Rogers Fund, 1943 (43.102.39). (Pictured with modern impression and enlarged modern impression.)

pp. 252–53:

Lisa Yuskavage, *Wrist Corsage*, 1996. Oil on linen. 84 × 72 in. (182.9 × 213.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art; Fractional and promised gift of David Teiger (332.2004). Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York / London. © Lisa Yuskavage.

*Édouard Vuillard, *The Green Interior (Figure Seated by a Curtained Window)*, 1891. Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled wood. 12 1/4 × 8 1/4 in. (31.1 × 21 cm). Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.222)

pp. 254–55:

Zhang Xiaogang, *Comrades No. 13*, 1996, 1996. Oil on canvas. 15 3/4 × 11 1/8 in. (40 × 30.2 cm). Harvard Art Museums / Fogg Museum; Gift of

Reade and Elizabeth Griffith (2012.118). © Zhang Xiaogang. Image: Imaging Department. © President and Fellows of Harvard College
*El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), *The Vision of Saint John*, ca. 1609–14. Oil on canvas. 87 1/2 × 76 in. (222.3 × 193 cm). Rogers Fund, 1956 (56.48)

Acknowledgments

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—Christopher Noey

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