

Pusher

Merlin James & Édouard Vuillard

In collaboration with Maureen Paley

September 24 - October 31, 2026

Wednesday - Saturday, 12 - 6pm

Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) belonged to the Nabi, the group of Parisian painters including Bonnard, Denis, Vallotton and Sérusier, among others. The name Nabi derives from the Hebrew/Arabic word meaning prophet, proclaiming themselves as prophets in the realm of modern art.

This pairing reflects a longstanding affinity. As a painter and critic, Merlin James has engaged with Édouard Vuillard on multiple levels: extensively reviewing the artist's multi-volume catalogue raisonné for The Burlington Magazine, showing Vuillard's works alongside other early modern masters in the exhibition FIELDWORK at 42 Carlton Place, and invoking his name to affirm the validity of painting in his landmark 2002 lecture, *Painting per se*, at The Cooper Union, New York.

Vuillard's golden period falls on the turn of the century, and is celebrated for its quiet, intensely composed painting that favours flat fields of colour and pattern over illusionistic depth. Although the two paintings in this exhibition are separated by almost a century, Vuillard's DNA surfaces through James's own muted palette and compressed compositions. Both painters were in their early thirties when making these works, before each oeuvre would evolve significantly later in their careers.

The exhibition will precede two major upcoming surveys for both artists. Vuillard. *Théâtres intimes* at the Musée d'Orsay (March 2027) and James's solo exhibition at Camden Art Centre, London (January 2027) and a solo exhibition at Vienna Secession (June 2027).

Checklist left to right

Merlin James

Initiated, c. mid 1990s

charcoal on paper with artist's frame

paper size: 26.5 x 38.5 cm

framed: 41 x 51 cm

Merlin James

Signed, c. mid 1990s

charcoal on paper with artist's frame

paper size: 26.5 x 38.5 cm

framed: 41 x 51 cm

Édouard Vuillard 1868-1940

Théâtre de plein air (le kiosque)

stamped with the signature 'E Vuillard' (Lugt 2497a, lower right)

distemper on paper laid down on canvas

24 x 19 5/8 in. (60.7 x 50 cm.)

Painted *circa* 1897-1899

Merlin James

'93, 1986 – 1996

acrylic on canvas with artist's frame

87.5 x 97 x 5.5 cm

34 1/2 x 38 1/4 x 2 1/8 in