

Pierre-Auguste Renoir

1841-1919 | French



Madame Paul Valéry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Painting Overview.....	4
Letter of Authenticity	6
Literature	8
Exhibited.....	15
Auction Comparables	16
Museum Comparables	19



Oil on canvas | Painted 1904

Signed and dated "Renoir 04" (lower left)

Canvas: 21 1/2" high x 18" wide | 54.61 cm x 45.72 cm

Frame: 29 5/8" high x 26 1/4" wide x 2 3/4" deep

75.25 cm x 66.67 cm x 6.98 cm

“

*Art is about
emotion; if art needs
to be explained it is
no longer art.*

- Pierre-Auguste Renoir

”



On November 27th, 1904, Pierre-Auguste Renoir wrote to young Jeanne Valéry: “Would you care to come [to my studio] starting Tuesday morning, if there’s not too much fog?” A gentle request from one of the best-loved Impressionists of all time, Renoir’s calling upon Jeanne on that late November day would yield this remarkable composition of his adopted daughter.

This portrait captures the visage of Jeanne Valéry, née Gobillard, the wife of French poet, essayist and philosopher, Paul Valéry. An orphan at the tender age of 16, Jeanne was the niece of famed Impressionist Berthe Morisot, who took Jeanne and her sister Paule into her family when their mother died. Morisot’s sudden death in 1895, however, left the young girls without a guardian once more. Renoir, who had been an extremely close friend of Morisot, became the guardian of Morisot’s daughter Julie and the Gobillard girls, inviting the three to join his family.

Julie, Jeanne and Paule became very attached to each other and to Renoir, who often entertained them with art lessons. In 1900, Jeanne married Valéry in a double ceremony with Julie and Ernst Rouart, the son of Renoir’s good friend and fellow artist, Henri Rouart. This painting was the first documented portrait Renoir completed of Jeanne, making it quite an exceptional composition.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir was born in Limoges, France and began his career as an apprentice to a painter of porcelain wares. He then moved to Paris at the age of 21, enrolling at the prestigious École des Beaux Arts. It was here, while studying under Charles Gleyre, that Renoir met Claude Monet and several other classmates who would later become the celebrated French Impressionists.

Working closely with Monet, Renoir began experimenting with the portrayal of light and its effect on his canvases. The youngest member of the Impressionist movement, Renoir embraced working *en plein air*, recognizing how a subject constantly changed through the dynamism of light.

Capturing a brief moment in time, or an “impression,” rather than a detailed scene, was central to the group’s philosophy and became the most important artistic phenomenon of the 19th century. Relying heavily upon composition, lines and descriptive details, Renoir distinguished himself among his contemporaries. His intuitive use of color and expansive brushstroke, along with an acute attention to his subject, has placed him among the finest painters in history.

Madame Paul Valéry is accompanied by its letter of authenticity by the Wildenstein Institute, dated February 27, 2006, and the painting will be included in their forthcoming catalogue raisonné on Renoir. ●



PROVENANCE

Gift from the artist to the sitter in 1904

Valéry family, Paris, until 1966

Private collection, Detroit, Michigan

Sale, London, Christie's, 28 November 1995, lot 00008

Private collection, New York

M.S. Rau, New Orleans

Private collection, Winter Park, Florida

M.S. Rau, New Orleans

LITERATURE

J. Baudot, *Renoir: Ses Amis, Ses Modeles*, 1949, p. 82-83

B. Ehrlich White, *Renoir: His Life, Art and Letters*, 1984, p. 226, 228

EXHIBITED

Les Expositions de Beaux-Arts, *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, no. 18

Galerie Durand-Ruel, *Renoir Intime*, Paris, January 2 - February 8, 1969, no. 43



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Paris, le 24 mai 2012

Ceci pour confirmer que l'oeuvre suivante :

PORTRAIT DE MADAME PAUL VALÉRY

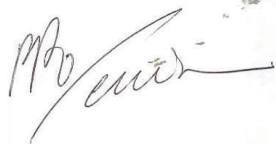
Huile sur toile

55 x 46 cm

Signé et daté bas gauche 'Renoir 04'

figure bien dans les archives du Catalogue Renoir, et qu'elle a fait l'objet d'une attestation d'inclusion, portant la référence : **06.02.27 / 9811**, en date du 27 février 2006 photocopiée au dos de la présente attestation.

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LETTER OF AUTHENTICITY

Wildenstein Institute
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PORTAIT DE MADAME PAUL VALERY

Huile sur toile

55 x 46 cm

Signé et daté bas gauche 'Renoir 04'

N.B. Cette œuvre n'a pas été physiquement présentée au Wildenstein Institute.

Fait à Paris, le 27 février 2006



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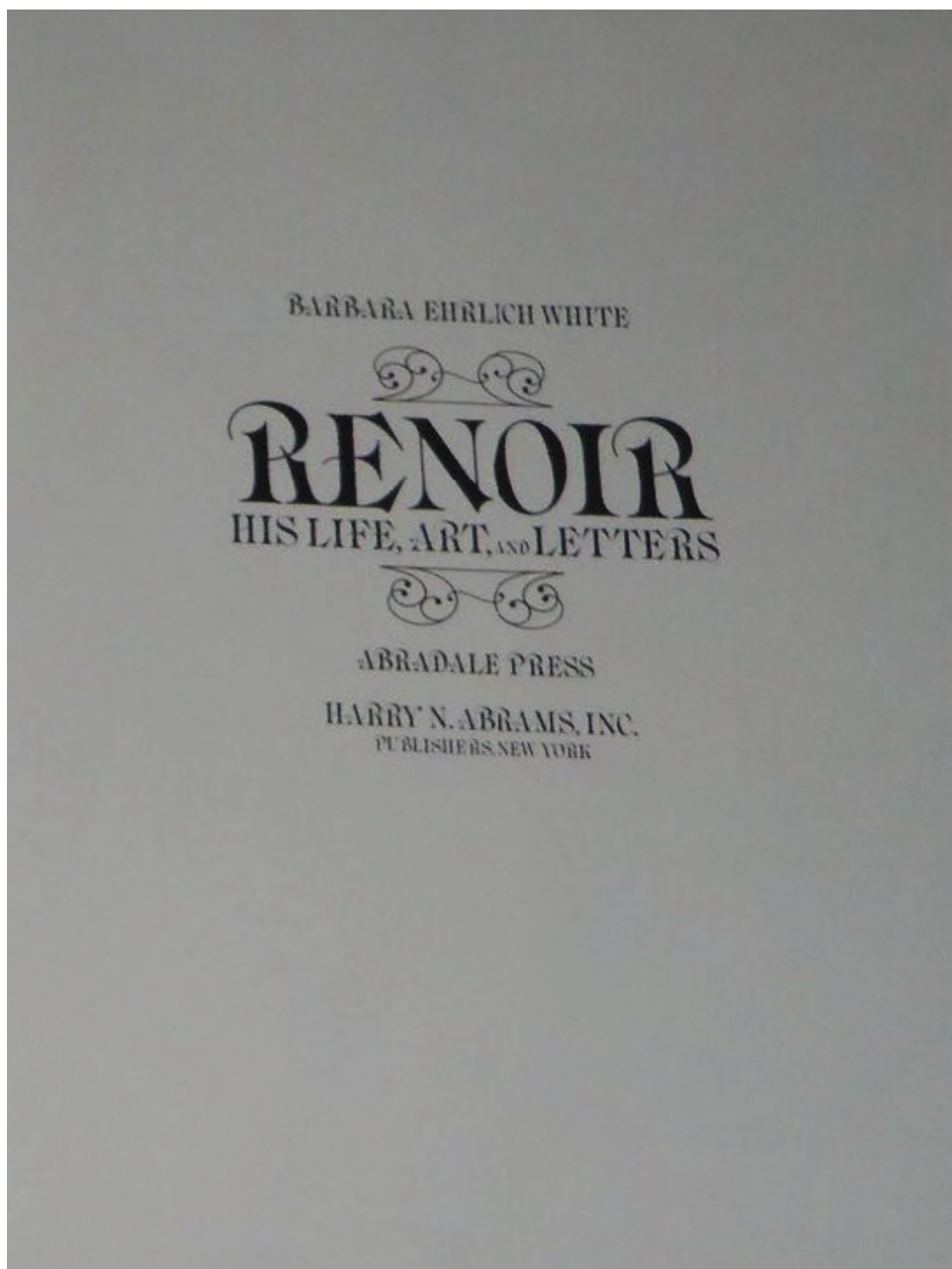
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B. Ehrlich White, *Renoir: His Life, Art and Letters*, 1984, p. 226, 228





B. Ehrlich White, *Renoir: His Life, Art and Letters*, 1984, p. 226, 228





Marthe Denis (Mme. Maurice Denis), d. 1904. 21½ x 17½". Private collection



Jeanne Gobillard (Mme. Paul Valéry), 1904. 21½ x 18½". Private collection

Maleek Reading, 1904. 11 x 12¼". Whereabouts unknown (stolen from the Musée de Bagnols-sur-Cèze, France, in 1972)



Misia Natanson Reading, c. 1904. 21½ x 18½". The Tel Aviv Museum. Gift of Dr. Herman Lorber, New York





Variant of *The Bathers*. 1903. 44 x 65 1/4".
Musée des Beaux-Arts Jules Chéret, Nice

come and pronounce it a masterpiece. Once in the Salon among the other canvases, it's not at all the same thing any more, and it doesn't bowl anyone over. So it's also a lesson in modesty. But there really are too many exhibitions and it seems to me quite sufficient to bother the public once a year.⁸²

Many favorable reviews of the Salon d'Automne appeared, including

Study for Variant of The Bathers. 1903. Brown, white, and red chalk on brown paper, 41 x 64". Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris



328

one by Gustave Babin that compared Renoir with Fragonard, Watteau, and Lancret.⁸³

Around this time, Gallimard brought Maurice Gangnat, a retired industrialist, to Renoir's studio. He soon became a devoted companion and frequent house guest at Cagnes. Like other close friends, he purchased directly from the artist.⁸⁴ His first acquisitions, in 1904, were twelve paintings, for which he paid 26,000 francs. For the next fifteen years, Gangnat was the most important collector of his new works.⁸⁵

In spite of Renoir's dire predictions, during his paralysis in August and September, that his career was over, by November he was painting again. On November 27, he asked Jeanne Gobillard Valéry to come for a portrait sitting in his Paris studio: "Would you care to come starting Tuesday morning if there's not too much fog? You will stay for lunch. That will be easier."⁸⁶ And on December 24: "You'll have to sacrifice yourself and come and get your slice of bread and butter (read portrait)." ⁸⁷

It is poignant that once Renoir was able to paint again after months of paralysis, he created the most sensual nudes of his entire career—voluptuous women who lift their hair to reveal their bodies or lie alluringly in bed. *Nude in the Sunlight* (1875–76) has been transformed by 1905 from the elusive woman of Renoir's youth, whose presence is like a whiff of perfume, into *Bather: The Source*, the tangible, rich-fleshed nude of his old age.

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JEANNE BAUDOT

RENOIR

SES AMIS
SES MODÈLES



ÉDITIONS LITTÉRAIRES DE FRANCE
PARIS

J. Baudot, *Renoir: Ses Amis, Ses Modeles*, 1949, p. 82-83





Mlle JEANNIE GOBILLARD (Mme PAUL VALÉRY)

J. Baudot, *Renoir: Ses Amis, Ses Modeles*, 1949, p. 82-83



J'éprouve encore même ravissement, même détente quand je franchis le seuil de cette demeure enchanteresse où Berthe Morisot telle une fée, vous introduit dans son royaume.

Dans cette habitation, après le mariage de Jeannie, j'assistai à une discussion philosophique entre le Père Janvier et Paul Valéry. Je ne pouvais suivre tous leurs arguments quand ils s'élevaient à des considérations trop abstraites pour mon débile cerveau ; toutefois je les écoutais avec avidité, j'admirais la vivacité de leurs répliques : il me semblait assister à une joute entre Athéniens.

A l'automne, Renoir recevait le jeune trio Manet-Gobillard dans sa maison d'Essoyes. C'est là qu'en 1898, une triste nouvelle leur parvint et répandit la consternation : Mallarmé avait été terrassé par un mal imprévu. Une lettre de Jeannie Gobillard (Mme Paul Valéry) témoigne du déchirement de tous.

« C'est gentil de nous plaindre, et de nous le dire, nous sommes bien peignées, en effet, vous comprenez tout ce que nous perdons. Julie surtout peut-être. Il y a des souvenirs de sa mère que personne ne saura jamais dire comme M. Mallarmé. Lui disparu, il semble que tante Berthe soit encore plus morte. Mais on n'a pas le droit de se plaindre quand on pense à ce qu'est maintenant la vie de la pauvre Geneviève, anéantie et comme révoltée sous ce coup inattendu. En deux jours cela a été fait. Il est resté dans les bras de sa femme et de sa fille dans un spasme nerveux qui le serrait à la gorge, le médecin présent, éperdu, ne comprenant rien. Il n'avait jamais vu chose pareille. Tous ses papiers sont sur la table : notes prises pour ce travail d'Hérodiade qui le préoccupait tant et qui restera inachevé. Sa chatte noire refuse de quitter sa chambre. Par toutes les portes, on croit le voir apparaître. Les murs résonnent de sa voix, et les deux pauvres femmes, la main dans la main, évoquent leurs souvenirs, sourient presque à certains, et de temps en temps, pleurent. C'est navrant. Nous sommes restées avec elles toute la journée du lundi, puis nous avons dû les laisser, nous demandant réellement ce qu'elles vont devenir, Geneviève surtout, pour qui cet homme était tout : le père, l'ami, on pourrait presque dire le mari, puisqu'elle a refusé bien des prétendants, ne trouvant pas en eux ce qu'elle avait en son père.






RENOIR INTIME

vers 1904	42	AMBROISE VOLLARD
		<i>Appartient au Musée du Petit Palais</i>
1904	43	MADAME PAUL VALÉRY
		<i>Collection privée</i>

Galerie Durand-Ruel: *Renoir Intime*, Paris, January 2 - February 8, 1969, no. 43






AUCTION COMPARABLES

	2	Pierre-Auguste Renoir
	Title	Berthe Morisot et sa fille, Julie Manet
	Description	PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR (1841-1919) Berthe Morisot et sa fille, Julie Manet signed '
	Medium	oil on canvas
	Year of Work	1894
	Size	Height 32 in.; Width 25.8 in. / Height 81.3 cm.; Width 65.5 cm.
	Misc.	Signed
	Sale of	Christie's New York: Thursday, May 12, 2022 [Lot 0031C] 20th Century Evening Sale
	6	Pierre-Auguste Renoir
	Title	La tasse de chocalat
	Medium	Oil on Canvas
	Year of Work	1878-1878
	Size	Height 39.4 in.; Width 31.9 in. / Height 100 cm.; Width 81 cm.
	Misc.	Signed
	Sale of	Sotheby's New York: Monday, November 12, 1990 [Lot 00018] Impressionist and Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures from the Estate of Henry Ford II
	Estimate	15,000,000 - 18,000,000 USD
	11	Pierre-Auguste Renoir
	Title	La liseuse
	Medium	Oil on Canvas
	Year of Work	1877-1877
	Size	Height 25.6 in.; Width 21.3 in. / Height 65 cm.; Width 54 cm.
	Misc.	Signed
	Sale of	Christie's New York: Tuesday, November 14, 1989 [Lot 00041] Impressionist and Modern Paintings & Sculpture, I
	Estimate	8,000,000 - 10,000,000 USD
	Sold For	14,300,000 USD Hammer





AUCTION COMPARABLES

	13	<p>Pierre-Auguste Renoir</p> <p>Title Les deux sœurs</p> <p>Medium oil on canvas</p> <p>Year of Work 1889</p> <p>Size Height 25.8 in.; Width 21.5 in. / Height 65.5 cm.; Width 54.7 cm.</p> <p>Misc. Signed</p> <p>Sale of Sotheby's London: Monday, February 5, 2007 [Lot 00043] Impressionist Evening</p> <p>Estimate 6,000,000 - 8,000,000 GBP (11,758,804 - 15,678,405 USD)</p> <p>Sold For 6,852,000 GBP Premium (13,428,554 USD)</p>
	14	<p>Pierre-Auguste Renoir</p> <p>Title La liseuse</p> <p>Medium Oil on Canvas</p> <p>Year of Work 1877-1877</p> <p>Size Height 25.6 in.; Width 21.4 in. / Height 65 cm.; Width 54.3 cm.</p> <p>Misc. Signed</p> <p>Sale of Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg New York: Monday, May 7, 2001 [Lot 00014] Impressionist & Modern Art</p> <p>Estimate 12,000,000 - 18,000,000 USD</p> <p>Sold For 13,202,500 USD Premium</p>
	15	<p>Pierre-Auguste Renoir</p> <p>Title Jeune fille à la corbeille de fleurs 《拿著花籃的女孩》</p> <p>Description Property from a French Private CollectionPierre-Auguste Renoir1841 - 1919Je</p> <p>Medium oil on canvas</p> <p>Year of Work Circa 1890</p> <p>Size Height 31.9 in.; Width 25.6 in. / Height 81 cm.; Width 65 cm.</p> <p>Misc. Signed</p> <p>Sale of Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 [Lot 00033] Modern Evening Auction</p> <p>Estimate 6,000,000 - 8,000,000 USD</p> <p>Sold For 12,903,000 USD Premium</p>



AUCTION COMPARABLES

	25	Pierre-Auguste Renoir
	Title	Berthe Morisot et sa fille, Julie Manet
	Medium	Oil on Canvas
	Year of Work	1894-1894
	Size	Height 32 in.; Width 25.7 in. / Height 81.3 cm.; Width 65.4 cm.
	Misc.	Signed
	Sale of	Christie's New York: Monday, May 8, 2000 [Lot 00027] Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Art (Evening Sale)
	Estimate	9,000,000 - 12,000,000 USD
	Sold For	8,806,000 USD Premium
	33	Pierre-Auguste Renoir
	Title	Buste de femme, de profil
	Description	Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919)Buste de femme, de profilsigned and dated 'Reno
	Medium	oil on canvas
	Year of Work	1884
	Size	Height 25.6 in.; Width 21.3 in. / Height 65.1 cm.; Width 54.2 cm.
	Misc.	Signed
	Sale of	Christie's New York: Monday, November 13, 2017 [Lot 0025A] Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale Including Property from The Collection of Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass
	Estimate	7,000,000 - 10,000,000 USD
	Sold For	8,187,500 USD Premium



Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *By the Seashore*

1883

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 36^{1/4} x 28^{1/2} inches | 92.07 x 72.39 cm



THE
MET

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, United States



Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *Madame Édouard Bernier*

1871

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 30^{3/4} x 24^{1/2} inches | 78.1 x 62.23 cm



THE
MET

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, United States

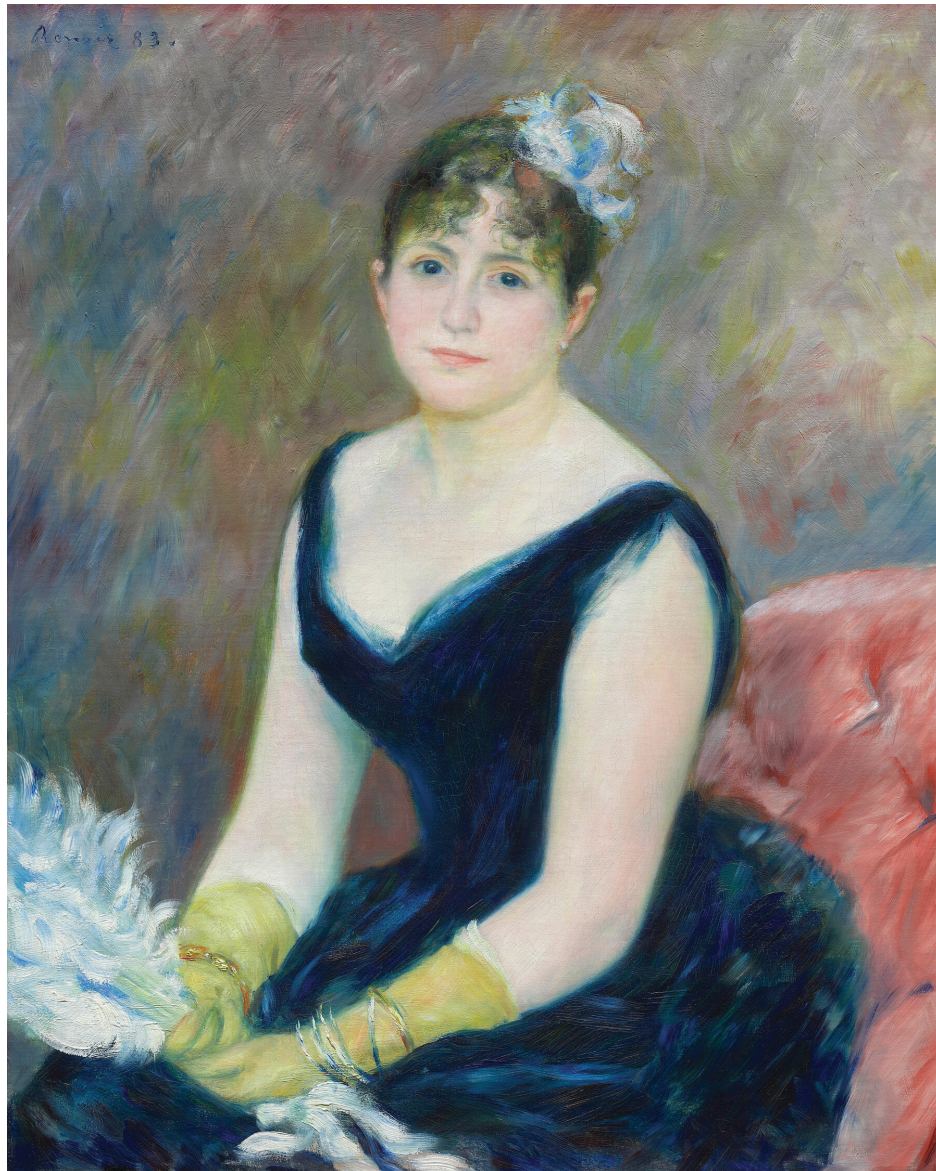


Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *Madame Léon Clapisson*

1883

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 32 x 25^{3/4} inches | 81.28 x 65.40 cm



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