

[The Toilette](#) by [Puvis De Chavannes](#)

Original Lithographic Bookplate - Main Subject: Portrait



**Item Number**

4351736059

**Retail Value**

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**ArtRev.com Price**

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**Dimensions (As Shown)**

5W x 6.5H Inches

12.7W x 16.51H cm

**Medium**

Original Lithographic Bookplate

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**About Puvis De Chavannes**

Born in Lyons on Dec. 14, 1824, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes belonged to the generation of Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet, and he was fully aware of their revolutionary achievements. Nevertheless, he was drawn to a more traditional and conservative style. From his first involvement with art, which began after a trip to Italy and which interrupted his intention to follow the engineering profession that his father practiced, Puvis pursued his career within the scope of academic classicism and the Salon. Even in this chosen arena, however, he was rejected, particularly during the 1850s. But he gradually won acceptance. By the 1880s he was an established figure in the Salons, and by the 1890s he was their acknowledged master.

In both personal and artistic ways Puvis's career was closely linked with the avant-garde. In the years of his growing public recognition, when he began to serve on Salon juries, he was consistently sympathetic to the work of younger, more radical artists. Later, as president of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts - the "new Salon," as it was called - he was able to exert even more of a liberalizing influence on the important annual exhibitions.

Puvis's sympathy to new and radical artistic directions was reflected in his own painting. Superficially he was a classicist, but his personal interpretation of that style was unconventional. His subject matter - religious themes, allegories, mythologies, and historical events - was clearly in keeping with the academic tradition. But his style eclipsed his outdated subjects: he characteristically worked with broad, simple compositions, and he resisted the dry photographic realism which had begun to typify academic painting about the end of the century. In addition, the space and figures in his paintings inclined toward flatness, calling attention to the surface on which the images were depicted. These qualities gave his work a modern, abstract look and distinguished it from the sterile tradition to which it might otherwise have been linked.

Along with their modern, formal properties, Puvis's paintings exhibited a serene and poetic range of feeling. His figures frequently seem to be wrapped in an aura of ritualistic mystery, as though they belong in a private world of dreams or visions. Yet these feelings invariably seem fresh and sincere. This combination of form and feeling deeply appealed to certain avant-garde artists of the 1880s and 1890s. Although Puvis claimed he was neither radical nor revolutionary, he was admired by the symbolist poets, writers, and painters - including Paul Gauguin and Maurice Denis - and he influenced the neoimpressionist painter Georges Seurat.

During his mature career Puvis executed many mural paintings. In Paris he did the Life of St. Genevieve (1874-1878) in the Panthéon and Science, Art, and Letters (1880s) in the Sorbonne. In Lyons he executed the Sacred Grove, the Antique Vision, and Christian Inspiration (1880s) in the Musée des Beaux-Arts. He painted Pastoral Poetry (1895-1898) in the Boston Public Library. These commissions reflect the high esteem with which Puvis was regarded during his own lifetime. Among his most celebrated oil paintings are Hope (1872) and the Poor Fisherman (1881). He died in Paris on Oct. 10, 1898.

## Original Lithographic Bookplate

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