

MARIE-CAROLINE SAINSAULIEU ORAL HISTORY

Interviewer: Sophie Pietri	Interviewee: Marie-Caroline Sainsaulieu	Date of interview: July 11, 2022
Location: Remote, France	Transcribed and translated by: Jancie Creaney	Interview length: 01:08:01

[00:00:00]

SP: Hello, I am Sophie Pietri, Head of Archives at the Wildenstein Plattner Institute in Paris and today, July 11, I will conduct a long distance conversation with Marie-Caroline Sainsaulieu who is in Limousin. This interview takes place at the time of the launch of the Eva Gonzalès digital catalogue raisonné prepared by the Wildenstein Plattner Institute and today we are going to record a new Oral History episode.

Marie-Caroline, first off, do you accept that we record this interview?

MC: Yes, of course, Sophie. Of course.

SP: So, to start, Marie-Caroline Sainsaulieu, can you introduce yourself at greater length, tell us where you were born, where you grew up and tell us a bit about your family environment?

MC: Of course. So listen, I was born—I'm French, I was born in France, in Normandy. I was born into a family of architects of several generations and before talking about myself I would just like to talk about my architect grandfather, who was actually half-American, since his mother was from the United States.

His greatest work, his greatest work was the Carnegie Library of Reims which was built after the war and which is in fact a masterpiece of art deco, an architectural masterpiece of decorative art. [00:02:00]

But, to reveal a bit the atmosphere in which I lived: his greatest feat, if I may say so, is that he saved something the whole world knows about, which is called the Angel of Reims,

the Smile of Reims, the Smiling Angel of Reims, found on the portal of the cathedral of Reims which was mutilated during the war of '14, destroyed but with the possibility of being restored. We know of it today because he had in fact made a complete inventory of the cathedral's statuary.

The French state had asked him to protect the cathedral, to do what he could to protect the cathedral, and he did. He did. Obviously. The cathedral was burnt down and so on, but he took photographs which helped to restore this Angel of Reims which had been mutilated and which we see today. The whole world knows [00:03:00] the Smiling Angel, a sculpture from the 12th century.

And you very very rarely see angels in Romanesque or Catholic churches with... this Romanesque or what, I would say, not Catholic but, the following period, I have a memory lapse. In short, if you will... the Smiling Angel. So that's the first thing I was immersed in. My mother was a historian, my father also an architect.

He was part of the Sainsaulieu firm, which was a very famous firm in the 1960s and 1970s. The Sainsaulieu firm was General de Gaulle's architecture firm when he was President of the Republic and so they did several things for the state. The Sainsaulieu firm has done a lot of work for the State.

So because of these things, this cultural environment—because all my uncles, my aunts, my cousins and so on are architects—I studied art history and [00:04:00] archeology. I have a master's degree in archeology on Greco-Roman mosaics and then, directly after this master's degree in archeology at the University of Nanterre, I joined the Wildenstein Institute, where I started to work on Géricault's catalogue raisonné with Germain Bazin.

This is what I can say about my family who was very honorably known and very honorably known in France. The name Sainsaulieu is a respected name. The archives, my grandfather's drawings, are kept at the Musée d'Orsay. There are drawings that are kept at the Musée d'Orsay and once again, the crowning jewel, among other architectural ones, is this famous Carnegie Library at the head of the Reims Cathedral.

SP: So, is it quite natural that you oriented yourself [00:05:00] professionally towards this since you were immersed in an artistic environment?

MC: Yes, yes, an enduring love of art, in any case. Yes. And beautiful things, beautiful constructions, beautiful things, beautiful works.

SP: In your professional career and in your research, what is your preferred field?

MC: My preferred field, in reality, well... evidently I really like architecture and in particular Romanesque architecture which is excessively seductive in its extremely luminous, simple forms. And which engenders great spirituality. So, I am very attached to Romanesque architecture and therefore to its sculptures, to the very, very beautiful objects from that period which are very simple and, it must be said, I am passionate about art history, in particular French painting. [00:06:00]

The 19th century in France is an excessively rich century as well as the 20th. But there are many extraordinary things in the 19th century, especially in the period of Napoleon III and so I was immediately interested in painting. And I particularly like works on paper, because there is no *pentimento* and that's very nice...

SP: And your specialty..

MC: My specialty now is French painting from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

I worked for many years, I wrote several books, as we will talk about later, but I worked a lot. I worked at Artcurial for a long time, and at Francis Briest who is an auctioneer, so, for twenty years, I wrote texts to accompany the works in the sales catalogs. I wrote [00:07:00] texts.. for painters who went from let's say 1860—yes, that's Corot, the school of Corot—up to the surrealists and sometimes later, the school of Paris and some contemporary works.

So in fact, I was able to—Picasso a lot of course. So I wrote a lot and worked a lot on painting. On all these artists, the Nabis, the Fauves, the Impressionists, and so on. As I've said. The cubists of course and I worked a lot on all these genres and my preference is for works on paper throughout this period.

SP: More precisely, since at the heart of our interview is the Eva Gonzalès catalogue raisonné [00:08:00], how did you become interested in Eva Gonzalès and publish, with Jacques de Mons, a catalogue raisonné of her work in 1990?

MC: I met Jacques de Mons through Lucile Manguin, daughter of Henri Manguin, the artist—the French painter whose dates of birth and death are 1870 to shortly after 1947–1950. He is a painter who is known for his Fauvist painting and Lucile Manguin wanted to do her father's catalogue raisonné.

She had a gallery in Paris called the Galerie de Paris actually, and Jacques de Mons, who was an art dealer, worked with Lucile Manguin. So quite naturally I met, when I was

doing Henri Manguin's catalogue raisonné before [00:09:00] that of Eva Gonzalès, I quite naturally met Jacques de Mons many times who, when the catalogue raisonné by Henri Manguin was finished and published in 1980, asked me a few months later, say around 1981-82, to work on Eva Gonzalès. Eva Gonzalès whom I did not know. He probably knew her through friendly relations he had with other art dealers, the Daber gallery and the André Watteau gallery..

These two galleries have disappeared today. But they were very, very in vogue in the 1950s, 60s, 70s. Especially the Daber gallery in the 1950s, the Watteau gallery a little later 60s, 70s, 80s and these people, these gallerists had been in contact with the [00:10:00] son of Eva Gonzalès, Jean-Raymond Guérard, who was of course very old at the time. And so Jean-Raymond Guérard and especially the widow of Jean-Raymond Guérard gave many paintings to sell to these two galleries, and so he had the idea—he must have been excessively seduced by this painting—he had the idea of doing the catalogue raisonné and since he knew me very well, I have a passion, really, I have a real passion. I was immensely happy when I did the catalogue raisonnés, even for Géricault I was completely passionate. I must say, when I joined the Foundation—I had the chance to enter the Wildenstein Foundation immediately after my studies—I was immediately fascinated by the work of the catalogue raisonné there on Géricault and Mademoiselle Fallek trained me. So I was passionate about this work.

I was fascinated [00:11:00] by Henri Manguin and so I immediately accepted, of course, overjoyed to work, especially on someone about whom there was nothing at all, except two, three booklets, a few exhibitions, articles, but nothing fundamental. If you will, the work was immense to do.

And so I started with not much to go off of.

SP: Before talking specifically about the catalogue, could you, Marie-Caroline, paint a portrait of Eva Gonzalès? That is to say, tell us a bit about her social background, who her parents are, her husband... How did she become a painter recognized by her colleagues? Give us a... Quickly paint a picture of her, please?

MC: Eva Gonzalès was born in 1847 [00:12:00] in Paris, from her father, a novelist and serialist... a brilliant and very cultured and very amusing man, who was president of the Société des gens de lettres and who was completely involved in the literary movement of the time, who frequented Isola, the great writers and also the art historians, the journalists and so on. Her mother was a musician, she had a very beautiful voice and she was also a harpist. She was born in Lyon... and she held concerts. She gave private concerts, in private homes, in salons. At that time this was done a lot in France, in Paris in the somewhat well-to-do families they held concerts. Generally, there were specific days to receive and so on.

And so, Eva Gonzalès' parents met during a particular concert. He [00:13:00] was obviously very seduced by this young woman who was very pretty but who had a lovely voice. They got married. Eva was born into an environment that was still very privileged insofar as they had...it was a typical bourgeoisie...quite pleasant.

But above all, she was lucky. She was lucky to be brought up in an open environment, very open in terms of culture, in terms of music. She received a completely classical education even, I believe, being among the nuns at one time. But of course, she learned painting, sculpture, et cetera, et cetera.

And she was sent around the age of 16, 15-16 years old to Chaplin, the painter Chaplin who was the official teacher to all the young girls... young girls from good Parisian families.

But it was a type of painting, I would say, a bit saccharine. [00:14:00] Precisely, the word is a bit harsh, but it's a bit like that, that is to say very pink, with conventional models, very conventional subjects, young ladies at the bathroom vanity, portraits, et cetera, et cetera. So Eva, from what I was able to read of her letters, particularly to her husband, Henri Guérard, was actually a very whimsical person, but also very diligent in her work. So—to go back a bit—I'll say that the school notebooks that I saw, the geographical maps, the drawings, there is a completely astonishing animal sketchbook by Eva Gonzalès.

Everything is done with a precision that is, I would say, almost scientific. She was someone who was very diligent, who must have been extremely reserved at the same time, well, very [00:15:00] attentive to her work. However, she also had a very funny side. She married a very funny gentleman, Henri Guérard, who was whimsical, who was messy, who was a bit of a jack of all trades, who made completely silly collections of lanterns, of—no ashtrays, no, of lanterns, vases, et cetera. He didn't collect paintings.

He collected everyday art objects, et cetera. He was someone, if you will, at the same time, determined. She had all the same a great deal of determination and a little rebellious side. She quickly wanted to leave Chaplin's teaching to go to Manet.

And that, for me, that's a big, a big question that I was still asking myself while preparing for this interview. I was

wondering how, not how they had met, but how they [00: 16:00] were seduced by each other. Because that's the real trouble.

They met quite simply because the Gonzalès' knew a lot of people and in particular, the Belgian painter Alfred Stevens who quite simply introduced Gonzalès to Manet, et cetera, et cetera. And so Eva and Édouard Manet meeting was quite natural.

So as much as I can understand, Eva was very very interested in Édouard Manet. Obviously, like all young girls from good families, going out and going to see such an exhibition alone was out of the question. Especially since in any case, the works of Manet being refused at the salons, it was complicated. Nevertheless, there is this exhibition of 1867 where he exhibited alone. Furious at being refused, he organized an exhibition of his works. Did she see it, that's not sure, but [00:17:00] Gonzalès, the father, probably went.

And he informed himself all the same before entrusting his daughter, his darling daughter, to this prodigy, so original and so decried. And he must have told her all this during their lunches, their dinners, et cetera. Discussion is normal. She evidently lands on painting. The difference: Chaplin, candy pink, and Manet with his extraordinary paintings where black jumps out, the vitality, the paintbrush pierces the air, et cetera, et cetera. So she naturally wanted to go there.

I understand very very well Eva Gonzalès's intellectual reasoning in asking her father for permission to enter and be taught by Manet. But Manet had never had any students, unlike Chaplin, so he had to accept this young girl from a good [00:18:00] family who had just left Chaplin's tutelage.

So how did this happen? My explanation is that I suppose, I can suppose, that he asked Eva Gonzalès if he could see some of her works. And there is a masterful one that she painted in 1869 which was exhibited at the Salon of '70 I believe, but in any case, yes that's it, but a masterful work which is in a private collection in France, which has been exhibited very rarely, notably at the Marmottan museum in 1993 and which is called *Le Thé*. And *Le Thé* therefore represents a subject, I would say a little à la Chaplin, but where we already see her extraordinary talent... We see the beginning of a great modernity. So there is the very, very diligent side that I told you about, in the lace that forms the... [00:19:00] lace around the neck of her sister Jeanne who poses to have a cup of tea. There are all the little details—well done. But there is, there is the future. There is already a modernism in two colors that are flattened, taking up a third of the canvas, the black dress of... Jeanne who poses and which is spread over a third of the painting, which is enormous. And a red shawl placed in counterpoint.

To me, I think he was immensely seduced because here, we are not at all in the Chaplinesque, not at all. We are truly in something... in an aspiration. I think he understood that the young girl in front of him was ready to go beyond the natural conventions, if you will, of the time—and traditions. And that's it, this is my [00:20:00] explanation.

That's my explanation, if you will, of this engagement and how she fell, I'm not going to say *in love*, but she was steeped in admiration for this man, who on the one hand was magnificent, that... he was a very handsome man but who was very knowledgeable of painting above all and that she grasped. That's what's wonderful.

Because... how did the lessons go with Manet? Well, she was coming, she was chaperoned of course. There was either her mother or her sister. She never had a, I would say, a heart-to-heart...

SP: Her sister is Jeanne—sorry, Marie Caroline—her sister who is Jeanne, the one posing for tea.

MC: Right. Jeanne. I forgot to say that Eva had a sister, Jeanne, her younger sister, who posed, who was the prized model throughout Eva Gonzalès' career [00:21:00] and who completely yielded to the demands of her big sister who, in exchange, offered her painting lessons. And who obviously also chaperoned her when she went to see Manet, where she listened to his instruction.

So to come back to my lesson, to my Manet and Gonzalès lesson, if you will... She chose her paintings, in my opinion, according to me, according to what I can see in the catalogue raisonné. She went rummaging a little bit in the studio, she took the ones she liked and he guided her so that, if you will, she could transpose herself, it was not a copy that was sought but it was, on the one hand, the know-how of the subject, so clearly, totally impressionist, but reserved, reserved for a woman, that is to say that there was no question of taking for inspiration a painting, if you will, of a café-concert, or stuff like that. Not at all, not at all. [00:22:00] Still lifes, these things, bouquets... and even much bigger, stronger paintings.

I have a memory lapse, sorry... well, paintings with characters, scenes, genre scenes. Portraits, genre scenes, and she drew from there and he gave it to her verbally, so every now and then during a conversation he must have had an eye, but it had to be an exchange if you will, in my opinion, speckled,

finally. In my opinion, very very very careful and at the same time, and at the same time very strong.

SP: So when she decides to take lessons from Manet, she already has every intention of pursuing a career as a painter.

MC: I think so, I think so. She had every intention. She's a [00:23:00] smart girl. Ambitious, no. Because otherwise she would have joined the impressionist group to see her name in the catalogs and so on. Ambitious, no—but prodigiously drawn to the exercise of painting. That's for sure.

SP: Which was perhaps not the case when at 16 she enters Chaplin's atelier, with perhaps at first just the intention to cultivate the arts for pleasure as young people were often asked to do.

MC: Yes. I agree, I completely agree. I think she was trying to find herself and that—I am tough on Chaplin, I am tough: the sentimentality of Chaplin's teaching in fact gave rise to a feeling of revolt and ingenuity within her, to go beyond, to be of her time, quite simply [00:24:00] to be of her time. In fact, she is a great adventurer, Eva Gonzalès. We don't know her and the more we study her works, the better we will know her and we will realize that she was perhaps a leader.

SP: Yes, the comparison is often made between Eva Gonzalès, the docile student, and Berthe Morisot, even if she was not strictly speaking the student of Édouard Manet and often art historians compare these two female figures, and it is rather to paint a portrait of Eva as a little less advanced in relation to Berthe, who is considered more rebellious, who very quickly freed herself from Édouard's instruction. What do you think of this comparison that is made between these two

women painters who were contemporaries? Eva is [00:25:00] younger, by five or six years.

MC: Yes, she is younger. She is seven or eight or nine years younger than Berthe Morisot, indeed. So, yes, I understand that there's a comparison. It is completely natural. It is completely natural. Why? Because the two women meet through Édouard Manet. I think Édouard Manet was in love with Berthe Morisot. Berthe Morisot was for me, in any case, according to the paintings that we have of her and even the photos, I find that she really has an absolutely ravishing face. And terribly, terribly, I mean, tactile...

I understand very well that Manet wants to paint her portraits. He did 13 or 14, I think. While he only made one—we will certainly talk about it—completely botched portrait of Eva Gonzalès.

So the two young women from identical backgrounds, with the same education, exactly the same ideas, et cetera, find themselves at [00:26:00] the atelier of the number one impressionist painter at that time, if you will. Berthe... Berthe, was she in love or did she have romantic feelings for Édouard Manet, I cannot answer. I am not a specialist in Berthe Morisot, especially since at that time Monsieur Édouard was married. So the question was settled at that time, I mean we still had a priori conveniences.

So they met there, moreover Manet never failed to give great compliments to Berthe, saying, "But she paints so well, but she is wonderful, but she is diligent," and so on, and so on. All that is true and so, if you will, there must have been a great, a great jealousy, a great rivalry. The word rival I think works for both. A great rivalry between the two, but their careers have been different because they are both

[00:27:00] rebellious. They both want to escape, if you will, the traditional spirit, even the painters from whom Berthe Morisot learned were traditional painters, and so on. They wanted to go into the light and into the light... not only into the light, through their painting, through the work of painting, but perhaps also to recognize themselves.

In any case, for Berthe, this is the case, rebellious... but also rebellious: Eva Gonzalès. But if you will, Eva Gonzalès, she experienced a tragedy in her life, which Berthe Morisot did not. She experienced this dramatic event, one that marked her all her life. It is the painting failed by Manet and I can confirm it today because I went to Monaco not very long ago for Eva Gonzalès, moreover, because the principality of Monaco, the Prince's Palace, [00:28:00] the archives of the Prince's Palace, hold completely extraordinary archives. Why? Because Emmanuel Gonzalès, the father, was of Monégasque origin. He had a house there. A house I don't think Eva ever stayed in.

On the other hand, on the other hand, his son went there and he... he built... He cultivated profound friendships, Jean-Raymond Guérard had profound friendships in Monaco and he simply gave very important archives to one of his friends who transferred everything to the Palace. And in her archives that I saw a short time ago, which was quite simply Eva Gonzalès' press book kept by the family, by Jeanne, by the mother, by herself, and so on. They'd cut up the newspapers and paste them in magnificent books, in magnificent leather notebooks with very [00:29:00] very beautiful paper inside, around the pages, and we see, beautifully prepared, all these newspaper clippings with the title, the date, and I believe even the page, and there I was able to see what I had not seen when I did the

catalogue raisonné: an outpouring of hatred and nastiness with regard to the painting Manet exhibited in 1870.

This is the one at the National Gallery and which will moreover be the subject of a Manet exhibition and, especially of Eva Gonzalès, in London and which will open in October, on October 18 more precisely—or 19. And these articles, I hadn't read them, but Eva had. So let's imagine this young woman of 20, or 22 who comes home... who all of a sudden becomes, I should say, a little bit the favorite, alongside Berthe, of course.

He does a [00:30:00] portrait, a large, large, very large portrait of his student. He botches it completely, especially the face. Eva Gonzalès was not beautiful, she was not pretty, she was not pretty. On the other hand, she was beautiful, but she had the face, she looked like her father. She had a prominent, down-curving nose, her eyes were quite deep set.

She didn't have what we call a pretty little face, a delicate face, it wasn't that at all. She had a sculpted face. And in reality, Manet did not succeed in rendering, if you will, the beauty, praised, praised by all her contemporaries, of Eva Gonzalès. Because everyone thought she was majestic, she had the bearing of a queen. She was majestic.

And so, you have to imagine when reading the torrent of insults: *she was ugly, she had big arms, she tilts her head awkwardly, she holds her paintbrush oddly* [00:31:00] She'd heard it all. It's mortifying. So if you will, I think that day, she made the firm decision to never put herself in the spotlight, quite simply.

Whereas Berthe, she had been, if you will, well portrayed. She was already admired, she hadn't been, I dare say, the word is

a little vulgar: trashed. I would like to find.. She had no difficult experiences behind her, in terms of painting, while Eva Gonzalès in 1870, her name was mocked.

So there you go. It's quite simple. If you will, she stayed out of loyalty to her master, but at the same time, she remained faithful if you will.. though she was terribly hurt, and there were tears. She shed hot tears, probably, seeing this. She continued to paint, but she was terribly traumatized.

According to me. [00:32:00] According to me, according to me.

SP: You told us that you had been able to see the family "press book" which concerned Eva. Did that allow you to measure, from a critical and commercial point of view, the reception that had been given to her painting since she exhibited many times at the official salon?

MC: So I can't say that the reviews.. there were good reviews, there were good ones, but there had been bad ones. And, I am very honest in my work, not having had this "press book" in my hands, I did the best I could. When I did the catalogue raisonné, of course. But there are lots of small newspapers, if you will, whose names we don't necessarily know and which have a lot, which have [00:33:00] well... which published articles that I have never seen.

So, I've probably seen the essential authors. Émile Zola, indeed, went to great lengths, especially when *L'Indolence* was exhibited in 1872. Émile Zola wrote a very, very laudatory article. He wanted to, if you will. Especially since he knew the father, since everyone, the whole family must have been hurt by the incident, if you will, moreover, Manet's painting of Eva does not...no, they didn't want it in their home, I

should say. So, I can't say that we could foresee a surge of interest at that time, the surge she deserved. Her talent was not terribly visible.

SP: And after her death, since she died very young in 1936—

MC: 1883.

SP: Yes, sorry, at 36. [00:34:00] She died at the age of 36 in 1883. Did those who were close to her try to make the artist, which she was, known... Did they try to promote her work? And how?

MC: Yes, so that yes, I'd answer yes. I'm going to come back for a second to the... the previous question: it's that Manet monitored the press for Eva Gonzalès. And in 1880 he said... he had this phrase which I love: *The pages (of the newspapers,) the pages are full of your praise.* That is to say that finally, finally, if you will, in 1880, her paintings are all masterpieces at that time. There you go, it's very clear. She has such a talented brushstroke and an approach to color that is, I find, very fine and very subtle. Her paintings are all remarkable.

So in 1880, [00:35:00] Manet said to her, *That's it, you made it.* Stroke of ill-luck and horrible turn of events, she died in 1883 very young. So in 1885, the family organized an exhibition and a sale. The exhibition lasts 15 days, 3 weeks. Yes, that's it. And the sale afterwards at the Hôtel Drouot. The exhibition was... The vernissage was wonderful... I included in my catalogue the newspapers that had quoted all the prominent people in the art world at that time, collectors and journalists and painters, and so on. Of course, the friends of Henri Guérard, the friends of Emmanuel Gonzalès, all came to pay tribute.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

SP: I'm not sure where you were at.

MC: Listen, I was basically going over what the family did after Eva's death.

SP: Perfect.

MC: So, I'll begin again by saying that after Eva Gonzalès' sudden death, a very very premature death, the family organized an exhibition in 1885, in January 1885, followed by a sale.

Each comprising approximately 80 numbers. Obviously with identical things between the sale and the exhibition, but with different works in the two as well... which all the same exposed her oeuvre a little more.

There weren't... there were more than 160... well, no, more than 100 works... more or less. So in reality, the vernissage was attended by all kinds of exciting people, since they had invited their relations. In particular, Emmanuel Gonzalès, president of la Société [00:37:00] des Gens de Lettres, had invited all of the major artistic figures of Paris, in reality. The whole Parisian art world was there.

But the *tout-Paris* was not there during the sale at the Hôtel Drouot at the end of January when, in reality, there were only two or three works purchased. All of the works were bought by Henri Guérard. The entire collection of works by Eva Gonzalès returned to the studio on Avenue Frochot where he had lived with Eva Gonzalès.

So, right. There was a great, great lull. There were a few paintings exhibited here and there, at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts or places like that. There was an exhibition in 1914 at Bernheim-Jeune, well, which we haven't talked about a lot, there was the war, 1932 an exhibition at Bernheim. And in reality we have to wait until 1950 [00:38:00] when Jean-Raymond Guérard is 65 or 70 years old, he was born in '83, we are in 1950, so he is 50 years old plus 17, he is 67 years old. So, he organizes at that time, Jean-Raymond, whose life we don't know much about.

He inherited an enormous fortune since he inherited—I'm backpedaling a little bit—the entire collection of Eva Gonzalès' paintings. As well as all the works of her father, the works of Jeanne, that... that doesn't count. But there was also a castle in Coubloust. There was a property in Monaco and a lot of things.

Actually, I am not sure that he worked very much.

SP: Sorry, Marie-Caroline. Sorry, a small precision, which is that Jeanne, Eva's sister, married Henri Guérard.

MC: Yes, exactly, you are right to point it out. Jeanne married, in '87 I believe, married Henri Guérard, who died in '97, ten years later, and so, Jeanne Gonzalès became Misses Henri Guérard, following the death of her sister and, evidently, raised Jean-Raymond. She died in 1924.

So in 1924, Jean-Raymond was the heir to all of that, to everything...their collections of paintings and so on. And he really...he tried to revive his mother's oeuvre starting in 1950. There was an exhibition at Daber in '50, another in '59. In the meantime, there was an exhibition in Monaco in 1952, but above all there was written by Claude Roger-Marx, with

whom he was very close, a book on Eva Gonzalès, a small booklet which [00:40:00] was my bible, in a way, the ultimate source since I knew that Jean-Raymond Guérard had..well had dictated, there is no other term, all the things that he knew and knew thanks to his aunt who had lived through it all. Really, we can confidently rely on this very small but interesting booklet, rich all the same in information, on the life of Eva Gonzalès.

So was she successful? That was your question. She had some success. She had a little, but on the other hand, the art dealers were able to see Eva Gonzalès' talent because the Daber gallery, which I was talking about earlier, and the André Watteau gallery a little later, when Jean-Raymond Guérard died in 18... 19—I have a [00:41:00] memory lapse, in 1982 I believe, if you will, I'm not sure. 1977 sorry. In 1977 he dies.

So his second wife, Alice Guérard, also inherited a tremendous number of paintings and everything in fact, engravings and so on. The merchants actually knew to buy a certain number of things and because she was still at that time a pupil of Manet before becoming, I hope very swiftly, the pupil of Manet certainly, but Eva Gonzalès, the Impressionist painter.

In reality, her success had been mitigated. We have to realize that her success was mitigated. Until now where all of a sudden, [00:42:00] everyone is talking about her.

SP: So until the 1950s, Jeanne's work remained within her family. Since Henri Guérard bought a large part of the works at the 1885 sale. So, a large part of the works remained in the family of the artist.

MC: Yes, Eva. You said Jeanne. It is Eva. The works of Eva Gonzalès. The works of Jeanne too, actually. The works of Jeanne too.

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes yes, no, no, the paintings absolutely stayed within the family. We can say until 1972, still with some exhibitions and purchases, purchases here and there in exhibitions here and there.

I know paintings that were bought in Monaco, others that were bought at Daber and so on. In particular, I know *Le Thé*, for example, was bought by a French collector [00:43:00] in 1950 at Daber.

But there wasn't, if you like, this infatuation. Even though she was already an Impressionist, her work was unknown. How to say and how to know, her work was unknown.

SP: And when Jean-Raymond dies, is there another descendant who will continue where Eva's son left off to promote her work, or does it end there?

MC: Well things... things end and don't end there. Things end at the family level. The succession of Jean-Raymond Guérard is very, very simple. No descendants, no descendants... so he gives everything to his governess whom he married a few months [00:44:00] before his death. Alice Emery became Alice Guérard a few months before the death of Jean-Raymond Guérard.

And she was a cultivated and extremely kind woman. Kind, I'll say why afterwards, very kind. And so she found herself, Alice Guérard, with many works and so on. She was very fond of Eva Gonzalès' paintings. She wrote that down and she said so, said it again and again to the person who will be her heiress

because she didn't have any children either. She was married twice and had no children.

She found herself in exactly the same spot as Jean-Raymond Guérard, without an heir. Therefore, she hands down the inheritance to the daughter of one of her friends. She herself being quite old, she did not want it to be a lady of a certain age who inherited, but rather her friend's daughter who had a lifetime to help [00:45:00] prosper Eva Gonzalès' notoriety. They were very simple people who did not have the idea, who did not then have the *légataire universelle* of today whom I know very well, who is Alice Guérard's heiress since she did not... She is the inheritor instead of her mother.

She was in her thirties, so she is still alive today. An 85-year-old woman who is absolutely delighted to know that Eva Gonzalès is exhibited in London, in Paris. Overjoyed. I obviously explained the Wildenstein Plattner Institute to her, since I see her regularly. We're friends, and this charming, very kind person didn't know how to raise awareness—she didn't know anything. And in this case, Alice Guérard had bequeathed, had given the paintings, the large paintings, Eva Gonzalès' beautiful paintings. She had deposited some with the two dealers I have already mentioned, Daber and Watteau [00:46:00] and she gave the rest of her collection to a historian whom I don't know if I can name here, but who is an absolutely remarkable art historian, specialist in engravings, specialist in Pissarro. Someone for whom I have boundless admiration because I saw him work a lot at the Doucet library when I went there myself for Eva Gonzalès.

And so the *légataire universelle* inherited a studio fund. She inherited everything else. She inherited everything else, furniture, buildings, properties in Monaco, et cetera. But she

didn't basically inherit, she inherited all the correspondence. She inherited the papers, except those given to Monaco. She inherited a lot of things that she showed me... that she gave to me.

She's been absolutely [00:47:00] wonderful to me. In the same way that Alice Guérard had been kind to her, the *légataire universelle* was very kind to me when I went to see her. Six months after starting the catalogue raisonné, I contacted a genealogist, the best in France by the way, who took no more than 5 minutes to find the name, address, telephone number and everything the *légataire universelle* shared with me when I visited.

Unfortunately, the genealogist made a mistake that I should have checked. He made a mistake, he gave me the wrong date of birth, 1849, which moreover was circulated in all the books of the 19th century. If you read Claude Roger-Marx, we still see 1849, whereas the true date is 1847. Well, only those who do nothing make no mistakes. But I still should have gone to see the... I trusted him terribly. I should have gone anyway...

I [00:48:00] even had it, the birth certificate. I was wrong. And the *légataire universelle* was extremely kind to me. I called her right away. She said, *Of course, come*. I went with Jacques de Mons and there we were adorably welcomed by a person who had taken out all these papers, all these photos.

We left with a suitcase of photos of paintings, papers, et cetera, enough to start the catalogue raisonné and it is thanks to these archives, hers, which are those of the family, which were taken, photos of the walls at the 1885 exhibition. Those things, yes, that's it. All that.

I had access to it all, I had it all and it was absolutely wonderful. It gave me an absolutely huge boost. I could never have finished a catalogue.. which definitely needs an update [00:49:00]. But it was wonderful. It was an absolutely marvelous meeting.

And today, she still trusts me. She gave me the droit moral. When you asked me for the droit moral, I went to ask her. She said to me, *Marie-Caroline, right away, I'll give it to you!* So she didn't make use of it, but, regardless it's me who has the droit moral.

SP: Alright, we have arrived at the point I wanted to arrive at, which is to say, the development of your first catalogue which appeared in 1990. You gave us a small overview of the archives with which you were able to begin your investigation. What were the difficulties you encountered in compiling this catalogue raisonné since, if I understand correctly, the bibliography on Eva Gonzalès was more than limited?

MC: It was dismal, it was dismal. [00:50:00] I scoured.. Indeed I scoured all the articles that I could. I read a lot of newspapers. I was able to go to the library of the National Assembly for Eva Gonzalès thanks to people I knew at the National Assembly who accepted; the curator accepted that I come by to work. The big difference between the National Library and the National Assembly is that at the National Assembly, when they bring you the *Figaro*, it's 20 years of *Figaro* and not 6 months. You see. So, we have everything we need and therefore we can work.

I was able to progress very quickly thanks to the library, thanks especially to the newspapers wherein I found the articles, wherein I learned that Emmanuel Gonzalès was going

to Dieppe with his daughter. There you go. But I seem to have only half answered the previous question when you asked...

SP: The difficulties encountered. For example, [00:51:00] the works that are in the catalogue of 1990, did you have the chance and opportunity to see them or not?

MC: I saw a lot. The ones that I haven't seen are those that are in black-and-white, which are very often enlargements of the photos... photos of the walls of the 1885 exhibition for some of them or otherwise the archives that come from the légataire which were archives of... Watteau if you will.

She also had the photos. The Watteau gallery took photos of the paintings, but they gave some to her, you understand. So, I had exceptional archives but black-and-white photos and... we're going to talk about it I know. The work will be magnified—Eva Gonzalès' work—thanks to the color photographs we are going to have, because then, we are really going to see [00:52:00] all sorts of things from a pictorial point of view.

SP: Remind us approximately how many works are listed in the catalogue of '90.

MC: So, there are 123 numbers including an engraving, so that makes I think in total 123 or 124 numbers including an engraving. Mainly paintings, 90-97 paintings, about 20 pastels and... about 20 pastels and some watercolors.

And the pastel being a constant with Eva Gonzalès because they are all, absolutely all magnificent. There are paintings that can be bad, that can seem unfinished. Although unfinished works are sometimes very, very, very, very beautiful. But unsuccessful paintings [00:53:00], not good, but then the pastels since the first known pastel exhibited in '70,

depicting a portrait of her sister Jeanne, which I believe is in an American museum, I don't know which one, sorry.

Truly, all of Eva Gonzalès's pastels are masterpieces. She knows how to hold the pastel itself, the pastel pencil. She has a touch, she has a velvety style that Philippe Burty in his preface spoke of. He had found this marvelous phrase: *like the dust of butterfly wings*.

Those are exactly the right words for Eva Gonzalès' pastels. It's the dust of butterfly wings on which the colors are superimposed, always juxtaposed in a [00:54:00] delicious, perfect harmony.

There you have it. Now you may be asking about the new ones, since there are new ones.

SP: Yes. Do you... How many do you think... How many discoveries or rediscoveries do you hope to make or have already made?

MC: Of discoveries, I have about a little less than 40, 40 numbers to review. Some first-rate works, some less-well, good ones nonetheless. Although the certificates have not been done, it will have to be done. And if not, there are still a number of works that were in the '85 exhibition and in the '85 sale that I'm still looking for. And Eva Gonzalès... [00:55:00] her works are probably in France, probably with others who have gone abroad of course.

I sometimes think maybe in salons. In my opinion, people don't know what they have because Eva Gonzalès was funny; from time to time, she positioned her signature in a totally strange place, along a floorboard, behind... on a dresser in the drawer or on an envelope, so it's... You have to search for the signature.

Sometimes it is quite visible, of course. We see it right away, it's clear... we see it right away. But sometimes you have to take your magnifying glass and search for the signature. This is very amusing. But I think that there are a number of paintings where people don't know what they have, which are... well, which belong to people who absolutely don't know what they have.

SP: Shortly after the publication of your [00:56:00] catalogue raisonné, so in 1990, we saw a resurgence of interest—

MC: Yes.

SP: In the works of Eva Gonzalès, with a series of exhibitions, notably in '93 at Marmottan and in '98 in Japan, I believe.

MC: Yes.

SP: Her work was presented alongside other women painters—Morisot or Cassatt—women whom Henri Focillon said were the “ladies of Impressionism.”

MC: Yes.

SP: In your opinion, does Eva Gonzalès really belong to this art movement or not, or do you place her alongside these “ladies of Impressionism”, as Focillon said?

MC: So, I would not rank her among them at all, but not at all with the “ladies of Impressionism”, not at all.

I will say why, but it is [00:57:00] my personal opinion, you will understand that I was enthusiastic. I fought alone for about forty years. Yes, 30 years or 40 years, I don't

remember, I no longer count the years working alone on Eva Gonzalès. I never lost my enthusiasm, so I truly think—and my enthusiasm is even greater today, thanks to the photos I look at on the internet and when I can magnify paintings that I've only seen in black and white. And so now, I say to myself, what an extraordinary talent that, in my opinion, is not recognized and it is a pity.

So the exhibition in '93, to come back to that of '93, was an absolutely considerable success. The exhibition must have been... what's it called...was prolonged to the maximum, the catalogue reissued, and so on and Marianne Delafond, [00:58:00] at that time the director of the Marmottan museum, gave me all the press, gave me all the press. And so there's press from all over the world, honestly, from all over the world, and it is enthusiastic. And in particular an article, there is an article by Souren Melikian in the *Herald Tribune*, I believe, so dithyrambic on Eva Gonzalès, dithyrambic. This article gave me great pleasure. Truly she had success in Israel, Australia, Japan... absolutely everywhere.

The exhibition in Bilbao also which we haven't talked about much. The Kunsthalle exhibition was not bad and, okay, indeed Eva was always accompanied by the "ladies of Impressionism."

I don't like those words very much. "The ladies of [00:59:00] Impressionism", between you and me, I find that a little bit contemptuous. You know. A tiny bit.

Here, these are the "ladies", now we envision them with their knitwear. Ah well, yes, there you go. So they paint, yes okay, they paint. But they know how to knit, they know how to embroider! It's a bit like that. However, in this case, I'm not sure that Eva Gonzalès knew how to knit and embroider. On the other hand she knew how to paint, and Berthe Morisot's

career is totally different. She painted for a very long time, she exhibited with the Impressionists so she acquired the label, she got the Impressionist label right away. Like Mary Cassatt too, a very, very likeable American and then on top of that, a socialite, a good friend of Degas, all that.

While our protégé remained in Manet's shadow all her life, she [01:00:00] died so brutally that she was unable to defend herself either later and above all to continue this pictorial path which was beginning and which was completely out of the ordinary. She was stopped short.

I think that... she will, I hope, have the same notoriety as her peers. I would say painters, artists, not "ladies of Impressionism", but artists. But I think all the same that her talent reaches above, above that of Berthe who made very beautiful paintings, who painted very beautiful pictures. But there is a subtlety, a pictorial subtlety that I don't find in the works of her friends.

Finally, the two, the two female impressionist artists, are Berthe and Mary Cassatt. So, I think that... [01:01:00] And then, very curiously, without my doing anything, Eva Gonzalès' notoriety is taking hold in different countries.

In particular there was also in France a short video by Marie Darrieussecq whom you know, the writer, on *la loge aux Italiens*. She spoke so enthusiastically about *la loge aux Italiens* and that made me very happy. In Italy, there are people who are interested in Eva Gonzalès; there is a novel that is currently on the way.

There was a novel written by Eduardo Manet, who says he is the grandson of Eva and Manet. It's totally impossible. But in any case, he wrote a book which circulated et cetera, et cetera.

And then there are theses. Most of all, there are these. There is Julie Maraszak's thesis, [01:02:00] a French historian with the University of Dijon, who wrote an absolutely remarkable thesis on the familial, intellectual, and artistic social circles that surrounded Eva Gonzalès.

She produced there a work in prose, prose that is easy to read, very well written, extremely well documented on the entourage and the paintings of Eva Gonzalès, which she handed over, and identified, then Caillebotte, Monet, Renoir, et cetera. Her work is absolutely fascinating and will be of great use to us, will be of great use in updating... updating because it's an update, it's an overhaul of the catalogue, given that, if you will, I think that a certain number are erroneously dated. Erroneously dated, why? Because I dated them based on black-and-white photo-negatives which were often fussy.

So it was very very very [01:03:00] difficult. And today I'm doing... I'm rediscovering it another way. And that's what's interesting. There you have it, and this will certainly be fruitful; and art dealers tell me that everyone is looking for an Eva Gonzalès, everyone, but there aren't any.

You know, it's a bit like Vermeer; there aren't a lot of paintings, but all are masterpieces.

SP: So to conclude, Marie-Caroline, tell us what you expect from a digital edition, you who have already published at least three catalogues raisonnés, that of Manguin, the catalogue of Eva Gonzalès, and that of Anselme Boix-Vives—tell us what you expect from a digital edition, this updated medium.

MC: So listen, [01:04:00] I'm waiting... It's not that I'm waiting, the opposite is happening. You gave me the opportunity to review this catalogue. And what I find first off to be super practical and terribly exciting is the possibility to make changes, that is to say that once it's printed, it's printed. If we are wrong, we are wrong.

Whereas in this case, let's say for example we're not totally sure about something, from what I understand, we can put it on hold. So we can progress slowly. We aren't forced to decide because there is a publishing deadline. That is, I must say, to allow the author, the historians, to work in intellectual tranquility.

And really, that is monumental. It is monumental, entirely. You have to realize that we have moved away from [01:05:00] a version that is rigid to a version that evolves with all the elements that we are going to find, all the articles that we are going to find, the new paintings which will suddenly shine light on other paintings and so on...

There is fluidity in the online format, which is absolutely wonderful for a researcher, for a researcher like me who accepts, in any case... if you will, the need to revise, who accepts being wrong. I think that... First of all, I think only those who do nothing make no mistakes.

But in any case, I can say that, intellectually, I am very honest. That is to say that if I realize I made a mistake, I step back and redo the work because that is what is interesting. And for me, that's what has always interested me in [01:06:00] art history. I worked on things... on masters who are not known, apart from Henri Manguin. Henri Manguin had a family, he had already been published, exhibited everywhere.

But Eva Gonzalès: zero. Antoine Guillemet—I found the unpublished correspondence of Émile Zola which allowed me to retrace part of Antoine Guillemet's life, no one ever published him. Henri Guérard neither, on whom I worked. Eva Gonzalès, nobody knew much about her. And it's the research, and the research even on something that I have already written about and which may be wrong, so I step back, I move with it, propping up, propping it up in a much fairer way and I find that tremendous.

The digitization you propose, for Eva Gonzalès, and for me too, I think it's magnificent because it's an explosion of the truth and it's also [01:07:00] a great way to ensure an artist is more loved because we have the chance to say why we made a mistake, to look at refined discoveries we made, et cetera, et cetera.

That is art history, full stop. This is the reality of art history.

SP: Thank you, Marie-Caroline. I think we've arrived at the end of the interview. Thank you for speaking at length with us and so eloquently about Eva. And as well, wishing you very big success in this endeavor.

MC: I wish it for us, I wish it for us, I wish it for the Wildenstein Plattner Institute, which I thank in turn for having welcomed me so kindly and for an artist who has not really revealed all her all her values, all her beauties, all her paintings.

So a very beautiful adventure begins. Thank you Sophie.

SP: Thank you Marie-Caroline, thank you Josie, thank you Josie
[01:08:00]

[END OF AUDIO FILE]