



## Baltimore Museum of Art Presents Joan Mitchell Retrospective in March 2022, Featuring 70 Artworks and Rarely Seen Archival Materials

### For media in Baltimore

**Anne Brown**

410-274-9907

abrown@artbma.org

### For media outside Baltimore

**Alina E. Sumajin**

PAVE Communications

& Consulting

646-369-2050

alina@paveconsult.com

### With the exhibition opening, the BMA will launch its extended evening hours on Thursdays, increasing public access to the museum

BALTIMORE, MD (January 31, 2022)—From March 6 through August 14, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) presents *Joan Mitchell*, the long-awaited retrospective of the internationally renowned artist who attained critical acclaim and success in the male-dominated art circles of 1950s New York, then spent nearly four decades in France creating breathtaking abstract paintings that evoke landscapes, memories, poetry, and music. This comprehensive exhibition features 70 works spanning the artist's career, including rarely seen early paintings and drawings, vibrant gestural paintings that established her reputation in New York, and enormous multi-panel masterpieces from her later years that immerse viewers with their symphonic color. Numerous loans from public and private collections in the U.S. and Europe include works that have not been shown publicly in decades and never in a single exhibition. The BMA's presentation also includes many archival photographs, letters, poems, and other materials from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, providing additional context about the development of the artist's work and influences.

The BMA is the only East Coast venue for *Joan Mitchell*. Tickets for the March 6–August 14 Baltimore presentation are available beginning February 7. The exhibition debuted at SFMOMA in September 2021, and a new presentation will open at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in October 2022. In conjunction with the opening, the BMA will begin extending its hours to 9 p.m. on Thursdays starting on March 10. Adding evening hours is among the BMA's strategic priorities as part of its efforts to increase community access and is supported by a generous gift from the Rouse Company Foundation. Additionally, the retrospective coincides with the final month of the exhibition *All Due Respect*, which features new work by four artists with ties to Baltimore who have previously received Joan Mitchell Foundation awards. *All Due Respect* includes installations by Lauren Frances Adams, Mequitta Ahuja, Cindy Cheng, and LaToya Hobbs, and highlights Mitchell's desire to support the lives and careers of working artists through her foundation.

Co-organized with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), *Joan Mitchell* is the result of more than three years of research and first-hand review of hundreds of paintings by exhibition co-curators Katy Siegel, BMA Senior Programming & Research Curator and Thaw Chair of Modern Art at Stony Brook University, and Sarah Roberts, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA. They were supported by research teams from both museums and Stony Brook University, as well as a dedicated fellow funded by the Joan Mitchell

Foundation. The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue have established a new depth of scholarship and understanding about Mitchell's work as a transnational artist, as well as her profound impact on the trajectory of art.

“Across her life, Joan Mitchell experimented with how painting could embody physical experience and capture a wide range of emotions—including grief, sensual pleasure, humor, joy, and a kind of metaphysical soaring in the face of death—as well as connections to people and places,” said Siegel. “Mitchell also grappled with conflict between the social roles prescribed by her gender and social status and her desire for true creative freedom. She was not simply ‘making it’ in an environment created and occupied by men, she was actively remaking painting and its possibilities. This exhibition is an opportunity to ask what it means to live a life with art at its center and to reconsider the art and narratives of the postwar era.”

Throughout her extensive career, Mitchell immersed herself in color and gesture in her studio, and was also deeply grounded in place and landscape, resulting in a singular style of painting that is at once abstract and connected to the world. Her works share evocations of feeling, as she physically expressed the sensations aroused by relationships; memories; the cities Chicago, New York, and Paris; the countryside of the Mediterranean; and Vétheuil, the French village where the artist made her home. The power of this approach can be seen in her vibrant articulations of urban environments in New York City in paintings like *The Bridge* (1956) and *To the Harbormaster* (1957), lush French landscapes like *South* (1989), and works that engage with the legacy of Vincent Van Gogh, such as *No Rain* (1976) and *Sunflowers* (1990-91). Photographs of views and other paintings that inspired Mitchell will be shown alongside her paintings, capturing the way she connected to the natural world and to everyday life.

The exhibition also examines the essential role of music and poetry in Mitchell's work. Immersed in culture from childhood, Mitchell's personal and collaborative relationships with writers and musicians in both the U.S. and France are key to her story. As her artistic style developed, the sometimes ambiguous and often personal nature of lyrics, lines of poetry, and musical compositions dovetailed with painting's capacity to express what cannot be named or explained. Two multi-panel paintings, *Ode to Joy (A Poem by Frank O'Hara)* (1970-71) and *La Vie en Rose* (1979), demonstrate the relationships between Mitchell's passion for the arts across its many disciplines and the way it propelled her practice. The BMA's exhibition emphasizes this with an immersive soundscape featuring quotes taken from Mitchell's writing and interviews voiced by actor Nadine Malouf, literature significant to the artist read by poet Eileen Myles, and music dear to Mitchell, from jazz standards to opera. The experience is optimized for headphones in the gallery and accessible for visitors through an app on their mobile device or a player borrowed from the museum.

### **Organization and Tour**

*Joan Mitchell* is co-organized by the BMA and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and co-curated by Katy Siegel, BMA Senior Programming & Research Curator and Thaw Chair of Modern Art at Stony Brook University, and Sarah Roberts, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: September 4, 2021–January 17, 2022

Baltimore Museum of Art: March 6–August 14, 2022

Fondation Louis Vuitton: October 5, 2022–February 27, 2023

## Ticket Information

Tickets are available through [artbma.org](http://artbma.org) beginning February 7. Prices are \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors, \$12 for groups of 7 or more, \$5 for students with ID, and \$5 for youth ages 7-18. BMA Members, children ages 6 and under, and student groups are admitted free. For more information, call 443-573-1701.

## Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue published by SFMOMA in association with Yale University Press that is on the short list for the prestigious Alfred H. Barr Jr. Award for museum scholarship from the College Art Association. The catalogue offers a sweeping scholarly account of the artist's transnational career and the cyclical nature of her painting in relation to historical contexts in the U.S. and France. Ten chronological chapters provide new research on Mitchell's methods by focusing on moments where her ideas and techniques coalesced into significant bodies of work, while also delving into her biography with close studies of her relationships with peers and friends, especially artists, poets, and musicians. In addition to chapters authored by co-curators Siegel and Roberts, in-depth essays by scholars Éric de Chasse, Jenni Quilter, and Richard Shiff present new historical models for understanding Mitchell's work in relationship to mid-century painting in Paris, poetry, and 19th-century French Romanticism. Artistic and literary responses to Mitchell's work were contributed by poet and essayist Eileen Myles, and painter David Reed in dialogue with conservator Jennifer Hickey, as well as Mitchell's close friends, writer Paul Auster, composer Gisèle Barreau, and artist Joyce Pensato. This volume is the first major scholarly publication on Mitchell in decades. The cloth-covered 10" x 11.5" publication comprises 384 pages with 350 color and black-and-white illustrations and four gatefolds and is available at the [BMA Shop](#) and other retailers.

## Joan Mitchell

Joan Mitchell (1925–1992) was an artist whose career spanned nearly five decades in the U.S. and France. Best known for her large, abstract oils on canvas, Mitchell also created smaller paintings, as well as an extensive body of works on paper and prints. Born in Chicago and educated at the Art Institute of Chicago, Mitchell moved to New York in 1949. In 1955, she began splitting her time between Paris and New York, before moving permanently to France in 1959. In 1968, Mitchell moved from Paris to Vétueil, a small village northwest of the city, while continuing to exhibit her work in Paris, New York, and around the world. In Vétueil, Mitchell regularly hosted artists at various stages of their careers, providing space and support to develop their art. When Mitchell passed away in 1992, her will specified that a portion of her estate should be used to establish a foundation to directly support visual artists.

## Exhibition Sponsors

Bank of America is lead sponsor of *Joan Mitchell*.



The exhibition is generously sponsored by The Alvin and Fanny B. Thalheimer Exhibition Endowment Fund and is made possible in part by a major grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.



Generous support has been provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art, sponsor of the international tour, and the Joan Mitchell Foundation. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support is provided by The Stoneridge Fund of Amy and Marc Meadows, the Clair Zamoiski Segal and Thomas Segal Contemporary Art Endowment Fund, Ilene and Michael Salcman, Komal Shah and Gaurav Garg, Martha Macks-Kahn/Goya Contemporary, and Stephen M. Salny.



*All Due Respect* is supported by the Joan Mitchell Foundation.

Evening hours are generously supported by the Rouse Company Foundation.

### **Baltimore Museum of Art**

Founded in 1914, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) inspires people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, programs, and collections that tell an expansive story of art—challenging long-held narratives and embracing new voices. Our outstanding collection of more than 95,000 objects spans many eras and cultures and includes the world’s largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse; one of the nation’s finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs; and a rapidly growing number of works by contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds. The museum is also distinguished by a neoclassical building designed by American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of modern and contemporary sculpture. The BMA is located three miles north of the Inner Harbor, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University, and has a community branch at Lexington Market. General admission is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art. [artbma.org](http://artbma.org)

### **Visitor Information**

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Thursdays to 9 p.m. beginning March 10. Timed reservations, face masks, and answering two questions about COVID-19 exposure are required for all visitors. The Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year’s Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

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