



The Exhibition

Joan Mitchell, Paintings

23 August - October 31, 2009

Curator: Sophie Lévy

This exhibition has received exceptional support from the Terra Foundation for American Art

TERRA
FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART



Joan Mitchell, *La Grande Vallée IX*, 1983-1984, collection Frac Haute-Normandie
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Photo © Jacqueline Hyde

Joan Mitchell (1926-1992) is one of the greatest American painters of the twentieth century. Born in Chicago, she spent almost her entire career in Vétheuil, only a few miles from Giverny, two landmark villages in the development of Claude Monet's art.

The abstract paintings Joan Mitchell created from the 1950s onwards refer directly to nature in their scale, light and dynamism (*The Great Valley*, *Sunflowers*, and *Fields*) and reflect upon the landscape surrounding her Vétheuil studio with its large vistas of the Seine.

Fifteen years after the retrospective of her work at the Jeu de Paume and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, the Musée des Impressionnismes Giverny presents "Joan Mitchell," an exhibition co-organized with the Emden Kunsthalle (Germany) and the Palazzo Magnani in Reggio Emilia (Italy). With over thirty monumental canvases coming from France and the United States, this new exhibition pays a comprehensive and vibrant homage to Joan Mitchell's art between 1950 and 1992.



Joan Mitchell, *Hemlock*, 1956, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;
Purchase with funds from the friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art
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Présentation de l'exposition

Joan Mitchell is one of the greatest abstract painters of the twentieth century. Between 1950 and 1958 she worked and exhibited in New York with other abstract expressionist painters such as Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell and Jackson Pollock. She moved to Paris in 1959. When her mother died in 1967, she bought a house in Vétheuil, just a few kilometers from Giverny, the two key villages in the development of the art of Claude Monet. That same year she exhibited for the first time in the gallery of Jean Fournier, an instrumental figure for the diffusion of American painting in France. The abstract painting that she developed – immense, light-filled, dynamic – made increasingly strong references to nature (The Great Valley, Sunflowers, Fields). She found inspiration in the landscape with its broad vistas of the Seine that surrounded her studio in Vétheuil. Although Joan Mitchell had always rejected the comparison of her paintings with the late work of Claude Monet, the two artists shared several artistic concerns: both based their practice on a ceaseless observation of nature; both expressed an optical interest in color and light; and both developed monumental pictorial surfaces with no vanishing point – in works that were both frontal and translucent. Around 1967 she began to create polyptychs (a single work divided into two, three or four panels). This format, which was very popular among American painters during the 1960s, was primarily a way for the artist, resident in France, to remain connected to her homeland. In addition, discontinuity fundamentally characterizes polyptychs, a phenomenon that prevents an immediate reading of the work, which is in turn accentuated by the monumental character of her canvases. Her quadriptychs, in particular, allow for an almost cinematic vision of the work, which dominates the viewer and is structured in sequences. The fine rupture between the panels is a reminder, as the observer is surrounded by the painting on all sides, that discontinuity is in fact an integral part of the visual experience. Organized fifteen years after the large French retrospective of 1994, this exhibition is accompanied by a rarely seen film made in 1976 by Angelika Haas, and offers a unique opportunity to compare Mitchell's panoramic painting with the landscape and transatlantic history from which it developed.



Joan Mitchell, *Un Jardin pour Audrey*, 1979, collection particulière
© Estate of Joan Mitchell



Joan Mitchell, *Sud*, 1990, collection particulière
© Estate of Joan Mitchell

Les visuels disponibles



Joan Mitchell, *Hemlock*, 1956, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase with funds from the friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art
© Whitney Museum of American Art
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Joan Mitchell, *Un Jardin pour Audrey*, 1979,
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Joan Mitchell, *Untitled*, 1957,
New York, Joan Mitchell Foundation
© Estate of Joan Mitchell,
Courtesy Joan Mitchell Foundation and Cheim & Read Gallery, New York



Joan Mitchell, *La Grande Vallée IX*, 1983,
© collection Frac Haute-Normandie
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Joan Mitchell, *Les Bleuets*, 1973, Paris,
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© Estate of Joan Mitchell



Joan Mitchell, *Edrita Fried*, 1981,
Joan Mitchell Foundation
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Joan Mitchell, *Sud*, 1990,
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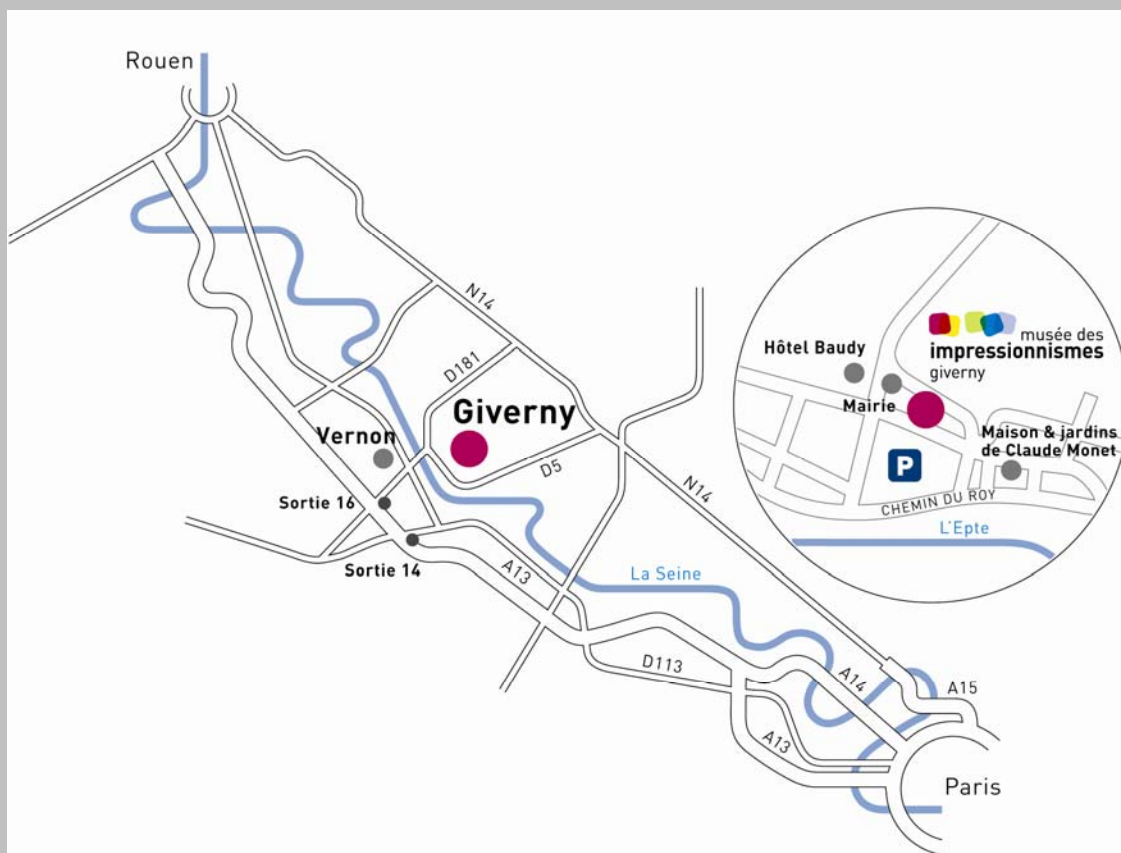
Press Relation

Chargée de communication du musée : Géraldine Raulot

02 32 51 92 48 g.raulot@mdig.fr

Service presse des expositions et activités : Catherine Dufayet

01 43 59 05 05 catherine.dufayet@wanadoo.fr bbeaudenon@wanadoo.fr



PRATIQUE

From May 1 to October 31: open daily

Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m

Galleries will be closed from August 16 to August 22

Free entrance on the 1st Sunday of the month

Free under 12 years

Adults: 5.50 € Reduced price: 3 / 4 €

Restaurant, Bookstore, Auditorium

99, rue Claude Monet - BP 18- 27620 Giverny - France - tél 02 32 51 94 65 – fax 02 32 51 94 67
contact@mdig.fr www.mdig.fr