

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART RECEIVES MAJOR GIFT OF PAINTINGS BY JOAN MITCHELL

The Museum of Modern Art has received a major bequest of four paintings by American artist Joan Mitchell (1926-1992) from the estate of the artist. With this acquisition, the Museum holds the largest and most representative repository of Mitchell's work in this country, spanning her career from the 1950s through the early 1990s.

Mitchell, a second-generation Abstract Expressionist, is known for her characteristically abrupt, vigorous mark-making and intensely varied, often edgy color. The new acquisitions -- *Grandes Carrières* (1961-62), *Untitled* (triptych, 1964), *No Rain* (diptych, 1976), and *Wood, Wind, No Tuba* (diptych, 1980) -- were jointly selected from the estate's holdings by John Somers, Executor of the Estate of Joan Mitchell, and the Museum's curatorial staff. The works compliment both historically and aesthetically *Ladybug* (1957) and *Taillade* (1990), two Mitchell paintings already in the collection.

Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, stated, "We are extremely grateful that The Museum of Modern Art was chosen as the recipient of this generous and important gift, which contributes greatly to our current efforts to assemble a superior collection of the best painting and sculpture of the postwar era."

Robert Storr, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, added, "In her early New York years, Mitchell pushed gestural painting to the limits of

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formal coherence and then, following her relocation to France, brought it back around to its origins in the broken brushwork and atmospheric luminosity of Impressionism. Her paintings are furious pastorales."

Joan Mitchell was born in Chicago in 1926 and moved to New York City in 1950. The following year, her work was included in the Ninth Street exhibition organized by Leo Castelli and the Artist's Club. In 1952 she had her first one-person show at the New Gallery, and, from 1953 to 1965, her work was exhibited regularly in New York at the Stable Gallery and the Martha Jackson Gallery. In 1959 Mitchell moved to France where she remained for the rest of her life. Her work was shown frequently in Paris at the Galerie Jean Fournier, and in New York at the Robert Miller Gallery. Mitchell's work was celebrated by a major retrospective of the last ten years at the Jeu de Paume, Paris, and a major retrospective of the earlier years at the Musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes, both in 1994.

The Museum is planning to show its collection of Mitchell's works in the near future.

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