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Joan Mitchell

Selected Paintings 1975 - 1977

April 22 – May 24, 1997

Tuesday-Saturday 10-6

Twenty years ago, the painter Joan Mitchell was in the midst of a period of complex change and development in her work. We have chosen eight of her monumental and magnificent “fields” and “territories” paintings of the early 1970’s and the strong and vivid “tilleul” (linden tree) paintings of the late 1970’s. The former group of work was shown in 1974 at the Whitney Museum and the latter group has as yet still been seen in depth only in France. Some of the paintings in our exhibition have never been shown in New York, and the others have been rarely seen in the twenty years since they were painted. We feel that this entire period of Mitchell’s work warrants renewed scrutiny and is ripe for rediscovery.

Canada III (1975) carries a vestige of the “fields” paintings in its juxtaposition of a deep brown flat mass with a lively, impastoed cloud of white and blue. *Chris’ Dead Tree* (1975) adds green to *Canada III*’s limited palette and along with *Cypresses* (1975) introduces a vertical brushstroke which derives from a shift in focus from Mitchell’s reaching to embrace entire landscapes to considering the individual tree. In *Red Tree* and *Green Tree* (both 1976), these vertical gestures are elongated and increasingly entangled. *An Island* (1977) shows Mitchell layering a shorter, staccato strokes over a thicket of longer movements, and into *No Room at the End* (1977) are tucked dashing marks of bright yellow and hot orange amongst the cooler blues and greens like sunlight sparkling through deep shade.