

LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

514 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001 Tel. 212 941 0012 Fax. 212 929 3265
info@lennonweinberg.com www.lennonweinberg.com

ARTnews SUMMER 2008

Joan Mitchell

Lennon, Weinberg

Generally grouped with the second generation of Abstract Expressionists, Joan Mitchell is one of only a handful of women of the period whose work is regularly exhibited in gallery and museum shows. This fine sampling brought together drawings and small and large paintings from 1973 to 1983, when Mitchell was living in a country house outside Paris. Nearly all were infused with a sense of nature—of shifting light, rustling leaves, and dense greenery.

In keeping with the AbEx predilection for spontaneity and offhand gesture, many of the drawings were scribbles in high-keyed color and accumulations of forceful strokes. Often dark blues and greens are shot through with brighter tones, as in *Tilleul* (1978), which pays homage to a linden tree Mitchell could see from the terrace of her house. But the artist also experimented with blocks of earthy colors in an untitled series made between 1973 and 1975. These works have a brooding quality not unlike some of Rothko's paintings. Occasionally, the artist paired her drawings with typewritten poems by



Joan Mitchell, *Buckwheat*, 1982, oil on canvas
87" x 78-3/4". Lennon, Weinberg

J. J. Mitchell (no relation) and James Schuyler, and the juxtapositions resonated: Schuyler's "The sun just/went behind the/ridge and turned/it mauve, marked/green by firs,/streaked white/by birch" aptly illumines Mitchell's accompanying drawing.

The artist's smaller paintings read almost as preparatory studies; one can only guess at the force a work like *Chiendent* (1978) might have if it were larger. But in the seven-foot-tall *Buckwheat* (1982), its title and colors alluding to van Gogh's paintings of wheat fields, Mitchell let out all the stops and reminded us why her work ranks right up there with the best of her contemporaries'.

—Ann Landi