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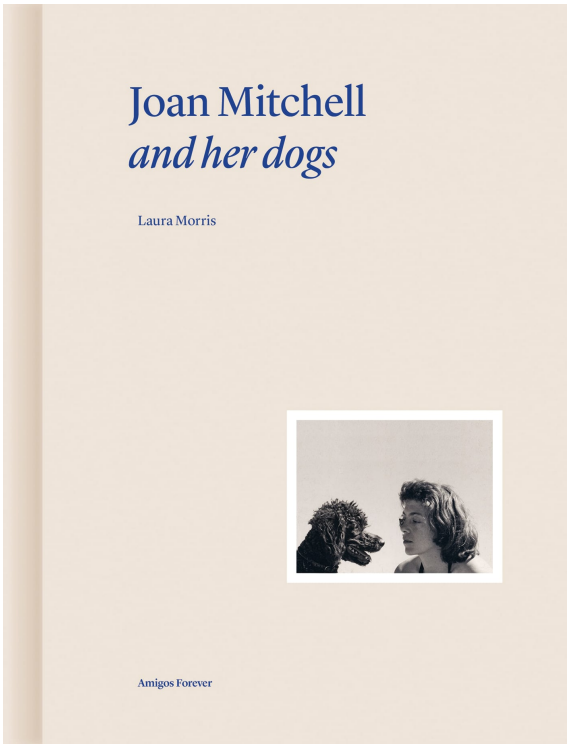

Joan Mitchell and Her Dogs

Laura Morris

Martin Bethenod

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- 2025 is the centenary of the birth of Joan Mitchell
- Joan Mitchell's contributions to art extend beyond her paintings. As a trailblazer for women in the arts, she challenged the gender norms of her time, paving the way for future generations of female artists
- Her work has been celebrated in major retrospectives and continues to be exhibited in prestigious institutions worldwide
- The Joan Mitchell Foundation will commemorate Mitchell's centennial throughout 2025 with a robust series of programs and events—anchored by presentations of her work in museums around the world—in collaboration with museum partners in the United States and France
- ***Joan Mitchell and Her Dogs*** is the third book in the *Amigos Forever* collection, which offers a look at the lives and work of great artists and art lovers of the 20th and 21st centuries from the perspective of the relationship to the "dogs of their lives"

Joan Mitchell, an extraordinary figure in 20th-century art, remains one of the most celebrated painters of the Abstract Expressionist movement. Born in 1925, in Chicago, Illinois, she grew to redefine abstraction, blending emotional intensity with lyrical beauty. Her work, characterised by dynamic brushstrokes, vivid colours, and profound emotional depth, established her as a towering presence in a predominantly male art world.

Joan Mitchell had at least nine dogs during her lifetime, and Georges du Soleil, a brown poodle, was her first beloved canine companion. Known for her deep affection for animals, Mitchell treasured Georges as a constant presence during her New York years. Like the other dogs that would follow, Georges was more than just a companion; he was also part of the vibrant, dynamic environment that nourished her creativity and her ability to channel emotion into her art.

"Dogs are objects of love (I suppose people could be? Sometimes)" wrote Joan Mitchell.

From her first dog, the adored Georges du Soleil, to Skye Terriers Idée, Isabelle, and Ibertelle ("Bertie"), Brittany Spaniel Patou, German Shepherds Iva, Marion, and Madeleine, and not forgetting Prunelle and Belle-Bête; all of them cherished companions in her life and work, all of them celebrated here. Joan Mitchell and her dogs: a love story.

Laura Morris, is Director of Archives and Research at the Joan Mitchell Foundation. **Martin Bethenod** has led numerous positions in the field of culture and contemporary art. He has been president of the Crédac-Centre d'art contemporain in Ivry since 2013 and president of the Archives de la Critique d'Art.







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