

John Joseph Mitchell



John Joseph Mitchell
Marigolds, 2025
Oil on panel in artist's frame
9 5/8 x 12 1/4 in
24.3 x 31 cm

Mornings

May 31 - June 28, 2025

Philip Martin Gallery is pleased to present, “Mornings,” an exhibition of new oil-on-panel paintings by John Joseph Mitchell. The exhibition is the gallery’s second solo presentation of Mitchell’s work.

John Joseph Mitchell’s paintings locate the viewer in the specificity of place. He tells us what it means to be connected to a place, and to know its rhythms. In Mitchell’s case, his place is the forests, fields and coastal environs of southeastern New Jersey. Mitchell lives near the Tuckahoe river, in a small town, south of the Pine Barrens, on a peninsula, with the waves of the Atlantic on one side and the calm waters of the Delaware Bay on the other. It is a bucolic spot, close to where he grew up, with deep resonance and history.

In Mitchell’s work, we find ourselves effortlessly connected to his vision, and how he figures it in paint. Mitchell depicts the seasons, the light on the water, turning leaves, the feel of rain. John Joseph Mitchell takes care with the paint he applies and how he applies it, while at the same time considering the wood support on which he makes his images. An accomplished printmaker, Mitchell uses a range of tools to cut lines into the wood of the support. These incisions accentuate the lines, shapes and colors of the applied paint, and complement passages of exposed wood grain that Mitchell stains, leaves bare, or otherwise uses to further his compositions. The exposed wood grain might form the background of an image - or its foreground - each working against the other in a quiet relation that allows for figure/ground flips and dynamic yet nuanced shape interactions.

French painters of the 19th century were fascinated by Japanese prints for a number of reasons, including their pictorial organization and use of perspective as a surface motif. This led to an investigation of shape and the “flatness” of the picture plane via global modernism that left a lasting legacy on contemporary art as we know it today. “Once I have established in a painting the shape of a sock, for example, I then have to ask myself what is the shape of the chair on which it sits?” Mitchell notes, going on to point out that, “In a painting, shapes or lines exist in the context of one another - they do not stand alone.” Mitchell’s words underline the fact that making paintings is essentially asking questions, open to observation, moving from one question to the next to witness new, perhaps unexpected, territory. As viewers, we follow the artist into a new world of sensation - the figuration of image and vision - and the enjoyment of poetry and place.

John Joseph Mitchell’s experience of the house in which he lives, built in 1800, contributes to his pictures the intervals of colonial-era architecture. The handmade intervals of American 18th and 19th-century structures stand in opposition to the off-the-shelf, prefab measurements of our contemporary built environment. Mitchell’s sense of this aspect of space contributes to his work a general appreciation of how everyday materials and objects age over decades and even centuries, and how we as people navigate things that last longer than we do, whether built by us or found in nature. It is a strong, subtle thread in Mitchell’s vision - one that finds a parallel in Horace Pippin or Albert Pinkham Ryder perhaps - or in the verses of William Carlos Williams, New Jersey’s poet laureate. “I like looking at things,” John Joseph Mitchell comments. “The painters I like all seem deeply connected to their particular world and looking at it. That’s what I try to do. I look at the marshes, farms, woods, and the ocean and the houses, people, animals and things in them that surround me. I hope to express and elicit the emotional range of visual experience.”

John Joseph MITCHELL (b. 1989, Somers Point, NJ) received his BFA from Rowan University (Glassboro, NJ) and his MFA from Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art (Philadelphia, PA). John Joseph Mitchell’s recent and upcoming solo and group exhibitions include Ingleby Gallery (Edinburgh, UK); Fleisher/Ollman (Philadelphia, PA); Andrew Edlin Gallery (New York, NY); Alzueta Gallery (Barcelona, Spain); Art at Kings Oaks (Newtown, PA); Gay Street Gallery (Washington, VA); Gravers Lane Gallery (Philadelphia, PA); Harper’s Books (East Hampton, NY); Alzueta Gallery (Barcelona, Spain); Galleri Magnus Karlsson (Gotland, SE); Wavelength Space (Chattanooga, TN); Kamihiro (Philadelphia, PA); and Little Berlin (Philadelphia, PA). John Joseph Mitchell lives and works in Tuckahoe, NJ.

John Joseph Mitchell’s exhibition is on view May 31 - June 28, 2025, with an opening reception for the artist Saturday, May 31 from 5-8 PM.

Philip Martin Gallery is open Wednesday - Saturday from 11-5. For additional images, or information please email info@philipmartingallery.com, or call 323-507-2037. Philip Martin Gallery is located at 3342 Verdugo Road, Los Angeles, CA 90065 in the Glassell Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.

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