

Joan Mitchell

Although involved with art all her life, Joan Mitchell pursued a career in literature and writing. She graduated from Cornell University with a B.A. in English, got her Masters

from the University of Michigan, and her Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara.



For over 15 years she taught writing and literature, first at Santa Barbara City College and then at UCSB. She published academic articles and two textbooks, plus a mystery novel with a local setting, “just for fun.” Deciding on a career change, she became a technical writer and managed technical publications departments, mainly in high-tech computer companies.

“Art has always been my first love, however,” says Joan. “I was very fortunate to go to schools, K-12, that had art departments and good art teachers. Starting in junior high, I also had private art lessons at home, and because we lived close to New York City, I was able to visit art museums there.” At Cornell, she took art courses as electives. Whenever she had time, she painted on her own.

Since moving to the Santa Ynez Valley from Santa Barbara, Joan has concentrated on watercolor. She is especially drawn to realism and the spectacular scenery of California’s Central Coast.



She explains, “I am a very visual person and painting is deeply satisfying to me, akin to a spiritual experience. I want to capture on paper the beauty I see around me. I love our mountains and sweeping ranchlands and lush vineyards. I also have a passion for buildings—historic structures, Victorian houses, dilapidated barns—anything with a story to tell.



Joan Mitchell is also very active in the Artists Guild of the Santa Ynez Valley.