

# ALEXANDRE GALLERY

For Immediate Release: March 20, 2019

**Tom Uttech: Early Paintings**

**April 25 – June 14, 2019**

**Reception for the artist: Saturday, April 27, 3 – 5 pm**

**Conversation with the artist and Jennifer Samet: Saturday, April 27, 4 pm**



Tom Uttech, *Feeding the Pitcher Plant*, 1971, oil on linen, 64 x 70 inches

Alexandre Gallery is pleased to present a selection of works by Tom Uttech from the early years of his career. The exhibition is comprised of ten paintings from the 1970s and related charcoal drawings, all based on the artist's highly imagined forays into the northern woods of Wisconsin and Ontario. Included is work that was selected for the 1975 Whitney Biennial, which brought Uttech his first national attention.

Unlike Uttech's work of the last twenty years, densely populated with realistic woodland creatures, these early large-scale, luminous paintings are highly imagined, even surreal. A

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phosphorous glow suffuses these magical landscapes, inhabited by biomorphic creatures and plants. Among them, we see anthropomorphic trees reaching into a technicolor sunset, a half-woman half-animal spirit hovering above an illuminated lake, and a mystical deer-headed creature floating on a pool of water among orange trout.

Uttech's spiritual attachment to the transformative powers of nature is felt strongly here. Curator Robert Cozzolino writes for the accompanying exhibition catalogue:

*Uttech's image underscores the sensation some feel when they are the only human being alone deep in the forest. The increasing awareness that everything surrounding you is alive, is watching, is looking at you as you look at it. Each place you look reveals a shifted vista, a changed panorama, a living ecosystem constantly moving and growing, changing before your eyes.*

These early fantastic images are different and more personal than his recent work, which speak to impending ecological crisis and have been described by critic Roberta Smith in a recent *New York Times* review as "magically transporting, and in one interpretation, disturbingly realistic." They suggest Uttech's deep enchantment with the wilderness, and present a spiritual realm in which to ruminate.

**Tom Uttech (b. 1942)** paints imaginary woodland scenes that celebrate the verdant natural world he has been closely acquainted with since his childhood in Merrill, Wisconsin. After completing his studies at the Layton School of Art and the University of Cincinnati, he was a professor of art at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, until 1998. Since the inclusion of his paintings in the 1975 Whitney Biennial, Uttech's work has been the subject of over 35 solo exhibitions. He continues to live and paint in Wisconsin.

**Alexandre Gallery** represents and exhibits contemporary American artists and specializes in works by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century American Modernists with particular focus on the Stieglitz Group. Alexandre Fine Art Inc. was established in 1996 and is located at 724 Fifth Avenue in New York City.

For further information and images, please contact the gallery at 212-755-2828 or at [inquiries@alexandregallery.com](mailto:inquiries@alexandregallery.com)