

ALEXANDRE GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tom Uttech: New Paintings

September 14 through November 25, 2017

CATALOGUE AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER WITH TEXT BY LUCY LIPPARD



Tom Uttech (American, b. 1942), *Mamakadendagwad*, 2016, oil on linen, 91 ½ x 103 ½ inches. Collection Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., purchase made possible by the American Art Forum, 2017.3.

The gallery is pleased to present the exhibition *Tom Uttech: New Paintings*, which remains on view through November 25, 2017.

Included in this show – Uttech’s fifth one-person exhibition with the gallery since 2004 (and his fortieth overall show since first exhibiting in New York in the 1975 and 1977 Whitney Biennials) – are seventeen paintings, two of which measure 91 x 103 inches. With each Uttech continues his exploration of the remote verdant North Woods in a style of detailed painterly realism that is both carefully observed and highly imagined. Uttech’s compositions are complex and often densely layered with a rich translucent paint surface akin to egg tempera or watercolor, although he paints in oil. Each includes an artist made painted frame integral to the painting.

Uttech begins his process with extended forays into the woods of Northern Wisconsin, Minnesota and Canada’s Quetico National Park, and then creates his paintings from memory in the studio. Uttech’s world is untouched by human hands, but often richly filled and fully inhabited with a multitude of animals and birds. He favors the dramatic light of early morning or twilight.

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The art historian Lucy Lippard writes:

Behind every one of Uttech's haunting and clearly contemporary images lies a hard-fought battle to be true to nature, to be as real as possible, and then to transcend reality, to reach another plane that communicates his feelings for the great mysteries of the northern wilderness, mysteries that remain unspoken but can be painted.

The poet and critic John Yau has written:

One senses the paintings are simultaneously real and mythical. Uttech is able to achieve this seemingly impossible synthesis because he never idealizes anything. Verisimilitude elevates the painting into a dimension where one must be highly attuned to both nuance and particularity. One must look again and again. We may finally be starting to see this world, this complex wilderness, but it has been watching us for a long time.

In this new body of work Uttech continues his "migration" painting series – fantastic imaginings populated with hosts of birds and other animals that cross the landscape in a flurry of natural diversity. He also introduces a new motif – "reflection" paintings – in which dense, close shore views are reflected with a crisp clarity and complicated patterning that invoke Rorschach-like test of the viewers response to the natural world. A highlight of this exhibition is the inclusion of his sixth large migration painting, recently acquired by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Others are in the collections of the Chazen Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum, New Orleans Museum and Tucson Museum, among other institutions.

In an artist's statement written for the occasion of this exhibition, Uttech says:

My painting is an attempt to share the state of mind I can enter when alone in the Northwoods. But in no way is the painting an accurate depiction of the physical place. Rather it aspires to use metaphor, design, color and imagery to simulate your experience of this mental state, which for me is an overwhelming feeling of correctness and completeness in my life. Further, it is my fervent hope that viewers will be affected both by this reaction and to the place that triggered it – and that they will accept the myriad interconnectedness and adjust their lives accordingly.

Tom Uttech was born in 1942 near Wausau, Wisconsin. He studied at Layton School of Art and University of Cincinnati before becoming a long-time professor at the University of Wisconsin until his resignation in 1998. He maintains his studio in a barn on his property north of Milwaukee and is engaged in restoring natural prairie to the surrounding area.

For more information, images, and gallery hours please contact inquiries@alexandregallery.com

**The gallery is located at 724 Fifth Avenue, between 57th and 56th Streets in New York City.
Regular hours are Tuesdays through Fridays from 10:00 to 5:30 and Saturdays from 11:00 to 5:00.**