



TOM UTTECH

American, b. 1942

*Kisibakwad*, 2014

Oil on linen in hand painted frame

Gift in honor of Budge, Ed and Peter Gierke, 2014.18

## Kisibakwad



**Tom Uttech** (b. 1942) Tom Uttech grew up near Wisconsin's North Woods and was fascinated with nature from an early age. After earning an MFA in painting from the University of Cincinnati in 1967, he joined the art faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and taught for almost three decades. He currently lives in Saukville, Wisconsin, where he paints in his converted-barn studio. His deep love and respect for nature continues to inspire his pursuits of naturalist and ecological initiatives. Uttech's work can be found in the collections of many art museums.

### A product of its time

Uttech experimented early with Abstract Expressionism, Pop art, and other movements that were popular during the 1960s. He then developed his signature compositions of realistic representation and imaginative invention focused on the forests, wetlands and creatures of his beloved North Woods. His landscapes may hold traces of specific locations but are meant to express the feelings generated by nature. When asked in an interview about his first art experience, Uttech responded, "That [it] was a view of a red-winged blackbird flying across a field in June where my grandparents lived. His wings were extended with these black and yellow epaulets against a green field. That scene burned in my brain. My art experience goes back so far I can't place where it started. My mother told me I always had crayons in my hands..."

### Take a closer look

*Kisibakwad* is representative of Uttech's body of work. The more time one spends looking at this work, the more one sees. This painting's densely packed structure swarms with life as forest creatures peek out from the rocky, tree-filled landscape. A second look affords the viewer details such as the ghost-like form of the wolf and the wings of birds weaving through the composition. The gloaming light emerges from the interlocking branches and a glimpse of a lake can be seen in the distance. Viewers may experience the magic of an unspoiled wilderness acknowledged by the fearless gazes of the forest inhabitants who are owned by no man. Uttech's carved, painted frame expands the picture plane beyond the canvas.

### Did you know?

Uttech shows respect for the Native American cultures that inhabited North America by using Ojibwa words and phrases for his titles. *Kisibakwad* is loosely translated as "there is a sound produced by the rubbing of two trees against one another, when they are agitated by the wind."

### On your own

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOfNUB1Uhcs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOfNUB1Uhcs)

*Magnetic North: The Landscapes of Tom Uttech*, Margaret Andera with essay by Lucy R. Lippard