



WAKE FOREST  
UNIVERSITY

Department of Art  
The Humanities Institute

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**HUMANITIES**

REYNOLDA



# **LOOKING CLOSER AT AMERICAN ART**

## **A SYMPOSIUM IN HONOR OF DAVID LUBIN**

Charlotte C. Weber Professor of American Art  
in the Department of Art at Wake Forest University

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025**

**1:00pm-6:00pm**

**Charles H. Babcock, Jr. Auditorium,  
Reynolda House Museum of American Art**



## PROGRAM

On the eve of his retirement, distinguished scholars of American art will gather to reflect on the legacy of the teaching and scholarship of David Lubin, the Charlotte C. Weber Professor of American Art in the Department of Art at Wake Forest University. Please join us after the talks for a reception in honor of Professor Lubin.

### Welcome

**Michele Gillespie**, *Provost, Wake Forest University*  
**Allison Perkins**, *Executive Director, Reynolda House*  
and *Associate Provost, Wake Forest University*

### "The Pastel from Mars"

**Jennifer Roberts**

*Drew Gilpin Faust Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University*

In a 2004 review of *Shooting Kennedy*, Luke Menand marveled at David's way of building a history out of improbable connections that "only an art historian (or a Martian) would notice." This insinuation that David's work performed a kind of alien intelligence seemed to me to be the highest of all compliments. And it captured my own sense of the audacity of his scholarship, particularly his flair for a certain unruly form of noticing that was simultaneously critical and generous. So perhaps it is not entirely coincidental, given David's impact on my own work, that my current research is focused on outer space. My paper will explore the first image ever transmitted from another planet: a strange and surprising picture of Mars made in 1965 of teletype tape, staples, and Rembrandt soft pastels.

### "What Is Not There"

**Alexander Nemerov**

*Carl and Marilyn Thoma Provostial Professor in the Arts and Humanities, Stanford University*

In honor of David Lubin's achievement, and in recognition of his retirement, I will reflect on the idea of disappearance. Specifically, I wish to think about the field of American art and, in a larger sense, art history, and to ask what about it would disappear if David Lubin had not appeared? Focusing on several paintings, I will consider the phenomenon of non-appearance as the autobiography of a person who, like all of us, might never have been but who is. I will ask how we leave our mark sometimes in subtractions of self, conspicuous absences in which portions of works of art, in sympathy, disappear as we do. What is not seen becomes our memory, as the most memorable works of art know.

— Break —

### "An Aleatory Approach"

**Martin Berger**

*Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, School of the Art Institute of Chicago*

In honor of David Lubin, my talk offers both personal and professional reflections on our four-decade-long relationship. I have three interrelated aims: to illustrate the ways in which David's teaching and research have impacted me and the broader field of American art; to reflect on the methodological tradeoffs that David and I have each made in the selection of our respective methods—through a reading of an Archibald Motley Jr. portrait of the artist's grandmother (in the Ackland Art Museum at UNC-Chapel Hill); and, finally, to highlight David's remarkable generosity to students, junior scholars, and colleagues over his more than forty-year career.

### Panel discussion

**with David Lubin, Jennifer Roberts, Martin Berger, and Alexander Nemerov**  
**moderated by Katherine Gregory**

Closing remarks by **Morna O'Neill**, *Professor and Chair, Department of Art*

Organized by the Department of Art in coordination with Reynolda Museum of American Art. Support provided by Wake the Arts, the Humanities Institute, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

*Please join us in the Forecourt Garden for drinks after the program.*