

For immediate release
February 10, 2026



University Galleries and the Wonsook Kim School of Art at Illinois State University are pleased to present two days of public programming with artist Dario Robleto on February 24 and February 25. Events include a film screening, discussion, and artist lecture, which are free and open to the public. Robleto is the 2026 presenter for the Anne and Stephen Matter Artist Lecture Series, co-organized by University Galleries and the Wonsook Kim School of Art.

On February 24 at 7:00 p.m., Robleto's 2024 film, *Ancient Beacons Long for Notice*, will be screened at the Normal Theater. Following the screening, the artist will have a brief public discussion with Kendra Paitz (director and chief curator at University Galleries) and participate in an audience question-and-answer session. On February 25 at 4:00 p.m., Robleto will deliver the Anne and Stephen Matter Artist Lecture at University Galleries. He will also participate in a student-centered event for University Galleries' newly launched Creative Practice Lab.

Art, science, technology, history, and empathy intersect in surprising ways throughout Robleto's films, sculptures, photographs, prints, and works on paper. *Ancient Beacons Long for Notice* is the third in a trilogy of films exploring the history and legacy of the Golden Record. Created in 1977 by a Carl Sagan-led team, the gold-plated copper discs were described by NASA as a "time capsule, intended to communicate a story of our world to extraterrestrials." Containing sounds and images (recorded as audio waveforms) of life on Earth, the discs were attached to NASA's Voyager I and II space probes and are currently traveling beyond our solar system. The Golden Record comprises greetings spoken in 55 languages; recordings of a train, thunder, and frogs; music by Chuck Berry, Beethoven, and Peruvian panpipe players; and images of Jane Goodall with chimpanzees, the Great Wall of China, and the structure of DNA, among others.

The Golden Record was intended to convey hopeful and positive messages about the planet, so references to violence and injustice were not planned inclusions. In Robleto's words, his film "examines the implications of this ethos across time and space through new research on a forgotten document: the earliest audio recording of warfare, made in 1918 on the Western Front of WWI." After learning about the audio recording, Ann Druyan, the creative director for the Golden Record, found a way to include a more expansive message about humanity within the project. She used an electroencephalogram and an electrocardiogram to record her brain waves and her heart's electrical signals while she thought about war, suffering, hope, and love.

Robleto's film joins archival imagery and footage with new graphics and animations, and mixes music and sounds with his own poetic narration. In the artist's words, the film asks, "What is our moral obligation to fully account for our actions—the good and the bad—in perpetuity, off-planet, and to beings we have yet to confirm exist?" After viewing *Ancient Beacons Long for Notice*, art critic Sebastian Smee declared the film a "21st-century artistic masterpiece," and wrote, Robleto "is one of only a handful of artists successfully delivering on the oft-proposed, seldom-accomplished integration of art and science."

Although *Ancient Beacons Long for Notice* is part of a trilogy, each film can also stand alone. These films can only be viewed within museum exhibitions or special events like the screening at the Normal Theater.

Events

These events are free and open to the public. No registrations or tickets are required.

- **Screening of *Ancient Beacons Long for Notice* and discussion with Dario Robleto**
 - Tuesday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Normal Theater (209 North Street, Normal)

- o Following the screening, Robleto and Kendra Paitz (director and chief curator at University Galleries) will have a brief discussion followed by an audience Q&A.
- **Anne and Stephen Matter Artist Lecture by Dario Robleto**
 - o Wednesday, February 25 at 4:00 p.m. at University Galleries (11 Uptown Circle, Suite 103, Normal)

Artist biography

Dario Robleto has held positions as an artist-in-residence, research fellow, and lecturer at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, SETI Institute, Hubble Space Telescope Science Institute, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and the Center for Advancement and Study of Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art. He was an artistic consultant for “Breakthrough Message” and a research consultant for *Cosmos: Possible Worlds*, which aired on National Geographic and Fox. Robleto has served as the Viola Frey Distinguished Visiting Professor at the California College of the Arts; Artist-in-Residence in Neuroaesthetics at the University of Houston’s Cullen College of Engineering; and the Artist-at-Large at Northwestern University’s McCormick School of Engineering and Block Museum of Art.

Robleto’s work has been exhibited at the National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.); Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study (Harvard University); Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art (Northwestern University); MASS MoCA (North Adams, Massachusetts); Centre Pompidou (Paris); Nasher Museum of Art (Duke University); Francis Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery (Skidmore College); Whitney Museum of American Art (New York City); Frye Art Museum (Seattle); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, D.C.); Hammer Museum (University of California, Los Angeles); Amon Carter Museum of American Art (Fort Worth, Texas); Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Santa Barbara, California); and The Renaissance Society (University of Chicago), among many others. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York City); The Menil Collection (Houston); Centre Pompidou (Paris); Harvard Art Museums; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, D.C.); Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts (Houston); National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.); Nasher Museum of Art (Duke University); Spencer Museum of Art (Lawrence, Kansas); and Blanton Museum of Art (University of Texas at Austin), among others. In 2025, Robleto was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Middlebury College and was selected as the Artist of the Year by the Art League, Houston.

University Galleries

University Galleries, a unit in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, is located at 11 Uptown Circle, Suite 103, at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available in the Uptown Station parking deck located directly above University Galleries—the first hour is free, as well as any time after 5:01 p.m.

You can find University Galleries on Facebook, Instagram, and X, and sign up to receive email updates through the newsletter. Please contact Gallery@IllinoisState.edu or call (309) 438-5487 if you need to arrange an accommodation to participate in any events related to this program.