In 1969, artist Lowell Nesbitt was invited by NASA to create artwork to commemorate the Apollo 9 mission—the first flight of the full Apollo spacecraft that would eventually take humans to the Moon later that year during the Apollo 11 mission. Based on his time at Cape Canaveral, Nesbitt produced a portfolio of prints that will be on view during this special exhibition. Taking away the mundane aspects of the enormous operation that is space flight, these prints capture the pure excitement, anticipation, and awe that people felt in 1969 at the prospect of space flight—feelings that deserve to be remembered and rekindled today.

Lowell Nesbitt (1933-1993) was a painter, draftsman, printmaker, and sculptor most closely associated with the Photorealist art movement of the 1970s and notable for the breadth of subjects he depicted throughout his career. Among his contemporaries, he showed an early interest in electronics and computer parts as artistic subject matter, and he was commissioned by NASA to commemorate the Apollo 9 and Apollo 13 space missions. In 1980, the United States Postal Service honored Nesbitt by issuing four stamps based on his paintings.

Timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Apollo missions, the exhibition will be on view in the John Bardo Center, where WSU faculty and students continue to conduct NASA-funded research to this day. The show will also coincide with the “Celebrating the Scientific Legacy of NASA and Apollo” symposium, taking place on October 19 at the WSU Rhatigan Student Center, sponsored by the Kansas Space Grant Consortium; this event is free and open to the public.

Lowell Nesbitt: Apollo, 1969 is the pilot project for Ulrich Connections, the newest program that will tie the Museum’s robust exhibition and event programming more directly to the world outside its walls. As part of the program, the Ulrich seeks out strategic partnerships with academic units on campus and community organizations to create temporary exhibitions and events that will allow the museum to reach new audiences and increase awareness of and access to its collection.

The project is cosponsored by WSU’s College of Engineering, and NASA in Kansas

From left to right: Lowell Nesbitt, Stage I and II of Saturn V, and Lunar Module, 1969. Screen prints. Gift of Dr. Udo Kultermann at the School of Architecture at Washington University, St. Louis, Collection of the Ulrich Museum of Art.
The friendships formed with Alliance and Advisory board members and within the larger Ulrich community have been a gift for both Ron and me.

Genevieve Farha (pictured with husband Chris) has been an Ulrich Alliance Board member since 2013. "I credit the Ulrich with giving me a much wider knowledge of and appreciation for Wichita State University; it is the driving force that brings me onto campus frequently. Watching this University embrace change and growth is exciting for all in the community."

"The Ulrich being an institute of learning allows no boundaries for the expression of individual talents of which I appreciate being a part of."

Ulrich Alliance Board member Scott Martin has been involved with the Ulrich Museum since 2012.

Lee Starkel (pictured with husband Ron) joined the Ulrich Alliance Board in 2013 and has been an Ulrich Advisory Board member since 2016.