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Myanmar Paintings, Stage Design Showcased in IWU Galleries

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Art exhibits featuring a collection of private paintings from Myanmar and hand-crafted stage renderings from more than three decades of IWU theatre productions will be presented at Illinois Wesleyan University galleries from Sept. 12 through Oct. 13.

Located in the Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art, the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries are free and open to the public from 12-4 p.m. on Monday through Friday, 7-9 p.m. on Tuesdays, and 1-4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

To illustrate the [University's annual theme "Power of Place,"](#) the exhibit at Wakeley Gallery will feature 36 paintings by artists

from Myanmar, a Southeast Asian country previously known as Burma. The exhibit is titled "Power of Place: Painting Myanmar in a Time of Transition." Paintings are also displayed in [The Ames Library](#).

In 2011, Myanmar's long-standing military junta gave way to quasi-democratic rule, only to be suddenly returned to dictatorship 10 years later.

"The paintings in this collection, all produced between 2012 and 2015, touch on the diverse dimensions of contemporary society, reflecting rural and urban life, religious beliefs and practices, disparate ethnic groups and identities and openly political stands. The artists draw inspiration both from traditional motifs and modern artistic styles, demonstrating the power of place and how it evolves over time," said Abigail R. Jahiel, professor of environmental and international studies.

Catherine Raymond, the director for the Center for Burma Studies and professor of art history at Northern Illinois University, will present a public talk and gallery walk for this exhibit at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at Beckman Auditorium in The Ames Library.

"Dr. Raymond is an expert of Burmese Art and on Myanmar, more generally," said Jahiel. "Her talk will provide a historical, political and cultural context through which to better understand a country that Americans generally know little about."

The exhibit and talk are co-sponsored by the School of Art, the Ames Library, and the Asian Studies Program, which is part of IWU's International and Global Studies Program.

An exhibit titled "Design/Development/Process: 32 Years of Scene Design and Related Crafts" will be on display at Merwin Gallery, with works created by Curtis C.

Trout, professor of theatre arts and co-chair of IWU's Theatre Design & Technology Program. A reception for this exhibit will take place from 4-6 p.m. on Sept. 24 in Merwin Gallery, during IWU Homecoming events.

Trout said the artworks included in the show represent every design step for creating a scene for the stage and for communicating that development to directors and collaborative co-equal designers in lighting, costumes and sound.



An example of a painting from a Myanmar artist that will be on display at IWU's Wakeley Gallery Sept. 12 - Oct. 13.



An example of a scale model stage rendering by Curtis Trout that will be on display in Merwin Gallery Sept. 12 - Oct. 13.

"As a 32-year retrospective, this show represents tens of thousands of work hours by myself, theatre staff and generations of IWU theatre majors or industry professionals," said Trout. "The art of theatre is encapsulated by that live performance event where all aspects of design and acting for a live audience come together in a unique event that plays out over time."

Examples of artwork include visual research from a director's pitch, set sketches for the scene designer and scale models of scenery complete with furniture and paint treatments.

Some of the artwork from the exhibit will go straight to a production scene shop, said Trout, which theatre staff will use the same way architects use blueprints to build a house.

Trout said he hopes viewers of the exhibit will walk away with a fresh understanding of the behind-the-scenes process of theatre productions, including the dedication and artistry involved in creating a theatre design.

"I hope that people will enjoy what they see, be intrigued and be able to appreciate the dedication and engagement over time on my behalf that this represents," he said.

By Julia Perez