

# The Chronicle

Thomas Aung '20 portraits on view at the Wikoff

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Thomas Aung, *apun*, 2017, oil on canvas, 52 x 34 inches

“In a world where connecting with people is done virtually through phone screens, we gradually forget the importance of in-person relationships,” says Thomas Aung '20, a visual arts major whose vibrant oil portraits are on view at the Wikoff Student Gallery in the Nott Memorial.

The exhibit, "Fragmented Memories," runs through March 17. A reception with the artist will be held Feb. 5, 5-6 p.m. It is free and open to the public.

Aung joined Union from Yangon, Myanmar, a city with a confluence of cultural, religious and architectural heritages. His paintings similarly reflect a somewhat discordant combination of brilliant hues and loose brushstrokes with somber and meditative poses and expressions.

The textured backgrounds in Aung's portraits sometimes include numbers and text. In some works, the background takes on life-like characteristics, conveying deeper connections between the artist and his subjects while creating more inscrutability and intrigue for the viewer.

Inspired by the old masters and contemporary artists such as Jenny Saville, Gerhard Richter and Jean-Michel Basquiat, Aung hopes to evoke emotion by juxtaposing elements of realism and abstraction.

"This body of work aims to connect viewers with their own fragmented memories of the people that they are close with and to self-reflect on the importance of the relationships they created," he says.