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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR DAVID T E LIM, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND INFORMATION AND THE ARTS AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF "UNMASKING VOLLARD" EXHIBITION, SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM, 12 JANUARY 2000 AT 7.20PM

Your Excellency, Mr Filhol Michel, Ambassador of France to Singapore,
Mr Clovis Pavaye, President of the Regional Co-operation Commission,
representing the President of the General Council of Reunion Island,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Mesdames et Messieurs

It is my pleasure tonight to open this exhibition entitled "Unmasking
Vollard".

I am told that Ambroise Vollard was an art lover "extraordinaire". From
what I have learnt, it would not do him justice to call him an art merchant alone.

Neither was he just a collector, or an arts promoter. He was all this, and more.

Vollard was a patron of the Arts and contributed in diverse ways to the Arts. He commissioned many pieces of art, collected masterpieces himself, promoted young artists and published books on the Arts. He was an art entrepreneur who was not afraid to try out new ideas. In particular, he was deeply interested in printmaking, and persuaded many artists to develop that art form. His ideas transformed the nature of art-making, and the concepts of creativity and originality. In promoting the print medium, Vollard made an invaluable contribution to many varied expressions of this art form.

Above all, it was Vollard's love and passion for the Arts that drove him to make art accessible to a wider audience. He wanted others to be able to enjoy art, and invested his time and money in this cause. We are therefore fortunate to have on display the Ambroise Vollard collection at the Singapore Art Museum. I hope that many will come and view this exhibition, and go away not only inspired by works of art, but also by the example of the man who sought to share his love for the arts.

Looking at art raises our awareness of the world around us. As we see life expressed in art, we discover how similar we all are, whether we live in Asia or in Europe or in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Even before Infocommunications Technology connected us as a worldwide community, we were already linked together by our similar hopes, fears and dreams. As Singapore becomes more and more a global city, the Arts will be another vital link that connects us to the world.

In Singapore, the arts have developed at a steady pace, and with increased intensity over the last few years. The Singapore Art Museum and her hardworking and passionate curators have raised the level of arts appreciation in Singapore and brought a new vitality to the promotion of visual arts. Others have also made their contribution. We see a growing number of art galleries started up by people with a passion for the arts. Like Vollard, they help both to support and promote new, young talents, as well as to make art more accessible to the public. Likewise, I am also encouraged by the many artists, collectors and arts promoters who have loaned valuable art pieces to

the Singapore Art Museum for public exhibition. This has enabled the Art Museum to widen its range of exhibitions and to share these works with the public. The development of the Arts has and will remain a collective and collaborative effort.

At this juncture, let me acknowledge the collaborative efforts that have made tonight's unmasking of Vollard possible. I would like to express, on behalf of all who will view and enjoy this collection, our appreciation to the General Council and the Leon Dierx Museum of Reunion Island for sharing your art treasures with us. Let me also thank the Ambassador for his tireless support of art and cultural ties between France and Singapore. And finally, I also thank all the sponsors who contributed to this exhibition.

Now, let us together welcome the Vollard collection. Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore