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SPEECH BY S DHANABALAN
MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AT THE OPENING OF LEE BOON WANG'S THIRD
SOLO ART EXHIBITION ON TUESDAY 14 JUL 92 AT 6.00 PM
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM ART GALLERY

1 Artists are rather special people. They are among the few creative people in the world with the talent for capturing, without any words, the mood of a personality, the essence of a place, a period of history or an event. In so doing, they immortalise a certain elusive, and sometimes transient spirit, on canvas.

2 We are fortunate that here in Singapore, we now have a growing pool of Singaporean artists. Working in a variety of mediums and different styles, they are capturing the many facets of Singapore and its way of life on canvas and paper. Mr Lee Boon Wang, is one such eminent artist. Those among us who like works by Singapore artists, will surely know of him and his works.

3 One need not be a connoisseur to appreciate a work of art. An interest in the subject is more than sufficient. I am, therefore, very happy to note the growing interest in art and the various art forms among Singaporeans. Many, particularly the young, I understand, are taking up art lessons in various art schools. Some are also taking up professional lessons at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts or NAFA as it is more popularly known. This Academy, from which Mr Lee graduated 39 years ago, can rightfully claim to be the doyen of our art scene. In its distinguished history of half a century, it has produced, besides Mr Lee, several other outstanding artists.

4 Formal education alone is not enough if one wishes to be an artist of exceptional merit. The truly successful are those who continue to learn, long after their formal education is over, both from within and without. By this I mean, they draw from the experience of their last work, and by studying the works of other great artists.

5 Mr Lee is one such artist. When asked how long he took to complete a painting, his reply was that it took one's whole

life. He also said: "All the pieces I have done before lead up to my last work." Mr Lee's works, which we will soon see, will, I am sure, demonstrate vividly, just what he means by this.

6 It is now my pleasure to declare open Mr Lee Boon Wang's Exhibition. I wish Mr Lee and the exhibition every success.
