

SPEECH BY MR JEK YEUN THONG, MINISTER FOR CULTURE,  
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NATIONAL DAY ART  
EXHIBITION AT THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL ON TUESDAY  
5 AUG 75 AT 5.30 PM

Ladies & Gentlemen

This art exhibition is part of the comprehensive programme of activities organised by the Ministry of Culture and other Ministries to celebrate our Republic's Tenth Anniversary.

Although it is one of the many art exhibitions that are held in Singapore, this exhibition is unique and distinct from others in two respects. Firstly, it is the result of the joint effort of all the 16 art societies and my Ministry. Secondly, although the art works on display are of various styles, they have one thing in common - all are of high quality.

Since its inception some seven years ago, the National Day Art Exhibition has been providing a platform for art works of high standard by our local artists - be they professional or amateur, established or otherwise, for the benefit of artists as well as art-lovers. I am told that the number of participants and the number of entries for the National Day Art Exhibition have been increasing year by year. There are 388 accepted entries as compared to 312 last year, which represents an increase of about 24 per cent. I am happy that it is not only a

numerical increase but a qualitative one as well, as you can see for yourself in this hall.

It is important, and this is an opportune time, for us to take stock of what we have achieved in the past decade. Generally, I would say that the fine arts, particularly in the field of painting, have developed well. This has been due partly to the joint efforts made by the government and art organisations in encouraging our artists. Also, with improving standards of living, the general public are becoming more sophisticated and appreciative of the finer things in life. This is a good sign of progress and I hope that the fine art movement will continue to progress with even greater vigour in the coming decade.

I notice that more and more of our people take up art as a hobby and a pastime. The Open-air Art Exhibitions organised by my Ministry, specially to encourage our young budding and talented artists, are extremely well supported both, by our young artists as well as members of the public who come to view the paintings. This is a good thing and deserves every encouragement. It indicates that painting and the enjoyment of paintings are no longer a privilege enjoyed by certain social class but is gaining popularity among people from all walks of life.

I congratulate the winners of this year's Special Award Medals. To those whose entries do not qualify for the Medals, I wish them all the best in the next National Day Art Exhibition. I now have great pleasure in declaring this exhibition open.

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