

EMBARGOED TILL AFTER DELIVERY

SPEECH BY TUAN HAJI SHA'ARI TADIN, SR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE, AT THE OPENING OF THE ART EXHIBITION FOR THE YOUNG AT TOA PAYOH BRANCH LIBRARY ON THURSDAY, 23.10.75, AT 5.30 PM

On display here today, as you can see for yourselves, are not the art works of established artists which we use to see at exhibitions. They are some of the wonderful and creative paintings and drawings by our very young but imaginative students. These students, ranging from 4 to 18 years old, are from the kindergartens, primary and secondary schools of different language streams in Singapore.

The art works on display here, I am told, are the cream of some 1,300 exhibits which were displayed at the Open-air Art Exhibitions organised exclusively for the young artists under 18 years old. The wide range of subjects and art forms fully reflect the talent and creativity of our young artists.

Although literacy education is important in schools, it has to be recognised that knowledge cannot be imparted without the simultaneous teaching of art, music, dance and other cultural subjects. An appropriate mix of the two, namely, literacy education and cultural education is required to foster a balanced mental growth of our young people and at the same time to keep them away from the undesirable influences of western culture. As human resources are the only resources we have in Singapore, it is only logical that our young people are properly educated and fully developed to become effective digits of our society.

With the increased emphasis on science and technical subjects in our education system, there may be a tendency for some schools to accord low priority to the teaching of art subjects. It is therefore necessary to provide more opportunities for our young people to participate in healthy and creative activities outside schools.

It is gratifying to note that more and more of our children have become interested in the fine art and that many of them have actively taken part in many art exhibitions and competitions organised

specifically for the young. Children are full of imagination and are capable of expressing through drawing and painting things that they have either seen or imagined. Parents should encourage those talented children to take up painting or to participate in other forms of cultural activities right from the schooling days. With the necessary encouragement from parents and the provision of opportunities for display of their art works in public, I am confident that more and more of our young people will take up painting as a pastime or at least learn how to appreciate art works.

I would like to congratulate all the young participants for their excellent works on display here today. I now have the pleasure to declare this exhibition open.

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