

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH OF THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MR. YONG NYUK LIN,
AT THE OPENING OF THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SALON
OF PHOTOGRAPHY ORGANISED BY THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF
NANYANG UNIVERSITY AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY CONFERENCE
ROOM ON FRIDAY, 20TH MARCH, 1964 AT 1700 HOURS.

On behalf of my colleague, the Minister for Culture, who is unfortunately not in Singapore because of other urgent business of great national importance, I have great pleasure in extending a warm welcome to all of you on this occasion - being the 3rd International Student Salon of Photography organised by the energetic and able group of young photographic enthusiasts known as the Photographic Society of Nanyang University.

Singapore has achieved in recent years an international repute for the standard of her photography which is amply supported by the fact that our photographers are constantly winning prizes at international photographic competitions. It is therefore natural that Singapore should itself become a centre for international displays such as this one. Our students at Nanyang University are to be congratulated for adding their efforts to those of other photographic societies. The results they have achieved are most impressive, for we have here on display the works of students photographers of some 20 countries, some of them as far afield as Belgium, Poland and Yugoslavia.

Photography is a powerful medium for the communication of ideas, particularly cultural ideas, but it may act somewhat like a double edged sword which cuts both ways in a multi-racial society like ours in Malaysia. On the one hand it can promote the intermingling of cultural values. On the other, it may retard to some extent the process of integration within our own society should the disparate parts be over-emphasised in the Malaysian setting.

Therefore it is all the more necessary for our artists, writers and photographers to make conscious efforts to bring to the fore those common denominators in our society which already form the basis to our sense of belonging and which show promise of developing into a full fledged national cultural identity. Photography is particularly suited to this kind of social engineering, as it exemplifies realism which is easily understood, whilst painting and other techniques of the artist could well swing now and then into obscure and abstract expressions beyond the understanding of our masses. The photographic enthusiasts of a University can be said to be more conscious of these possibilities than the man in the street who generally takes up photography merely as a hobby. I have no doubt that our students at Nanyang University have expressed themselves fully in this spirit.

May I therefore warmly congratulate the Photographic Society of the Nanyang University once again for their hard work which has met with such good response and success and it is with much pleasure that I now declare the 3rd Singapore International Student Salon of Photography open.

MARCH 20, 1964.

(Time issued: 1500 hours)