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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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MC/NOV/52/79 (Social Affairs)

ADDRESS BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, ACTING MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CHAIRMAN, VOCATIONAL AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING BOARD, AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE SECOND TERM OF OFFICE OF THE APPLIED ARTS TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT THE VITB BOARD ROOM ON TUESDAY, 27 NOV 79 AT 1300 HOURS

The development of the Applied Arts Industry is closely associated with social and economic development. In early Singapore and during the pre-war days, advertising art as a mass medium was employed mainly for press advertisements and billboards. Interior designing as a specialisation was non-existent and architecture was at a basic stage of development. Art objects and household artifacts were imported and, if locally made, were traditional in design and construction. After the Second World War, the development of entrepot trade led to an increase in the use of advertising art. The catalyst came when Singapore achieved independence, with industrialisation.

The shift in economic strategy from import substitution to export orientation towards the end of Singapore's first decade of industrialisation resulted in an urgent need for the improvement of design, packaging and presentation of manufactured goods. The construction of prestigious office buildings and multi-storeyed commercial complexes and the mushrooming of hotels to meet the influx of tourists led to an increased need for interior design services to create aesthetic yet functional interiors and environments. Our public housing programme, coupled with qualitative improvements in our way of life and tastes, further heightened these needs.

The demand for well-designed products and household items is enhanced by the need to maintain product competitiveness in the export market. It is increasingly vital to have trained manpower for promotion of export orientated products.

The Baharuddin Vocational Institute (BVI) was established in 1968 to provide training to develop creative manpower resources. By 1970, a

variety of manual and applied arts courses were conducted. In 1974, the Applied Arts courses were conducted at the Industrial Technician Certificate (ITC) level.

Up to June 1979, a total of 478 trainees had graduated from our applied art courses, with 371 in Advertising Art, 52 in Interior Design and 55 in three-Dimensional Design. BVI-trained persons constitute about a quarter of the total Advertising Art personnel in the industry. In the Interior Design sector, 30 per cent of the designers have been BVI trained.

Thus the VITB through the Applied Arts courses at BVI has been making a major contribution to the growth of the design agencies and studios, by equipping the country with a workforce of young trained artists, designers and craftsmen. The Baharuddin Vocational Institute has distinguished itself with the many awards won by its staff and trainees in national graphic design and logo competitions launched by various organisations and ministries.

In October 1977, the ITB appointed a group of industrialists to advise on the formulation and implementation of the Applied Arts training programmes so as to meet the country's development needs and industrial requirements. This group of people constituted our first Applied Arts Trade Advisory Committee. On their advice, a survey on the Manpower and Training Requirements in the Applied Arts Industry was conducted in May 1978.

The survey revealed that the Board's two-year ITC Advertising Art and Interior Design courses required upgrading. The industry expressed an urgent need for professional designers. The survey projected a manpower requirement of 240 Advertising Art and Interior Design personnel over the next five year period. The survey findings were discussed with such professional bodies as the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore, the Singapore Advertisers Association, the Advertising Media Owners Association, and the Singapore Institute of Architects. These bodies confirmed the need to upgrade the present Advertising Art and Interior Design courses.

I am pleased to announce that the Board has finally decided to upgrade the Advertising Art and the Interior Design Courses to Diploma level. The first group of trainees will be selected for training in April 1980, under the Joint Admission Board for admission to technical

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colleges and pre-university classes. Baharuddin Vocational Institute will thus become the first institution in Singapore to offer to creative and talented school leavers professional design training at Diploma level. The Diploma course will be a three-year programme with an additional six months of industrial attachment. The present Advertising Art and Interior Design trainees will complete their ITC courses as scheduled. ITC graduates will have the opportunity to upgrade themselves to Diploma level through a two-year part-time course in the future.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the past Trade Advisory Committee for its significant contributions in the last two years, particularly in reviewing the Applied Arts courses to bring them in line with the needs of the industry.

It is my pleasure to welcome you, the members of the newly reconstituted Applied Arts TAC for another three-year terms of office. We welcome back Mr Chan Yen Park as the Chairman of this Committee. Under his capable chairmanship, the committee has done excellent work and we in the Board are indeed grateful. The other eight re-appointments are Mr Au Mun Chow, Mr Chia Yong Kwang, Mr Choy Weng Yang, Mr S Kosava, Mr Khor Ean Ghee, Mr Lim Chin Hook, Mr Tan Huay Peng and Mr Luke C Yong. They are joined on the committee by seven new members: Mr Anthony Chau Po Liang, Brother Joseph McNally, Mr Vince Khoo Tiam Siew, Mr Lee Fong Yuen, Mr Low Teo Ping, Mr Sannie Bin Abdul and Mr See Tian Min.

The members of the new committee represent many fields and professions in Applied Arts, including Art Directors and persons drawn from Advertising Management, Graphic Design and Design Management, Marketing and Public Relations, Interior Design and Architecture, Printing, Industrial Supervision and Management, Art Education and Design Training. Mr Vince Khoo Tiam Siew and Mr Lee Fong Yuen are the President and the Vice-President, respectively, of the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore (the 4As). Mr Low Teo Ping is a Council Member of the Singapore Advertisers Association (the SAA), and Mr Anthony Chau Po Liang is a Council Member of the Singapore Institute of Architects.

I see great potential in this group of people and I have no doubt that closer co-operation between the industry and VITB will be achieved.

The new TAC has the urgent task ahead of seeing to the successful implementation of the new Diploma programmes for Advertising Art and Interior Design. I have every confidence that with your support and encouragement the Board's decision to upgrade the courses to Diploma level will yield dividends for the country in general and the industry in particular.

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