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**SPEECH BY MR CH'NG JIT KOON, MINISTER OF STATE
(COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT), AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE ART EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE OUTRAM PARK COMMUNITY
CENTRE ART CLUB AT TEO CHEW POI IT HUAY KOON
ON SATURDAY, 22 AUGUST 1987 AT 3.00 PM**

I am pleased to be here this afternoon to officiate the opening of the art exhibition featuring the winning entries of a nation-wide art and calligraphy competition organised by the Art Club of Outram Park Community Centre.

The arts and cultural scene in Singapore has been very active and artistically stimulating in recent years through the increased government support for the arts, greater local audience interest in artistic activities and more locally produced works. The recent announcement of the government's five year art acquisition programme at the Art Fair 87 is yet another indication of government's desire to make Singapore more culturally vibrant.

The development of an artistically inclined society, like nation-building, is a long and tortuous process. It will take more than just exhibitions, concerts, plays and publications to nurture and sustain cultural development and growth. However, we can all play a part to help accelerate the process of creating a more conducive environment for the arts to thrive and excel. We can, for example, promote greater participation in artistic activities by encouraging more grassroot involvement in organising art classes, forming cultural groups such as choir, orchestra, drama and dance troupes and holding art and craft activities, etc.

These community-based cultural activities are useful outlets for our young people to continue their artistic pursuits after school. They also help bring cultural activities to the doorsteps of the people and foster a greater awareness of the finer things in life.

The success of cultural promotion at community centres is very dependent on the active participation of the talented few. Our fellow citizens who are artistically talented should step forward and participate actively in the various cultural groups in community centres. Those who are not endowed with artistic talents could support the building of a culturally vibrant Singapore by attending activities organised. It is only when our people show enthusiasm in supporting the arts, can we expect our community to be more enlivened in cultural activities.

I am glad to note that more and more cultural activities are being organised in the community centres. To sustain these activities, it is important that our established artists should take time off to actively support the art programmes at our community centres and interact more closely with the people. This will not only upgrade the standard of our arts but also motivate the aspiring artists at the grassroot level.

This afternoon's exhibition features 180 entries from a nation-wide art and calligraphy competition organised recently by Outram Park Community Centre. A most encouraging sign in this exhibition is the predominance of young, budding artists who altogether have submitted more than one thousand works for the competition. I commend the organisers for their effort as it offers an additional avenue for promising young artists to show their talents. They need the opportunities for exposure in order to nurture and develop their artistic potential to the fullest.

7 On this note, I congratulate the Art Club of the Outram Park Community Centre for organising the art and calligraphy competition and the exhibition. I also congratulate the artists whose prize-winning works were selected for the exhibition. I now have great pleasure in declaring the exhibition open.

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