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SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
HEALTH AND CULTURE, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
NATIONAL DAY ART EXHIBITION ON WEDNESDAY 17 AUGUST 83 AT
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM ART GALLERY AT 5.30 P.M.

The National Day Art Exhibition is an event which artists and lovers of art look forward to every year. It is an appropriate way to celebrate our National Day. The Exhibition represents an annual review of the progress made and the achievements attained by our painters, sculptors and graphic artists. It also affords an opportunity for all art lovers to enjoy the viewing of artistic creations which cover a wide range of styles and media.

Organised annually since 1970, the National Day Art Exhibition has grown from strength to strength. The number of entries received for this year's exhibition, which is 402, is the largest. It represents a 7.7 per cent increase over 1982. Sixteen of the 402 entries were from artists participating for the first time; of the 16, six have been selected for exhibition. This is encouraging and illustrates the role of the National Day Art Exhibition in the discovery and encouragement of new talents.

To give further encouragement to our Singapore artists, the organisers of this year's National Day Art Exhibition have introduced two attractive prizes in the form of "Overseas Educational Tours". One award is for an artist, aged between 18 and 44 years; the other is

for older artists. The award entitles the artist to make an art educational tour of an ASEAN country to visit art organisations and interact with artists there.

One award has been made this year to Mr Leo Hee Tong for his painting "Pigeons in Peace". I wish to congratulate Mr Leo Hee Tong for his excellent effort. I am sure that, in the course of his overseas visit, he will make discoveries which will inspire him to greater achievements in his career as an artist.

Between now and the end of the year, the calendar of visual arts activities includes two new activities:

- a) an exhibition by five young artists, aged between 18-30 years, is scheduled in Oct 83. This is the first in a new series aimed to give young, unestablished artists the opportunity to show their efforts; and
- b) a two-week Sculpture Workshop is scheduled for Dec 83. It extends young and talented persons interested in sculpture the opportunity to venture into these pursuits under the guidance of our established sculptors. A series of public lectures on the history and origins of sculpture, and its various forms will run concurrently with the Workshop.

The new projects are in addition to the established Pioneer Artists of Singapore Exhibition scheduled in Nov 83, and the two courses on Art Appreciation, each comprising six lectures to be held from Sep 83.

The art scene in our Republic continues to improve. Our artists are encouraged by an increasing demand for works of art. Each year, there is a greater use of paintings to provide a touch of beauty in the homes and to enhance the office environment. The demand for works of art is also helped by the fact that they are a form of investment.

Vibrant as it is, the art scene in our Republic is full of promise of better things to come. The environment is conducive for our artists to work harder, and to meet the challenge of achieving further progress and excellence in all their endeavours.

On this note, I congratulate the organisers for putting up this stimulating art exhibition in celebration of our National Day. I have much pleasure in declaring the National Day Art Exhibition 1983 open.
