

31 AUG 1984

PRESS RELEASE

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84-042-13

Release No: 73/AUG
04-3/84/08/25

SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(HEALTH AND CULTURE), AT THE SCULPTURE WORKSHOP/SYMPOSIUM
ORGANISED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
THEATRETTE ON SATURDAY 25 AUGUST 1984 AT 10.30 AM

I am happy to be present here at this inaugural two week Sculpture Workshop/Symposium organised by the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Culture aims to promote sculpture as an art form. Towards this objective, it is launching a five-year Programme of Annual Sculpture Workshops and Symposia whereby interested artists can practise under the direction of our established sculptors.

Open to those above the age of 16 years who are interested in three-dimensional artwork, this year's session has attracted a total of 58 participants. This is an encouraging response.

Despite its brevity, this Workshop and Symposium covers a wide scope. It will introduce participants to sculptural ideas, techniques and processes through work on the respective media, that is, wood, metal, ciment fondu, ceramics, stone and plastics. In addition, two public lectures will be held during the evenings at the National Museum Theatrette to generate interest among the public, especially the interested who are unable to enrol for one reason or another. These lectures will outline the history and origins of sculpture and the development of regional and international sculpture projects.

The Ministry of Culture is fortunate, at this Workshop and Symposium, to be able to tap the expertise of six well-known artists: Mr Tan Teng Kee and Brother Joseph McNally (for welded sculpture); Mr Ng Eng Teng (for ciment fondu and ceramic sculpture); Mr Sim Lian Huat (for plastic sculpture); Miss Han Sai Por (for limestone carving); and Mr Michael Ong (for wood carving).

The immediate goals are important - to acquaint participants with the problems of concept, scale, material, architectural relationships and execution and presentation of the finished works. Equally important is the fact that this is a vital part of continuing skills development for our artists who can, in various ways, play a vital role in raising our people's aesthetic appreciation, be it in the home, the work-place, the art gallery, the shopping complex or anywhere else for that matter.

Today, many ordinary homes have paintings hung on the walls instead of the traditional wedding and family photographs. This reflects an appreciation of art by flat dwellers who see paintings as a means of helping overcome what could otherwise be the drabness of highrise living. Besides, local paintings are usually reasonably priced.

Some house-owners also make use of semi-manufactured traditional handicrafts to beautify their homes. Together with paintings on the walls, the aesthetic effect can be very pleasing and dramatic. There is, therefore, adequate awareness of the impact of 3-D art in interior decoration. Yet the ordinary home where a sculpture takes pride of place in the hall is still the exception rather than the rule. The reason may be firstly that sculptures are not as easily available as paintings, and secondly that they are not priced within the reach of ordinary wage earners.

Where the external landscape is concerned, the absence of sculptures is noticeable, especially in open spaces. These are the very venues where sculptures can best be sited to contribute to the already beautiful, clean and green environment around us. This is amply demonstrated by the Central Park which features the Asean sculptures. I would like to urge architects and planners to incorporate and blend sculptures into the overall mosaic of private and public housing estates and parks.

I wish the participants a fruitful exposure, and now have the pleasure to declare open this Sculpture Workshop and Symposium.
