

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY DPM LEE HSIEN LOONG
AT THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF
LASALLE-SIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND
THE OPENING OF ITS TWO NEW BUILDINGS
AT THE MOUNTBATEN CAMPUS
ON FRIDAY, 18 AUGUST 1995 AT 5.00 PM**

I am happy to join you for today's ceremony to declare open LaSalle's new buildings, and to celebrate LaSalle's 10th anniversary. This is a significant milestone in the development of the college.

LaSalle has grown tremendously. From the small classes in the borrowed rooms of St Patrick's School ten years ago, the college has developed into a leading arts institution, with 1,200 students and 150 staff. It is one of only two private institutions in Singapore which offers diploma and degree programmes in the arts.

LaSalle's growth reflects the increasing interest in the arts in Singapore. As the economy develops and our society matures, the demand for the more intangible, less material satisfactions increases, and with it also demand for arts education.

LaSalle plays an key role in developing artists and their audience in Singapore. LaSalle graduates today hold important jobs in our creative industries, in fashion designing, dramatics, music and others. Some of our best known artists are graduates of LaSalle. They help to create the vibrant local arts scene, and satisfy the desire of Singaporeans for a more gracious society.

I am glad that the leadership of arts education in Singapore is in private hands. Individuals with a passion for

arts education, notably Brother McNally himself, have made LaSalle what it is today. The generous support of public-spirited corporations and foundations have significantly contributed to the growth of LaSalle and the local arts scene. Besides SIA's donation of \$15m to build these new buildings, LaSalle has also benefited from the generosity of the Khoo, Lee, Shaw and Hong Leong Foundations, the Airbus Industries and many other companies and individuals.

The Government will continue to do its part to support arts education. It will allocate adequate resources for the development of the arts. Outstanding performing arts groups receive housing grants and other assistance. The Esplanade by the Bay Arts Centre should be ready by the turn of the century. The Singapore Arts Museum, housed in the conserved former St Joseph's Institution Building, will be completed soon. Two other new museums, a new National Library, several regional and specialist libraries, and more premises to house arts groups are also planned.

In collaboration with the private sector, the Government has helped to bring in major arts events like the Singapore Festival of Arts, the Festival of Asian Performing Arts, concerts by well known artists like Luciano Pavaroti and Michael Jackson, musicals such as Les Miserables, Phantom of the Opera, international art and antique fairs like Treasures and international auctions by Christie's, Sotheby's and others. These activities make Singapore a more vibrant place to live in and visit. They will help make Singapore a hub city of the arts.

The Government will also continue to support LaSalle financially. LaSalle pays nominal rent for its Telok Kurau and Mountbatten campuses, which are on state land. The National Arts Council (NAC) provided LaSalle renovation grants, and paid for LaSalle's 30-year lease of the Mountbatten Campus. These are public investments in infrastructure, to nurture creative talent. While we improve facilities for the arts, we must also develop our artistic talent to the full. The NAC, in conjunction with

some private agencies, provides training awards and scholarships for training local artists. And the NAC, the Singapore Arts Centre Company and the National Heritage Board have schemes to train arts administrators, museum curators and other supporting personnel. More can be done.

In recognition of LaSalle's pivotal role in training artists and the supporting personnel needed to further develop the arts in Singapore, I am pleased to announce that for the next five years, the Government will give LaSalle an annual grant through the NAC, to meet half its expenditure in selected courses. The grant will fund full-time Singapore students who meet the entry requirements of our polytechnics, but are taking courses in the fine arts, music, drama and dance in LaSalle, courses not available at the polytechnics.

The Government will also extend the same financial assistance to the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, LaSalle's sister college. The sum of the grants for the two arts institutions for five years is expected to be \$4m. This further investment in developing our creative talent will help improve the quality of life for Singaporeans, and provide a further impetus for the development of our creative industries.

I congratulate LaSalle's management and board for their achievements, and take pleasure in declaring LaSalle's two new buildings open.

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