

PM: Artists too have vital role to play

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By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Artists have an important role to play in developing the culture of a country. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said they could also uplift the image of a country and protect and defend the nation's moral values.

"This is because those involved in the artistic fields are not different from other sectors of society.

"They are part of society and their every contribution is meaningful," he said when launching the "Vi-

sions" art exhibition organised by the Yayasan Seni Berdaftar.

The sponsors for the exhibition are the New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad, Sistem Televisyen Malaysia (TV3), Malaysia Airlines, Allied-Link, Pan Pacific hotel, Parico and Pico.

Dr Mahathir said artists could introduce Malaysian culture to other countries through their paintings.

Malaysia should not just depend on selected well-known artists but greater efforts must be made to ensure new faces whose artistic capabilities are just as good.

Dr Mahathir was glad that Yayasan Seni had taken efforts to introduce artists Abdul Mutalib Zakaria and Abdul Ghani Ahmad whose paintings were on display at the exhibition.

Also on display are works of international artist Jian Hi-zou.

Dr Mahathir said he understood that Yayasan Seni had established a special scholarship to assist artists to pursue in-depth studies on art.

"This is a very good development in the field of arts and should be emulated by other organisations."

Earlier, Yayasan Seni

Berdaftar Board of Trustees chairman Toh Puan Mahani Idris Daim said the foundation would continue to strive to promote the arts in the country.

She said the board had established scholarships to assist local artists who wanted to learn more about painting and drawing.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said tourists were greatly attracted to the country because of its culture and arts.

He said more art exhibitions should be held especially during *Visit Malaysia Year 1994*.