

**SPEECH BY THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH MALAYAN
ART EXHIBITION, AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL
CULTURAL CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR ON THE
16TH MAY, 1960**

Within the last few years since our country achieved independence much has been said and written about the flowering of Art in Malaya and the growth of culture. So much has been said about the growth and development of our culture that one gets the impression sometimes that culture is a new thing introduced into this country by a band of crusading intellectuals. However, it is well known from time immemorial that any settled community of people have their own type of culture. Indeed, culture is intertwined with the life and development of any community and the degree of its growth depends on the growth and the progress of the people themselves and on their environment.

Painting is a facet of the culture of the people. It therefore, gives me great pleasure to be here today to witness this beautiful facet of Malayan culture—the annual exhibition of the works of Malayan Artists, the sixth of the series held under the auspices of the Malayan Arts Council. I am also happy to note the standard of pictures exhibited here has shown improvement and compares favourably with that of previous years. One of the contributing factors, I believe, is the growing awareness and appreciation of all the workers of good painting. This development of painting is indeed very praise-worthy and I hope that in Malaya in the future there will emerge a Malayan school of painting.

At present I note that Malayan Artists are greatly influenced by foreign schools of painting both Asian and European. I hope Malayan Artists will evolve in the process of time and experience a distinctive Malayan art form. The painting of any country has its own distinctive features, so also I hope that Malayan painting will have its own distinctive features.

At this juncture of our history a new and dynamic spirit has permeated our people and I am sure that our Artists should capture this spirit in their canvases. Artists have, throughout the ages, depicted the spirit of their times in their paintings and sculpture, because art is related to life and is also a reflection of life. I sincerely hope our artists will take kindly to this suggestion of mine, and the time will soon come when Malayan Art will depict with vigour and good sense the hopes, aspirations and achievements of our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with this hope of mine that I have great pleasure in opening the Malayan Artists Exhibition.