

Penyampai : DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD ALI  
Tajuk : MAJLIS PERASMIAN PAMERAN GAMBAR  
Lokasi : BALAI SENI LUKIS NEGARA, KUALA LUMPUR  
Tarikh : 02-04-1999

Saya berasa bangga kerana diberi penghormatan untuk merasmikan pameran gambar oleh Mr Hiroji Kubota yang bertajuk 'Out of the East: Transition and Tradition in Asia' pada hari ini.

2. As we approach the new millennium, Asia is indeed facing a period of much upheaval and change, especially the countries hardest hit by the economic crisis of the past eighteen months or so. Yet in the face of these upheavals, there is much that remains the same because of the many strong traditions that have underpinned Asia's societies for many centuries. The more positive of these traditions will survive changes while those that are weak and do not serve our peoples well will evolve into something better, God willing.

3. I am delighted to see that Mr Kubota has decided to photograph these changes in this period of transition in East Asia for his exhibition and book. Photographs are vitally important for the preservation of our collective memory about ourselves and our own identity as people living in Asia. Some of the memories that are captured by photographs may seem archaic but that is precisely why they are important. As we speed along into the future, we need reminders of simple things that ground us, that adhere us to our roots and that provide us with our identities. These photographs also remind us of our energy, productivity and versatility as a people and I believe that this gives us the strength for us to face a future of new challenges and hope.

4. I would like to congratulate Mr Kubota for his insightful images and Mobil Oil, Daimler-Chrysler and the National Art Gallery for bringing this exhibition to Kuala Lumpur. I understand that "Out of the East" has already been exhibited in New York, Beijing, Chengdu and Bangkok, and the inclusion of Kuala Lumpur in its itinerary is a recognition of the growing importance of Kuala Lumpur as a centre for cultural and artistic excellence. The arts scene in Malaysia, and in Kuala Lumpur particularly, is burgeoning and lively. We have many art exhibitions being held all over the city, many plays and theatre performances, music both local and foreign, classical and contemporary, all of which are enjoying much patronage by our local people. Major exhibitions such as these should be encouraged as they allow Malaysians to appreciate the high standard of works from abroad and encourage them to also expect and achieve the same quality for our own arts.

5. For our people to have access to such high-quality exhibitions, we need the support of the private sector. In this country the private sector has been active not only in providing support for charitable and community programmes but also for the arts. In this light, both Mobil and Daimler-Chrysler are to be congratulated for their corporate support of the arts scene in Kuala Lumpur by bringing this exhibition here.

6. I understand also that schoolchildren will be invited to view this exhibition. This will be an excellent way for our children to learn more about our neighbours in this region, to understand their lifestyles, the similarities and their differences.

Understanding of different cultures is I believe essential to the promotion of peace among different nations and should be encouraged among our people from as young an age as possible. I therefore congratulate Mobil Oil for organising a schools programme in conjunction with this exhibition.

7. Saya percaya anda semua tertunggu-tunggu untuk menatap dan menikmati gambar Encik Kubota. Justeru itu saya tidak akan melengah-lengahkan lagi masa. Dengan berkat Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala saya dengan sukacitanya merasmikan pameran "Out of the East: Transition and Tradition in Asia" ini.