



**SPEECH BY DR LEE BOON YANG
MINISTER FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS
AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF
ENCORE! THE EUROPEAN SEASON IN SINGAPORE
ON TUESDAY, 6 MAY 2008, 6:30PM
AT THE GRAND CATHAY, CATHAY CINEPLEX**

His Excellency Ambassador Pierre Buhler;
Excellencies from the European Union Missions in Singapore;
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;
Good evening.

Thank you for inviting me to join you at the opening of the “Encore!
The European Season in Singapore”.

2 Singapore is happy to host the inaugural edition of The European Season outside of France. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to enjoy and be inspired by the variety, diversity and dynamism of Europe’s arts and culture. Indeed, blessed with rich cultural heritage and strong tradition in the arts enabling the EU to play a significant role in the international cultural arena.

3 Europe and Singapore enjoy a long standing, close and fruitful relationship. Besides our strong political, economic, trade and investment ties, Singapore and the European Union (EU) member states enjoy warm cultural relations, marked by regular exchanges in arts, culture and design. For example, the European Union Film Festival, which is into its 18th run this year, is now a regular feature in Singapore's arts calendar. The Film Festival is just one of the many events featuring the cultural and artistic creations of the EU countries.

4 We have hosted many other events in Singapore. "The Scenic Eye Exhibition" (June-July 2006) presented by the Goethe-Institut Singapore was part of the National Museum's pre-opening season in 2006; the National Museum also hosted a major exhibition "Greek Masterpieces from the Louvre" from December 2007 to March this year. We also had the French Haute Couture Gala in March this year. The Singapore Design Festival 2007 also hosted a number of presentations from EU members such as Finland (e.g. Alvar Aalto Exhibition), Germany (Neues Bauen (New Building) International 1927 | 2002 architectural exhibition), Italy (e.g. Italian Genius Now exhibition) and Sweden (Swedish Icons exhibition). This week, a major exhibition of Henri Matisse will be opening at the STPI and it is part of this European Season. These events provided the audiences in Singapore the chance to experience the different facets of European arts, culture, heritage and design.

5 The European Season in Singapore is yet another good opportunity for us to work together, engage the European and Singapore corporate community in support for arts and culture in Singapore. Such meaningful partnership will help us to boost our standing as a Global City for the Arts.

6 On this note, I would like to extend my appreciation to Ambassador Buhler and fellow Heads of the EU Missions for initiating The European Season in Singapore. I wish the Season every success and look forward to the exciting line-up of the Season encompassing a wide range of European arts and culture.

7 I wish you an enjoyable evening.