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**SPEECH BY RADM (NS) LUI TUCK YEW
SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION, AND INFORMATION,
COMMUNICATION AND THE ARTS
AT THE LAUNCH OF CHRISTIAN LACROIX THE COSTUMIER
THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2009, 7.15PM
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE**

Good evening,

H.E. **Pierre Buhler**, Ambassador of France to Singapore

Excellencies and distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

1. I am delighted to be here this evening for the launch of the exhibition, **Christian Lacroix the costumier**. This is an exciting collaboration between the National Museum of Singapore and the **Centre National du Costume de Scène**, France. This exhibition also marks the beginning of the Voilà French Festival and Encore European Season. I am indeed honoured to join this celebration with you.

Cross-cultural exchange

2. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in January this year between France and Singapore, and another between our National Heritage Board (NHB) and France's **Réunion des Musées Nationaux** (RMN). The agreements mark an important milestone in the partnership between the two countries. It signifies the commitment and determination of both countries to intensify two-way cultural cooperation, such as promoting and encouraging the development of exchanges, artists in residency programmes and cooperative activities in the fields of art and culture.

3. The *Christian Lacroix the costumier* exhibition marks the first of such collaborations, and we are delighted to welcome this outstanding exhibition from France to Singapore. Similarly, we look forward to presenting our collections, arts and artists in France. The NHB, for example, is working with the world-renowned **Musée du Quai Branly** in Paris to present an exhibition on Peranakan art in 2011. The National Arts Council is also looking to send Singapore artists, musicians, and talented youths to France for residency programmes and exchanges. These collaborations will not only allow Singaporeans and visitors here to enjoy world-class arts, events and performances from France, our arts and culture professionals will also get more international exposure and greater opportunities for interaction and learning in France.

4. Singapore and France enjoy good relationships. Singapore is one of France's leading trade partners in Southeast Asia, and we also collaborate closely in terms of cultural exchange. In Singapore, the number of people learning French has increased over the years, and we have Singaporeans studying in France with assistance from the French Embassy and relevant agencies. In the last few years, French artists and authors have participated in many festivals such as the *Singapore Arts Festival*, *Mosaic* and *Womad*, as well as the *Singaporean Writers Festival*.

5. Singapore is a multi-racial and multi-cultural society, and we appreciate artistic and cultural diversity. We want to position Singapore as a confluence of east and west and a place for dialogue on multi-culturalism. The wonderful exhibition of Christian Lacroix's works is one such avenue. The French have been influencing the world's design scene in terms of architecture, fashion and style. The artistry, the gorgeous fabrics, the attention to detail, the interpretation of history all come alive through the medium of costume. Many stories can be spun and references to history can be made. These efforts of cross-cultural exchange will further strengthen the people to people understanding and ties between us. This exhibition is thus a wonderful opportunity for Singaporeans and visitors to immerse in a different world, the world of theatrical and operatic interpretations of history.

Design as an art form

6. In France, fashion, especially high fashion, is celebrated as an art form. Christian Lacroix has been recognised as one of the leading practitioners and an artistic master of high fashion. His stage costumes show the close link between haute couture and the performing arts in France. Costume design is regarded as a key factor that contributes to the overall success of a performance. We hope that the exhibition can further inspire our performing arts groups, especially those in theatre, drama and opera, to even higher levels. We also hope that the design and detailing of the costumes spark interest in our fashion scene and inspire a new generation of fashion designers to follow in the footsteps of our very own Benny Ong, Andrew Gn & Ashley Isham. We hope this exhibition will also trigger the creative interest of our students, as well as give them a deeper understanding and appreciation of the wonder of theatre and opera.

Conclusion

7. It now gives me great pleasure to declare the exhibition open. Thank you and have a good evening.