



**Speech for
YBhg. Datuk Seri Hj. Ahmad Phesal bin Hj. Talib
Mayor of Kuala Lumpur**

**Soft Launch of Art in the Park
4 June 2014
9.30 am
Boat House, Perdana Botanical Gardens
Kuala Lumpur**

Assalamualaikum w.b.t dan Selamat pagi.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, members of the media.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all here today in this historical 126 years old botanical garden, to soft launch the inaugural Art in the Park festival.

We have invited you here as representatives of government, the private and public sectors and the tourism industry with the presence of the media members.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this Tun Abdul Razak Heritage Park, we have two greatest assets; the “parks” and the “arts”. We have nature parks such as Botanical Garden, Orchard Garden, Bird & Butterfly Park and the arts such as the Islamic Arts Museum, the Tugu Negara, Laman Asean, Police Museum, Tun Abdul Razak Gallery and slightly further; the Bank Negara Museum & Memorial Tunku Abdul Rahman. So far, I have not encountered any other parks around the world having this unique feature where you actually need more than a day to experience it all.

And I begin to realize the potential of this park in developing its social role to reach out to the urban communities and the tourists, by organizing activities that is able to merge these two greatest

assets, into a new hallmark festival for Kuala Lumpur.

Big cities like London, New York and Paris have utilized their parks for art. For example, the Frieze Art Fair, one of the world's leading contemporary art fair is held in Regents Park in London every year. The city of Kuala Lumpur too, can be transformed into a more vibrant city to live in and to visit, by staging Art in the Park.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Therefore, I am proud to announce The Art in the Park festival which is scheduled to be held for 2 weeks, from 16- 30th October 2014 in Tun Abdul Razak Heritage Park. That is about 4 months from now. It will be an outdoor Art festival, for a change. This unique concept will take artwork and the enjoyment of artwork out of galleries and museums into the parks during the festival, so that the public can enjoy art, in a natural outdoor setting.

And the main focus for the art display will be in this Perdana Botanical Garden. We believe that the Perdana Botanical Garden have the ability to communicate effectively, educate and raise public awareness about the importance of connecting people to the arts and the nature.

Art in the Park will be KL latest annual festival where the Perdana Botanical Garden will be

transformed into an art village, for you to wander round and enjoy all the fine exhibits and be captured by the art and nature experiences.

Ladies & gentlemen,

The Art in the Park main feature is, commissioning of new sculptures and other new forms of installation art by Malaysian and foreign artists. In addition, partners of Art in the Park will contribute outdoor artworks and installations. Art in the Park will also introduce a new, exciting platform to the artists to create innovative artworks inspired by natural surroundings. This component will be turned into a competition, where KL Mayor Sculpture Awards will be introduced, beginning this year; with the objective of supporting and encouraging Malaysian creative talent, as well as attract international creative talent into KL.

Ladies & gentlemen,

Last week we have received a confirmation from a distinguished French artist - Marie Hugo, to participate in this festival. She will bring her art installation of 'Pantun Forest' from France. This sculptural work is inspired by the Malay poems popularized in Europe by Marie Hugo's illustrious ancestor Victor Hugo. "Pantun Forest" was initially showcased to international visitors during the 2013 Marseille-Provence European Capital of Culture

festivities. I am sure her work together with the local artists, will be the main crowd puller to the Art in the Park festival.

At the same time, I strongly encourage all other arts and nature institutions in Tun Abdul Razak Heritage Park such as Islamic Art Museum, Masjid Negara, Police Museum, Bird & Butterfly Park, Bank Negara Museum and others will put on their own art exhibitions during the 2 weeks festival.

Besides art exhibitions, visitors can expect music, dance, talks and workshops on arts to liven up our park in October.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Cities Culture Report 2013 highlights that the top 20 world cities are defined by the wide range and depth of cultural offering in each city including the number of festivals in the visual and performing arts. Art and culture as well as green spaces in the city are major elements for world cities to distinguish themselves with social and economic benefits. Art and culture have become urban rejuvenation tools for world cities. It is a well researched fact that culture attracts businesses as well as a global educated workforce.

It is our hope that Art in the Park festival will contribute to position KL as one of the world's best art and cultural city.

Ladies & gentlemen,

Creating a world class event that will eventually command world class artists and attract thousands of visitors, can be financially challenging. And I welcome sponsors and partners combining with us in holding Art in the Park and we have included a copy of our Sponsorship Programme in the Media Packs.

And once again, thank you for joining me this morning and see you in October for the Art in The Park.

Drafted by:

Tourism Unit @ DBKL on 2nd June 2014

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