



Media : Channel NewsAsia
Date : 16 May 2009

Singapore's School of the Arts sees big response to its style of education

SINGAPORE: It has been over a year since Singapore's first independent pre-tertiary arts school started operations. But the School of the Arts (SOTA) has already seen overwhelming response to its unique brand of education.

Its new permanent campus is on track to open at the end of this year and the school is already bracing itself for growing demand.

It was not a usual art exhibition, especially since all the works were done by 15-year-old students making their debut at the Singapore Art Museum.

For example, one piece was based on a project called the "Unreadable Book".

Lee Fang, a Year 3 student, said: "Unreadable gives a sense of unknown. You can't read it, while book is like knowledge. So I use red and green to show the contrast between unreadable and book.

"The strips are like my rhythm to the thoughts and the thoughts are like continuous, that's why I use the scroll. There is a beat and a pulse to my thoughts but there are times when the pulse and the rhythm are interrupted or disrupted but sometimes it is about expression."

Working with established art groups in exhibitions and performances is part of the exposure that budding artists receive at SOTA.

These include the Esplanade, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Singapore Dance Theatre and the National University of Singapore Arts Festival. Students also need to take the International Baccalaureate diploma exams at the end of six years.

Besides working with local arts groups, all secondary three students also undergo an overseas immersion programme. The students spend two weeks with an arts school in China, Philippines, Brisbane, Copenhagen or Chicago.

The curriculum at the School of the Arts is very demanding, but students said they have no complaints because they are having fun.

Chong Lii, a Year 3 student, said: "We see the connections of like biology, art and chemistry and how the colours mix and that kind of thing."



It is this mish-mash of subjects that attracted over 600 students to compete for 150 spots last year.

SOTA has no plans to increase places yet and is keenly watching the turnout during the June auditions before making any decision.

Those who got in are not just talented in the arts.

Rebecca Chew, principal of SOTA, said: "We've just started since last year, so this year the whole new excitement is what do they really articulate? They know their mind, they say it, they are confident, they appreciate what is around them, that's given us the most joy."

Students interested to audition can register online.

Source: Channel NewsAsia © MediaCorp News Pte Ltd. Permission required for reproduction.