

Picturing The Nation –
Education Resource Sheet for Secondary School and College Students

Questions

Level 5

Who are the people selected to represent a cross section of Malaysian society in Hoessein Enas' *Malaysians*? What do you think about Hoessein Enas' selection? Consider who are the other Malaysians that are left out of this selection. Can you name other characters that should have been included as well?

Listen to the selected soundtracks at the listening stations located in the exhibition. In your opinion, what role does music play in the art of Hoessein Enas? Can you describe in words how that period in Malaysian history felt to you?

Look at the section on 'Commissioned Portraits'. Who are some of the important figures that you are able to identify? What purpose do you think these portraits serve?

Examine closely the content in the reconstructed artist studio belonging to Hoessein Enas. What do the objects in the studio tell you about the artist's personality?

Level 3

How important are the Fundamental Liberties to you?
What do you think Yee I-Lann is trying to say about these principles in her artwork?

Why do you think the characters in Vincent Leong's *Run, Malaysia, Run!*, are running around in circles? Are they trying to achieve something?

Consider the figures in Ahmad Zakii Anwar's black and white charcoal drawings, *Orang Perempuan*. How would you describe the way they look? Are they different from the characters in Hoessein Enas' 1963 series *Malaysians*?

Discussions

What does the title 'Picturing The Nation' mean to you? Can a nation, which is a collective body, be represented? Often what is represented also draws attention to what is excluded from representation. Can the act of picturing or representing something ever be completely inclusive? Discuss.

Is the Malaysia 'pictured' in Hoessein Enas's painting different from mainstream representation of Malaysian society today? Has Malaysian society changed over the past 50 years?

How do contemporary artists respond to figurative representation? In what way do they draw on the legacy of Hoessein Enas and how do they differ from it?

Consider if Hoessein Enas' sketches are more a documentation and presentation of his process rather than a finished artwork. Could it also be possibly both – a set of ideas

and an outcome simultaneously? Discuss how the exhibition brings into question this issue.

Further Readings

Dato' Hoessein Enas: From His Personal Collection, Rahel Joseph and Nur Hanim Khairuddin, eds., Kuala Lumpur: ILHAM, 2015.

Menemui Moderniti: 40 tahun Angkatan Pelukis Se-Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara, 1998.

Narratives in Malaysian Art Vol I: Imagining Identities, Nur Hanim Khairuddin and Beverly Yong, eds., Kuala Lumpur: Rogue Art, 2012.

Donna Amoroso, *Traditionalism and the Ascendancy of the Malay Ruling Class in Colonial Malaya*, Singapore and Honolulu: NUS Press and University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso Books, 2006.

Tim Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Mohamed Hoessein Enas, *Malaysians*, Kuala Lumpur: Shell Company of the Federation of Malaya, 1963.

Tan Chee Khuan, *The Life and Art of Dato' M. Hoessein Enas*, Penang Art Gallery, 1999.

Tan Chee Khuan, *Eight Pioneers of Malaysian Art*, Marshall Cavendish c/a Times E, 2015.