

Buy a mobile phone and get a free artwork

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THE mobile phone sales market here has thrown up an offer art lovers may find hard to resist: Buy a state-of-the-art cellular phone for \$798, and get an original artwork for free that may be worth even more.

Bring home, for example, a framed, abstract painting of nudes by American disabled artist Gregory Burns, which is worth \$1,099.

However, you have to rush to an exhibition of artworks, which is open from noon today to reserve the painting.

Burns' piece is the most expensive of the 100 artworks on show which will be given free to buyers of the Nokia 6110 set, which will be launched by the Finnish mobile phone manufacturer today.

The first 100 customers to go with their warranty cards to the exhibition at

Earl Lu Gallery at LaSalle-SIA College of the Arts get to choose a painting on a first-come-first-served basis.

The artworks, in media such as watercolours, oils, Chinese brush and charcoal, are done by 40 disabled artists of the Very Special Arts, a charity organisation here which promotes visual and performing arts of the disabled.

Nokia paid the organisation between \$93 and \$1,099 for each of the paintings and spent \$20,000 to hold the display.

Its marketing strategy is the latest in the competitive mobile phone market here, where four major suppliers of the phones, including Ericsson and Motorola, have been coming up with promotional offers and price cuts to push sales.

In the past, free artworks have been known to be given for major purchases, such as condomini-

um flats.

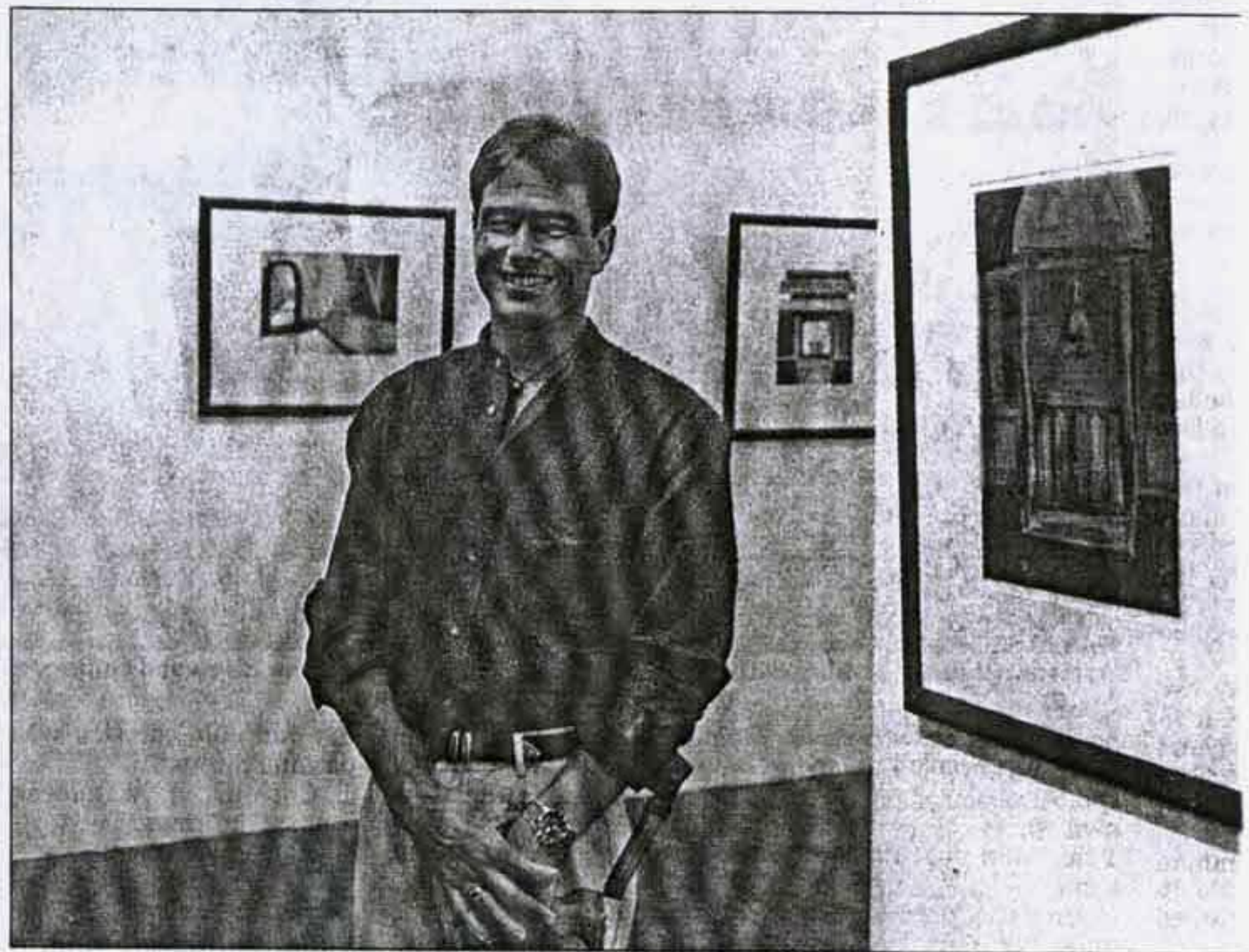
But it is, perhaps, the first time here that free artworks are being given for consumer goods such as mobile phones, which can even cost lower than the freebie itself, in the case of Burn's work.

However, Nokia denied it is making the offer to push sales.

Its sales & marketing vice-president in charge of its South-east Asian operations, Mr Juhua Reima, said the company paid VSA a total of \$40,000 for 116 artworks, as a product launch to benefit charity.

It is keeping 16 of them in its own collection. As it does not want to hold the remaining 100, it decided to release them to its customers.

He said: "Our Nokia phones are designed to adapt to people's lifestyles. So we wanted to do a product launch that would also help people, such as the dis-



Artist Gregory Burns, whose painting of nudes is the most expensive at \$1,099.

abled, to create meaning in their lives."

Nokia is known for its user-friendly mobile phones, which are curved and have big display screens. Its Nokia 6110 has a call screening feature, for example, that identifies groups of callers with different ringing tones.

The second and third most expensive works on offer at the exhibition, which are worth \$990 and \$901, were also done by Burns, who was struck by polio as a child.

The rest are mostly representational paintings by artists such as visually-impaired print-maker Chng

Seok Tin, paraplegic Hadijah Ali and quadriplegic Tan Kok Leong

But the customers will not know the value of these works. They have to choose the artworks according to what they like. Their paintings, which will be reserved for them, will continue to be on show till

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