

Department of Fine Arts

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As a consequence to the University Reforms Bill of 1972, according to which the teaching of subjects that fall under the category of Humanities and Languages were confined only to the University of Kelaniya, then known as the Vidyalankara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka, a study program of Fine Arts was introduced under the Department of English. The study program was the successor to the Fine Arts program taught at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya that was discontinued under the provisions of the University Reforms Bill. Professor Ashley Halpe, the Head of the Department of English, who had been transferred from Peradeniya to Vidyalankara in 1974 under the provisions of the same Bill, convinced the Faculty Board that a Fine Arts program, similar to the one he introduced at Peradeniya, should be introduced at Vidyalankara. Accordingly, with the support of several members of the Faculty; namely Professors Chandrasiri Palliyaguru, Sunanda Mahendra de Mel, Somaratne Balasooriya, M.H. Gunatilake, and G.K. Haththotuvegama, Professor Halpe introduced the Fine Arts study program in early 1972, with an enrolment of some twenty-odd students. The study program remained under his leadership as the Head of the Department of English for nearly three-years, until he stepped down in mid-or late 1978.

Initially, the subject was offered only as a subject for the General Degree program. However, due to the requests made by enthusiastic students, the Faculty decided to offer a Special Degree program in the following year. Nearly ten students enrolled for the special degree program. At the beginning, the program was offered in both Sinhala and Tamil media.