



High-tech supermarket Habitat by Honestbee is among the commercial entities that have stepped forward to help galleries affected by the sudden cancellation of Art Stage Singapore. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG

🕒 PUBLISHED 3 HOURS AGO | UPDATED 48 MIN AGO

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SINGAPORE - Grocery shoppers might get to admire some new world-class art as they browse the shelves of food at Habitat by Honestbee next week.

The high-tech supermarket in Pasir Panjang is among the commercial entities that have stepped forward to help galleries affected by the sudden cancellation of Art Stage Singapore, the biggest contemporary art fair here.

"We will take into consideration the subject matter, context and size of the works to determine how we can collaborate with the artist and gallery," says the company's managing director Pauline Png, who adds that it is offering its space for free.

Others who have come forward to offer alternative spaces to showcase artworks include property developer Far East Organization and car company Volvo.

The contemporary art fair was supposed to run from Jan 25 to 27 at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, in what would have been its ninth edition, but was abruptly cancelled on Wednesday (Jan 16), just nine days before its start.

Art Stage's founder Lorenzo Rudolf cited a "difficult market situation" and "unequal competition" from another fair at Gillman Barracks - referring to the new boutique fair S.E.A. Focus which runs from Jan 24 to 27 - as reasons for cancelling the event.

Since then, there has been a groundswell of support from the community, with galleries, artists and even home owners offering to host exhibitions. Many have posted their offers on a Facebook page called Art Stage SOS, started by online art magazine Plural Art Mag on Wednesday.



Since then, corporates have also come forward in a show of support - Far East Organization is offering space in its properties along the Orchard Road belt, while Volvo is willing to convert a 120 sq m space - previously home to its art gallery Volvo Art Loft - located at its showroom in Alexandra Road into gallery space for artists who need it.

Over in Yishun, Big Tiny, a Singapore start-up promoting the sustainable tiny house movement, has offered its 2,000 sq ft office space, which comes with two 150 sq ft mobile homes.

All three companies are offering their spaces for free.

Container storage space Le Freeport in Changi North Crescent has 18 showroom spaces available- each 75 sq m to 82 sq m - fully equipped with hanging systems and lighting. It will charge \$80 a day for each showroom.

Fair participants were livid upon receiving news of the fair's cancellation, as many had shipped in artworks from abroad, booked hotel rooms and paid for plane tickets.

Singapore-based Gnani Arts, which focuses on contemporary Indian art, had planned to stage a protest by destroying artworks at its gallery in Tanglin Shopping Centre on Friday, but cancelled it after advice from friends and collectors.

The gallery will now hold an event called My Art Stage on Jan 26, where its director P. Gnana will create a new painting "to

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look forward to new and brighter things that are to come".

Groups or individuals who would like to help can visit the Art Stage SOS Facebook group.

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