



Singapore galleries offer space to display works meant for Art Stage Singapore



Kult Studio & Gallery is one of the local galleries offering space for rent, offering support to ensure that the months of preparation for Art Stage Singapore do not go entirely to waste. PHOTO: KULT STUDIO & GALLERY

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SINGAPORE - Galleries, artists and even home owners have swooped in to help after the sudden cancellation of Art Stage Singapore on Wednesday (Jan 16) which left gallery owners, artists and artworks in limbo nine days before the fair was supposed to begin.

The contemporary art fair was launched in Singapore in 2011 and slated to return from Jan 25 to 27 at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre.

But on Wednesday morning, galleries received an e-mail, signed by Art Stage's founder and president Lorenzo Rudolf, asking them to "cease all preparations for Art Stage Singapore 2019" or reverse them.

The Art Stage Singapore website listed 45 exhibitors for this year's edition, more than half of whom are based overseas.

Footfall and sales for the fair had been declining in recent years. At Art Stage Singapore 2018, there were 84 exhibitors, compared with 131 in 2017 and 170 in 2016.

Some people took to social media to rally support for "stranded" parties, including via a Facebook group called Art Stage SOS, started by Plural Art Mag on Wednesday to help affected gallerists and artists find alternative spaces to display their works.



At press time, the group had more than 100 members.

Some galleries are offering support to ensure that the months of preparation for Art Stage Singapore do not go entirely to waste.

Artist Eugenia Gajardo is opening up her private studio, called The Studio Gallery, to affected artists, and will not ask for a fee or commission.

Asked why she decided to help, the artist, who had planned to display 12 of her own paintings at the fair and paid for a 35 sq m booth, says: "I feel the distress myself... I prepared these (works) specially for an international art fair. It was something so special."

Others stepping in to help range from a member of the public offering her three-bedroom apartment as an exhibition venue to consultancy Asian Art Advisory, which

is providing a 5,000 sq ft space for appointment-only exhibitions.

Meanwhile, Singapore-based art commune Gallery and Kult Studio & Gallery are offering space for rent.



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Instinc art space had paid a special rate of about \$7,000 for a 35 sq m booth at Art Stage. Founder Yeo Shih Yun approached Gajah Gallery earlier this week, when rumours about the cancellation of Art Stage Singapore were already circulating.



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Gajah Gallery is not charging a fee for the use of its space. However, it will receive a 50 per cent commission for each piece of work sold.

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Art Porters Gallery co-founder, Guillaume Levy-Lambert, says the gallery had planned a solo showcase of paintings by Indonesian artist Naufal Abshar for Art Stage Singapore.

"We want to do everything we can to help stranded galleries - we'll see if we can fit in (artworks from) foreign

galleries at our arts space," adds Levy-Lambert, who is already in talks with three galleries from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Israel.

"Our costs and potential loss are only a fraction of what some foreign galleries have at stake."

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