

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

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Galleries apart, restaurants, a marketplace and cultural organisations are planned for Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. Christopher Pike / The National

Installations and cinema at The Yard are forerunners of Alserkal Avenue's expansion

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Alserkal Avenue, Dubai's heart of art, is expanding to include new gallery spaces, cultural organisations and restaurants. While these will be up and running in a few months, The Yard, an open-air space at the centre of the expansion, will display commissioned artworks during Art Dubai and host a pop-up cinema screening short films.

Alfresco

The Yard will be the site of several installations and artworks commissioned by Art Dubai, including those by Mehreen Murtaza and Maria Thereza Alves. Also in The Yard is Cinema Akil, a pop-up cinema that will feature short films until Sunday, March 22.

The art

Top among the galleries is Leila Heller Gallery, one of the most prominent American galleries of Middle Eastern and Iranian art. Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller, an Iranian art dealer, who opened her New York gallery in 1982, has been promoting art from this region for many years in the United States.

As well as Middle Eastern art, her gallery has some exceptional secondary-market works from major 20th-century artists such as Robert Indiana, Ed Ruscha and Andy Warhol. Part of the gallery's plans is to present solo exhibitions of prominent western artists.

Also set to open is a brand new gallery from the French art dealer Stephane Custot. His eponymous space aims to create a dialogue between influential modern masters and international contemporary artists from East and West.

Local growth

Home-grown heavyweights The Third Line, who have long held a leading position in Dubai's gallery scene, will be moving from their current location to a new warehouse in the expansion. The founders, Sunny Rahbar and Claudia Cellini, say that the move represents a "coming of age" for the gallery as its expanding programme needs a larger and more versatile space.

The creative space and gallery thejamjar will also open a new space in Alserkal Avenue.

Restaurants

On the list is Wild and the Moon, which serves cold-pressed juices and smoothies with a focus on natural, organic, raw, plant-based, gluten and dairy-free food. The eatery Inked will host events, and Good Vibes Market will bring together the community through themed markets around the avenue's streets.

Cultural organisations

The new warehouses will be home to MB&F M.A.D. Gallery (which already has spaces in Geneva and Taipei) and specialises in high-end watches (it calls them horological machines). There will also be an office for locally based Limah Design Consultants and Sven M, an architecture and design firm specialising in the cultural and residential sectors.

Other events

The exhibition RCA Flux in Dubai, which will run throughout the week, presents works by current students in the RCA School of Fine Art. There is also an ongoing programme of artist videos at A4 Space.

Also coming to Alserkal Avenue is the Jean-Paul Najar Foundation from Paris, which will present European and American post-minimal works from the 1960s to 1990s.