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A piece by British artist Gordon Cheung, who uses newspaper cuttings as the base and paints over them. Antonie Robertson / The National

Highlights of Alserkal Avenue's new art season

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Before the sun set on Sunday, the thoroughfares of Alserkal Avenue – Dubai's art hub – were already starting to fill up with people, and the familiar buzz of anticipation hung in the air.

It was the official start of the art season, with the majority of the 19 galleries coordinating to throw their doors open to the public and whirring into life after another long, hot summer.

The event began in the late afternoon, with an artist talk inside pop-up space Nadi Al Quoz. It lies at the heart of the avenue and is home to presentations, cultural gatherings and even the occasional yoga class.

On Sunday, however, it was the spot for British artist Gordon Cheung and locally based curator Murtaza Vali to have a public conversation about Cheung's art, which is filling the largest room in Leila Heller Gallery.

The conversation moved from information technology to dystopian paranoia, and included a dash of geopolitical dialogue centred around the South China Sea, in what was a fascinating insight into Cheung's work.

After walking through the galleries at Alserkal Avenue, here is our pick of the top exhibitions to check out.

Gordon Cheung

Cheung's paintings, on display at Leila Heller Gallery, demand attention. Psychedelic colours of paint are daubed on so thick that it becomes a three-dimensional swirl on the canvas. Up close, the layers of material become apparent.

The artist uses cuttings from the *Financial Times* to form the basis of his pieces. These are pasted underneath the paint so that from afar they resemble a kind of *The Matrix*-style stream of information running through the veins of the work. The images on top range from cowboys on horses to still-life flowers and the mountains of the Sinai Peninsula.

With several complex threads to the concept behind the work, Cheung, who is making his regional debut, is worth researching before you visit.