

# SPACE

DERWENT  
LONDON

Winter 2009





**DERWENT  
LONDON**

Above: A new photographic artwork by the artist Matthias Hoch, enlivens the main reception of 25 Savile Row. ([www.rocketgallery.com](http://www.rocketgallery.com))

Space Issue Five  
© Derwent London plc 2009  
Design: Studio Myerscough  
Editorial: Simon Allford, Rebecca Lesser, Susannah Palk, Hugh Pearman, Simon Silver

Photography: Richard Learoyd, Matt Chisnall, Tim Soar, Edward Lucie-Smith, Bowness, Hepworth Estate, RIBA Library Photographs Collection  
CGIs: Smoother, AHMM, The Neighbourhood



[04 Welcome](#) / [05 Update](#) / [06 The Space Race](#) We strive to create exciting spaces for tenants that are one step ahead / [08 Your Fitzrovia](#) The new Fitzrovia gallery that showcases the area's future / [10 The White-Collar Factory](#) Why the office spaces of the future will have one foot in the past / [12 Love at first sight](#) The Charlotte Building – Fitzrovia's newest creative hub / [14 The Turnmill](#) Its exterior draws on history, its interior looks to the future – Clerkenwell's latest landmark building will feature the best of both worlds / [16 The Dock](#) Can Tom Dixon turn Portobello Dock into a permanent design district? / [18 Angel Building](#) The Angel Building leads the way / [20 Lateral Vision](#) Designs to revitalise a forgotten corner of Fitzrovia / [22 Hugo Dalton](#) Introducing the artist Hugo Dalton.

# welcome to space

We provide new spaces with an emphasis on quality architecture, great design and, crucially in challenging times, value for money. We are proud to attract high-calibre tenants to our central London portfolio.

If there is a theme running through this issue, it is interaction: how buildings interact with and enhance their environments; how people connect with the places in which they live and work; how those places can in turn bring out the best in their occupants. And how Derwent London communicates with our tenants to ensure long-lasting relationships – which creates communities. We believe that nurturing those communities is the key to our success.

Those rather stylish mannequins on the cover are an example of the way we like to express our vision. They are gracing the Charlotte Building, clustered inside the space to give it a sense of scale, and to explore its possibilities. They hint at a bigger picture. And they are not alone – the breathtaking sculptures of Daniel Chadwick and the inspired interior design of Linda Morey Smith also contribute to an unforgettable launch (page 12).

Speaking of bigger pictures, Simon Allford of architects AHMM has been considering the future, and what sort of working environment we will one day inhabit. He unveils his blueprint, the White-Collar Factory, exclusively to Space on page 10.

At Derwent London we strongly believe in the inspirational power of architecture and design – and on page 16 is a good example: Portobello Dock, where the recent Tom Dixon exhibition highlighted north Kensington's burgeoning role as a creative quarter. Portobello Dock also boasts a breathtaking wall work by the artist Hugo Dalton. He explains how he conceived it, and what effect he hopes it will have, on page 22.

If you are looking for a new space to take your business to the next level, you can find news of our available leases, and who to contact, on page 6. We also reveal where our newest tenants such as Tom Dixon, Target Media Group and the advertising company Unanimis are setting up – could you be next?

This is just a flavour of what we have in store – we hope you will find something here to inspire you. Enjoy the read.



## Property Week Property Company of the Year

Derwent London has been awarded Property Week's Property Company of the Year for 2009. At the awards night the judges said Derwent London had 'successfully tackled the difficult property market by using sound judgement and keeping to their core business'. John Burns, CEO of Derwent London said the award was testament to the commitment of the entire team.



## The new place to shop — Baker & George Street, W1

The retail giant Tesco along with the beauty specialists Skin Oasis and the chocolatier Leonidas have moved into the up-and-coming retail hub of Baker & George Street. Following the introduction of other well-known retailers, these recent lettings have enhanced the area's appeal, attracting consumers from both Marylebone High Street and Oxford Street.



## Tea time

Refurbishments have just completed at the Tea Building's new reception. Designed by architects AHMM with the unique identity of the building in mind, it also features a refreshed entrance lobby with new entrance doors and a state-of-the-art lighting system. The works coincide with the opening of Pizza East. Set on the ground floor of the Tea Building, Pizza East is the latest restaurant concept from the owners of Shoreditch House.

[www.teabuilding.co.uk](http://www.teabuilding.co.uk)



## Fitzrovia evolution continues

With over one million sq ft in Fitzrovia, Derwent London has seen a flurry of recent lettings in this area. Only 3,000 sq ft remains at 43 Whitfield Street after successful lettings to the University of Leeds, Zuhlke Engineering and Feilden Clegg. In addition, the entirety of 45 Whitfield Street has been pre-let to Target Media Group. In the pipeline are 17,000 sq ft at 65 Whitfield Street and 12,000 sq ft at 1-5 Maple Street which will be marketed after refurbishment works complete in Summer 2010.



## Leasing made easy

Derwent London has introduced its new standardised leases. Aimed at cutting time and legal costs, the new terms are simple, clear and tenant-friendly. Drafted after a year-long consultation with our legal partners, issues such as service charges, uninsured risks and tenant protection have been revised to create a jargon-free contract.



## Angel Film Award

A film previewing the Angel Building has won the Best Overall Architectural Film award at this year's Architectural 3D Awards. It showcases Derwent London's 264,000 sq ft Angel Building, due to complete in the summer of 2010. The film was nominated for all four awards in the Film/Animation category and beat 150 entries to win the top prize and the Industry Choice award.

[www.angelbuilding.com](http://www.angelbuilding.com)



## Designed to heal

The Teenage Cancer Trust's new unit at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff opened in May this year. Designed by the "award-winning architects" ORMS and working in conjunction with corporate patrons Derwent London, the new unit features flatscreen TV's, pool tables and a Big Brother inspired chill-out space. The space is designed to create a youthful and savvy atmosphere. A fresh approach in hospital design to complement a fresh approach to treatment.

[www.teenagecancertrust.org](http://www.teenagecancertrust.org)



## The Charlotte Building launches

Derwent London's 49,000 sq ft new office development at 17 Gresse Street launched this October. Designed by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, this sleek new building features bespoke finishes by designers such as Tom Dixon and Linda Morey Smith. In keeping with Derwent's ethos of design-driven innovation, the launch featured a stylish set of mannequins strategically placed to enhance the space and offer an original sense of perspective. Two floors have been pre-let to Unanimis, a subsidiary of Orange France Telecom.

[www.charlottebuildingw1.com](http://www.charlottebuildingw1.com)

For further details please contact Celine Thompson, Head of Leasing, or Joanna Buckley, Leasing Surveyor, on 020 7659 3000.

# the space *race*

Despite the difficult economic climate, Derwent London has continued to maintain a steady flow of new tenants. We would like to be able to say this is the result of a masterplan to beat the recession – but actually we think there is a simpler explanation: we create inspiring buildings.

Our ethos has always been design and value driven and we still strive to create exciting spaces for tenants that are one step ahead. It has always been our goal to provide arenas for new ideas and new communities to thrive in – and we will adhere to that.

An example that in many ways defines our approach is the Tea Building in Shoreditch – a community of creative businesses that has become a symbol for the entire area's regeneration. This year has seen companies such as Oakley and Erasmus join long-existing tenants such as the advertising agency Mother, the Rocket and Hales galleries, Shoreditch House and Tomato Films.

And it's not just lettings in Shoreditch that have been flourishing – across our entire portfolio tenants have been moving in.

In Victoria, Novus Modus snapped up the last available space at Greencoat House, while in Fitzrovia the entire Qube building – its office, retail and residential space – is now fully let. Niche financial companies dominated our Belgravia lettings as Perry Capital Limited, Richmond Park Capital and Chenavari all took space at 1 and 4 Grosvenor Place.

In the year to date Derwent has let 250,000 sq ft of floorspace. Behind each of these deals has been the leasing team headed by Celine Thompson and supported by Joanna Buckley. They maintain close relationships with both agents and potential tenants, and are always up to speed with clients' requirements.

One notable recent success was the part pre-let at the newly completed Charlotte Building in Fitzrovia. The digital advertising company Unanimis has taken 13,000 sq ft on the top two floors of the 49,000 sq ft building – one of our flagship new-builds in this fast-rising part of the capital. The area's reputation as a media village received a further boost recently with 12,200 sq ft at 45 Whitfield Street pre-let to OTM, the creative division of Target Media Group, the UK's fastest-growing independent media agency.

Going forward, our plans for the regeneration of Fitzrovia, where we own more than one million sq ft of office space, will see a number of smaller refurbishments completing next year. There will be 17,000 sq ft at 65 Whitfield Street available from summer 2010, as well as 12,000 sq ft at Maple Place and, in autumn, 4,000 sq ft at 12–16 Fitzroy Street.

"We don't create your run of the mill buildings, we create exciting spaces with integrity," says Celine Thompson: "They are focused on strong design and good quality. But more importantly it's what tenants identify as good value."



For more information about available space, contact Celine Thompson, Head of Leasing or Joanna Buckley, Leasing Surveyor on 020 7659 3000.



# Your Fitzrovia

by Hugh Pearman



Derwent London has a vision for the future of Fitzrovia — and it is being unveiled at a brand new exhibition space at 43 Whitfield Street. The building itself is a Derwent refurbishment by architects Nissen Adams, and is a signifier of that future direction — projects that are sensitive to their environment, that keep and enhance the character of their neighbourhood.



Fitzrovia is one of London's better-kept secrets. It was one of the first places I worked in London, and I loved its slightly exotic nature — with its independent shops, pavement cafes and strong residential culture. It was in some ways more like Paris than London. Despite being framed by the busy thoroughfares of Oxford Street to the south, Euston Road to the north, Tottenham Court Road to the east and Great Portland Street to the west, this charismatic quarter is still something of an oasis.

It's real London all right, a proper mix of living, working and trading. Posh in some parts, rundown in others. And it's one of Derwent London's most important property portfolios, adding up to something like 1 million sq ft of buildings of all types. But not a lot of people know that — even I didn't know that Derwent has just replaced the nondescript 1950s office block I used to work in with something considerably better: the Charlotte Building by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands.

The 30-odd buildings that Derwent owns in Fitzrovia, ranging from big brand-new office blocks to little old pubs, was built up over many years by London Merchant Securities, which merged with Derwent Valley Holdings to form Derwent London in 2007.

**Having inherited the estate, Derwent London is now evolving a strategy for dealing with it over many years. And to show everyone the way its mind is working, it has opened a gallery at 43 Whitfield Street, in the heart of its Fitzrovia parish.**

Many of the buildings can simply be refurbished when needed — Derwent has already started this process. Some outdated 1950s and 1960s office buildings are at the ends of their useful lives — how best to replace them and maintain the identity of the area? And can more be done with the public space and ground-floor uses of the buildings to open them up to everyone?

The new exhibition space opened in September. As projects develop, they'll be displayed here first. Drop in, and you'll get a good idea of Derwent's long-term commitment to Fitzrovia.

The exhibition is open Monday to Friday 10–11am 43 Whitfield Street, W1 [www.derwentlondon.com/fitzroviaexhibition](http://www.derwentlondon.com/fitzroviaexhibition)

Above, left to right: The Fitzrovia Exhibition and 43 Whitfield Street

# WHITE COLLAR

## FACTORY

SIMON ALLFORD OF AHMM REVEALS HIS BLUEPRINT  
FOR THE OFFICE BUILDING OF THE FUTURE

I have always been sceptical about calls for developers to learn from car manufacturers – and recent turns have suggested that my doubts were justified. However, compact cars continue to set new standards: the Mini, the Beetle and the Fiat 500 are all utilitarian yet brilliant designs that have become icons (both old and new) whilst removing the technological add-ons that confuse choice with excess. So what is there to learn?

For me, the architectural equivalent of the compact car is the multi-level factory building. It is a type that has been endlessly refined over its history and one that has a long association with industrial design and production. It typically has big spans, flexible floor-plates, big windows, generous volumes and robust construction. All these add up to make a building type that is instantly recognisable as both functional and monumental. That is why these buildings continue to be converted from places of production into places to live, work and play.

To make a new prototype of this factory building for use as an office we, the designers and our clients, must resist the market's call for an ever more complex building (over serviced and reliant on computer technology) and produce a building that relies on the physics of natural resources (big windows letting in light that open to let in air). In buildings, as with cars, very few of the computerised gizmos are used – which suggests they are not needed. In that sense, and almost certainly in that sense alone, the difficult times we are experiencing are proving beneficial. As that first-world-war admiral stated so succinctly:

'GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE  
NO MONEY, THEREFORE  
WE MUST THINK'

For the last six months, Derwent London, Davis Langdon, AKT and AHMM have taken this admiral's axiom on board and have been thinking about how we might make a different, more economical office building: the built equivalent of the simple, elegant, compact car; the office that learns from the warehouses and factories that we have all spent years converting to offices; a factory that is no longer for a blue-collar workforce (a dying breed in the West) but for office workers. Hence the title: The White-Collar Factory (I share the naming rights with David Rosen).

So what is this new office building like? It has a concrete frame. It is 4m floor to floor. It is served by lifts and stairs, and has fire sprinklers so it can be open and connected. Indeed it is very much like the office we all know well. Where it is different from most large-scale contemporary commercial construction is that to move forward it looks back in time. Its floor plates are defined by the potential of natural light and ventilation to penetrate deep into the building. The very large opening windows needed are adjusted on each elevation in response to solar orientation – that way, expensive shading devices are eradicated. The concrete floor slab is exposed to maximise thermal storage and to allow chilled water pipes (cast into the slab) to cool the floors; and also because we like that raw concrete finish. This environmental design is smart because it is simple, and does not rely on complex technology. The high ceilings (a metre higher than standard) allow hot air to rise above the heads of the occupants and hit the ceiling where it is cooled by the chilled slabs, meaning the usual expensive infrastructure of air-conditioning units and pipes is no longer required. Importantly, we all enjoy that feeling this generous volume gives us.

The building is future-proofed in that if we have all got the market wrong, and there is a panic and a movement backwards to ever more highly tempered space,

**THIS NEW WHITE-COLLAR  
FACTORY STILL HAS THE  
VOLUME THAT ALLOWS IT  
TO BE UPGRADED**

It could revert to being a traditional energy guzzler with all the paraphernalia of air conditioning. Whilst we all believe that this will not happen, we know that it is important to allow a tenant to choose (as in apartment buildings, where one neighbour opens their windows and another installs air conditioning).

The reason we are confident in this new prototype is that the generosity of volume, and the play of light, ensures that it has a particular, proven, spatial character: that of a monumental piece of industrial production (think of Bernd and Hilla Becher's photographs) inspired by utility and recognising the need for delight. Like its predecessors, it is inherently convertible to something else (residential, probably, or even better a "city sandwich" packed with layers of different users). It also embodies that most sensible maxim of enduring architectural quality: "long-life, loose fit" – as with a suit, the less you tailor a building to a particular user, the more it will accommodate future users.

As with any prototype, nothing is entirely new – and much has been done before in different ways, by different designers at different times and in other places.

**THE DIFFERENCE THIS  
TIME IS THAT THE  
TWIN DIFFICULTIES OF  
A SHORT-TERM CREDIT  
CRISIS AND A LONG-TERM  
ENVIRONMENTAL ONE  
SUGGEST THAT MAYBE  
THIS TIME WE'LL GET TO  
WORK TOGETHER TO  
BUILD THAT EXEMPLAR  
SOMEWHERE SOON.**



# LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT



**THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BUILDING LAUNCH LIKE IT. WITH THE TOP FLOORS ALREADY PRE-LET AND STRONG INTEREST IN THE REMAINING SPACE, THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED CHARLOTTE BUILDING HAS MADE A STYLISH DEBUT, HOSTING THREE CREATIVE EVENTS – A POP-UP ART EXHIBITION, AN ART INSTALLATION FEATURING SOME VERY SPECIAL MANNEQUINS, AND A CHIC INTERIOR MAKEOVER.**

This 49,000 sq ft new-build, designed by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, offers seven floors of contemporary office space in the heart of Fitzrovia. It has been designed with extra-special tenants in mind: its sleek aluminium and patterned glass-clad exterior radiates calm intelligence with hints of modernity and technology.

Its private courtyard, with Tom Dixon-designed metal gates, is a statement of pedigree and purpose. Pass through the front doors into the airy reception and the feeling continues – from the warm LED-lit circles in the ground-floor ceiling to the

executive-level top-floor with its private roof terrace and panoramic views.

The pop-up exhibition, curated by the consultancy Art Source, which specialises in matching artists to buildings, features the work of the artist Daniel Chadwick and is dominated by his beautiful silver sculptures and his signature giant mobiles.

**A separate installation by the design consultancy Made Thought is the first to feature the Derwent London mannequins. “They are a way of providing a sense of scale, which is hard to achieve when viewing an empty office,” says Made Thought’s Paul Austin.**

Meanwhile on the first floor, an urbane fit-out by the award-winning interior designer Linda Morey Smith perfectly showcases the building’s future capacity as a hub for creative enterprise. All three projects demonstrate the potential of the Charlotte Building. Now the race is on to fulfil it.

[www.charlottebuildingw1.com](http://www.charlottebuildingw1.com)

# THE TURNMILL

A STUNNING NEW LANDMARK BUILDING  
FOR CLERKENWELL BY ARCHITECTS  
PIERCY CONNER BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN  
CIVIC BUILDINGS AND ART GALLERIES

Standing at the junction between Clerkenwell Road and Turnmill Street, overlooking Farringdon's famous railway cutting sits The Turnmill, the former site of the notorious nightclub of the same name. In order to rejuvenate this corner of Clerkenwell, which is now little more than a thoroughfare for commuters, the architects Piercy Conner have submitted plans for a stunning 76,000 sq ft new-build to replace it.

The new structure addresses both Clerkenwell's architectural traditions and its current incarnation as a media enclave.

The intricate brickwork and elegant white-cast-masonry reveals reference to the past, while the large flexible spaces of its interior provide the sort of blank canvases that appeal to creative tenants.

**The dichotomy was inspired by the sculptor Barbara Hepworth's study of ancient and modern Greece — the skin on the outside of her sculptures is dark and articulated, yet inside they are pure white.**

"The building's outer 'skin' works with Clerkenwell; its inner 'skin' with the fact that it's an area in transition," says Stuart Piercy.

"What happens inside is not necessarily what happens on the outside — this is almost always the case in a constantly evolving area."

The building is divided by what Piercy describes as a "fissure" — a 5m-wide, 22m-high gap that separates its two halves. "The whole area used to be full of lanes, caverns and rat runs," says Piercy. "Our idea was to think about that, but in a more engaging way."

"So you enter by walking through a crack, or fissure, between the two halves — and, as you get further in towards the reception area, it opens out like a cavern. It's an incredibly dramatic entrance."

Its transparent roof is made from ETFE — the same inflatable "cushions" that cover the Eden Project, which Piercy worked on during a spell at Grimshaw architects. It brings natural light deep into the building.

"We are keen to look at commercial buildings in the same way that we might look at public or civic buildings such as galleries," Piercy says.

"We want to make the spaces more dramatic and inspiring. In areas such as Clerkenwell, offices are changing to become more like galleries, with very flexible informal spaces."

Shops and restaurants at street level will help to further reinvigorate the locality.

"We were inspired by Edward Hopper paintings," says Piercy, "where you can look through windows and see everything inside: our ground floor is totally glazed and totally open."

A beautiful, functional building with a design inspired by eminent artists — in no time at all, it will be as if 63 Clerkenwell Road had always been there.



# THE DOCK



As the much-heralded location of Tom Dixon's recent design exhibition, Portobello Dock has become London's newest creative quarter



**The Grand Union Canal is just starting out on its 140-mile route from London to Birmingham when, approaching Kensal Green, it passes Portobello Dock.**

Here Ladbroke Grove, conduit to Notting Hill, crosses the waterway and the Portobello Road market is nearby. Here – either side of the canal and its dock spur – is a campus of buildings, historic and modern, recently built or refurbished by Derwent London. And this was the setting for one of the big events of the London Design Festival in September: The Dock.

**The Dock was masterminded by designer Tom Dixon, who has opened his new showroom and studio in the late Victorian depot known as the Wharf Building.**

With its paved yard and curving approach ramp, this was originally designed for transfer between horse-drawn dustcarts and boats. As The Dock event proved, it and the rest of the campus also make an excellent place for a party. Which of course is one of the reasons Derwent London sponsored it.

Dixon's idea was simple. With the development only recently completed, there was still plenty of empty floorspace not yet occupied. So why not turn it all into a temporary design village, where all manner of studios and companies could get together and show off their wares and expertise? Dixon's showroom became the main entrance to the event, and so had thousands of people tramping through. As Dixon says, "It's not just any old showroom, but a more characterised and appropriate space we could not have dreamt of."

**Tipped as one of the hot events of the festival, so it proved to be, housing over 50 exhibitors including pop-up shops and designer food outlets over the course of a week.**

Among several special events, the Festival also held its annual conference there. For many, this was the first chance to see the brand-new Canal Building by architects Stiff+Trevillion.

The whole event certainly suggests that this 50,000 sq ft mixed development, linked by its own pedestrian bridge across the canal, could become something more than offices. With Dixon trailblazing, could it become a permanent designer district? There's a lot to be said for strength in numbers.

**One thing that The Dock experiment proved was that it's big and varied enough for a critical mass to develop.**

[www.portbellodock.com](http://www.portbellodock.com)

# ANGEL BUILDING



On display will be architect's drawings, models, photographs, sketches and material samples, laid out around the marketing suite.

AHMM's brief was to devise a working environment that was aesthetically compatible with the rest of the building, but flexible enough to show potential tenants the exciting possibilities of the space.

[www.angelbuilding.com](http://www.angelbuilding.com)

The full potential of the Angel Building will be showcased next autumn when the architects AHMM complete their fit-out.

The 4,000 sq ft fifth-floor space will include a reception, cellular offices, informal breakout spaces, open-plan offices, a conference room, a gallery, a kitchen and an extensive landscaped terrace.



How two buildings in the same Fitzrovia street are being reinvented by architects DSDHA to bring out the best in each



# LATERAL VISION

If you know the architects Deborah Saunt and David Hills, the names behind the initials DSDHA, you know that they are not people for the conventional architectural response. DSDHA is a relatively young outfit with a steadily growing portfolio, ranging from diminutive pavilions such as you find in Potters' Fields Park near Tower Bridge, to a range of public-building projects such as the St Anne's Community Centre in Colchester, secondary schools in Guildford and Gloucester, and new housing at the Athletes' Village in Stratford.

They have now taken a typically lateral-thinking approach to Suffolk House, one of the many existing buildings in Derwent London's Fitzrovia portfolio. It's tucked away at the top of Whitfield Street, close to Warren Street Tube station in the newly designated Fitzrovia conservation area.

**What DSDHA is doing, in fact, is sensitively adapting two buildings, both on the same street, to bring out the best in each.**

Suffolk House, which is Victorian in origin, is currently used as a small-company workspace. Further south, Asta House is a mid-1950s office building for which there is an existing planning consent for a mixed-use development including some flats. But Asta House is surrounded mainly by offices, while Suffolk House is in a more residential enclave next to a public square. The solution? Rebalance things by swapping the uses; the plan is to shift all the commercial space currently in Suffolk House to Asta House. And all the homes planned for

Asta House will instead be built in the remodelled and refurbished Suffolk House.

To do this, Suffolk House has to be enlarged, in keeping with the building's character.

**DSDHA's answer is to build on top — to crown the building, not with a clichéd mansard-roof solution, but a sophisticated crinkle-crankle roofscape that picks up on the valley roofs of the area and reinterprets them in a new geometrical form and skyline.**

This will be a green place to live. With an array of solar panels and areas of green roof, a bike store in the basement and absolutely no car-parking spaces (abundant local public transport renders them unnecessary). Suffolk House will reinforce the residential character of this part of northern Fitzrovia.

Derwent London has built its reputation on imaginative office buildings, but residential spaces are increasingly becoming part of the mix, as at Rathbone Place (a conversion by Sergison Bates) or the planned new mixed-use building in Leonard Street, EC1, by AHMM. Multi-purpose spaces such as these point the way to an exciting future.





# working with hugo dalton

**Introducing Hugo Dalton, the artist who has reinvented the fresco, and his stylish new 'wall work' at Portobello Dock**

Listening to the in-demand young artist Hugo Dalton describe his style, it's easy to see why his work fits perfectly into Derwent London's oeuvre:

**"I think my drawing is becoming more sculptural," he says, adding, "however, I think it is fundamentally about dividing up space."**

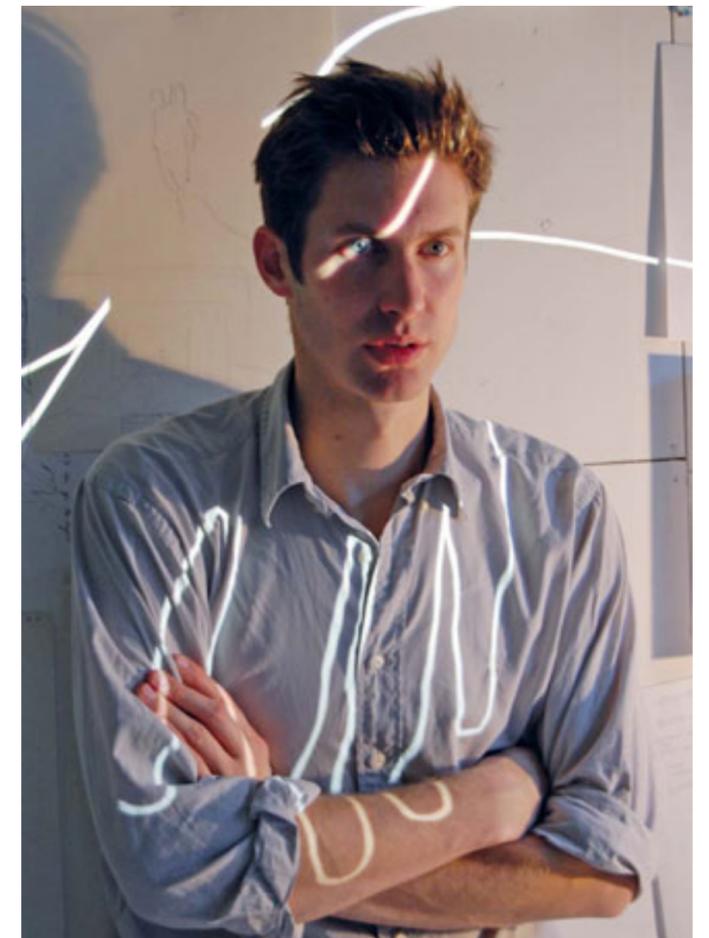
Since graduating with first-class honours from Goldsmiths in 2002, Dalton has been leading the charge to reinvent the fresco – or "wall work" in contemporary art-speak – using modern materials and techniques. His first commissions were for private residencies: clients included Kay Saatchi, the former wife of the art collector Charles Saatchi, and the leading financier Anthony de Rothschild.

In 2007, Dalton was given the challenge of creating art for Portobello Dock, Derwent's elegant new office development in west London, and its sister development of private flats, Portobello Lofts. The results are seen here – although in reality the aluminium-powder paint he used means that the art shimmers and changes colour according to the light.

**"I didn't want to make something that denies the architecture, but something that was like a free-floating form within it," he says.**

"There were these huge, white walls, and the temptation was to do something quite imposing, but in fact it's a space that people use on a daily basis, so I didn't want to give them this 'thing' that they felt compelled to look at every time they passed it. I wanted instead to give them something to stimulate their enjoyment of moving through this beautiful space."

After discussions with Derwent's Simon Silver and Mike Stiff of the architects Stiff+Trevillion, Dalton devised a series of abstract, reed-like patterns based on the *vallisneria spiralis* plant, which symbolises Portobello Dock itself. "It is capable of living in both salty and fresh water, and the reason I chose it to represent the building is that it is located on a canal" – the Grand Union Canal – "which is a route to the sea," he explains. The finished art exemplifies why Dalton is in global demand from New York to Beijing. Not only is it a thing of beauty, it allows the architecture to breathe – and it's a clever concept too.



**DERWENT  
LONDON**

[derwentlondon.com](http://derwentlondon.com)

