

INTERVIEW: Hugo Dalton on His "Invasive Species" Show at Joyce Gallery

by [Wang Yiquan](#)

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British artist [Hugo Dalton](#) is best known for site-specific paintings. His works have been exhibited at the **Victoria & Albert Museum** in London, the **Today Art Museum** in Beijing, and **AM Art Space** in Shanghai. Dalton has created a new mural entitled “Invasive Species” at [Joyce Gallery](#), turning the art space into a flourishing garden. He talks about his work in an interview with **BLOUIN ARTINFO**.

What inspired you to make this work?

All of my work is site-specific, in dialogue with the surroundings. The gallery space here is inside a shopping mall. It seems to me that, every time I come to Beijing, there is a new piece of retail. The city is growing very fast.

I have always been interested in a plant called Himalayan balsam, because it’s a plant that grows very fast. It was originally put in gardens for ornamental and decorative purposes. It’s from Asia and was imported into the U.K. around 1830 for gardens. But it now grows in gardens across the United Kingdom. I think it grows quickly, just like shopping malls.

How long have you been working on the project for Joyce Gallery?

This one I did very quickly, because I wanted to preserve the energy of the plant. This plant grows much faster than other flora; it grows really fast and takes over. I wanted the drawing to reflect the true nature of the plant. Calculating my time... it took about three days.

Did you sketch the Himalayan balsam to get the images for this work?

I make all of the drawings from life. This is the most important thing for me, being in a field and drawing Himalayan balsam.

Have you made drawings during your stay in Beijing?

Yes. I've been drawing shopping malls. In the future, I want to make an artwork in the countryside, but it would be a wall painting of a shopping mall.

Have you ever painted on canvas?

I seldom paint on canvas. I did one canvas work for the Royal Horticultural Society, but it's about 5 meters high and 26 meters long, so it's almost like a wall. I think when you're painting something on the wall, it's more like a sculpture, and less like a painting.

Do you have a studio?

My studio is in middle of London, in Waterloo, but most of the time I'm outside, drawing. I find I'm very happy sketching from life. I have a wall in my studio, and I'll paint on it to try out ideas. I'll test out a motif, and then paint the wall white again so that I can do something different.

“Invasive Species” will be exhibited at Joyce Gallery through January 9, 2014.

[Click here to see more images from “Invasive Species.”](#)

Translation by Bridget Noetzel

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