

OUT OF HIS HEAD

Mark & Hannah Hayes-Westall have been working in, and writing about, contemporary art on and off for almost 20 years. Each month they introduce an artist that should appear on your agenda

THIS MONTH: DEXTER DALWOOD



WHAT'S SO INTERESTING? Sharing a thought is an amazingly intimate experience, and when generated by artists, can be a powerful tool in controlling our feelings about events and people; what we call history. It is the ability to skillfully generate a connection between what's in his head and what's in that of the viewer that makes British artist Dexter Dalwood's work so emotionally compelling.

Dalwood is a painter who has refined the use of the vocabulary of painting to deploy conscious and subconscious associations in the heads of his viewers for many years. The work that generated wider awareness of his name was a series of paintings of imagined personal spaces belonging to celebrities, where works like *Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse* (2000) used our pre-existing understanding of the dead singer's milieu and mental state to create a narrative around an easy chair, pot plant and view over Seattle's harbour

FIND THE WORK

SIMON LEE GALLERY
12 Berkeley Street,
W1J 8DT
simonleegallery.com

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

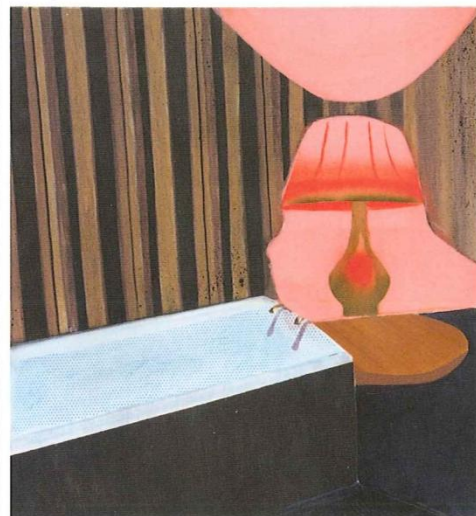
Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse,
2000; *Half Moon Street*, 2014;
Too Many Flowers, 2015;
Interior at Paddington, 2014

front. Drenched with celebrity news, these imagined landscapes gave us alternative histories, new ways of understanding the way we think about the role of prominent people in our shared experience.

In his most recent exhibition, 2015's *London Paintings*, Dalwood's use of viewer associations as a material with which to create narrative evolved further, with segments of works reflecting the style of famous works by other painters, from a clutter of Warhol-style flowers in *Too Many Flowers* (2015) to a brilliant, Hockney-esque turquoise swimming pool cutting through the murk in *The Thames Below Waterloo* (2014), a painting which also nods to Monet.

Using scraps of experience, memory and narrative is a technique that allows the painter to establish powerful connections with key moments in our history and one that has led to him being labelled as a leading contemporary history painter, alongside the likes of Belgium's Luc Tuymans, capturing the sense and spirit of our times.

Sometimes this is explicitly political,



| OUT OF OFFICE |



as in *1989* (2014) – a painting of Trafalgar Square’s statue of George IV seated on his horse shows only the rear of the horse and plinth as if seen from below. The painting’s title, when taken with unusual angle of view and the hazy blue skies capture the sense of being at the heart of that summer’s Poll Tax riot.

In other works, the sense of a personal history feels stronger, with glimpses of nights out in *Roundhouse* (2014) and *Marquee* (2012) while a series of domestic scenes including *Interior at Paddington* (2014) and *Half Moon Street* (2014) hint at the peripatetic life of an artist, with domesticity found in a wide array of London locations. Real or imagined, these quotidian scenes are connected for us by references to other painters, and by our own familiarity with the subject matter.

Dexter Dalwood lives and works in London. He received a BA from Central Saint Martins, and an MA from the Royal College of Art. Nominated for the Turner Prize in 2010, he has been the subject of mid-career survey exhibitions at institutions including Tate St Ives, Frac Champagne-Ardenne, CAC Malaga, and the Kunsthau Centre d’art Centre PasquArt, Biel, Switzerland. He is currently preparing for a show of work in Hong

Kong, where he will continue to examine a broad range of subjects quoting cultural and historical references, as well as the history of painting itself. 📍

