

CAPTIVATING & CONFIDENT



WE MEET DARA HUANG, FOUNDER OF DESIGN HAUS
LIBERTY, THE DESIGNER OF 9 PREMIUM APARTMENTS
AT NO.5 UPPER RIVERSIDE.



The daughter of a NASA scientist who emigrated to the US from Taiwan, Dara began her career at Foster + Partners in London and Herzog de Meuron in Basel. There she worked on such high profile projects as Tate Modern in London and the stacked skyscraper at 56 Leonard Street in New York.

In 2013 she opened her own architecture practice in London, Design Haus Liberty. Projects have ranged from Villa Mosca Bianca on the shore of Lake Maggiore in Italy to a cluster of apartments in Shoreditch. We met Dara to talk about her approach to the interiors of nine premium apartments at No5, Upper Riverside and where she seeks inspiration.





WAS THERE AN OVERARCHING THEME BEHIND THE INTERIORS OF THE PREMIUM APARTMENTS AT NO. 5?

Organic form and raw beauty. We love the idea of sculptural function, so the columns are exposed concrete, the timber is raw finished with metal trim.

The entire penthouse collection is also based on allowing light to naturally spill in with the curved wall corners, creating softness and a luxurious quality to a very beautiful collection of flats.

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► Dara Huang on finding inspiration in the Thames



DID YOU KNOW THE PENINSULA BEFORE THE PROJECT?

I didn't know much about the area actually but I started to visit with my three year old. Greenwich is really family orientated with attractions like the National Maritime Museum but I was actually quite surprised by the beauty of the place and how much history there is. I've been in London for 10 years and am only just now really discovering the Peninsula.

ALL THE APARTMENTS HAVE RIVER VIEWS. HOW DID THE THAMES INSPIRE YOUR DESIGN?

We are often inspired by organic form and nature so the river became our starting point with the views of the water and the proximity to the natural green. The shorelines here are also unique because of the high and low tides. So we wanted to bring that organic nature straight into the lobby replicating the curves of the river and the use of earth clay to the walls.

WAS THERE ANYTHING YOU BROUGHT TO NO.5 FROM YOUR WORK ON OTHER LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS LIKE 56 LEONARD STREET?

I wouldn't say anything I do is a copy and paste but when you've been working in certain places it does leave lasting impressions. 56 Leonard Street definitely has many similarities such as the use of raw materiality and looking at sculptural form. It's just a design process that is part of who I am but again it's all subconscious and a combination of feelings

and emotions that come out of our minds onto paper and into built form. Only then can we judge what we've done and where influence is coming from.

COULD YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT YOUR COLOUR SCHEME AND USE OF MATERIALS?

There is no better designer than Mother Nature; sometimes it's just a matter of curating what is already there. So we picked a feature marble that is a combination of different shades of green because we wanted it to relate back to nature and rawness. It was a beautiful accent to an already quite neutral palette. We always try to use the purity of natural finishes, keeping the design very simple and not concealing or covering up. So we were minimalistic with no skirting or ornament. These details are so hard to achieve in construction especially at this scale. But when you walk into the space you can feel a real difference.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE FURNITURE COLLECTION YOU'RE CREATING FOR THE APARTMENTS?

We have used the same inspiration for the furniture as throughout the apartments, marrying organic form with something functional for living. The idea was to build a collection that was as comfortable as it was design oriented. When we picked the materials we wanted a real contrast between polished and raw natural textures. For example, the softness of wool boucle next to rough-cut timber and metal. Also we love reflecting the beauty of nature through our pieces, be it the grain of wood, the veins of marble or oxidation of steel.

▶ INSPIRED BY ORGANIC FORM AND NATURE

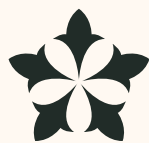




WHAT ELSE IS IN THE PIPELINE FOR DESIGN HAUS LIBERTY?

A ton of stuff all in different aspects. For example Fulham Pier, a large luxury members' club next to the football stadium, which I'm really excited about it. Then there are two villas in Ibiza and a terminal in Saudi so it really is a very large range of things. We tend to do what we feel, working a lot with our intuition. I'm happy where we are and how we're developing. It's not predefined but is malleable and open to change. I think that is the best part about it. As the brand grows we're growing as well.

DESIGN HAUS LIBERTY TEAM: DARA HUANG, SANDA KADIEV,
MICHAEL FAULKNER, LIVIU FILIPOV AND SEVCAN SUKRUOGLU.



KNIGHT DRAGON