

'A close physical proximity to things often allows you to overcome design problems. You can forget what your brain thinks.'

Thomas Heatherwick in *Frame 15*.



Going Slightly Green

To distinguish Mixed Greens from the conventional white-box gallery, Leven Betts exploited the ceiling, a few pieces of furniture and the colour scheme. The 325-m² space was designed for a client whose first home has been located, until now, primarily on the internet. The dropped ceiling of the physical gallery conceals mechanical systems – heating, cooling, lighting and sprinklers – while providing the space with an artistic flourish that takes advantage of the one plane that does not usually function as an exhibition surface. Sculptural and luminous, the ceiling – a composition of aluminium flatbar and translucent acrylic – navigates a crooked path determined by the unusual meander of existing beams and columns. Its prominent angles also divide office area from storage and packing spaces below. The architects' distinctive built-in furniture uses the cantilever to evoke the wonder some of us still feel for technology: a jagged, cantilevered reception desk contains three pop-up laptops for browsing the virtual gallery (they can be folded into the counter when not in use), and a similarly sharp, cantilevering, 5-m-long bar caters for opening parties and creates a sculptural hub for socializing. The name of the gallery dictated the colour scheme but not in an over-bearing way. Green appears only inside shelving and cabinetry; consequently, when drawers and doors are closed, the gallery signals that it is on show and, when they are open and the green is exposed, that it is most likely in a more administrative mode.

Shonquis Moreno
Photography by Michael Moran

On the Surface: A ceiling of light and lines is the crowning glory at Mixed Greens, a gallery whose interior design is the work of New York-based Leven Betts.