



Lee wears Acne jumper and jeans, Mr Porter, Givenchy watch, and Mods and Rockers desert boots he designed for Clarks



Harper's A FASHIONABLE LIFE BAZAAR

B BRITAIN'S HERITAGE BO Y

*The epitome of
cool, Lee Broom,
invites Bazaar
Interiors into his
renovated fire
station home*

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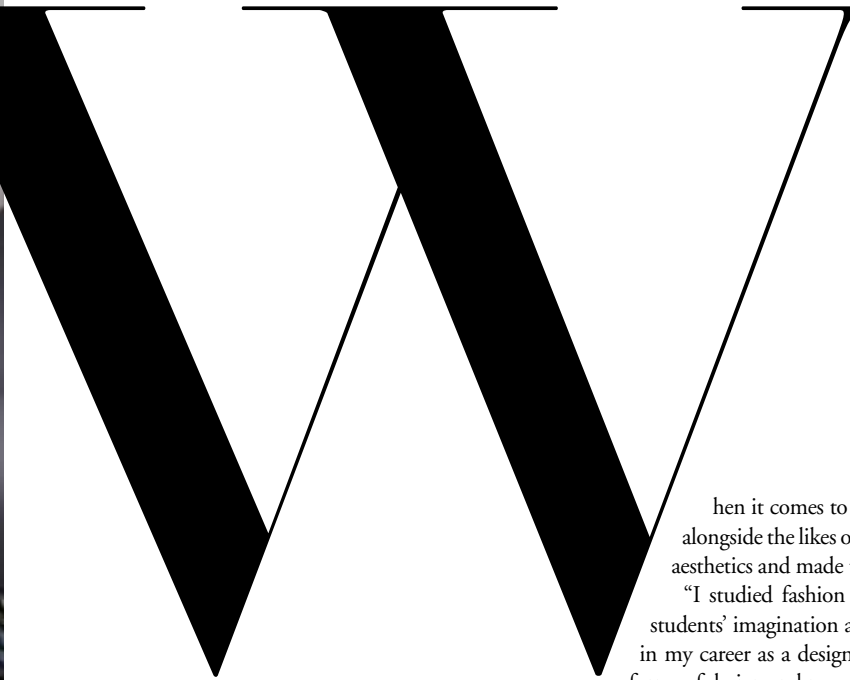


Lee with his iconic Hanging Hoop chair and Crescent table lamp in the living room. Wears Alexander McQueen shirt, Mr Porter, A.P.C. chinos, and vintage belt



Carousel Brass Pendant light over a bespoke marble breakfast table in the kitchen

Parq Life sideboard and side table, with Parquetry coffee table and Salon sofa, all by the British designer, with limited edition skull print by Magnus Gjoen and geometric silk appliqué textile by Serena Wells



When it comes to cutting-edge British creatives, Lee Broom's name appears, glowing in neon lights, alongside the likes of Alexander McQueen and John Galiano. He's bent design rules, redefined classical aesthetics and made the rather forgotten traditions of some British handicrafts fashionable again.

"I studied fashion at London's Central St Martin's," he reveals. "This institution enhances every student's imagination and encourages them to experiment, which is something that I've carried forward in my career as a designer. I also believe that this invaluable training allowed me to diversify into other forms of design and move away from fashion into products and interiors."

Lee was born in Birmingham in 1976, and his childhood in the Midlands was surrounded by theatre, art and design. "I was at theatre school for a decade from the age of seven, and I was working as a professional actor during that period, performing in many TV shows and theatrical productions," he recalls. As a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company from the age of nine and having an artist for a father, he became particularly attracted to architecture. "I imagined the sets of the plays we were working on. I have very vivid memories of drawing the house I thought I would live in when I was older and creating the interiors for it."

The former Vivienne Westwood intern had a clear vision when he graduated in 2000. "Everyone was looking for that dream job," he recalls of his final-year class. "However, I wanted to work for myself rather than another brand, so the plan was to start my own fashion label."

Fate had other things in mind. To support himself during the final years of university, Lee advised bar and restaurant owners how they could enhance their interiors. His advice became sought after for a number of small projects, and in 2002 he was invited to design hip nightclub Nylon from concept through to completion.

"I enlisted the help of my college friend Maki Aoki and we set about designing this huge venue," he recalls. The nine-month-long venture was akin to an intensive training course in interiors yet on a live project. When the venue opened to rave reviews and won awards, the duo was inundated with more interior design projects. "Although I didn't end up opening my own fashion label, I did end up starting my own design business, Makilee, with Maki in 2003. Like I said, for me it was more important to be working for myself and so that dream was beginning to unfold." ➤



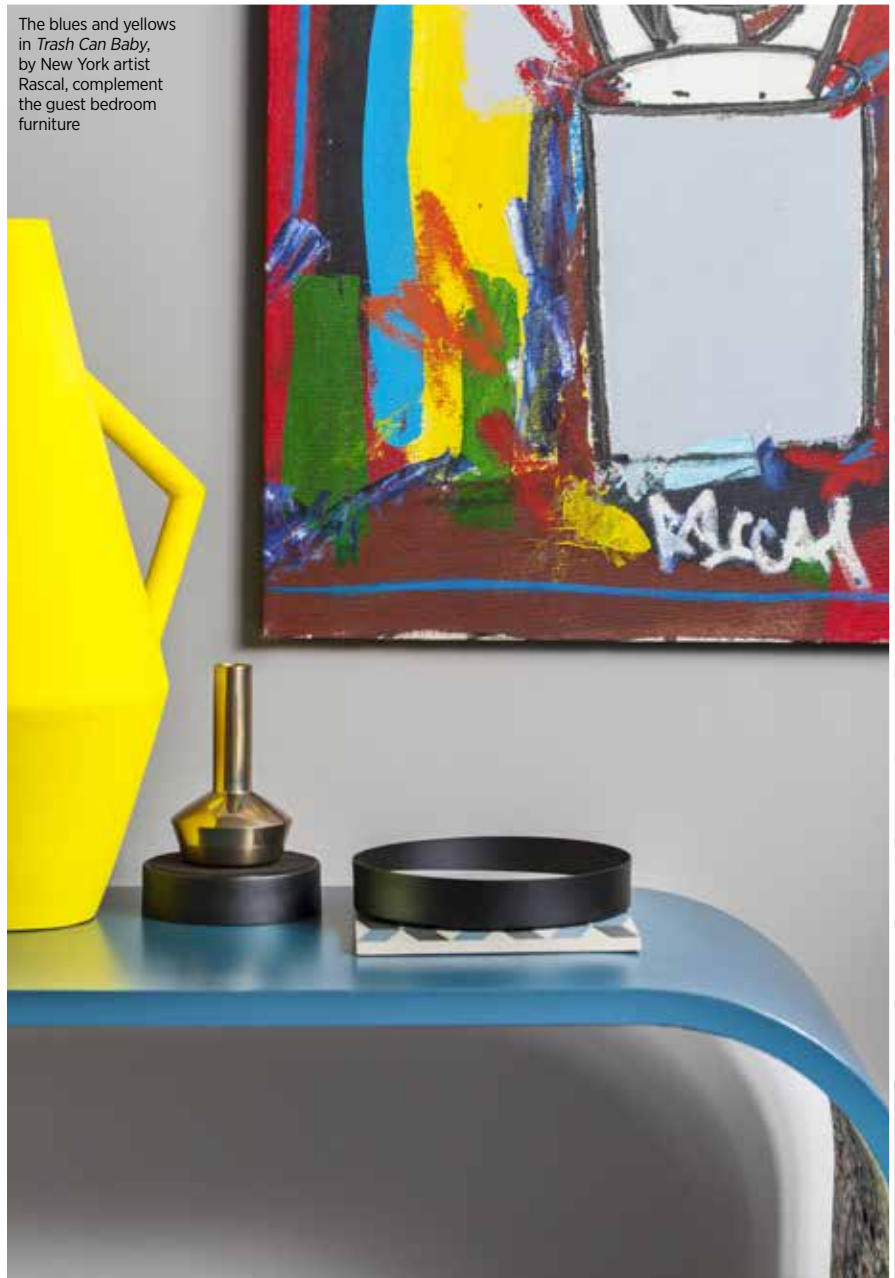
Lee's Fulcrum lights glow in the grey guest bedroom while a Kora vase by Spotti Edizioni adds a splash of colour



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Lee Broom, designer

The blues and yellows in *Trash Can Baby*, by New York artist Rascal, complement the guest bedroom furniture



“THERE IS A REAL ENERGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST I ADMIRE, AND ENTHUSIASM FOR NEWNESS AND FOR CULTURE”

Lee Broom, designer



Above right: Striped Altar chair with Keith Haring's leather jacket, bought at auction, and Lee's Mods and Rockers desert boots for Clarks.
Far left: Carpetry sideboard with a selection of candle holders, all designed by Lee, including the iconic Crystal Bulb



Chamber Lights hang above Lee's new Podium Vase

"As a nation and as designers we sometimes struggle to take our creative innovations into the market," he comments. "So I admire designers such as Sir Terrence Conran, Paul Smith, Tom Dixon and Kelly Hoppen for being credible designers, creating their own niche, achieving success and flying our flag overseas."

Touring Lee's refurbished Renfrew Road abode in south-east London, the designer's flair is evident in his approach to the distinct building. "I never liked the idea of living in a regular house or apartment, which is why I chose to live in a fire station," he laughs. The building is the oldest fire station in London and Lee fell in love with its industrial attributes. Original ceramic wall tiles and huge steel beams run across his home, creating several different levels that he has deftly adapted into an eclectic living space. "When I first moved in there was not enough natural light, so I brought down as many walls as I could, created a skylight and opened up the windows as much as planning guidelines would allow." The previous owner had hidden all the original industrial details and architectural

features. It took Lee six months to gut the space and appoint it to its present glory, complete with a cinema room made from a space that was filled in with rubble from the original construction.

Lee works on many projects overseas, including ones in the Middle East. In addition to his furniture and lighting designs anointing many of the region's iconic commercial venues, he has enjoyed working on many prestigious residential projects in the UAE. "I am a city boy, so every opportunity to travel to the UAE excites me," he says. "Initiatives like Dubai Design & Fashion Council and Dubai Design District have the potential to elevate the region's credibility in the years to come. There is a real energy in that part of the world that I admire, and an enthusiasm for newness and for culture," adds the designer, whose deft hand at presenting tradition anew made him an ideal choice as a judge of the 2015 edition of the Harper's Bazaar Interiors Awards. "I hope the creative community there keeps it authentic and keeps it real. My advice would be not to emulate European design too much, but create your own niche instead." ■

In 2006 Maki moved back to Japan and Lee went solo under his own name. This time, he didn't want to restrict himself to designing solely interiors. In 2007, he launched his first furniture and lighting range and through his work traditional British crafts such as glass blowing and parquetry found a new, global audience. "I guess I'm one of those designers that likes to bring a lot of British energy into their designs. I love to work with British craftspeople, I love the traditions of this country, and I also love the modernity of London, and this informs my thought process as a designer." His hand-cut crystal and brass masterpiece, the Crystal Bulb, went on to achieve cult status amongst design aficionados after its launch in 2012, firmly establishing him as the pin-up boy for British manufacturing.

With more than 75 furniture and lighting products sold in over 120 stores in 40 countries, and 24 awards (including the career-defining British Designer of the Year Award 2012), when he received the Queen's Award for Enterprise – the UK's highest accolade for business success – in 2015, the distinction was certainly well warranted.