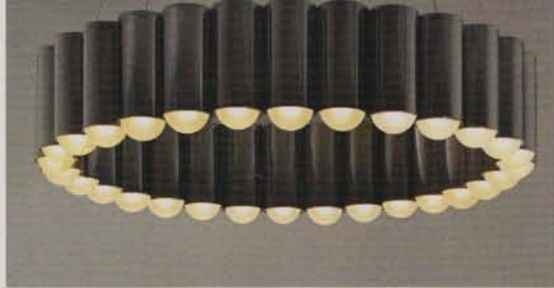


NEW BRIT ON THE BLOCK

LEE BROOM'S METEORIC
RISE HAS TAKEN THE
DESIGN WORLD BY STORM

WORDS: ZOEY GOTO





FAR LEFT
New Collection
2013, Carousel light,
photo: Marcus Peel
LEFT
New Collection
2013, Only Light
Only Wood



Lee Broom has been heralded as the poster boy for the British design scene. In the seven years since launching his interior and product design practice, Broom has created stylish bars and restaurants on a global scale, won over 20 awards including 'Designer of the Year' at the British Design Awards and become one of the highlights of London Design Festival, with his crowd pleasing furniture exhibitions.

The young designer has now opened his first retail space, called Electra House, in a former townhouse in Shoreditch. Lee says that opening his own store has always been on the agenda, but even he is surprised by the speed in which it has happened. 'My own shop has always been a dream, but I imagined it would happen in another three or four years' he admits. The shop and Lee's design studio are interlinked, offering visitors a glimpse into the creative process. This interaction with the public

appealed to the outgoing designer. 'It is quite nice for people not just to see the final show, but also some of the backstage elements' Lee feels. Dotted around the shop are Lee's iconic interior pieces, displayed on plinths like works of art. Here we find the studded chairs from his Salon collection, his Art Deco inspired pendant lights and a sideboard upholstered with a Persian rug from his Heritage Boy collection. Alongside these recent classics, sit Lee's new designs. These include his Fulcrum glass candlesticks and his dramatic Carousel light, inspired by the merry-go-round ride of a traditional British fairground.

Lee took a somewhat unconventional route into interior design. As a child he was a successful actor, before training as a fashion designer and working for Vivienne Westwood. These earlier vocations have had a noticeable impact on his furniture creations. ➔

ABOVE Lee Broom's quilt collection for Heal's www.heals.co.uk
BELOW
New Collection 2013,
Only Light Only
Wood



RIGHT

Lee Broom outside
Electra House, photo:
Luke Hayes

BELOW

Lee's bistro white
chair for Heal's and
Electra House
interior, photo: Luke
Hayes



‘There are fascinating details in the buildings around us that we miss if we don’t raise our eyes’

‘The pieces I create definitely have drama. They are often in a theatrical setting and demand attention. I see everything as a show’ he says.

Lee finds inspiration in the piles of *Vogue* magazines he has collected from the 1990s, as well as his architectural surroundings. ‘They say that if you want to experience London then look up as you are walking, which is challenging as you are trying not to get run over! But the saying is right, there are fascinating details in the buildings around us that we miss if we don’t raise our eyes. I have the capacity to soak up images and store them away for the future, like a visual filing system!’

Working with the right British manufacturers and craftspeople has been crucial to building the Lee Broom brand. ‘There is a portion of the British manufacturing industry who are really disheartened and when you approach them with a crazy idea, you are just met with a flat

no. Yet there are others who are really inspired at the notion of working with young designers and producing more bespoke items on a smaller scale. As soon as you get that enthusiasm from them, the job is halfway there.’

Next on Lee’s schedule is designing a restaurant in West London called *Dirty Bones*, and working on his next interior collection, which will develop elements from his *Fulcrum* candlesticks. ‘My company has grown rapidly and I want to keep that momentum up. I see myself designing furniture for a long time but I’d also like to revisit fashion. I would love to design a pop concert that encompasses fashion, music art and theatre for an artist such as Lady Gaga or Madonna. I don’t rule anything out!’ Considering his meteoric rise to date, Lee Broom has firmly established himself as the young British designer to watch.