



SomethingAbout **LEE WOOD**

Designer, L72

After 16 years working on prêt-à-porter, accessories and licensing at Versace, Lee Wood parted with the fashion house in 2014, setting up his Milan-based consultancy company StudioL72 and launching the label L72. Wood's debut collection for AW15 showcased his creative vision in both men's and womenswear, as well as providing a preview of his accessories collection, which he held back for SS16.

Last year, L72 won *Vogue Italia* and AltaRoma's collaborative "Who Is On Next?" competition for womenswear. With his ready-to-wear collection the current focus, Wood presented '50s-inspired silhouettes embellished with iridescent red, yellow and blue CDs.

"The collection was inspired by memories of my childhood," says Wood. "Now, in this digital age, primary colours are different, as they're transmitted through light to our computer screens,

tablets and smartphones. They're no longer RYB, but RGB."

The designer's childhood in Playhatch, a hamlet just outside Reading in Berkshire, was the unlikely setting for his first encounter with fashion. "I have very vivid memories of looking at record covers and asking my mum if I could have 'that outfit!'" says Wood. "I once pleaded her to make me a crazy, glam-rock-style, blue all-in-one with Lurex lightning flashes, and she did. I never wore it, but I knew I had to have it!"

Wood may have his mother to thank for encouraging his early creative endeavours, but it was Donatella Versace who schooled him in fashion. He remains forever grateful to his mentors. "All that I am today, I owe to two people: my mother and Donatella Versace!" he says.

SomethingAboutVERSACE...

"Working with Donatella was incredible; she's such an amazing woman, so courageous and hard-working. Being part of her team is like being part of her family. It's impossible to pinpoint everything - 16 years is a long time, especially in fashion. I think the best way to describe my education there is that I arrived in '98 as a curious, energetic young man and left as an adult and a professional."

SomethingAboutUTILITARIAN...

"L72 is me, Lee 1972. I didn't want to use my full name for the brand - I wanted it to be neutral, less about the person, more about the product. Letters and numbers feel very military and futuristic to me. When I was developing the logo with my graphic designer, Michele Alemanno, I wanted something that spoke of tomorrow, that was utilitarian and also inspired intrigue. We talked about Area 51 and the film *District 9* - those secret military spaces where you're not really sure what goes on behind the walls."

SomethingAboutTHE1950S...

"The '50s have always been a source of inspiration to me - not just the women's fashion, but also the whole mentality of post-war optimism; there was such a sense of daring. L72 is graphic, sensual, purist. I like the idea of evoking that kind of '50s femininity and mixing these womanly volumes with elements of menswear and street style. I never want my clothes to look retro; I think it's my responsibility as a designer to present new ideas, pieces that people will want tomorrow, not pieces that remind us of our past."

STORY BY JANINE LEAH BARTELS



Trousers by L72

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