



## Down the Rabbit Hole

Luke Edward Hall follows beauty wherever it leads. Myth, memory, and fantasy run through his creative endeavors, where classical references meet a distinctly personal joie de vivre.

Words by Billie Muraben

Photography by Jukka Ovaskainen

Whether Luke Edward Hall is focusing on interiors, his clothing label Chateau Orlando, or design collaborations, his work is rich with mythology, folklore, and a touch of magic. It is particularly important for him that, when dealing with spaces, all the details come together in a coherent narrative—underpinned by the accompanying stories he writes. “It gives a project heart and soul,” he explains. It’s also personal: “I dress similarly to how I put a room together, mixing old and new, creating contrasts, putting unusual things next to each other.”

When we speak, the designer is in the midst of renovating a house in southwest Cornwall, a county in southern England. “I have sourced all of the mugs from various potters, but we have no roof at the moment,” he says from the characterful dining room of his Oxfordshire cottage. Hall and his husband, the designer Duncan Campbell, are approaching the project from the ground up, researching the property’s history—it was built as a school hall in the 1800s and later became part of a church—and considering how this can play into their aesthetic scheme. Artist Barbara Hepworth’s studio in nearby St. Ives was an early reference, with its white walls and

local stone, but they soon realized the minimalist leanings wouldn’t work for them. “We are now using the term ‘Pirate Baroque,’” Hall tells me, citing a 15th-century carving of a mermaid on the pew of a nearby ancient church. He lists 17th-century dark wood and pewter, grotto furniture, silver-gilt tableware, and mother-of-pearl accents. “I want it to feel like you’re stepping inside a creaking galleon, or an oyster shell,” he says.

Ever since he landed in Cornwall, he has been creating work based on its legends, as well as his own experiences there. The region’s mythological history has inspired the paintings, drawings, and ceramics in his May exhibition in Athens at the Breeder. Think: fantastical creatures, lost kingdoms, and ghost ships. Yet, he also allows his mind to carry him far away. For his latest clothing collection, he framed his designs around an imaginary trip to a Greek island to study the flora and fauna. “It’s a personal kind of myth-making, I suppose,” he says of his approach.

Hall’s own journey began in Hampshire, England, where he grew up before making his way to London to study fashion at Central Saint Martins. While at university, he sourced and sold antiques with Campbell and their friend, the clothing designer Haeni Kim. Their first customer was Ben Pentreath, who soon offered Hall a job at his Bloomsbury studio. “I didn’t know anything about interiors, but I felt an affinity with him, and I wanted to learn,” he recalls of the two years working with the architect and interior designer before setting up his own studio in 2015.

This past winter, Hall embarked on the French Alps for a project with Hôtel Saint-Georges for which he designed the interior, signage, menus, and branding. For inspiration, he considered everything: the location, the roaming deer and wild boar, the history of the building, with its traditional chalet architecture. “I went down the rabbit hole of ‘St. George and the Dragon,’” he says, referring to the medieval tale in which the martyr slays a monster and rescues a princess. The designer then imagined the 3rd-century saint journeying through the local village of Megève and meeting animals along the way, and from here the project evolved. “When you enter a good hotel, you leave the everyday behind you,” he offers. When a project hits the spot for Hall, “It’s another universe.”