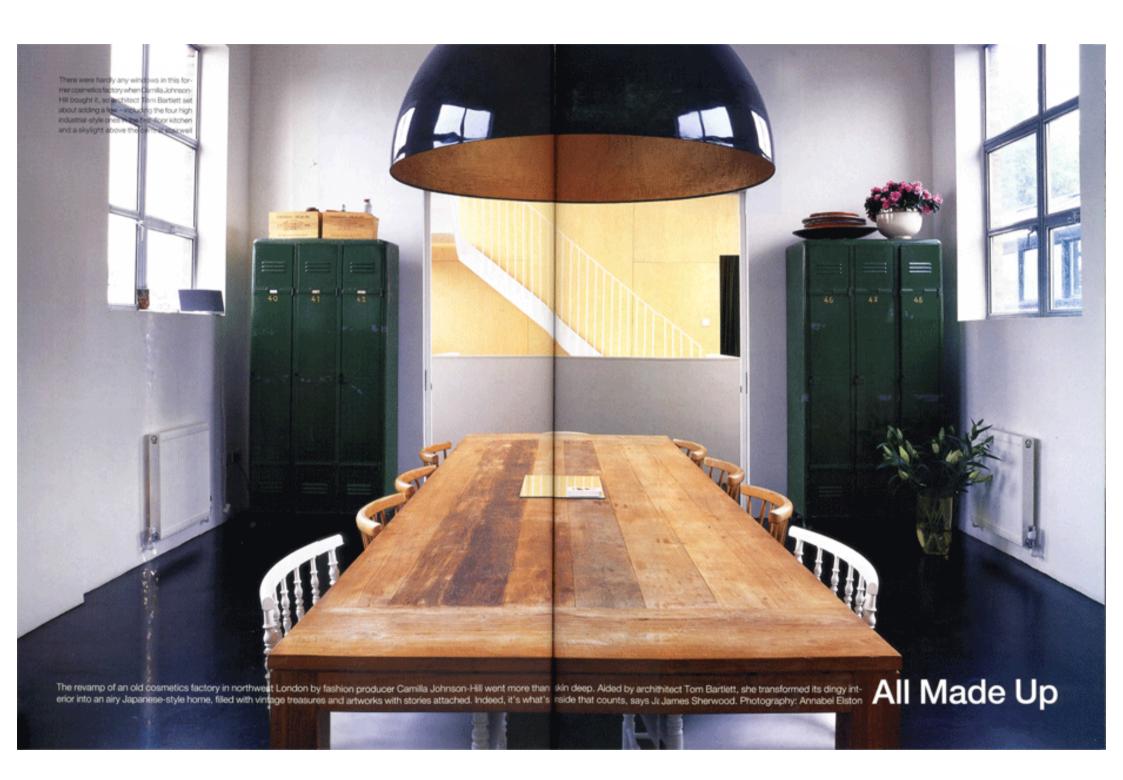
THE WORLD OF THE W





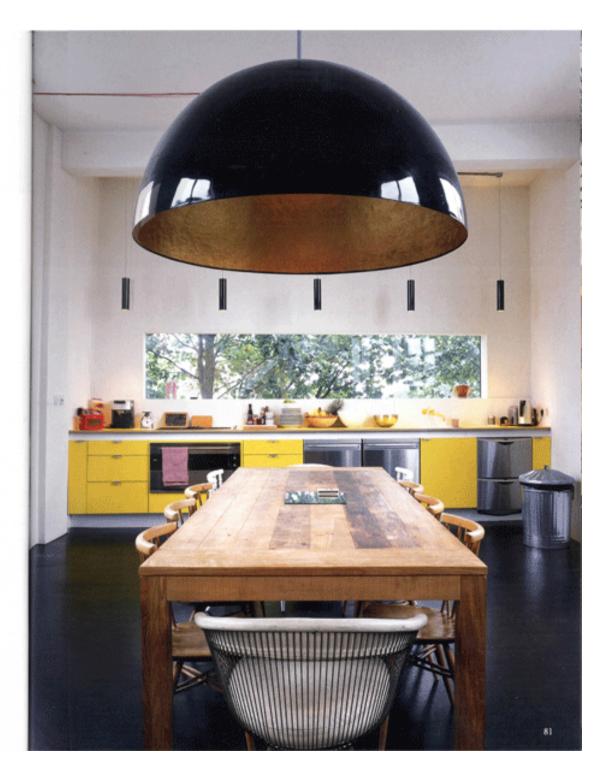




Top: planning restrictions meant that the wall panel at the foot of the stales had to remain in place, so Bartlett humed it into a mirror to make it a feature. Above: this 1900s office desk is from Philip Thomas. Right: an Ebay find, this 1950s stacking chair was designed by Carl Jacobs for Kandya.

Cipposite: "We had to liberate the view from the kitchen." saly-solvisor-HR, so Bartiet out through an external subplaceta is onglindscape window at his client's eye lavel. Ades liquid and brushed-steel work units stand beneath.













Fashion producer camilla Johnson-Hill's world makes The Devil Wears Prada look like Rebecca of Surmybrook Farm. There isn't an edition of Vogue, a Mario Testino shoot, a Gucci campaign or a supermodel's ego that has not come into her orbit. So it's a surprise to be greeted, not by a hatchet-faced, whippet-thin fashionista teetering on Alexander McQueen heels, but an urban Snow White wafting contentedly round what was once a cosmetics factory in Kensal Green.

On paper, the old works seems unappealing. It flanks a railway line and overlooks acres of Victorian Gothic mausoleums that wouldn't look out of place on the set of Twilight. Windows were almost non-existent, staircases comprised vertiginous steel catwalks and a hydraulic lift-shaft drilled through two floors. 'Remember, I am a producer,' says Johasson-Hill with a twinkle in her eye. 'My job is to interpret a creative concept for fashion editorial or advertising shoots according to budget and make it happen. Itell you how best to play your money.'

Applying the same principle to the factory, Johnson-Hill commissioned Tom Bartlett – founder of the Waldo Works architectural practice, whose projects have included Garrard's Mayfair flagship and the Ibiza finca of Jade Jagger (Wol Oct 2004), the royal jeweller's former creative director – to eviscerate the shell and create a series of public and private spaces arranged round a central stainwell. 'I put together a research file of inspirations and ideas,' she says, 'but Tom taught me to consider the psychology of the space: the importance of good architecture in moving you round the space, and living in it rather than just looking at it.'

Bartlett built a dramatic staircase, based on right angles, leading to a first-floor kitchen/dining room, where he added four authentically industrial windows and cut an audacious eye-level landscape window through a previously solid brick wall. He concealed bedrooms off the ground and first floors, and constructed a penthouse on the roof between two large terraces.

"When I started the project, I had just seen an exhibition called Skin and Bones at the Museum of Modern Art in LA, about fashion's relationship with architecture,' says Johnson-Hill, "My approach to the space was basically to tailor materials, textures and colours together with a simplicity inspired by Japanese architecture."

The Japanese tone is set on the ground floor, where bleached-plywood panelled walls fitted with concealed doors define the stairwell. Step-cut plywood then rises in perfect symmetry, like pieces of a Jigsaw puzzle. A large mirrored wall at the foot of the stairs creates a play on perspective reminiscent of an Escher sketch.

There is none of the sterility of the stereotypical Clerkenwell loft about Johnson-Hill's home. Internal walls and windows have been cleverly plotted to conceal or open up intimate spaces. Her bedroom is hung with deep Lincoln-green velvet hangings 'inspired by a 1970s porn movie set'. A floor-to-ceiling wall panel in the ground-floor office was built to support a life-size Mario Testino 'heaven is a disco' underwerar shoot for I. Usmo

Vegue. It is flanked by lengthy and inviting curtains that hide a cute guest bedroom.

A floating bookshelf runs the length of the office and adjoining bedroom, supporting treasures from Johnson-Hill's travels that fashion bounty hunters would kill to possess. One such is a print from Bert Stern's famous The Last Sitting with Marilyn Monroe, photographed in 1962. A New York colleague of Johnson-Hill's was renovating his apartment and discovered a single strip of negatives under the floorboards. He found out that Stern was a former tenant and the negatives were identified as never-before-seen shots of the Hollywood star.

Every piece of art in the house tells a story. A Diane Arbus of a crying child was a parting gift from New Yorkbased fashion photographer Pamela Hanson, for whom Johnson-Hill had worked – Hanson presented her with the print saying: "This is how I feel." A study by Jock Sturges was made on a nudist camp where Johnson-Hill produced a shoot. Another nude turns out to be the fashion producer herself, surrounded by human skulls and shot by photographer, diarist and artist Peter Beard. It is inscribed "Special delivery to Camilla by hand."

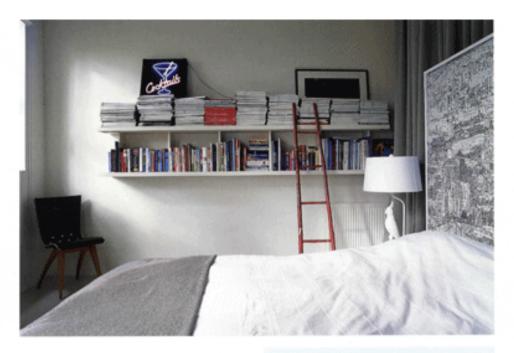
Johnson-Hill applies a true fashion producer's eye to furniture. A vast, black-domed lampshade in her dining room was copied by a set-decorator colleague for a fraction of the original's price. A matching pair of 1950s green steel school lockers with peeling name tags still intact were bagged on Ebay, as were a smattering of the mismatched dining-room chairs. There are also highquality but battle-scarred vintage pieces from Paris flea markets and London-based 20th-century antique dealers Retrouvius and Phillp Thomas.

'I apply the same principles to my home as I would to a fashion shoot,' says Johnson-Hill. 'If someone comes to me with a budget of £250,000, I will make it work. If the bar is raised to £1 million, I will work to that brief. So, for example, I may have liked the floors to be resinfinished but I ran out of money – and, actually, I like the imperfection of the raw floors as they are now.'

Meanwhile, Bartlett's hand is visible beyond the factory's infrastructure. A 'flying' chrome standing lamp in the penthouse sitting room is the twin of one he owns; while Johnson-Hill's low, garishly painted, 1950s-style 'WrongWoods' cabinet is an Established & Sons piece that Bartlett urged her to view.' I thought it sounded hideous,' she says, 'but then I saw it and fell in love.'

Love would not be an understatement for what Johnson-Hill feels for her factory. 'My film-director friend Wes Anderson persuaded me to buy this building,' she giggles. 'He told me that the sound of the trains would become exquisite.' When I say, somewhat facetiously, that it is like living within earshot of the tide, Johnson-Hill agrees: 'Hearing the trains rush past is like the heartbeat of the house. Also, because the walls are so thick, the seasons can blow a maelstrom round me and I can see but not feel the weather. It is magical'

To contact Tem Bartlett at his Waklo Works architectural practice, ring 020 7313 9029, or visit waldowurks.co.ak



Above: in the guest bedroom. Burtlett designed the Hong Kong skyline talle de Jouy specially for Johnson-Hill. The cocktails sign-was a gift from her mother, while the cockation bedside light (one of a part) is from Crate & Barrell in New York.





Left: Johnson Hill stands before the double front doors the found at Fletrouvius. Above: the fashion producer wanted her renovated factory home to blend in with its industrial surroundings, so painted its enterior brickwork slate-blue.