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Adam Jones (left) runs Quercus & Co., a Sydney wallpaper and print studio (above) that has intriguing influences. 'Fair Isle' (below) is based on the "Shetland Isle knitting style made popular in 1920s by the Prince of Wales", he says. 'Oslo' (bottom), also from Adam's new 'Handcraft' range, is inspired by a knitting machine punch card, while 'Tapestry' (top right) evokes a vintage diamond kilim pattern.

DESIGN PROFILE

Quercus & Co.

For the founder of this Sydney label, the design journey has been filled with far-reaching influences, including a Prince of Wales knitting craze **WORDS LEE TRAN LAM**

Adam Jones grew up with the visual overload of the '70s. "Our home was drenched with patterns of all varieties," says the creator of Quercus & Co., a Sydney design studio. "Dad even painted the doors and frames with a wood-grain effect. The wall next to my bed was papered with plain lining paper, so I could draw all over it." He'd also lose hours gazing at the overdetailed surfaces in his home, trying to unlock how the patterns were put together.

This ultra-ornate upbringing was a bold contrast to his time studying textile art at London's Goldsmiths College in the '80s. "It was a very conceptual period and anything decorative was severely dismissed. I left with a first-class honours degree and, despite graduating alongside Damien Hirst and many other soon-to-be Young British Artists, my creative output flatlined. I didn't make any more art for years."

Later, in Australia, he became a colourist at Porter's Paints and was a co-director at Sydney landscape design firm Spirit Level Designs for 12 years. These career tracks steered him from his initial training in screen-printing, but his lifelong love of patterns didn't waver. "I wrote a wallpaper business plan over 15 years ago. Reading it again recently, I was pleased to see how much has come true," says Adam. He only launched Quercus & Co. in 2012, though – so why the delay? "I was scared of putting everything on the line," he says. "Procrastination worked for a while, but thankfully age and urgency came along!"

While Adam's ideas emerge from everywhere (Japanese shibori, Baltic knitting), he's amazed by how far Quercus & Co. has travelled. His work has been bought in Paris, Geneva, New York; one "surprise order" even came from the area Adam grew up on the Welsh border. His new 'Handcraft' range speaks to this global reach, with influences from the Scottish Isles to Latvia. Such a broad geographical sweep is not unusual, he says. "A basic pattern can be found to be the same in China, Europe, the Middle East – like colour, it's relatively universal." ❖



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For more information on Quercus & Co., visit quercusandco.com.