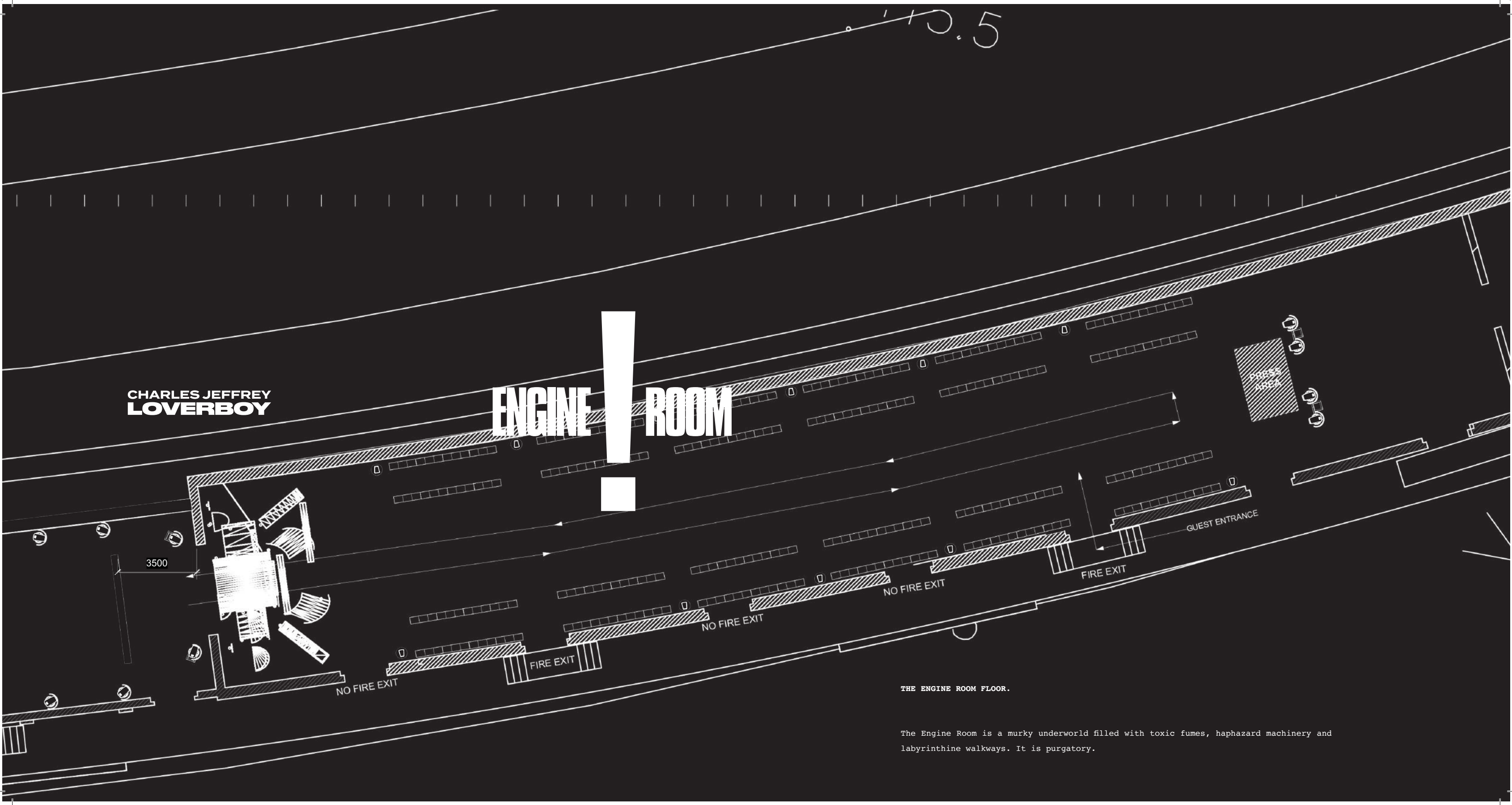


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CHARLES JEFFREY
LOVERBOY

ENGINE ROOM



THE ENGINE ROOM FLOOR.

The Engine Room is a murky underworld filled with toxic fumes, haphazard machinery and labyrinthine walkways. It is purgatory.

A UTOPIA ENGINEERED FOR YOU

OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE LOVERBOY NEWS CORPORATION





LOVERBOY

LOVERBOY is a creative force springing forth from the mind of Scottish Creative Director and Designer, Charles Jeffrey. Based in London – in the catacombs of historic Somerset House, to be exact – LOVERBOY continues to build on its stellar start in the fashion industry, taking on new challenges and reaching new customers year on year.

From humble beginnings in Charles's East London bedroom, LOVERBOY is now an international fashion powerhouse, carried in over 90 stores across the world, and employing a team of ten full-time staff.

Drawn to the inherent magic in queerness, Charles and his collaborators create fashion dreamscapes, adding new layers to the brand's story with each passing season. Together they weave the folkloric thread of Scottish history into the rich tapestry of London's queer nightlife and music scenes.

A radical sensibility informs all of LOVERBOY's output, and the brand is proudly committed to making clothes that can be worn by anyone, in any conceivable way. With LOVERBOY entering its eighth year, Charles and his team of fashion visionaries are taking this approach to new heights, drawing inspiration from art, music and unconventional sources of queer joy.

Renewed connection to nature, the body and notions of queer wellness are all key creative stimuli in LOVERBOY's current future-facing phase. The brand will also continue to renew its focus on collaboration through partnerships with artists in residence who act as contributors to the design process.



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LOVERBOY NEWS

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RAVE TO THE TOP

WELCOME TO THE ENGINE ROOM.
CHARLES JEFFREY's fantastical satire enters a new chapter.

THE ENGINE ROOM is a murky underworld filled with toxic fumes, haphazard machinery and labyrinthine walkways. It is purgatory.

Scooped up from the wasteland below, Workers are responsible for feeding the furnaces, thus keeping the heavenly floating city of Ajuka from falling out of the sky. If they work hard enough, some are granted citizenship and the chance of a fresh start.

But the Engine Room is also a trap. Many spend a lifetime toiling there, trying and failing to escape, losing their minds in the process.

LOVERBOY's Autumn/Winter 2023 collection is presented in three parts.

First we meet the Workers. Bedecked in warm layers, protective gear and reworked staples, their outfits reflect their arduous conditions they endure. Unexpected embellishments recall the trinkets made by magpie-eyed mudlarkers, highlighting the Workers' ingenuity in the face of adversity.

Part two introduces us to the Posers, former workers who now set the sartorial agenda in Ajuka, populating the city's many luxury boutiques. Sleek tailoring, oversized ruffles and ornate prints characterise their clothing, alongside fearsome, claw-footed footwear.

Finally, we meet the Snakes, Ajuka's arch gossip merchants who disseminate the city's news. Their uniform is heavily influenced by the tools of their trade and their medium of choice – the newspaper. A desaturated palette provides a base for tailored tweeds and a scribbled star motif, later giving way to stark, soulless white and newsprint accents.

The Engine Room draws a great deal of inspiration from the visual and literary worlds of Scottish artist and playwright John Byrne (b. 1940). The multi-hyphenate master is responsible for his own surreal universe of stories and images, many of which highlight the nuances of working class experience and the power of creativity. The Engine Room is notably inspired by Byrne's 1987 play, The Slab Boys Trilogy.

Charles Jeffrey and his team have woven Byrne's world into that of Ajuka. References to Byrne's own distinctive personal style can be found in the predominance of fairisle, tweeds and artful accents. The homage is completed through the inclusion of arresting painted scenes, which find their way onto numerous pieces thanks to the support of Byrne's archive.

ELSBETH, SNAKE

Ajüka on a harsh morning of a new week. Suedes and patent leathers meet and smear each other. An elegant rush. **ELSPETH** sits unabashed atop her newsstand. Unphased by the roar. Pointing, laughing, galvanised by her own image. Her newspapers sit abidingly, silently screaming their rhetoric, which is always at least 45% factual. She knows no bounds and circulates every possible circle, revelling in the absurdity that is Ajükan life. She sees everything.

ELSPETH is leaning against the side of her newsstand. She lights a cigarette, taking a long pull.

ELSPETH:

Guesssss how old I am... Take a wild guess, go on... A clue? Oh alright. All I'll tell you is I've been ssserving this city since before I'm sure you can remember. And no, before you ask, I have not been sseeing Doctor Rubène like most of those morose marchionesses.

ELSPETH smirks, taking a final drag of her cigarette before flicking it away, half smoked.

ELSPETH [CONT'D]:

No, no, I'm all natural, dear. It's been sssaid that the Dowager Duchess of Bevenburg – yesss, she hosts those maarveloussly opulent parties – well, she reportedly ssspent a million Ajukan Dollars on her... appointments last year. I KNOW. I said the very same thing... she should have spent TWO!

ELSPETH chortles, before lighting up another cigarette

ELSPETH [CONT'D]:

One of my sources at Palazzo Bevenburg told me that one. Can you imagin– Oh! Never you mind who my eyes and ears are, cheeky beggar! A cold-blooded lady like myself never reveals her age, endangered animal collection or internal news sssources. Do you wish to risk the full scale collapse of Ajukan society? Well, if I began to reveal the mouths of my horses it might jusst happen!

More laughter. ELSPETH takes a seat.

ELSPETH [CONT'D]:

Some people do want that of course. The collapse. I've even heard mutterings of an uprising from below. All those little sssods in the Engine Room who missed their shot, blah blah blah, cry me a river!

But if you want my real opinion – off the record of course – I sssuspect this city is probably going to fall out of the sky of its own accord rather soon. No wonder everyone's dressing like it's the end of the world, at leasst we're all going to die looking fabulous... and not a day over 25!

SENGA, 27, WORKER

A WORKER has been toiling in the Engine Room for three months. She is slightly naive and has not yet been completely disenfranchised by the conditions she's living in, but she is timid and a little awestruck by her old friend SNAKE 2's glamorous appearance.

SENGA's work gear is studded with all manner of salvaged trinkets and embellishments, a common practice among those in the Engine Room. The halter-neck wrap top under her suit is constructed from the reconstituted blue overalls given to every Engine Room Worker at the beginning of their tenure.

HORTENCE, 29, POSER

A SNAKE has been living in Ajuka for two years. They know WORKER 2 as both were members of the same Glaedyhoot tribe in the land below. SNAKE 2 has been a Snake for just over a year. They regularly take trips to the Worker bars down near the Engine Room to gauge the temperature of those living there and to scour for material for stories.

HORTENCE's snappy ensemble is pure Ajuka business-glam. There's something of an Eighties resurgence happening in the city's boutiques, and HORTENCE is ahead of the curve, eschewing the newsprint motif worn by her contemporaries, she is able to blend with the upper classes and gather valuable gossip.

The pair sit on bar stools at a high table, small glasses of clear liquor in front of them. Both sip their drinks intermittently throughout the conversation, SENGA winces slightly after each small mouthful.

HORTENCE sips drink.

SENGA sips drink.

SENGA:

Great guzzleGods! Did they make this bevvy stronger?

HORTENCE:

Haven't a clue, dear, it always tastes UTTERLY preposssterouss to me. But I'm surprised you're not having it on your morning carbonflakes by now.

SENGA's mind is on other things.

SENGA:

You've not been down the infini-stairs to see me in a while, Hortence.

HORTENCE:

I know darling, I'm ssorry. It's just been constant, soiree after ssoiree! Dry ice sculptures, dark choccy fountains, that sort of thing.

There is an awkward silence as SENGA takes another sip of her drink and tries not to wince. HORTENCE clutches for something to say.

HORTENCE [CONT'D]:

I just love your little ensemble, by the way. So gregariociously grafted, for a Worker.

SENGA:

Oh, much obliged.

HORTENCE:

Did you make that top, too? Such an exssquisite cut. Would you fashionate one for me?

SENGA seems irritated by this bombardment, she grows more despondent as she delivers the following.

SENGA:

Honestly I'm always cream-crackered from working with all those infernal machines. It's like looking after a class of unruly kiddy-winks. Always hungry, always belching... Absolute midden! You've hardly the need for new clobber down here...

HORTENCE isn't listening.

SENGA [CONT'D]:

Is... is that another new gandering frock?

HORTENCE (breathless):

It is indeed! A senssational, sumpique new boutique just opened on my peninsula and I simply couldn't help myself!

There is an awkward silence as SENGA takes another sip of her drink and tries not to wince. HORTENCE clutches for something to say.

SENGA:

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Another pregnant pause.

SENGA:

Well, I hope I can join you up there soon.

HORTENCE:

Darling! You'll be up in no time! That clobber you're wearing alone is enough to catch their beady ocles. Now, I know nobody has ever been plucked before the four month respiration ceremony, but I have a sssneaking sssuspicion that you could be the first!

SENGA is taken aback.

SENGA:

Do you really think so?

HORTENCE leans across the table.

HORTENCE:

I know so, duckie dear. Jusst the other day I was thinking about the delights you used to zhush in the Land Below, all those trinkets and merri-clobber and what not. Your keen ssartorial skills won't go to waste in Ajuka, and I'll make sure everyone who's anyone claps eyes on your work. You can be my little protégé, and I'll do all your PR! You just focus on the here and now, live in the meauxment darling. Keep doing as they say and keep that marvellous little mind of yours from going gaga!

SCUD, 23, WORKER

a WORKER has been toiling in the Engine Room for just under a year, but it feels like it's been 20. He knows he's been misled by the Ajuka propaganda machine that lured him there, and to which he's now contributing unwillingly. He is generally disillusioned by his position, the chance of promotion to the city above feels very far off.

Like many Engine Room employees, WORKER has customised his blue work suit, which boasts sprayed-on, acid wash detailing. The ensemble is accessorised with an embellished felt hat along with regulation gloves and boots for protection.

HECTOR, 25, POSER

His POSER boyfriend, lives in downtown Ajuka having worked his way out of the Engine Room. He empathises with WORKER, but has recently become somewhat affected by his new life in the city and his flashy new job as a tailor to the great and good.

POSER'S own suit is fresh from the atelier. Understated and oversized, it allows him to cut a louche figure in the city streets, which he also stomps in claw-toed loafers – all the rage in Ajuka!

We meet the couple in an endless stairwell, one of the dingy, liminal spaces between the Engine Room and the Ajuka city far above. They are facing each other, leaning against a wall. POSER is holding WORKER's hand, telling a long winded story, the latter looks downcast.

HECTOR:

...and I was telling him, "If you're gonna sharper my ensemble, at least use natural fibres."

HECTOR waits for a laugh. SCUD doesn't respond, he's staring into space.

HECTOR [CONT'D]:

Darling, are you okay?

HECTOR doesn't wait for an answer.

HECTOR:

You haven't even ogled my new suit...

SCUD eyes him, exasperated.

SCUD:

Are you takin' the piss?

HECTOR [CONT'D]:

Oh don't be all downgrumped.

SCUD:

I'll be however which way I want... If that's alright wi' you? Or are you gonnae shirrack me like those big burly bastards with tiny clipboards, that give you a skite roun' the ear for not shovellin' toxic waste fast enough?

HECTOR:

Look, I know it's bad–

SCUD:

Oh that's curious, because it seems muckle like you've forgotten.

HECTOR:

Don't be ridiculous. 'Course I remember. The constant incinerating fumigation that makes the brainfolicus stand stock still. Everything feeling flat and dark. No wonder so many lose it there and rot, or give up and careen themselves through the rosie chute!

[pause]