

The light of the matter

His 'Hollywood' and 'Delphinium' became instant icons. For many years, he has had a special collaboration with Chopard and Louis Vuitton, for whose boutiques he designs the lighting. William Brand, designer and founder of Brand van Egmond, is considered one of the leading lighting designers of our time. From his atelier in Naarden, The Netherlands, his evocative lighting sculptures find their way to some of the most beautiful spaces around the world



Hollywood collection



Orpheus Amethyst, part of the Orpheus collection



William Brand, designer and founder of Brand van Egmond



Hollywood Icicles collection

By William Brand
Designer and founder, Brand Van Egmond

I am convinced that both light and art trigger something primal in the human brain. Light is, for example, as primal and relevant as the air around us. We are oblivious to its importance, till the very second it disappears. Excellent light strengthens the moments and experiences that people have. We all know we have a better conversation in spaces that are more beautiful or interesting. Similar to the way people experience light is their approach towards art. A sculptural object influences its environment and adds emotion. By combining light with a sculptural object, a synergy arises; all our senses are stimulated and people find a connection with the space. This has always been my approach since I founded my atelier in 1989, after graduating from the School of Arts as a sculptor and architect.

Trends and choice of materials

While I shy away from working with trends in my own creations – I strive to touch values that lie deeper – I do notice certain changes in interiors. For example, the choice of material. I enjoy crafting and experimenting with steel a lot. After all those years, we are still learning new ways to work on finishes, for example. I find steel an 'honest' material; it can be adjusted at certain temperatures, but it also lasts. This last aspect is important; I do not create and craft for one particular period. The lighting sculptures from my atelier are crafted to last for generations. We use crystal as well, in an unconventional way: I like the possibility of splendour, but it needs to be in the right balance in order to surprise. In some markets, the UAE included, there has traditionally been a strong demand for the use of crystals in chandeliers. In the last period I have noticed a growing demand for our more sculptural use of steel: it started for the private spaces we lit up, but also now for public spaces.

Another trend we notice is the interest in tailor-made lighting. We see how the perception of a chandelier is changing: from being primarily a source of light to an object of art. This culminates in a steady growth in requests for commis-

sioned lighting, where we work on translating any wishes into handcrafted reality. A unique light, befitting the personality and space of a client.

Also, we detect a renewed appreciation for a more boutique approach towards design and quality. For example, we design and create everything in-house. This allows us to continue to be open, despite the complications of the last year. If our business was based on 'just in time' management, or outsourcing towards many external suppliers we would not have managed to stay open every single day. We cherish our independence, and the resilience that comes with this.

Interior styles. Contemporary versus classical?

My lighting sculptures have a dual soul. Although they are evidently contemporary, they have often distinctive classical elements. I simply love blowing new life into old forms.

This results in us lighting up some of the oldest heritage castles here in Europe, but also new and contemporary residences: even by means of the same collections at times. We are not easily labelled, which is something I very much enjoy. In fact, our lighting is often used to build a bridge between different era's or even styles.

Lighting advice

Try not to use too many lights in the same space: a key element to beauty is proportionality. Especially when designs have so much character as in my work, it is not necessary to bring too many in the same space. I like to create atmosphere by means of my lighting.

Do not be afraid to make a bold statement: add identity to a space in order to make it truly your home. A house is more than a shelter: it should lift us emotionally. It's important that you feel one with your home. This has nothing to do with money by the way, you can create a great atmosphere in many ways. Of course, my lighting is used to add soul to a space, but other elements can have this effect as well: like flowers, or small objects you have collected over the years.

The dinner table is one of the 'cross roads' of a residence: this is where the different generations meet. Treat this table with the respect it deserves, and add a beautiful light to grace the conversation and guests. **W**

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Galaxy collection



Ersa collection



Tailormade chandelier

PRACTICAL TIPS

● To create the right atmosphere with light depends on several factors, such as the functionality and size of a room, the alignment with the technical light and the other decorations in the interior. All factors influence one of my favourite games: creating poetry with light by means of an evocative lighting sculpture that adds character.

● In a limited space, concentrate on just one centre of attention. If you add too many different types of chandeliers, they start to compete for attention... rarely with positive effect. However, when you can make use of corners and 'lines of sight', you can be more flexible and add different chandeliers.

● Consider the function and emotion you wish to give to the room. In a hallway, you may welcome your guests, or wish to feel right 'at home' upon entering. At the dining table, you are seated several times a day: for your meals, but perhaps also to read or work. It is one of the 'cross roads' of a home, with often different generations meeting there. Consider a light that can appeal to the different generations and make sure there is enough quality light output for different uses of the location.