

BEHIND THE SCENES

## Designer Spotlight: Gerald Olesker - Architect Of Light

BY SANDRA MARDENFELD - JUNE 7, 2022



Photo credit: Manolo Langis

For Gerald Olesker, lighting design should start during a project's creation process, not come as an afterthought. "The true unique approach is that lighting should be part of the architecture and not a 'purchased' item," said the founder and CEO of ADG Lighting, part of Architectural Detail Group Inc. "This is how my team and I approach these projects all over the country and worldwide."

The right lighting can make a home's landscape seem more palatial, highlight treasured artwork or artifacts in a room, and much more. Olesker, as a designer and fabricator of custom lighting products, understands the impact of lighting on architecture, and interior and landscape design.



### **A Fascination With Light Begins Early**

Even at the beginning of his career as an architect, working for Galper-Baldon Associates, Olesker paid attention to light, sketching it into projects as he learned foundational skills. “Galper told me in my early 20s the two keys to business were to always pick up the phone, and if the tree falls over — take care of it — then deal with the money,” he said. “Baldon taught me that space is defined by whatever you want it to be — a hedge, a change in flooring, a light source.”

He discovered that no one considered an artisanal architecture approach with lighting ... and that led him to start ADG Lighting, an offshoot of a family business. “I was the president of a thriving company that I designed and built the major relationships in the industry for,” said Olesker. “But after 700 projects and some family differing opinions, it was time to redefine how I approached the industry.”



Photo credit: Manolo Langis

Since its inception, ADG Lighting produced lights for spaces such as celebrity homes belonging to reality star Kourtney Kardashian and basketball legend LeBron James to worldwide properties, including Spago and Lupo by Wolfgang Puck, Ambrose Hotel Santa Monica, Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, MGM Grand, among others. "At ADG we developed the idea that all projects needed to be approached from curbside to poolside," Olesker said.



### **Lighting Designer, Manufacturer and Entrepreneur**

He likes the process and opportunity of creating something that never existed and with ADG's ability to manufacture, his company can devise innovative projects, whether that's lighting, sculptures or accent pieces. The company collaborates with designers, architects and home owners to develop the right look whatever that takes. "Sometimes I will still pick up a hammer and torch," Olesker said. "Right now, I am working on a sculpture for a client and it requires my hand and eye. This is for a special client that appreciates my attention."

Some 80% of what he does is original. "Happiness is knowing that the vast majority of clients appreciate that we gave them something above and beyond," he said.



Photo credit: Manolo Langis

Olesker has captured his design perspective in his book 2017 book, "Mused XOGO," which shows 30 years of written and sketched expressions.

For him, every project provides a challenge. "This is about balancing people's preferences," he said. "There is no math equation that can completely describe the complexity of desires." But that's the essence of his work — elevating architecture's essence with lighting designs and artistic installations. "Inspiration is always a critical part of good work," said Olesker. "I avoid any trend and look to the architecture, the architect, and the soul of a project."



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