

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Easy Living

Fresh Summer Style





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Olivia 28 chandelier in antique bronze with ocean-green handblown glass shades. XK5 pendant with eight-inch handblown glass shades. Chester desk lamp in aged brass and black walnut.

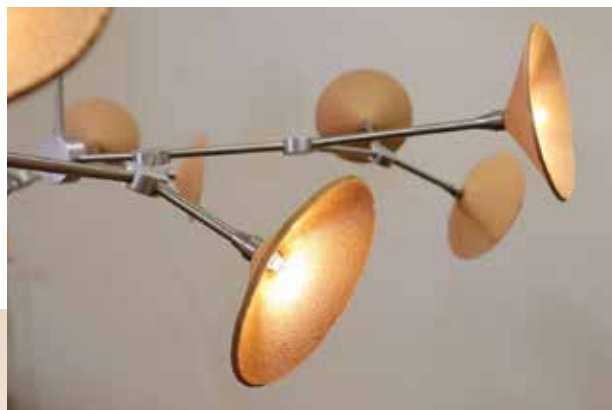
ENLIGHTENED

Artist Gordon Auchincloss collaborates with designers and homeowners on his architectural lighting fixtures.

BY NATHANIEL READE



TOP TO BOTTOM: Elsa 10 chandelier in polished copper with bourbon handblown glass shades. Elsa 14 chandelier in stainless steel with ocean-green handblown glass shades. Sir Fitz chandelier in stainless steel with raw leather shades. Artist Gordon Auchincloss with his Odysseus floor lamp in stainless steel and black walnut.



In 2016, when Gordon Auchincloss was forty-six, he rolled the proverbial dice. A maker of public sculptures based in Vermont, he

was tired of the travel and committees and had always loved lighting and twentieth-century modern design.

So he bought stainless-steel tubing, machined sixty-five fittings, commissioned a friend to make him blown-glass shades, and brought a chandelier to the Architectural Digest Design Show in New York City. This can be torture for an artist. Besides the time and thousands

of dollars in materials, travel, meals, and booth rental, there's the risk that nobody will show interest in your work.

Born and raised in Litchfield County, Connecticut, Auchincloss had been intrigued by modern design from a young age. While in college he had the chance to spend a night at artist Alexander Calder's house and says that visiting those sculptures felt like "being in Monet's garden." Something clicked. A few months later he found himself sitting at a picnic table in Montana, playing with the wire and pliers he'd just bought to fix the muffler on his Subaru. He began bending, twisting, and snipping, and ended up with kinetic sculptures of little figures so interesting a gallery agreed





GORDON
AUCHINCLOSS
ENJOYS
CUSTOMIZING
HIS WORK TO
FIT THE COLORS,
TEXTURES,
AND DIMENSIONS
OF SPECIFIC
INTERIORS.

to sell them. A visitor to that gallery asked him to bid on a public art commission, which he won. He did more public sculptures over the next twenty years—but started to burn out.

That's how he found himself rolling the dice in NYC. Fortunately, his gamble paid off. Show visitors complimented him on the uniqueness of the design and the blown-glass shades. Someone bought the chandelier. He went home to



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Atlas 3 chandelier in aged brass and black walnut. Auchincloss commissions his friend, fellow artist Devin Burgess, seen here in 2019, to create the glass shades. A work in progress in stainless steel with polypropylene shades.



his studio, and his phone began to ring.

What particularly draws interior designers, architects, and homeowners to Auchincloss, besides the beauty and originality of his designs and materials, is his collaborative spirit. He enjoys customizing his work to fit the colors, textures, and dimensions of specific interiors. By altering the size, arrangement, finishes, and shades, he can help solve a specific challenge in a way that makes the lighting a statement and elevates the whole design.

Thinking back on that first show now, Auchincloss says, “Sometimes as an artist the biggest risk is not risking anything at all. Sometimes you’ve got to wade out a little deeper.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: To see more of Gordon Auchincloss’s work, visit auchinclosslighting.com.