

## Light and Glass

Lighting glass is both very challenging and very wonderful! Glass is all about light. Each piece has its own combination of transparency, translucency, refraction and reflection. The many variations of glass and glass art have a liquid quality that is one of the lighting designers greatest challenges.

Start by understanding the properties of the glass. If it is etched or sandblasted and smooth it will be pretty easy to deal with, but if it is clear and has pattern (flutes, prisms, etc.) or is a handmade cast or formed piece of art glass, it will have very specific properties that will inform your design. Is it colored? Textured? Clear? Does it incorporate frit in the pattern? Is it more effective if backlit or frontlit? Get a sample piece and play with it. Understand it.

Then understand the context. Is the piece fixed, as an architectural element or is it freestanding? What are the sight lines? Under what lighting conditions does the glass want to be viewed? What are the existing lighting conditions? You may find that you cannot avoid seeing a source through the glass or reflected from it. If that's the case, move your source closer to the glass surface, and 'hide' the lamp as much as possible from the viewer. Or, you may choose to make the source a part of the composition.

Lighting glass is a dance. You need to understand your partner and feel the rhythm of the music.

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