

# Light's Animate Object: Suggesting Relationships through Lighting Design



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## Description

The design of light is a complex and powerful aspect of the design process, the effects of which are as much social as they are utilitarian. Much of this has to do with the co-dependence of light and its object— i.e., one can't see one without the other— and the relationship between light and lit object (both animate and inanimate) is subject to any number of interpretive and often contradictory readings, all of which are rooted in a cultural condition. By closely examining the connection between light and human relationships, the perception of which largely forms our perceptions of the spaces we inhabit, I hope to tease apart the ways in which the people in a room are read differently under different kinds of light. In the context of the Gramercy Park Hotel lobby in New York City, where the interactions of strangers are complicated and often highly orchestrated, one can see how lighting design promotes, confounds, or otherwise manipulates our understanding of each other in space. My intention is to re-imagine a lighting concept for the hotel lobby with the knowledge that specific and varying kinds of encounters, key to the unique social structure of public life in New York City, are determined both by our social practices and by a number of spatial mechanisms, including design in light.

## Date

2012

## Related people

[Monica Herman](#) (designer)

[Peter M. Wheelwright](#) (thesis advisor)

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