

## Designer QnA: Philip Mitchell On His Obsessive Love For Art, Art And More Art, And His Amazing Gallery Walls

Boards



By Marianne Litty



Philip's Drawing Room for the Kips Bay 2018 Showhouse was a masterpiece of eclecticism and curation, dedicated to family memories and the love of collections. Front and center, Jacob and Wylø, Philip's Ganaraskans (a rare breed from Canada) lounge on a mid-century daybed. The fireplace screen is by contemporary artisan [Marie Suri](#), sourced from [Liz O'Brien](#), the "Fake Van Gogh" painting was commissioned by Philip from contemporary artist CB Hoyø, and the display of blue and white ceramics is a tribute to Philip's mother, who was an avid collector. The ceiling is covered in "Carnival" from Christopher Farr, a 1970s design by Hungarian textile artist Michael Szell, and the floor is layered in rugs with a variety of warm-toned patterns. There are dozens of unique custom cushions, all designed by Philip, that further enrich the atmosphere of bountiful hospitality and comfort. Photo by Annie Schlechter

Philip Mitchell was raised between the Canadian countryside of southern Ontario and the urban lifestyle of Los Angeles, in a household steeped in design. His mother stacked the family bookshelves with life and style stories of Sister Parish, [Mies van der Rohe](#), [Edwin Lutyens](#), Elsie de Wolfe, [Robert A.M. Stern](#) and more; all of whom inspired Philip's formative years and influenced his tendency toward the classics, along with a strong appreciation and understanding of all things contemporary.

He learned throughout those years that style came from within a person and that it was timeless. True style wasn't about trend, but about the people who make up your world, the aesthetics you admire and the stories you hear.

Connecting with a person and their story is the basis of Philip's method of design. The approach to clients is organic, so initial meetings are about learning how the client lives, what they like and how they envision being in their new space. His reputation for being a hands-on, energetic and passionate project leader is one he earns over and over. With an almost encyclopedic knowledge of design architecture, art, textiles and historical reference, collaborating on projects of any scale becomes an unforgettable journey that clients all over the world crave again and again.



Philip Mitchell

The client's personality and own style emerge from this process Philip leads, resulting in warm, inviting, comfortable living spaces; interiors that combine form, function and balance with a gracefully edited selection of fine furnishings, art and accessories.

# PHILIP'S FAST 5

1

**Role Models:** My mother and my husband

2

**Necessary extravagance:** Artwork – I am an impassioned collector and like to be surrounded by the eclectic pieces from a multitude of periods that I have taken a lifetime to collect

3

**Secret vice:** Anything real estate related – websites, blogs, books, floor plans

4

**Hidden talent totally unrelated to design:** I have a photographic memory



5

**Go-to color scheme:** Anything with earth tones

## SHOP PHILIP MITCHELL'S INCOLLECT FAVORITES



ARNE NORELL – NORELL MÖBEL AB  
Arne Norell Easy Chair Model Inca by Norell Möbel AB in Sweden  
**Studio Schalling**



WILLIAM HOLTON  
"Yellow"  
**ILIAD**



Pair of Porcelain with Wooden Base Gold-Plated Task Table Lamps  
**La Maison Supreme**



JOHN DICKINSON  
Pair of Rare Stacked Books End Tables  
**Assemblage Ltd**

**Tell us something about you that is not in your bio.**

I require very little sleep, enjoy great food and love spending my downtime with my husband and our two dogs.

**What excites you most about the design process?**

The personal connection to the client, the project and often the objects they bring with them to work with. I recently had clients bring with them an incredible collection of important folk art paintings (the largest collection of a single artist I had ever come across). The pieces are graphic, colorful and full of energy, so I



Husband Mark Narsansky with Jacob and Wylo

suggested installing them en masse, gallery style in their elliptical stair hall. The art almost feels like a wall covering in this application and grouped like this creates a sensorial experience when walking through the space.



An antique marble-topped neoclassical center table displaying a collection of amethyst glass was positioned in the center of the room, to glow in the firelight or sparkle in the daylight. The fireplace surround is of Italian violet marble. Two seating areas, defined by silk rugs, create symmetry and balance. The palette of violet tones is tempered with a range of neutrals, with accents of gilt, crystal, mercury glass and mirrors to capture and reflect light around the room.

**SHOP PHILIP'S INCOLLECT FAVORITES**



A Gold Leaf Rock Crystal Draped Chandelier  
**David Duncan Ltd**



Collection of Blue Blown Glass from Afghanistan  
**Bermingham & Co.**



ROAN BARRION  
Series Z Stool/Ottoman  
Roan Barrion Design



FONTANA ARTE  
Rare Rectangular Mirror by Fontana Arte  
Donzella

Name an architect, artist or designer, living or dead, you'd love to collaborate with and why?

Sister Parish, because of her knowledge, experience, clients, and projects. And because so many talented designers worked at that office at some point in time.

*"What seems important to me is permanence, comfort, and a look of continuity in the design and decoration of a house. The happiest times of my life are associated with beautiful familiar things and family"*

— Sister Parish



Sister Parish; photo by Horst P. Horst via Getty Images

How do clients push you to think outside of the box and challenge you?

My clients often come with existing collections of artwork, accessories, furnishings etc. that I may have to work with when designing and decorating their homes.



In Philip and husband Mark's Toronto penthouse apartment, elegant moldings are the base onto which he layered a wide range of artwork including photographs, works on paper and paintings. The bookcases mix books, ceramics and sculpture, and an artfully-styled coffee table offers a closer look at select volumes, a trio of orchids and a pair of alabaster vessels. The abundance of visual treats ensures there is always something to admire, examine or comment upon.

## SHOP PHILIP'S INCOLLECT FAVORITES



English Carved Walnut Armchair in the George II Style  
**Butchoff Antiques**



PAULETTE TAVORMINA  
"Vanitas VI, Reliquary, After D.B.," 2015  
**Robert Klein Gallery**



M. FORD CREECH ANTIQUES  
George I Walnut & Walnut Veneered Bachelor's Chest  
England, c1715-20  
**Antiques & Fine Art Magazine**



PAUL EVANS  
One of a Kind Reversed Loop Coffee Table Signed c.1968  
**Fritz & Hollander**



**What is your favorite object in your home, and how and when did you acquire it?**

I have too many to choose from. To be honest, anything I have inherited from my mother and her family is very special to me, but if I had to choose favorites it would be the china, silver and crystal that I have inherited. Whenever I set the table with them it brings back warm memories of the hospitable feeling my mother effortlessly created for family, friends and guests at our table.

**How does a design project start for you? Is there a particular element that you always start with that inspires the whole project?**

I like to get to know the client and understand what they are looking to achieve. Then I create a brief and scope of work around that. It is also influenced by the geographical location of the project, as I love appropriateness.



**Left:** A view through a column-bracketed archway to a luminous living room appointed with a mix of traditional and neoclassical style tables, a deco-inspired daybed, and artwork celebrating the theme of classical architecture. **Right:** The elegant entry hall is replete with classical motifs. A pedestal-base center table encircled by three stools of Philip's design is positioned beneath the shaft of natural light coming from the ceiling's oculus opening.

### SHOP PHILIP'S INCOLLECT FAVORITES



A Set of Four Neoclassical Style Gilt-Bronze Torch Form Wall Lights  
**David Duncan Ltd**



ROBERT BOURDEAU  
Color Print, Edition 1 of 15  
**Jamie Pryde**



Pair Hepplewhite Style Armchairs  
**Flavor**



M. FORD CREECH ANTIQUES  
George III Gesso & Giltwood Mirror, England, c1730  
**Antiques & Fine Art Magazine**

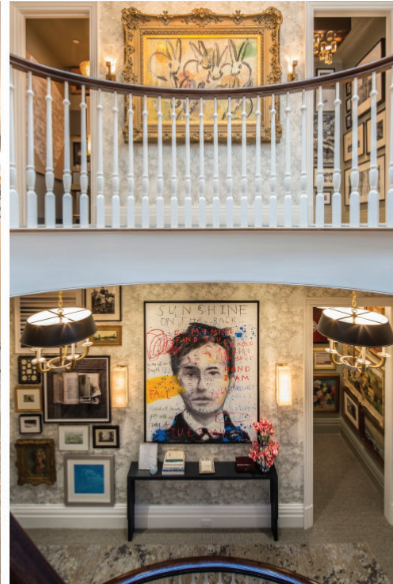
**What is your dream project?**

Anything involving historic restorations of older buildings — saving history for future generations is very important to me.



**What is your favorite part of the install process?**

Definitely seeing the client's emotional response when they experience the completed space. There is nothing more gratifying.



Philip's Grand Staircase at the 2015 Kips Bay Decorator Show House. The elliptical stairwell was transformed into a continuous swath of art — nearly 300 pieces — most of them from Philip's own extensive collection. A heady mashup of styles, mediums and provenances, from fine art to souvenirs, the display twined up and around in a dizzying and delightful composition that could be admired item by item or in its entirety. Photos by Marco Ricca

**SHOP PHILIP'S INCOLLECT FAVORITES**



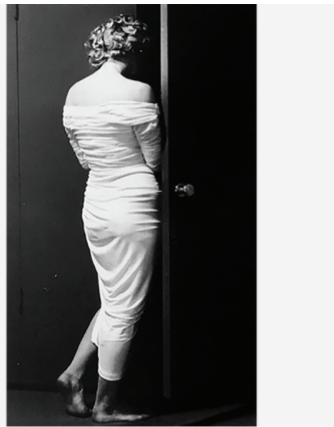
HUNT SLONEM  
"Untitled Bunny" (CRK02549)  
Madison Gallery



NELL BLAIR WALDEN BLAINE  
"Abstraction CH Collection #H," 1940s  
Lost City Arts



PAULETTE TAVORMINA  
"Still Life with Cauliflower and Bread, after L.M."  
(from the series Bodegón)  
Robert Klein Gallery



PHILIPPE HALSMAN  
"Marilyn Entering The Closet"  
Tishu

**Do you have a signature element — something you always include when styling an interior?**

**ARTWORK - lots of it!** Many of my clients have extensive collections of artwork and I love the challenge of cohesively incorporating all of the pieces into their new spaces. I tend to hang gallery style walls and installations to accommodate large inventories of artwork. By mixing different mediums, scales, subject matters and styles, I believe it creates a more interesting overall effect that is a very personal representation of my clients tastes in art. When clients don't have large collections, we usually accompany them to art shows and galleries to help advise them so they can start assembling a collection. I always advise them to purchase things they love rather than for investment, and am forever encouraging future purchases with or without me, because I think the most interesting spaces are those that evolve organically, when a person develops passion for collecting artwork.

**Tell us what you love about Incollect and what one can expect sourcing with us.**

I love the variety of styles you can find on Incollect. Historic, vintage and antique pieces from many different periods as well as a variety of newer items to select from. The eclectic mix of pieces is constantly inspiring.

**[VIEW PHILIP MITCHELL'S PROJECTS ON INCOLLECT](#)**

Sep 19, 2018

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