

II. THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Notes for January 12th 2012 Meeting

In November, we began the section "The Elements and Principles of Design" in flower arranging. This covered the Attributes of: Beauty, Harmony, Distinction, And Expression. The elements I covered were: Visual Characteristics, Physical Components and two of the 8 Elements – Light and Space. Tonight, I shall cover two more of the Elements: Line and Form.

3. The definition of "LINE" is: a one-dimensional visual path through the design. It is the primary foundation, the skeleton of your design. It may be straight or curved, but it creates a visual path, motion, or rhythm that leads the eye from one point of interest to another. Think of line as the melody moving throughout a symphony and of the color, form, and texture as the instruments that make the score complete. You want to keep in mind how your line affects the viewer.

A. Line has many characteristics. It can be long or short; straight or curved; weak or strong; thick or thin, delicate or bold.

- 1) Each of these has a quality chosen to promote: harmony, unity, or contrast.
- 2) Each also has a communicating factor, which sets the mood of the design.
 - a. Vertical lines are uplifting and inspirational.
 - b. Horizontal lines are restful and quiet.
 - c. Thin lines are less forceful than heavy lines.
 - d. Lines curving upward appear alive.
 - e. Lines curving downward appear wilted and depressing.
 - f. Oblique lines are forceful, while zig-zag lines appear restless.

B. There are two functions of line in design, which are:

- 1) to establish the structural framework of the design and
- 2) to carry the rhythm through the design.

C. Line in design is achieved in either one or both of two ways:

- 1) First, by using linear material such as branches, cattails, gladiolus, etc.
- 2) and, second, by creating a line by repetition of shapes, forms, sizes, textures and colors in a linear direction, which builds one way rhythm into a Traditional Design through gradation and transition.

D. Traditional and Creative Line and Line-Mass designs get their names from the degree of dominance of line in each.

4. FORM is an object having three dimensions. It can be closed or open, round or spike-like.

A. There are several characteristics of Form and the effects or force will vary with each of them. These characteristics are:

1) The Visual Size.

2) A Closed Form – this is solid, compact, or massed, with few open spaces, making it appear heavier than an open form of the same size.

3) An Open Form – this has spreading parts, producing spaces between parts important in design. An open form appears lighter in weight than a closed form of the same size.

4) Most flowers have form; most leaves have only a flat shape with length and width but not thickness: a. Flat shapes are restful and make visual resting areas through the design. b. Nature combines most flower forms with simple leaf shapes.

B. What is true about forms of individual components is true also of the form of the whole design.

1) A Line or Line-Mass design typifies an open form, for it has an open Silhouette.

2) A Mass design typifies a closed form, for it has a closed silhouette.

And that ends today's lesson. In February I shall cover Size and Texture.