

## II. THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Notes for April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Meeting

A few months ago, I introduced the topic of The Elements and Principles of Design. I then proceeded to cover the ELEMENTS. Tonight's topic begins the PRINCIPLES of DESIGN. In ELEMENTS I covered the topics of color, texture, size, pattern, line, form, space, and light. All of these are to be considered when doing a floral arrangement. Once you've selected the materials to be used, there must be a plan for organizing them. This is where DESIGN comes in. The components of DESIGN are: balance, proportion, rhythm, contrasts, dominance and scale.. The goal of the designer is to achieve all of these in creating a well-balanced design that is pleasing to the eye.

I.BALANCE – What is this? In floral design it is defined as visual stability and is usually the first principle noticed. To have this, you must ensure that there is equal weight, either actual or visual, on opposite sides of an imaginary central axis. This axis is vertical because balance is related to the force of gravity.

The design must balance from the top to bottom, side to side, and front to back.

A free standing design should be in balance from all sides.

Balance may be either symmetrical or asymmetrical.

- a. Symmetrical – also called FORMAL balance – is when both sides of the central axis are composed of LIKE materials placed in a mirror image of each other. Many traditional designs reflect this.
- b. Asymmetrical balance is achieved when there is equal VISUAL weight, which is comprised of DIFFERENT materials.

Things that play into visual weight, which differs from actual weight, are: denser, bolder forms; larger sizes; darker colors; and coarser textures. These all appear heavier than their opposites.

Solid forms have more visual weight than enclosed spaces.

Materials placed higher in the design, and further away from the axis, appear heavier than those nearer the center.

The axis in this type of balance is not necessarily in the center of the design.

Creative designs are almost ALWAYS asymmetrical.

II. PROPORTION is defined as the ratio between AREAS and AMOUNTS to each other and to the whole. Pleasing PROPORTIONS require unequal amounts, areas, and dimensions.

Three things are to be kept in mind when considering AREA: 1. the amount of plant material in relation to the size of the container; 2. the height of the arrangement relative to its width; and 3. the whole design relative to its background, frame, niche, or pedestal.

The ELEMENTS OF DESIGN need to be considered: 1. the relative magnitude of the combined effect of hue, value, and intensity of colors; 2. the relative length, width, and thickness of the line; 3. the amount of rough texture compared to smooth; 4. the area composed of round forms compared to spike or elongated forms; and 5. the ratio of activated space to open spatial areas.

PLEASING PROPORTIONS rely on great depth from the foreground through the middle ground to the background of the design.

In Traditional design, depth is developed by: overlapping forms; profile pose of some plant materials, which draws the eye to the back; gradation of size, color and texture; use of transitional materials; and finishing the back of the arrangement, especially at the rim of the container.

In Creative design, depth is developed by: combining materials ??????; varying the juxtaposition of some components to front or back of others; incorporating space within the design and piercing the spatial area with a form or line – often a diagonal; creating tension by receding and advancing colors, placed to overlap (keeping in mind – cool colors recede, drawing the eye to the back; and the importance of juxtapositioning of variations of shade and tint and shiny texture(s) (advance) with rough texture(s) (recede). Depth can also be affected or created by the use of transparent (see-through) forms.

Next month I'll cover RHYTHM, CONTRAST, DOMINANCE AND SCALE. And that will conclude The Floral Design Program for this year.