

II. THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Notes for March 8th, 2012 Meeting

Tonight I'm continuing the 8 Elements essential in creating a good floral design. I've covered 7 of them: light, space, line, form, size, pattern and texture. Tonight is the final element: COLOR. We've just finished an activity that exemplifies most, if not all, of these elements.

COLOR

Good design does not require color and in some cases may deceive the eye as we work. In creating floral designs, we do not have the option of working only in black and white. So, we need to develop a good understanding of how color affects what we see. For this we all really need to read the "color" section of the NCSCG's book. This section is very long and very detailed. So, for tonight I have chosen to use a few ideas from that book and also another, more simplified book. Basically, in putting arrangements together the color wheel idea is used, which gives primary colors and then all the other possible hues from light to dark.

To begin with, one definition of color is that it is defined by how the eye sees and interprets wave-lengths of light reflected from a surface and that it therefore follows that color is derived from light.

When you're in the dark, there is no color visible. As light advances, so does color come into view.

Both the amount and kind of light determine color. Sunlight contains all visible colors, which are seen as natural in the daylight. Artificial light lacks various rays that produce colors; so colors have a different appearance. Where light is strong, colors are more intense. These same colors appear drab in an unlighted, dark area of a room.

This is a VERY important consideration in a flower show where arrangements are often made in daylight, then displayed under artificial light, which is different and less intense.

COLOR quality catches the eye immediately and can cause an emotional response. Reds, oranges, yellows are bright and stimulating, depending on their value and intensity. They are associated with fire and heat. Blues, greens, and violets are usually restful and associated with water and sky. Most of nature's colors are blue and green.

The PHYSICAL properties of color are important to the arranger who wishes to use color effectively. These are: Hue, Value, and Intensity.

1. HUE is the specific name of the color.
2. VALUE is the lightness or darkness of a color, or quantity of light reflected.

Variations in the value of a hue occur when white is added, which makes it lighter, or when black is added, the hue is darker.

3. INTENSITY: Saturation, the brightness or darkness of a color is greatly affected by the intensity of the hue itself and the texture of the surface.

COLOR is never seen alone. Atmospheric color combines influences, such as lighting, with other colors seen at the same time as the material being viewed.

Again, colors are referred to as warm - red, yellow, orange, or cool - blue, green, purple. The lighter, brighter and warmer a color is, the more it will DOMINATE. Use hues of this kind to design for large spaces. In every arrangement, place your dominant colors low and toward the center of your design to provide weight and BALANCE. The darker, duller, and cooler a color is, the more it will recede. Use these hues to provide RHYTHM and CONTRAST.

Color reacts with adjacent colors in very interesting ways. Complementary colors, those opposite one another on the color wheel, can give a sense of excitement to your arrangement, provided they

have the same value and saturation. Red and green, blue and orange are complementary combinations. Therefore, bright orange Carnations used with bright red Gladiolus will appear even brighter when used with complementary blue-green or very dull foliage. Purple and yellow are also complementary, but their values and saturation are so different that using them together can create a spotty effect with divided dominance, which can disturb the balance.

Rarely is a color pure. Be sure to examine your materials carefully to determine what mix of hues they are. Check a color wheel to find combinations that work.

The greater the CONTRAST the more DOMINANT are the colors we see. Black with white is definitely more vibrant than gray with white. Related hues, such as light, bright, yellow Roses with the dull brown undersides of Magnolia leaves can also provide an interesting contrast. A gradual change in color, on the other hand, moving outward from center to the edges of your arrangement, will produce a pleasing RHYTHM in your design.

Viewing your design as a black and white photograph will reveal the correct use of advancing and receding color. You will be able to see any interruptions in rhythm, as well as voids.