

## II. THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

### Notes for November 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Last month's session ended with two questions on my part: 1) what exactly is a vinette and 2) what are the preservation methods for fresh fruits or vegetables. I consulted with Anne DeBoeser, who is an official flower show judge and she told me the following: A VINETTE is a scene, (can be a small segment of a room, which can have furniture in it or other elements which are appropriate to the person's intent. It could be a window on a wall with a ledge or an outdoor scene. As for PRESERVATIVES: she suggested lemon juice near to the time of showing; wrapping in saran wrap; or a spray, which can be purchased for this purpose. (not sure where to get this – Michael's?)

The last two months of this program in floral design covered "The Basics for Designing with Plant Materials," *when* and how to select them, how to procure them, how to preserve them, how to affix or secure them into containers and ideas for displaying them.

Now, we are moving onto "The Elements and Principles of Design."

First a definition, which I think many of you already know, but which I feel is good to refresh or enhance your memories and will teach those of us less learned in this topic.

1. FLOWER ARRANGING is defined as the art of organizing those "Elements of Design" within the plant materials, and other components such as fruits according to the Principles of Design to attain the following attributes: BEAUTY, HARMONY, DISTINCTION, and EXPRESSION.

What is meant by these attributes?

- a. **Beauty** is that intangible quality of appeal to the observer, which arouses interest and gives pleasure.
  - b. **Harmony** is a pleasing arrangement of the elements of the design into a unified art form.
  - c. **Distinction** is marked superiority in every respect: design, artistic concept, expression, condition and workmanship.
  - d. **Expression** is that quality, which communicates and interprets to the viewer an idea, emotion, mood, or story in an imaginative manner.
2. DESIGN is the plan, which brings order to any art medium.
3. ELEMENTS OF DESIGN are: 1) the **visual characteristics** of plant material, containers, bases, accessories, features, staging, and mechanics; 2) the **physical components** used in flower arranging; and 3) the **eight elements of light, space, line, form, size, pattern, texture and color**.

Each of these has certain characteristics, which fall within one of two types:

- The inherent, tangible characteristics: color, texture, form, size, and sometimes line and pattern. OR
- The given characteristics: light, space, and sometimes line.

These eight elements are the working ingredients for the floral designer's recipe.

The designer selects among them to choose the components for the design plan.

and organizes the chosen ones according to the Principles of Design to form the completed design.

So, these are the details of The Elements of Design.

4. As for the PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN – there are six, which are: balance, proportion, rhythm, contrast, dominance, and scale. These six are basic standards, which govern and are common to all the visual art forms considered beautiful down through the ages.

So, to summarize – Flower arranging is an art form in which the medium is plant material. The designer organizes the Elements of Design (light, space, line, form, size, pattern, texture, and color) according to the Principles of balance, proportion, rhythm, contrast, dominance, and scale. Judges apply these same principles to the evaluation of each design in the flower show.

Today, I'm going to go over two of the elements: light and space.

1. **LIGHT**: illumination necessary for vision. There are two **TYPES**: **NATURAL** (sunlight) and **ARTIFICIAL** (manufactured ). There are three types of artificial:

a. *Incandescent*: a concentrated direct source of warm yellow light; b. *Florescent*: a soft, diffused light which casts a bluish-gray tinge on objects; and c) *Special*: black light, colored spots, strobe, etc. used for unusual effects.

The **EFFECTS** of **LIGHT** on designs are many: a. to change the color of materials, enrich textures, modify forms; b) to create shadows; c) to dramatize; d) to portray emotional impacts or convey a mood; and e) to affect depth.

The **FACTORS** determining lighting effects are: 1. candle power and the number of lights; 2. the type of light: a bulb, tube, filtered, warm or cool, ultraviolet, black, flashing, color, combination of colors; 3. the distance from the light source; 4. the distribution of light (concentrated or diffused); 5. the intensity (bright or dim); and 6. the angle of projection: from above, behind, underneath, in front, depending on the effect desired.

**CARE** is required when using lights in design because hot light will damage plant materials. Electrical equipment must be in good repair and kept away from water.

And, it must be remembered that lighting used overall in the flower show must not exceed the capacity of the facility and must be in compliance with local safety codes.

Now **SPACE** and we're through with today's lesson.

**SPACE is defined as an open area in and around the design.**

It's a frame of reference – the three-dimensional expanse within which a design is organized.

The Designer deals with three kinds of space: 1. **Total space**(that which is available to the designer and over which the designer has least control). In one's home, this space is controlled by surrounding wall areas and furniture. In the flower show, it is determined by the schedule and provided by the Staging Committee.

2. The second kind of space is **The spaces within plant material and other components** over which the designer has limited control. Examples here are containers, where spaces may be enclosed by handles, raised bases, or holes built into them by the potter or manufacturer - these being controlled by the selection.

There is also limited control with decorative wood and other materials, which may be selected for the spaces inherent within them.

Some spaces in plant material have been formed by size and placement of petals, leaves, and branches. The designer may control this by judicious pruning.

3. The third kind of **space is that established within the design** where the designer has complete control. Here the designer creates both solids and spaces in design. The spaces within must be planned and organized, and are not just something that is left over. The difference between a bunch of flowers brought in from the garden and the same materials organized into a design is selection and placement of materials and spaces according to the arranger's plan.

Thank you.