

II. THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Notes for the May 10TH 2012 Meeting

After months of speaking about the "Elements" of Design, I began last month to talk about the "Principles" of Design. I covered "Balance" and "Proportion." Tonight's topics are: RHYTHM, CONTRAST, DOMINANCE, and SCALE.

1. The third Principle (Balance and Proportion being first and second), RHYTHM, "is achieved by having a dominant visual path of line or color through the design." This gives the design the appearance of being alive. There are several ways to accomplish this:

- a. by placing materials to carry the eye smoothly through the design.
- b. by repeating forms, colors, textures and spaces placed in a linear direction.
- c. By placing materials in a sequence in which adjoining parts are similar or harmonious. This is known as GRADATION, which implies a change from large to small, heavy to light, coarse to fine, dark to light, dull to bright, hue -to- hue, value to value.

Successful, traditional designs, particularly mass, depend on gradation for rhythm.

Now, contrary to what I've just said, CREATIVE DESIGNS, particularly Abstract Creative do NOT require repetition and gradation, as their rhythm comes from centers of interest carefully placed and planned throughout the entire design. Push-pull tensions move the eye from one pause point to the next.

2. The fourth Principle, CONTRAST, "is achieved by placing opposite, or unlike, elements together in such a way as to utilize their differences to create interest." Contrast only exists between elements related in some manner - Dimension (long vs. short); Color (light vs. dark); Size (large vs. small); Shape or Form (round vs. angular); and Line (straight vs. curved). "

Equal amounts of contrasting textures, colors, or forms divide the attention - going against the NEXT principle of DOMINANCE.

Remember: too many contrasts will result in a busy design having erratic rhythm, which can often be unpleasant to the eye.

3. The fifth principle, DOMINANCE, is when one of the elements above exerts itself to become the greater visual force. This implies subordination - for one element to be effective, another must be less so.



DOMINANCE provides control. That is, more of one hue than another; more curved lines than straight, or straight than curved, etc. This control can also be achieved by using larger forms, stronger colors and/or thicker lines.

In DOMINANCE, the largest amount does not always have the greatest effect. As, a bright hue of a small area can appear stronger than a large area of a pale value. Also, repetition alone does not necessarily result in dominance.

The bottom line is: that whatever is dominant, it/they should be evident immediately.

4. The sixth and final principle is SCALE. Scale is "size relationship of one object in the design compared to another." Examples of this are: the size of each individual bloom and leaf to others in the container; size of an accessory in comparison to other objects in the design.

Scale is different than proportion. Scale deals with individual parts to each other while proportion is a ratio between areas and amounts. When the variation of size is too great or too small, components appear out of scale. This can destroy the effect of your design immediately because it is so noticeable.

In conclusion, we must remember that "the ELEMENTS of DESIGN are TANGIBLE INGREDIENTS in the design recipe, while the INTANGIBLE PRINCIPLES of DESIGN are DIRECTIONS FOR COMBINING those ingredients into a successful design.

This concludes this year's Floral Design Information Sessions.

I thank you so much for your attention to my efforts in this worthy cause.