

Floral Design Basics: Principles & Elements

Elements

basic visual qualities of a design; includes line, form, space, texture, pattern, color, size and fragrance

Line

visual path the eye is drawn or attracted as it proceeds through the arrangement; curves or directional movement of the arrangement; static/dynamic

Form

three dimensional configuration or shape; describes the length, width and height of an object; also known as shape

Shape

two dimensional; geometric shape of an object

Space

total area a person can see; can be broken up by shapes and forms; positive/negative; draws attention to a certain area; emphasize importance

Positive Space

area occupied by materials

Texture

visual or tactile feel of an item; surface quality; is know as pattern when enlarged

Pattern

created by repeating lines, shapes and forms; also referred to as repetition

Size

amount of space a component occupies in a composition

Fragrance

appealing odor emanating from a specific item

Color

light reflected off an object; also referred to as hue

Warm Colors

are created using reds, oranges and yellows or various combinations of each; tend to represent sunlight and/or heat

Floral Design Basics: Principles & Elements

Cool Colors

are created using blues, greens and purples or various combinations of each; tend to represent water or the sky

Primary Colors

basic building blocks of the color system; red, yellow and blue

Secondary Colors

mixture of two primary colors in equal amounts

Tertiary Colors

mixture of a primary color and secondary color in equal amounts

Receding Colors

colors which do not show up at a distance

Aggressive Colors

colors which are easily seen at a distance

Chroma

used to describe the brightness or dullness of a color; used to measure the pureness of a color; quality of color combining hue and saturation

Tint

refers to the amount of white in a color; adding white to a color lightens its tint

Shade

refers to the amount of black in a color; hue darkened by the addition of black, forms the shade of a hue

Tone

measure of color intensity when gray is added to a hue

Monochromatic

color harmony of one chroma in different values; having or consisting of one color or hue

Analogous Colors

any three colors which are side by side on a 12-part color wheel

Complementary Colors

any two colors which are directly opposite each other on a color wheel

Floral Design Basics: Principles & Elements

Double-Complement

two complementary color sets

Triadic

combination of any three colors equally distant from one another on a color wheel; union or group of three

Tetrad

four colors equally spaced on a color wheel; a group or arrangement of four

Split-Complement

two colors on either side of a complement; a hue and any two adjacent colors

Poly-Chromatic

combination of all color harmonies; showing a variety or a change of colors

Value

describes the lightness or darkness of a hue

Intensity

brightness or darkness of a hue

Principles

expressed visually through the elements and include balance, proportion, harmony, unity, dominance, rhythm and contrast

Balance

equality of distribution throughout an arrangement

Mechanical Balance

ensures the arrangement is stable and will not fall or tip over; provides the feeling of stability and security

Asymmetrical Balance

composed of different materials on either side of the central axis

Symmetrical Balance

amount of materials, position and colors are the same on both sides of the central axis; mirror images

Filler

floral material which has an “airy” look to create the finishing touch

Floral Design Basics: Principles & Elements

Proportion

relationship in units/elements within a design in shape, size, quantity and degree of emphasis

Scale

secondary principle of proportion; size of a composition in relation to its surroundings

Harmony

achieved when all the elements, flowers, foliage and container, complement one another; describes tangible and intangible

Unity

organization of components into a whole resulting in a cohesive relationship of all parts; oneness of purpose

Dominance

area of authority in a design

Focal Point

secondary principle of dominance; location within a design attracting the most attention; center of interest in a design

Emphasis

secondary principle of dominance; area which stands out in a design

Accent

secondary principle of dominance; enhances or adds interest to a design

Rhythm

visual movement throughout a design; usually achieved by means of repetition

Depth

secondary principle of rhythm; dimension in a design achieved through the placement of materials; placing materials at different levels in a design

Repetition

secondary principle of rhythm; repeating “like” material within a composition

Transition

secondary principle of rhythm; use of material in a composition to connect two things which are opposite; visual movement from gradual degrees of change

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Contrast

striking difference between two elements

Variation

secondary principle of contrast; used to break the similarity of an arrangement

Opposition

secondary principle of contrast; used to create a higher interest

Tension

secondary principle of contrast; creating contrast by using two conflicting elements; dynamic aesthetic quality which requires the skillful use of contrast; expresses action or energy; principle of contrast