

LESSON 4
MASS DESIGNS:

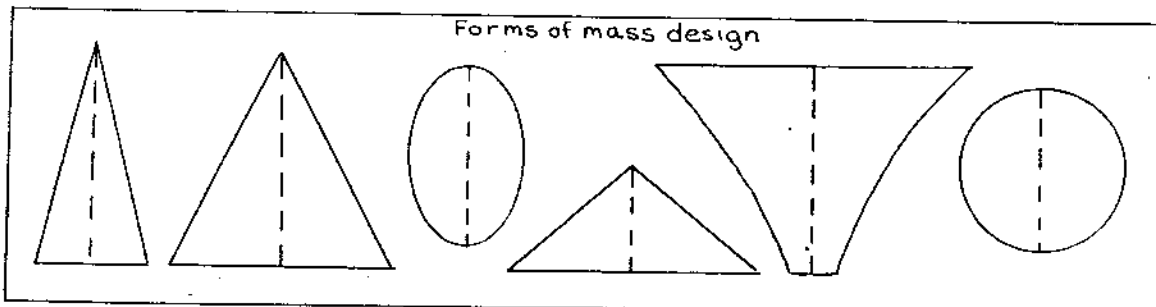
I. REVIEW OF LINE AND LINE-MASS DESIGN.

1. Line designs were studied in Lesson 1 and 2. The linear pattern is dominant; characterized by restraint in the amount of plant material, and an open silhouette (spacing between the plant material). Vertical and horizontal line designs were outlined, referring to the elements (visual characteristics) and principles, (basic standards which organize the elements). The elements and principles are present in all flower arrangement. In Line designs spaces between the plant material exceeds the amount of plant material.
2. Vertical Line-mass design were studied in Lesson 3, using tall and shallow containers. More plant material was added to strengthen the line. Additional flowers were used low in the design near the point where all the plant materials emerged from the container. This creates a center of interest. The outline of the design against the background (the silhouette) should appear open, not packed or crowded with plant materials. In a Line-mass design the spaces between the plant material are equal to the plant material.

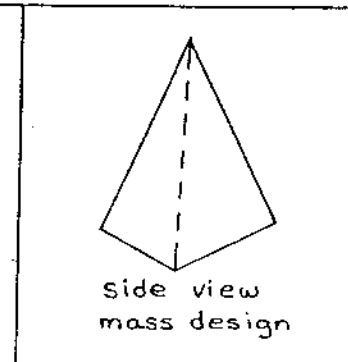
II. STUDY OF MASS DESIGNS: Mass designs, adapted from Europe, were characterized by the use of a large quantity of plant material. The design had a closed silhouette, however, the plant material is **not crowded or packed**. Distinction largely depends on the grouping of forms and colors to create a focal area (center of interest). Even though this is the most dominant part of the design, a gradual blending of color, size and forms should blend the center of interest into the overall design.

Line is present but it is not the dominate form. The line is softened with the **amount** of plant material. In a Mass design the plant material exceeds the spaces within the design. Choose one or more types of plant material.

These geometric designs--Line, Line-mass and Mass are the **foundation** of all floral designs and continue to be used in **all** types of designs. The geometric types were derived from the cone, sphere and the cylinder. Mass designs may be vertical, horizontal, right triangles, left triangles, symmetrical triangles, s-curves, crescents, or Z shaped. It is primarily the **amount** of plant material and the way it is placed into the design that determines whether the design becomes a Line, Line-mass or a Mass design.



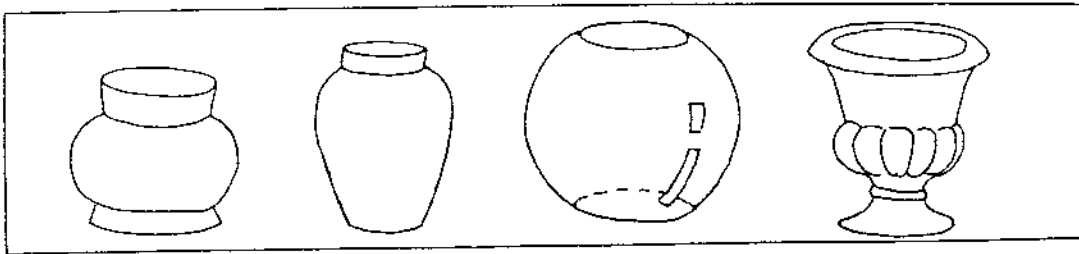
Flower arrangement is a 3-dimensional art form. Mass designs should be completed in the back to avoid flatness and to give depth to the form.



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A. Containers for Mass Designs:

1. Containers may be traditional in form. These may be tall or low, with a wide mouth to enable the designer to use large amounts of plant material. All material should emerge from one opening and appear to come from one point..
2. The types of container may include pottery, copper, brass, silver or pewter. Urns or compotes, with a pedestal and/or a shallow top may be used. Containers may have straight or curved sides.



- B. Mechanics:** Generally, Oasis as described in Lesson 3 page 10, is the easiest to use in a tall container for a mass design. It is easier because it allows easy placement of material down over the top to the container. A large needleholder is best in a low container.

C. Plant Material:

1. Elongated, linear forms to establish the structural pattern of the design. Select at least 5 to 9 pieces of line material. The amount depends on the size of the container and the width and thickness of the plant material. Materials to consider: Iris foliage, glads, eucalyptus, cattail, sansevieria, aspidistra, delphinium, bells of Ireland, celosia, or any other linear form.
2. Rounds forms: To create mass effect, at least 7 flowers. The number depends on the size of container and the linear material.
3. Transitional/filler: May need 7 to complete the design. It is necessary to complete the back, and close the silhouette.
4. Plant material should compliment the container in color, size and texture.

D. Structure:

1. Select a tall, urn or compote type container compatible with plant material. The design will take the form of a symmetrical triangle.
2. If using a tall or urn-shaped container, cut Oasis to fit; prepare by floating in water until saturated. Build up the bottom with newspapers, sand, or old oasis. Insert prepared Oasis. Be sure the Oasis extends above the mouth of the container 1 to 2 inches. Place one or two narrow strips of florist anchor tape across the top of the Oasis, press to sides of the dry container to secure. See lesson 3 page 10.
3. If working in a compote style container, a large needleholder secured with floral clay may be used. Or Oasis may be used, or a combination of both.
4. The design selected is a symmetrical triangle. Each side of the design should have the same amount of plant material. They do not need to be exactly alike but similar. The **visual weight is equal**.

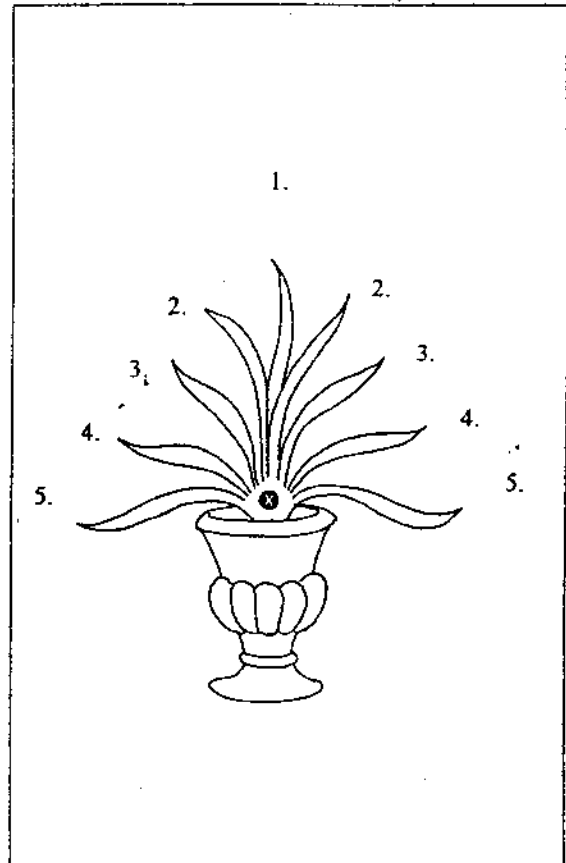
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E. Measurement of linear materials. To achieve symmetrical balance, that is balance equal in visual weight on each side of the design, plant material should be the same length and placed at approximately the same distance from the main line into the Oasis or the needleholder. It may be easiest to cut these stems at the same time to insure they are the same length.

1. Choose a tall piece of plant material, measure height and width of the container, cut line 1 1/2 times or more than this measurement. This is the first placement.
2. Cut **two** pieces of line material about one half the length of the first line cut, #1. These lines are placed to form the lower portion of a triangle and placed second into the design.
3. Cut **two** pieces of line material 3 to 4 inches shorter than the #1 line. To be placed near the #1 line.
4. Cut **two** more pieces of material 2 to 3 inches shorter than the last lines cut, #3 line. To be placed between the #3 and the #2 lines. One to the right and one to the left.
5. Cut **two** more several inches shorter than the last two. To be placed at the front and angled downward and outward. Two more could be placed in the same position in the back to achieve greater depth.

F. Line material placements:

1. Insert first line in the center back of the needleholder or Oasis, in an upright position. It becomes the main line.
2. Insert two stems about half the length of #1 low on each side **angled** downwards below the rim of the container. These stems form the lower portion of a triangle.
3. Insert on right and left sides slanting tip slightly towards the back. At the top near # 1.
4. Insert on each side, angling slightly forward. Between # 3 and # 2 stems.
5. Insert two shorter stems about half the length of # 4 at the front and back on both sides. Angled downward and outward.
7. Do not go beyond the boundaries of the triangle formed by the placement of #1 and #2 lines. All stems should **appear to radiate from one point** at or near the base of the main line.



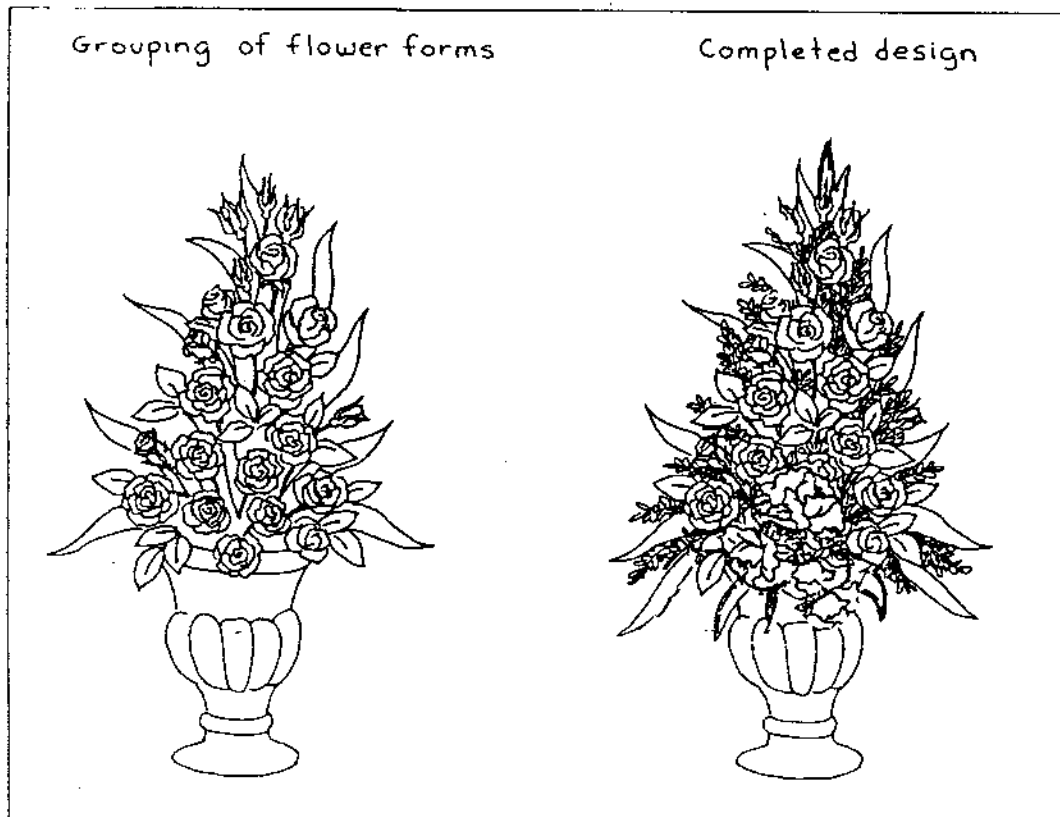
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G. Cutting and Placement of flowers:

1. The least opened flowers or buds should be the tallest. Cut shorter than the main line. Place in front of the main line and in the same upright position.
2. Cut two flowers several inches shorter than the one above # 1. Insert one on either side of the main line and angling a little toward the back. Reinforce the triangle shape. Do not go beyond its boundaries. Show the side of the flower rather than the face.
3. Cut two more flowers several inches shorter. Continue to insert to the left and to the right down to the rim of the container.
4. Cut two or three flowers shorter, but of slightly different length. Place these at the base of the main line (at the center of the imaginary point of emergence). Only one should be facing fully forward. Turn each flower slightly for greater interest.
5. Additional flowers may be inserted to the left, to the right and to the back. The design should not become crowded!

H. Transitional/Filler:

1. The transitional/filler plant material should be cut shorter than the line and flowers that it is placed near. Each piece should be cut 2 to 4 inches shorter than the line. Other pieces cut 2 inches shorter should be placed in the front of the main line with the tips going forward over the rim of the container.
2. This pattern of placing two on either side and to the back and one or two in front should be repeated. The design should not appear crowded, packed or stuffed.



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III. APPRECIATION TIME.

Mass designs are much loved for their beauty of flowers, forms and colors. Characterized by the use of a large quantity of plant material the design should have a closed silhouette, however, the plant material should not be crowded. Distinction largely depends on the grouping of forms and colors to create one center of interest near the point where all plant materials emerge from the container. The stems should not cross each other but flow out in a radiating pattern. The pattern selected (symmetrical triangle) should be followed with the placement of each stem.

Line is present but it is not the dominate form. It is softened with the amount of plant material. In a Mass design the plant material exceeds the amount of open space within the design.

For mass design, sometimes a bushier type of linear material may be used like Celosia, Bells of Ireland etc. In this case less plant material may be needed. The measurements and placements would be the same. The overall effect should be that of a mass design with a closed silhouette. There should be little space between the plant material, but not **crowded or packed**.

The element of color in design is the most compelling element. Consider the colors of home decor in creating a compatible design. Consult books and charts on color for study and practice for use in floral design.

Mass designs may be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. Symmetrical has equal amounts of plant material on each side. Asymmetrical has unequal amounts of material on either side of an imaginary axis. This is referred to as balance. Balance is important in all designs from side to side and from front to back. After the design is completed, it should be checked to see if it is visually stable. Does any part appear to be falling down or out of the container? This relates to the principle of **balance**.

Does the eye flow easily through the design, following the placement of the line? All placements should be within the framework established by the line material, not leading the eye out in different directions. This dominant visual path through the design is called **rhythm** a design principle. Each stem **gradually** becomes shorter as it is placed lower in the container toward the center of interest. There is a grouping of forms and colors to create this center of interest. Even though this is the most dominant part of the design, a gradual blending of color, size and forms should blend it into the overall design.

If the line material is delicate, the flowers and other forms should be delicate also. This is size relationship of one object to another is referred to as **scale**, a design principle. Is the container too tall or too small for the amount of plant material in the design? A small space (proportion) requires not only a small arrangement but a small container (scale) and a small amount of plant material (proportion). **Proportion** is the relationship of areas and amounts to each other and the whole.

Is there interesting contrast of liner (spiked) and round forms? A contrast of textures? **Contrast** means difference. It is a design principle. However, to achieve unity and harmony in the design there must be more of one line, more of one color, more of one form, more of one texture, etc to establish **dominance**. The balance between the design principles of contrast and dominance binds the design together to form a unit.

Focus on the beauty that has been achieved! Focus on the beauty of the flowers and colors. Skill as a designer comes with **practice and study**. The challenge of acquiring this skill and developing a love for the beauty and fun of flower arranging is exciting.