The American Institute of Floral Designers presents

The AIFD Education Experience

THE AIFD CONNECTION

The Hand-Tied Experience
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The history of a hand-held bouquet dates to the 14th century, where the original nosegays were carried by upper class women who used them to mask unpleasant odors in the streets. Hence the name “nosegay”. The AIFD Guide to Floral Terminology defines this term under “Flowers to Carry” under the Wedding and Personal Flower index as follows:

**Nosegay**: old English term meaning “small cluster of flowers wrapped in moss”

Current design trends lead us to using this design technique. Another “Flowers to Carry” term often applying this technique is shown with many different spelling variations: “tussie-mussie”, “tussy-mussy” or “tuzy-muzy”. The **tussy-mussy** also dates back into history to the Victorian Era and the reign of Queen Victoria in the mid 1830’s. Tussie meaning “knot of flowers” and mussie meaning “wrapped with damp moss to keep the stems moist”. This term is defined as

“a small, compact and round bouquet of mixed fragrant flowers like violet, roses and herbs like sage, rosemary and rue were arranged in a random pattern or organized in concentric circles or spirals.”

To expand the life of these bouquets a holder was created. These clusters were sometimes placed in delicate, handheld, decorative metal bouquet holders now becoming more of a fashion accessory. Some holder styles featured a pin to be inserted through the side of decorative holder and through the stems to secure the bouquet into its decoration. Others had tiny legs which folded out, allowing the holder to actually stand on a table when not carried. The more formal nosegays had concentric rows of flowers with a rose often in the center. The informal nosegays were more casually arranged.

Today’s hand-tied bouquets can be seen in a variety of design styles using botanical materials to reflect forms and used to represent emotions. These bouquets are created and presented to a recipient for many reasons. Hand-tied bouquets can be given as a gift, for a birthday or any celebratory function. The design is appropriate for giving to a patient in the hospital as it already arranged and is just place into a vessel of water. The bouquet can be presented for a stage performance or to the winning athlete an important sports function. It is very trend savvy and fashionable for a bride to carry a hand-tied bouquet as her wedding bouquet. They are also used for bridal attendants and can be created as a small clutch bouquet that is carried by a flower girl, the mother of the bride or mother of the groom.

The concept of a hand-tied design is that the bound bouquet can be carried, held or place into a vase or container of water without untying it. There are a variety of forms, sizes and styles that suit any occasion. Hand-tying is a construction process in the design technique of bouquet making. The bouquet of botanical materials are mechanically constructed by using a binding or tying method to secure the stems together.
So where do we start? When designing a hand-tied bouquet there are many factors to consider. The conceptual thought is the accumulation of ideas thus forming various field of interest that affects the designer or artist’s thinking.

For hand-tied bouquets the history obviously plays a dominate role in their development. But it is extremely important to apply the elements and principles of design according to The AIFD Guide to Floral Design Terms, Techniques and Traditions as this creative process begins and ends.

We might follow these steps:

- Determine the Construction Design Technique(s)
- Determine the Form
- Choice a Design Style
- Selecting the Color Palette
- Gather the Flowers
- Preparing Your Product
- Begin the Assemblage Process
- Applying Additional Techniques

**Step one: Determine the Stem Placement for the Construction Design Technique(s)**

When determining the construction concept of your composition there are several processes you can follow. There are three basic stem positions you can use to build your hand-tied process. The fourth process is a combination of the three basic stem positions.

**Spiraling:** the process of continually placing stems adjacent to one another, angled around a central axis. The materials in a bouquet thus constructed evenly support one another’s weight, allowing the composition to stand by itself when placed on a table.

**Parallel stem placement:** having parts arranged in the same direction or course with continuous equal space between them.

**Lacing:** a method of crossing and interweaving stems to form a framework for holding plant materials in position within a container. Successive stem placements result in a mechanically solid vase design, ensuring secure delivery. This technique can also be used for making hand-tied bouquets.

**Integrated stem placement:** the use of two or more stem placement techniques in the same composition.

Choosing one of these processes will help you to determine the form you will then choose.
Step two: Determine the Form

**Form:** is the shape or configuration of an individual component of the composition the overall, three-dimensional, geometric shape or configuration of a floral composition.

**Geometric:** shapes; structures, decorative patterns or designs based on geometric forms.

A bouquet can be any number of geometric shapes:

- **Circle**
- **Triangular**
- **Square.**

A **closed-form** design expresses its overall geometric shape in a fairly literal sense, exhibiting relatively little open space among its components, whereas an **open-form** has a relatively spacious appearance and displays more **voids** in its construction. A **mass design** is one in which the form is emphasized over line as the dominant element and which incorporates little negative space.

**Circle:** a **closed- plane curve consisting of points that are equally distant from a center point. A ring.**

- **Round:** a planned composition in the form of partial sphere using radial stem placements.
- **Mound:** a raised mass on a horizontal plane.
- **Sphere:** a three-dimensional round design; a globe, orb or ball.
- **Oval:** a broadly elliptical, egg-shaped design.
- **Fan:** a semi-circular, radiating design in which lines emerge from a center point much like spokes from the hub of a wheel.
- **Crescent:** a narrow curved shape that tapers to a point at each end.
- **Hogarth:** an elegant, elongated “S” shaped curve, often interpreted in design that is also known as the “line of beauty”. Named for the 18th century English artist William Hogarth.
- **Conical:** a three-dimensional geometric figure having a circular base and sides that taper evenly to an apex.

**Triangle:** a **plane figure with three sides and three angles.**

- **Symmetrical:** an **equilateral or isosceles triangle.**
  - **Equilateral:** a design form in the shape of a triangle with all three sides of equal length.
  - **Pyramid:** a solid figure having a square base and four triangular sides meeting at a point.
Isosceles: a triangular form where two sides are of equal length and the third side is a different length. Has symmetrical balance.

Asymmetrical: without symmetry; not having a mirror image on both sides of a plane, axis or point.

Right: an asymmetrical triangle-shaped arrangement with a vertical line perpendicular to a horizontal line forming a 90-degree angle within the triangle. Sometimes referred to as a L-shaped design.

Scalene: an asymmetrical triangular design in which all three sides are unequal in length.

Square: an elongated four-sided parallelogram consisting of equal sides and right angles.

Cube: a form having six equal square sides.
Rectangle: a planned composition in the form of a rectangle.
Vertical: a tall narrow design that does not extend beyond the width of the container.
Diagonal: a design pattern in which the primary axis lies on a slant of approximately 45 degrees.
Horizontal: A composition in which the predominant line(s) are parallel to the plane of the horizon or the surface base.
Obelisk: a planned composition in the shape of an obelisk.

See Derivative Designs Chart- The Guide, page 136
See Geometric Design Chart- The Guide, page 191

Step three: Choose the Style

Now that you have determined your form, the actual style of the bouquet may be selected. At this point you need to decide on 2 different techniques for your design style development:

Non-armature construction
Armature construction

Armature is defined as: a decorative and or supportive framework for a floral composition that is typically constructed from natural materials, such as branches. Non-natural materials, such as wire, may also be used.
Any type of design style can be chosen, some styles lean more towards armature constructions for their design development. Always remember to apply the element of size (the dimensions of line, form and space) and the secondary principle of scale (the relative ration of size, or the relationship of the composition to the surrounding area or environment).

Some of the most common of styles used for these design techniques are:

- **Biedermeier**: a bouquet style similar to the nosegay and named after a German style of interior design. May be designed with compact spiraling or concentric circles, each featuring a particular flower or color.
- **Cascade Design**: an arrangement that features descending line of plant material in the manner of falling water.
- **Colonial Design**: a compact, tightly massed composition of plant materials, typically symmetrical and round, with flowers arranged in fairly regular patterns. This design is collared with a ring of foliage or lace.
- **Enclosure Design**: a type of circular shelter design resembling a bird’s nest. Several layers of plant materials encircle the center to create a feeling of protection and at the same time draw the eye inward.
- **Formalinear**: an asymmetrical balance design of few materials, usually placed in groups that emphasizes forms and lines. Generous use of space accentuates the individual flowers, leaves, stem angles, colors, and textures. Radial stem placement is typical.
- **Line/Linear Design**: a general term for any western line design that combines the linearity of ikebana with massed character of classic European arrangements. Line mass describes a geometric design in which lime materials and massed quantities of flowers are used together to establish the overall form of the composition.
- **Mass Design**: a general term for any composition in which the element of form has more dominance than the element of line. Mass design are typically dense with plant materials and incorporate relatively little negative space as a means of emphasizing the overall shape of the arrangement.
- **Millefleur**: a design utilizing many varieties and many individual blossoms of similar sizes primarily in circular Shapes. From the French meaning “1,000 flowers”.
- **Tussie –Mussie**: a dainty, compact round bouquet of mixed fragrant flowers and herbs arranged either in a random pattern or organized in concentric circles.
- **Volumetric Design**: a three-dimensional, closed form composition consisting of a clearly designed geometric shape which is wholly or partially filled or outlined with plant materials and/or decorative accents.
- **Waterfall Design**: a cascading design resembling a waterfall in appearance. Descending lines sometime intentionally crossed and several layers of different, typically sheer materials with delicate textures emphasize depth and create a flowing effect.
Step four: Select the Color Palette:

Color (the visual response of the eye to reflected rays of light) is probably the most influential element when it comes to choosing your flowers. The choices made for the bridal or bridesmaid’s hand-tied bouquets many times begin with a discussion of colors chosen for the wedding. Depending upon the occasion, the environment and the personality of the recipient also plays into the application. Color terminology that is important to understand is as follows:

- **Value**: the degree of a color’s purity relative to the gray scale.
- **Warm/Cool**: aggressive (red, yellow and orange) and recessive (blue, green and violet) colors
- **Monochromatic**: a grouping of different values of one hue which may include achromatic colors (black, white and gray)
- **Analogous**: a grouping of three adjacent colors on the color wheel: one color dominates
- **Complimentary**: a pair of hues directly opposite on the color wheel.


Step five: Gather the Flowers

Choosing flowers for the bouquet is a combination of factual information regarding time, place, conditions, etc., the best choices for the style and colors chosen. Professionalism and a strong knowledge of flowers, varieties available, characteristics of each variety and care and handling will help make the best selections.

See Flower Identification Chart – The Guide, page 140

In selecting your product you must keep in mind the principles of **unity** (oneness of purpose, thought, style and spirit, the organization of components into a harmonious whole resulting in a cohesive relationship of all parts) and **proportion** (the comparative relationship in size, quantity and degree of emphasis between components within the composition. It is the relationship of one portion to another portion or the relation of one portion to a whole).

Also pay attention to the elements of **texture** (the surface quality of materials as perceived by sight or visual or by touch or tactile) and **fragrance** (a sweet or pleasing order, perceived by the sense of smell).

The **form** of the flowers as well as the overall bouquet is also very important. Flower and foliage form is observed by the predominate dimensional qualities with regard to its shape, structure and usage within a composition. The **inflorescence** or the arrangement of the flowers on the axis determines the categories of the forms. Some examples of these forms are:
Filler flower: any open form inflorescences that is branched or clustered and used to fill space.
( i.e. Gypsophila, wax flower, limonium)
( foliage i.e. tree fern, smoke tree)

Form Flower: any inflorescence having shape as its most distinctive characteristic.
( i.e. iris, heliconia, calla)
( foliage i.e. monstera, silver dollar eucalyptus)

Line Flower: any inflorescences having a spike-like or linear form or featuring an elongated stem.
( i.e. gladiolus, liatris, larkspur)
( foliage i.e. scotch broom, equisetum)

Mass Flower: any closed form inflorescences having a single, dense, rounded head at the top of the stem.
( i.e. carnation, dahlia, chrysanthemum)
( foliage i.e. camellia, aspidistra)

Renegade Flower: a term sometimes used to describe an inflorescence which may fall into more than one flower form.
( i.e. bird of paradise)
( foliage i.e. ti, flat fern, myrtle)

See Flower Form Glossary – The Guide, page 139 -144

The end result of your product choice must be a pleasing composition that compliments the design style and occasion.

**Step six: Preparing Your Product:**

In order to create the best possible hand-tied bouquet the product preparation time is essential. The conditioning of all the flowers and foliages must be completed prior to the assembling process.


Construction for the bouquet is based on clean stems below the binding point of the bouquet. The first preparation is the removal all foliages below this level point. This is done by stripping all the leaves, thorns, lateral branches and any other objects that might interfere with the assemblage process and may compromise the longevity of life of the fresh flowers. Place the cleaned stems into water while they await the assembly process.
Step seven: Preparing Your Tying Method:

The next decision of the design is to decide how you are mechanically going to tie the composition. This must be determined at the before the assemble process. There are many products and techniques that you can use to mechanically tie your bouquet keeping in mind the application for very soft stems. Some techniques are:

Binding: tying together materials, primarily mechanical.
Banding: ornamentally encircling material in concise and consecutive ring drawing attention to a particular component.
Wrapping: covering a single stem or bundle of stems from end to end with decorative materials such as ribbon, raffia, wire, etc...


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floral Mechanical Bindings</th>
<th>Floral Decorative Bindings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchor tape/bowl tape/bulldog tape/Davee tape/pot tape</td>
<td>Bark covered wire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable tie/zip tie</td>
<td>Bind wire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chenille stem</td>
<td>Jute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear tape</td>
<td>Raffia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth-covered wire</td>
<td>Balloon string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enameled wire</td>
<td>Ribbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flocked wire</td>
<td>Decorative wire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floral tape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay cord/waxing string</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taped wire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these bindings can be combined or the decorative bindings can also pose as mechanical.

Step eight: Creating Your Armature (optional):

With today’s design styles and the global design influence some creative armatures can be pre-made products. Choosing your armature is very much reflected on the design style you have previously chosen. Base this structure on the form of the style and use this decorative mechanical product to help support your flowers and foliages.

Armatures can be constructed out of natural materials (fresh or preserved) such as:
- Branches of any type
- Linear foliages and filler flowers

They can also be constructed out of many other non-natural materials:
- Decorative Wire
- Poultry Netting or Chicken Wire
- Permanent Botanicals
- Novelty Premade Items
A combination of both natural and non-natural materials can also be created for the structure. Creating these structures can be labor intensive. Keep in mind the binding process must be repeated with consistent product and securing techniques.

**Step nine: The Assemble Process**

Whether you have chosen a style that is a Non-armature or an Armature construction any of the design and mechanical techniques can be applied. The stem placement suggests the design form and style you have chosen. The design styles chosen maybe dominated by the element of **line** (*the vital visual path that directs the eye movement through a composition. The lines may be straight, curved, or a combination. May be actual or implied*). For example, a Biedermeier involves concentric circles, both the Waterfall and Cascade design styles flow from descending lines. Mass design and Millefleur depends upon the placement of textures and the correct color balance. Volumetric design contains a great **depth** (*the placement of materials at different levels within and around an arrangement*) capacity, where as Flormalinear design utilizes **space** (*the area in, around, and between the components of the design, defined by the three-dimensional are occupied by the composition*) and line to accentuate the flowers and foliages.

Also applying the element of **pattern** (*A repeated combination of line, form, color, texture, and space as a single component. Like a coleus leaf, snowflake, spider web, underside of a mushroom*) and the secondary principles of **repetition** (*The repeating of like elements within a composition. Line, form, space, color, texture, pattern and size*) and **focal area** (*Areas of greatest visual impact or weight, centers of interest to which the eye is drawn most naturally. Emphasized are within the area of dominance*) are very important.

Here are the **four stem placement applications** and their assemblage process.

**Spiraling:** the process of continually placing stems adjacent to one another, angled around a central axis. The materials in a bouquet thus constructed evenly support one another’s weight, allowing the composition to stand by itself when placed on a table.

The most common hand-bouquet is created with a spiral technique process of application and it begins with these basic steps:

- Begin by holding one flower or piece of foliage upright between the thumb and forefinger. (usually a right-handed person will hold the design in the left hand and introduce new materials using their right hand and vice versa for a left-handed person, but this is a matter of choice and ease of assembly.) This first placement of the stem becomes your central axis of the bouquet. Stem distribution begins around this base structure. As the bouquet becomes larger and more flowers are used the hand will now hold the bouquet rather than still within the thumb and forefinger thus relaxing the products into the palm of your hand.
• Add flowers and foliages by placing the next stem alongside the previous stem. All stems are introduced with the flower head to the left and the stem to the right. By angling the head of the flower outwards creates a wider shape to the design.

• To maintain an all-round shape the bouquet should be turned slightly. All stems will spiral.

• To introduce flowers and other products to the back of the bouquet the design should be turned so the “back” now becomes the “front” and the procedure is then the same…flower head to the left and the stems to the right.

• The area of intersection of these stems is called the binding point or tying point. Never criss cross any stems. Doing this will cause pinching of the stem of the product and may obstruct the water flow through the vascular system of the stem. Always introduce each stem the same direction as suggested above at the binding point.

**Parallel stem placement:** having parts arranged in the same direction or course with continuous equal space between them.

The objective of a parallel or vertical hand-tied bouquet creates a linear line appropriate for presentation or arm bouquet or to establish height into a container. The line movement of the flowers can project a fan shape or relaxed form as long as the stem placement remains parallel.

• Begin by holding one flower or piece of foliage upright between the thumb and forefinger. (usually a right-handed person will hold the design in the left hand and introduce new materials using their right hand and vice versa for a left-handed person, but this is a matter of choice and ease of assembly.) This first placement of the stem becomes your central axis of the bouquet. Stem distribution begins around this base structure. As the bouquet becomes larger and more flowers are used the hand will now hold the bouquet rather than still within the thumb and forefinger thus relaxing the product into the palm of your hand.

• Add flowers and foliages by placing the next stem alongside the previous stem.

• To maintain an even shape the bouquet should be turned slightly. All stems will be placed side by side.

• To introduce flowers and other products to the back of the bouquet the design should be turned so the “back” now becomes the “front” and the procedure is then the same.

Because of this stem placement there is not an intersection of stems for an obvious binding point or tying point. You have a choice of binding locations along this parallel stem column keeping in mind the stem length is usually 1/3 of the overall design.
**Lacing:** a method of crossing and interweaving stems to form a framework for holding plant materials in position within a container. Successive stem placements result in a mechanically solid vase design, ensuring secure delivery. This technique can also be used for making hand-tied bouquets.

- This application uses the container as its support method by placing the flowers stems along the edge of the container, laying them all the same direction, creating a support structure. Keep adding products to the desired capacity.

- The bouquet can then be lifted out of the vessel and then bound.

**Integrated stem placement:** the use of two or more stem placement techniques in the same composition.

Combining two or more combinations contributes to the development of creative design styles and personal preferential techniques.

**Step Ten: Adding Additional Techniques:**

Many design techniques can be applied to the assemblage process. By applying **Dominance** (the visual organization within a design that emphasizes one or more aspects. When one element is emphasized, others are subordinate) and **Emphasis** (area(s) in a composition given special attention) creates interest in the composition. Some we might suggest are:

- **Bunching:** a gathering of several similar materials together and inserting them into an arrangement as one. Labor saving technique.

- **Collaring:** completely encircling a flower, bouquet, or container edge with foliage or other decorative materials creating a finished appearance.

- **Framing:** using branches or flowers to enclose or showcase the material within. Defines space and may bring special attention to the focal area of a composition.

- **Grouping:** the placement of identical materials within a specific limited area, with each material maintaining its individual identity. There is space between groupings.

- **Shadowing:** the close placement of one material directly behind the primary material, giving a three-dimensional appearance. Resulting in a shadow or echo effect of the primary.

- **Sheltering:** placing one or more materials over or around another, lightly enclosing the materials within, to create an impression of protection.

- **Veiling:** layering light materials over more solid forms creating a light, almost transparent screen. Often used in the waterfall design.
When applying some of these techniques keep in mind the appropriate and correct placement of materials to achieve the proper technique application.

**Step Eleven: The finishing process:**

Now is the time to apply the binding or tying method you choose before the assemblage process. Once the bouquet is secure then the length of the stems need to be adjusted for the design style. For **visual balance** *(a primary principle that imparts a sense of optical equilibrium)* and **proportion** *(the comparative relationship in size, quantity, and degree of emphasis amount components within the composition)* stems are usually 1/3 of the overall design.

Whether it is a hand held or placed in a container or vase, the stems of the flower and foliages need to be cut at an angle at the same length desired. Even distribution of product should allow the bouquet to stand up by itself on an even surface or in a shallow container. Decorative applications to the binding or tying method can be created at this time. Additional Design Techniques can be applied during the assemblage process or after the completion of the hand-tied bouquet. The secondary principle of **Accent** *(detail added to a design to provide additional interest, affecting the totality of the design)* draws attention to certain areas and adds a creative flair.

Some additional design techniques you can apply are:

- **Braiding:** *a decorative technique of interweaving strands of fiber, ribbon, foliage, etc... by braiding, folding or pleating.*
- **Bundling:** *firmly tying similar materials together forming a radiating pattern above and below the binding point.*
- **Detaching:** *removing a flower’s petals to give the flower a new shape.*
- **Sewing:** *fastening or gathering materials together using wire, thread, staples, straight pins etc... Threading decorative string, ribbon or wire for decorative purposes.*
- **Suspending:** *the process of hanging or attaching an object from above so as to allow free movement.*
- **Weaving:** *the interlacing of materials to create a new dimensional or sculptural form.*