

Basic Design II "At Home With Flowers"

Illuminary Designs class notes, page 1

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Well respected designer and author Bob Thomas often stated that the creative process depended entirely upon mental perception and outlook. The mind that rests securely in the cradle of tradition and romanticism seldom reaches out for new adventure. Illuminary designs are a new adventure!

An Illuminary Design incorporates light/s for special effect: The lighting must be an integral part of the design.

- Light/s must be incorporated within the overall design: above, underneath, or in the container, etc. not placed as a spotlight.
- Mechanics must be concealed in an artful manner, behind or within other components.
- Effect of light may be subtle, may be distracting.
- Warm lights may be harmful to plant materials. Cool lights are preferred.
- Shadows become design components and should add to, not detract from, design.

Mechanics (wires, sockets, bulbs, etc.) must be in good repair for safety!

- Electrical capacity of exhibit facility and safety codes must be considered.
- Care must be exercised to keep lighting equipment away from any water source.

Suggested types of illumination include:

- battery-operated
- plug-in
- colored and other special effect lights
- prisms and prism paper to increase the effect of lights, but actual source of light must also be provided
- chaser lights
- light tubes
- lights enclosed in plastic tubing
- fiber optics

These lights may be used in the background, concealed in bases, placed in the underlay, or be within the container. Lights can be used to enhance a table design.

When writing a flower show schedule, it must indicate if electricity for mechanics is or is not available.

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How Illumination impacts the Principles of Design

BALANCE	Is design balanced between shadows and lighted areas? How is the balance affected by shiny areas or highlighted areas?
RHYTHM	Lights can enhance the rhythm by leading the eye through a series of lights or lighted areas, but it can also take away from other components in the design. Lights that intermittently change color can hold the eye, impacting rhythm.
DOMINANCE	The lights can be too dominant, becoming nothing more than a "Neon Sign". The lighting should enhance, not dominate, the design.
CONTRAST	Too many light contrasts can make a design seem busy affecting unity within the design.
PROPORTION	How much is too much? A conservative approach to the amount of illumination will protect you from having proportionately too many lights, or too much light.
SCALE	Lights may stand out, appearing to be larger than they are. The shadows created become part of the design and you should evaluate how this impacts rhythm, balance, proportion and scale. Think of shadows as tangible pieces of the design.

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How Illumination impacts the Elements of Design

LINE	The basic line of the design should be decided on paper before acquiring lights. They can make a design exciting by following a diagonal line, or restful and calm if placed on a horizontal. Curves make viewers smile and be happy.
COLOR	Evaluate if light has increased or decreased the color. Has it dramatized one area over another? Has light enhanced the background chosen?
LIGHT	The lighting should enhance, not dominate, the design.
TEXTURE	Some panels, backlit, have wonderful texture and add to the overall beauty of the design. Some lights are immersible now and placing them underwater can add luminescence. Lights can be placed inside tubes lined with optic cellophane. Fiber optics add extra texture to designs.
PATTERN	Are open areas of pattern proportionate with lighted areas? What patterns (shapes) are created by light and shadow?
FORM	Lights within a closed form can be exciting. Clear tubes can be lined with colored cellophane and lights placed inside. Lights shining out of holes in shapes, or shapes rotating with light emanating from within can add some zing.
SIZE	Light can impact how we perceive size of objects, with well lit objects appearing to be larger, and dimly lit objects smaller.
SPACE	Open space adds a needed rest for the eyes, as lighted areas appear dominant. Lighted areas can appear to be up front, defeating depth in the design. Contrasting elements are needed with bold expression to juxtapose with the lights.

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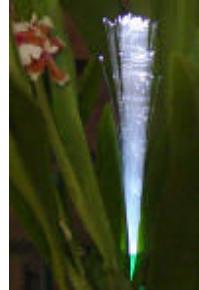
What To Bring

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For this design, concentrate on simplicity. For class, it may be easier to evaluate what light sources you have available and then build a design around them.

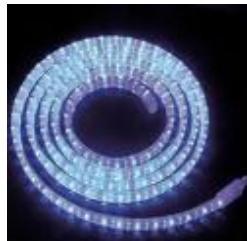


Battery operated LED lights are among the easiest to work with because you have no wires or cords to hide. They are generally available in several sizes and colors. Some are safe to immerse in water and can be placed inside a container.



[click for larger image](#)

Fiber optics can be battery operated or plug-in, and vary in size. They do not omit as much light as a battery operated LED-style light. Again, it is easier to hide the mechanics of a battery-operated fiber optic.



Rope lighting should be used with caution because it can become very hot. Seek out those with cool lights. The advantage of rope lighting is that it can be positioned in pleasing sweeps and curves that lead your eye through the design.

Christmas-tree type lights require a power source, but are cool enough in operation to be used under an underlayment or behind a backdrop; threaded through plastic or acrylic tubes; or wound inside a glass container if you are using a different container within to hold the water. Remember that the water line is part of the design, so you may want to consider an opaque container as your water source so that you can fill it to a lower level, keeping it away from electricity!

Underlighting can be effective if using clear containers. LED-type lighting is sufficiently cool not to boil your flowers.



Consider other sources of illumination: small flashlights, fluorescent tubes inside covering fabric or boxes or opaque containers. Keep it as simple as possible - the design type only requires **some illumination**, so long as the light is an **integral part of the design**. Other components should be chosen to take advantage of the light.

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