



Study Guide: Creating An L Shape Arrangement

**Rittners Floral School
Boston, Ma.**

Contents That You Will Need To Create This Arrangement:



- °Container
- °Foam
- °Bells of Ireland (4-5) or other linear flower
- °Roses (7-8 stems)
- °Fuji Mums (At least 3 stems)
- °Baker fern/Leather leaf or other foliage
- °Curly willow or other branchy material

The contents are approximate depending upon the size of your container, what flowers are available to you, their level of development, how dense you like your design, and your own specific tastes. For example we used seven roses. You may find it works well with six or eight. If we used snapdragon in place of bells of Ireland, it may take 6-7 stems depending upon the size of the flowers and your own tastes.

What is a Line Arrangement?

Line arrangements, are also sometimes called Linear Designs, Western Line, and even Geometrical Designs. Essentially they are floral designs that are based on geometrical shapes. These include a huge range of shapes such as verticals, horizontals, diagonals, L Shapes, inverted T, and a range of triangular variants (eg. equilateral triangles, right triangles and scalenes triangles) and more.

Technically a round or hemispherical shaped arrangement is also a “geometrical” shape but it sometimes can feel confusing to put it into the same category as a triangle. Yet round and oval shapes are so widespread and important for the floral designer that we usually classify it in its own category, as simply “round designs” (as opposed to line or linear arrangements.) You have already learned a round arrangement.

One sided Horizontal Shape



Many people who do floral designing find line arrangements to be difficult and/or intimidating. It is often easier to stick with round and oval shapes. But learning line designing need not be scary if it is taught well. (And that's why you are taking these lessons!)

Learning linear design **gives you many more design options in your floral art.** Being able to make linear designs makes you a much more competent designer. Your designing may even amaze your friends and family.

Linear designs **can be adapted to any season and any holiday.**

When you really get skillful at line arrangements you can even **play with multiple linear motifs within one design.**

Modular Vertical
Vase Arrangements



What shape are we going to make?

The arrangement that we are going to make in this lesson is called a “L shaped vase arrangement.”

It literally goes up and down, and then at the base goes horizontally off to one side.

Like a vertical line arrangement, L’s can be made very large and impressive (with very little effort!)

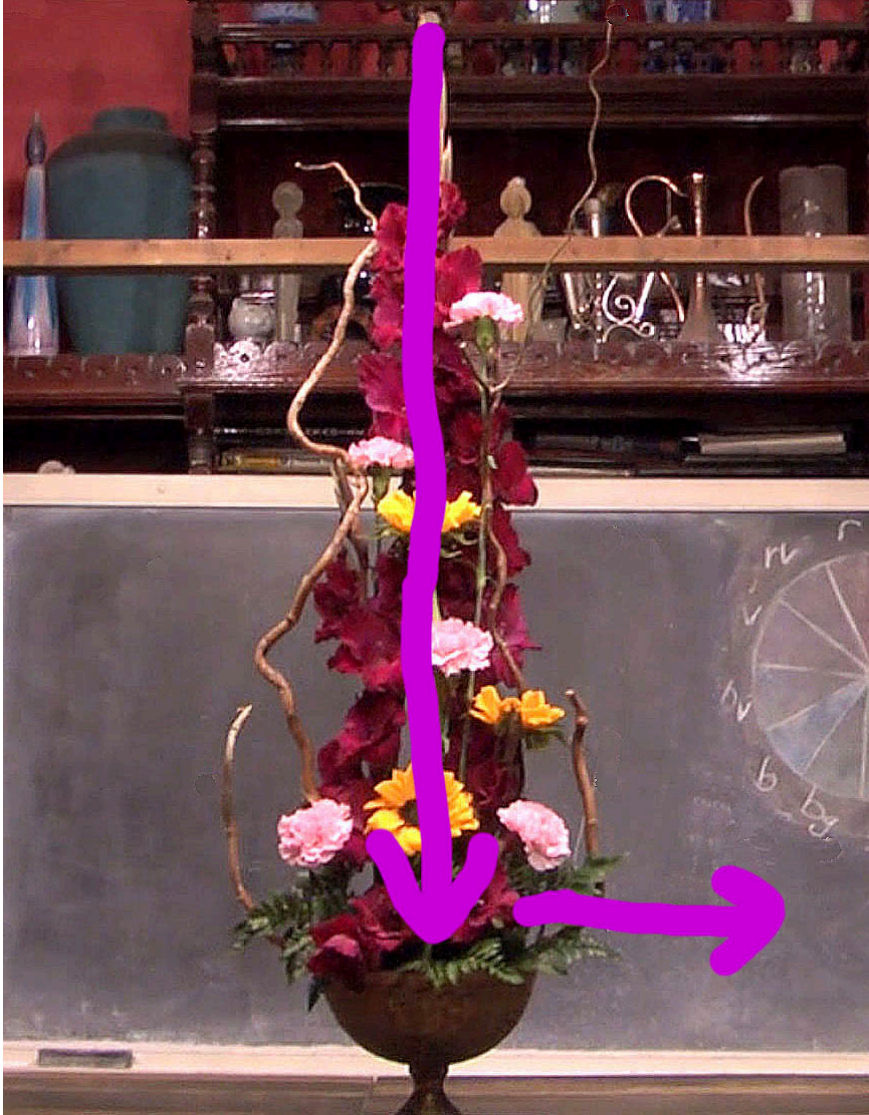
It is possible to make an L arrangement that can be viewed all the way around but they typically tend to have a front side and a back side. (This tends to be true of most line arrangements in general.)

It is a nice design for a reception area or entry area. It would work on a mantel or sideboard table.

With the appropriate colors and symbols it could be created for any holiday or occasion.



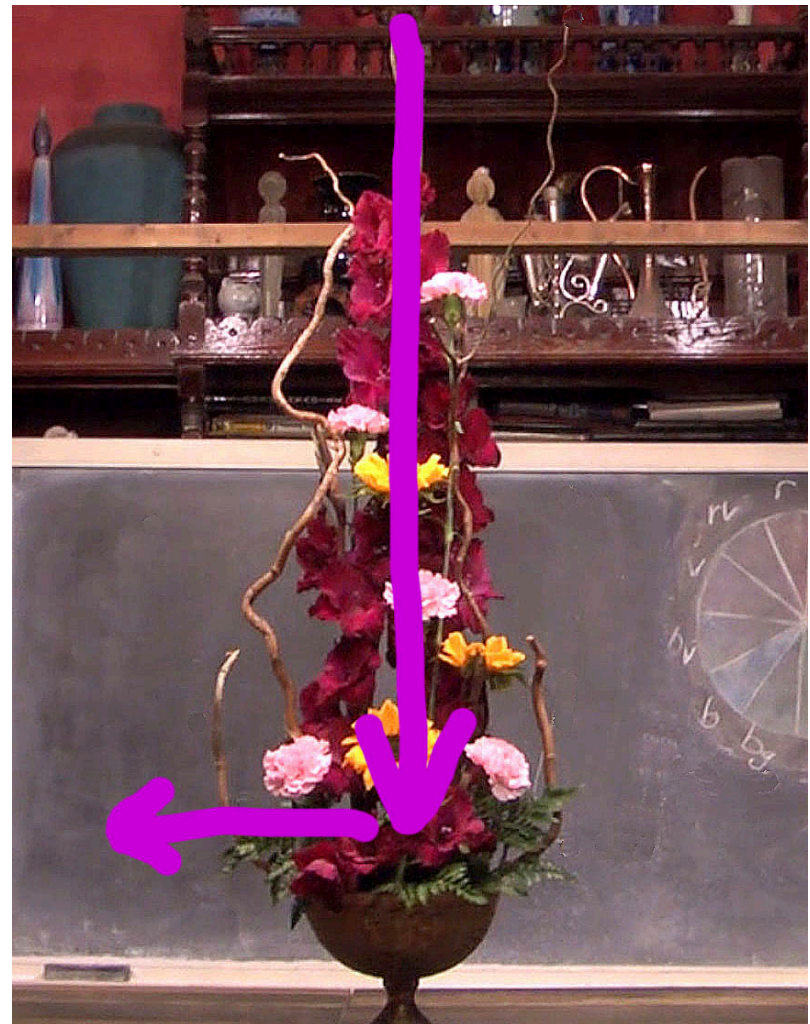
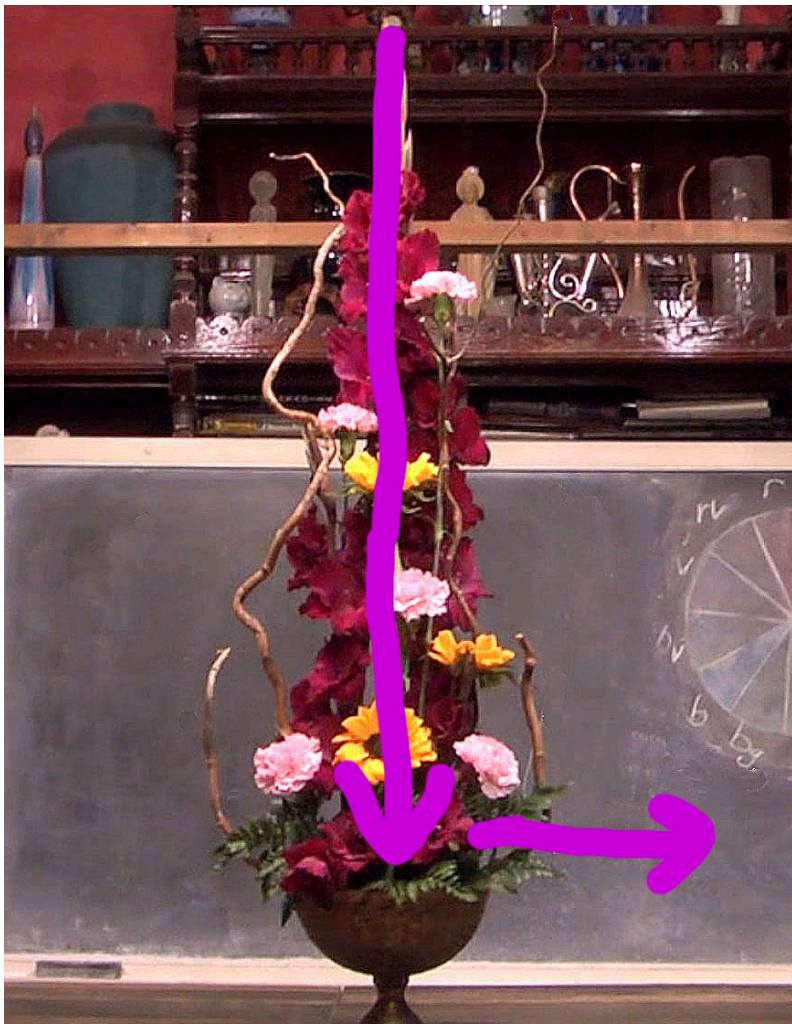
Dr Steve... An Action Photo!



It is very easy to change a vertical vase arrangement into an L shaped design.

Think about it. You could simply add a section to the lower part of the design.

While making the vertical, we could have continued by adding a glad or two to the bottom right and then add some carnations and sunflowers to follow the glads.



Let's pretend that we did add flowers coming out to one side or another of that vertical design.

We could create an L shape to look like an L. (Photo above at the left.)

We could also reverse the bottom of the L to go towards the opposite direction as shown above to the right. The addition of flowers to the bottom going to the left or to the right would result in two slightly different L shaped designs.

Start With Your Container:



Every flower arrangement starts with a container. Containers are among the floral designer's best friends. Like your live friends, each container has its own unique qualities.

These containers have the feeling of country jugs. On the other hand they also remind me of some of the vessels I've seen in some posh art galleries with all kinds of interesting glazes and finishes.

I picked the container to the left because I hadn't used it for a while and find it attractive. The green of the base works well with the bells of Ireland that will be used in the arrangement. Remember that the shape, size, color(s) and possible symbolism inherent to a container does affect how the completed design will impact the viewer. It is something to be aware of but not to be overly obsessive about. It is fun to experiment with this variable.

Any container could be used for this L shape vase arrangement. As long as it holds water/foam and you like it, it should work out fine.



I started by filling most of this container with discarded pieces of foam from a foam scrap bucket. Then I added a piece of foam tightly into the top. (If you don't have foam scraps, perhaps a shorter container would work better for you.)

This particular container required 1/3-1/2 block of foam at the top, but again your mileage may vary depending upon what container you choose to use. What is important is that you wedge your foam in tightly so it doesn't move around on you.

Some designers use green florist tape over the foam across the top of the container to attach to the opposite sides of the vessel to assure that the foam is not going anywhere.

I don't do that unless I have to. The reason is that any spots of foam on the top that are covered by the florist tape become dead zones as far as stem insertions are concerned.



One very easy way to get a linear shape is to start with some linear flowers. Bells of Ireland are fun to use. Look at how tall this design has become with one quick and easy stem insertion!

Now don't fuss if you can't find bells when you want to create this arrangement. Other linear flowers would include glads, liatris, larkspur, delphinium, and snapdragon. Any of these could be used. Would the design look exactly like the one presented? No. But you could still create a very attractive L shape vase arrangement and that is the purpose of this lesson.



Place a second bell of Ireland next to the first one but slightly lower. Place slightly to the right. Both of these stem insertions are approx a half inch from the rear of the container, at the back of the foam

Look how large this design can be! (Is it possible to scale it down? The answer is yes. A shorter container and shorter stems would easily do that.)

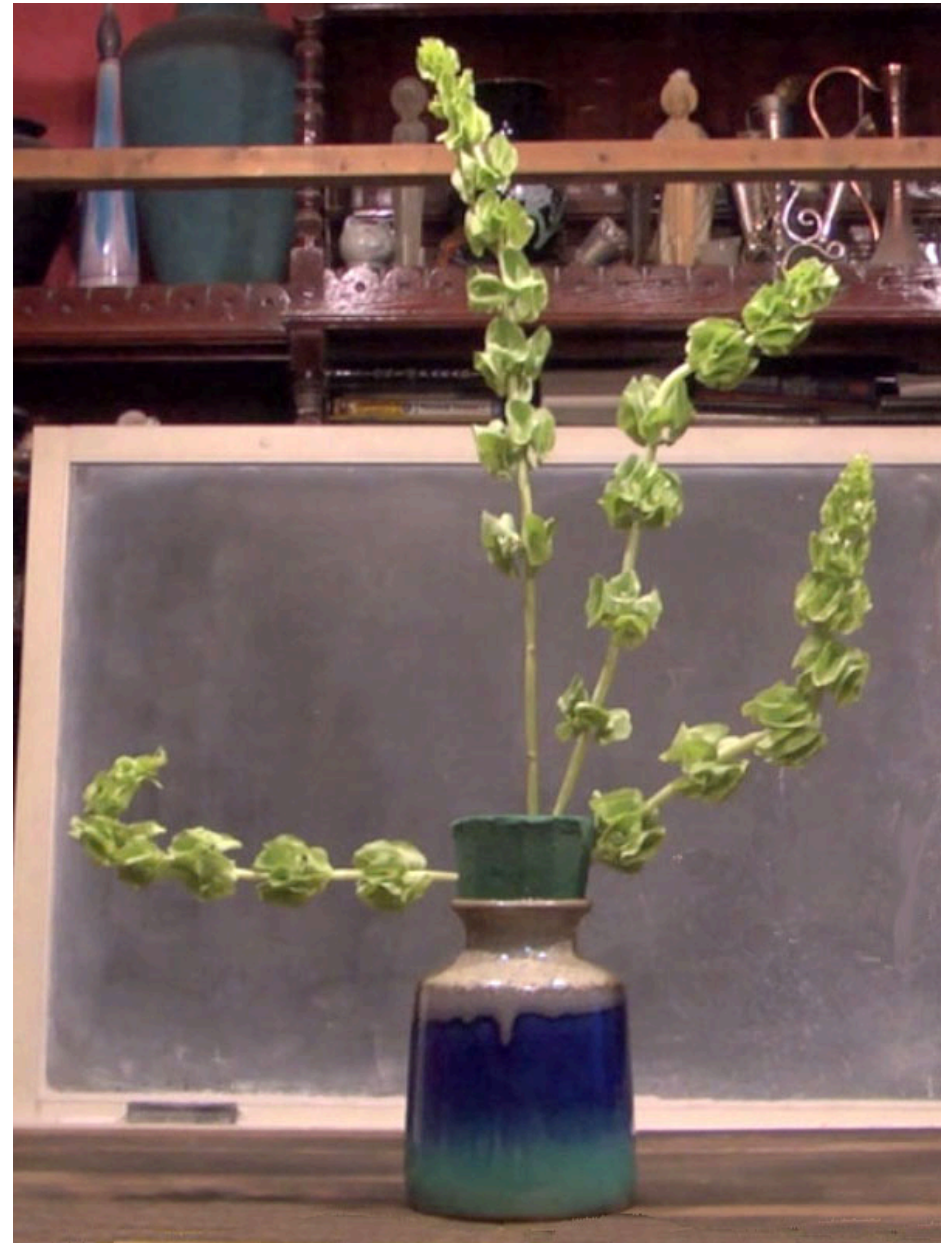
Keep in mind, though, a saying we have at Rittners. “The taller the design, the more you can charge for it.” Enough said!

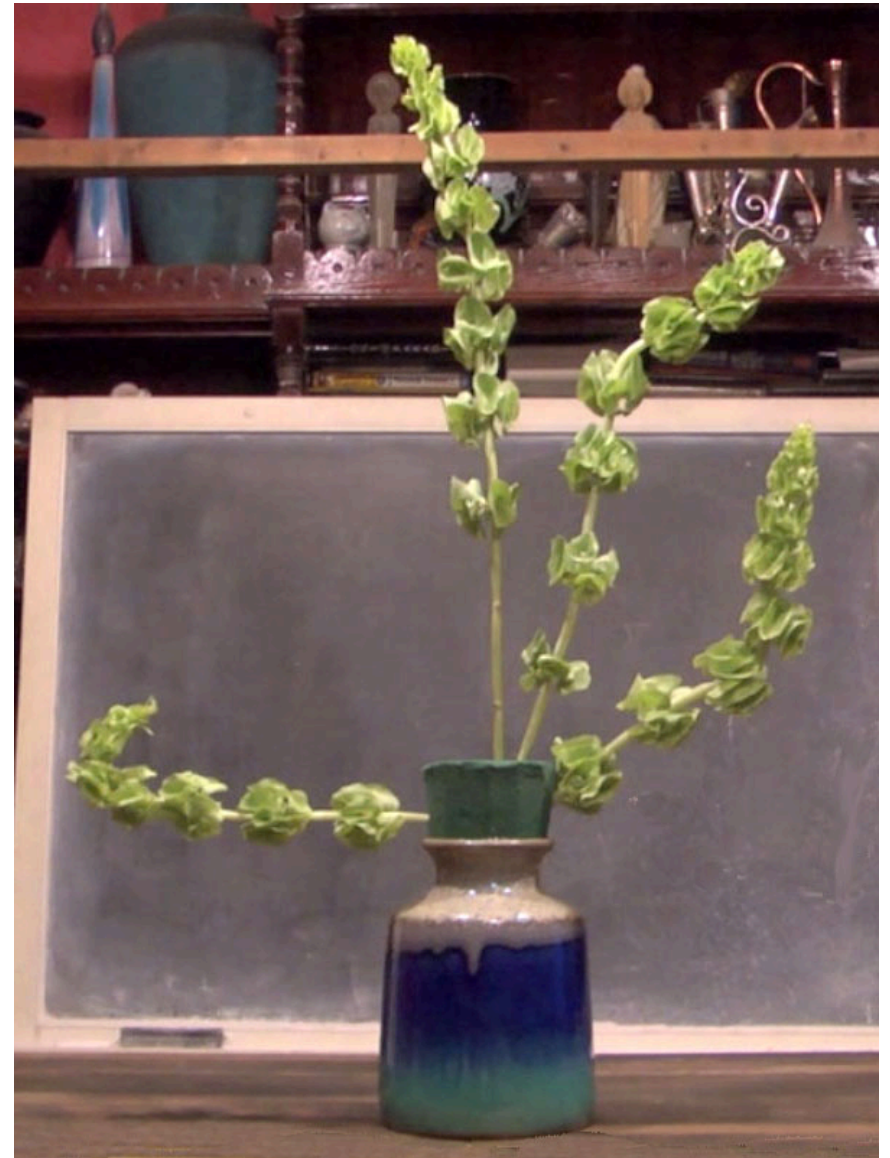
A third bell is placed lower to the right.

Notice we are allowing space in between the flowers. It makes it interesting to be able to enjoy not only the flowers but the space between them.



The fourth bell is on the bottom to the left. This gives us a framework for our L shaped design.





Notice that this arrangement is going to be a reversed L.



Regular L.



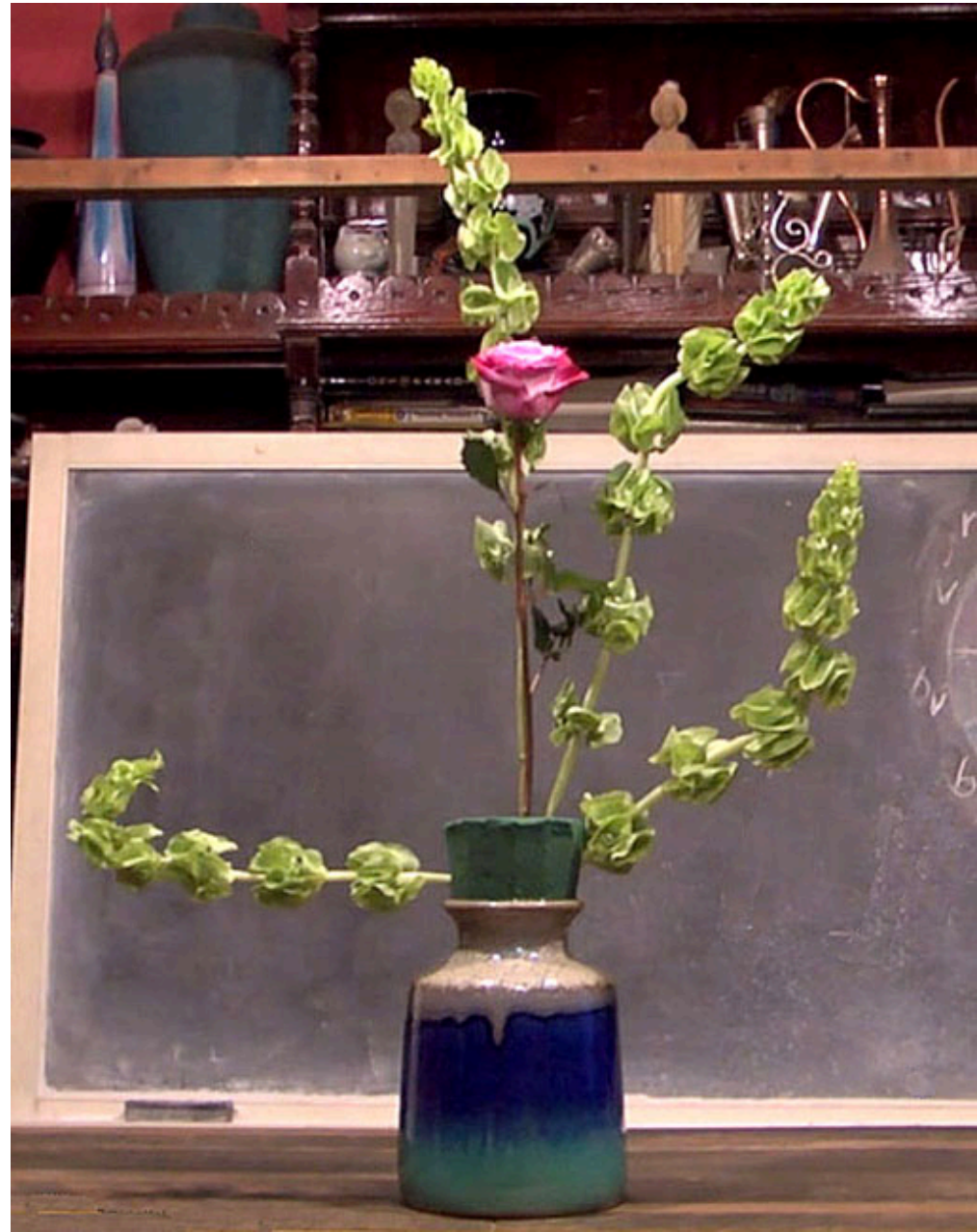
Reversed L.

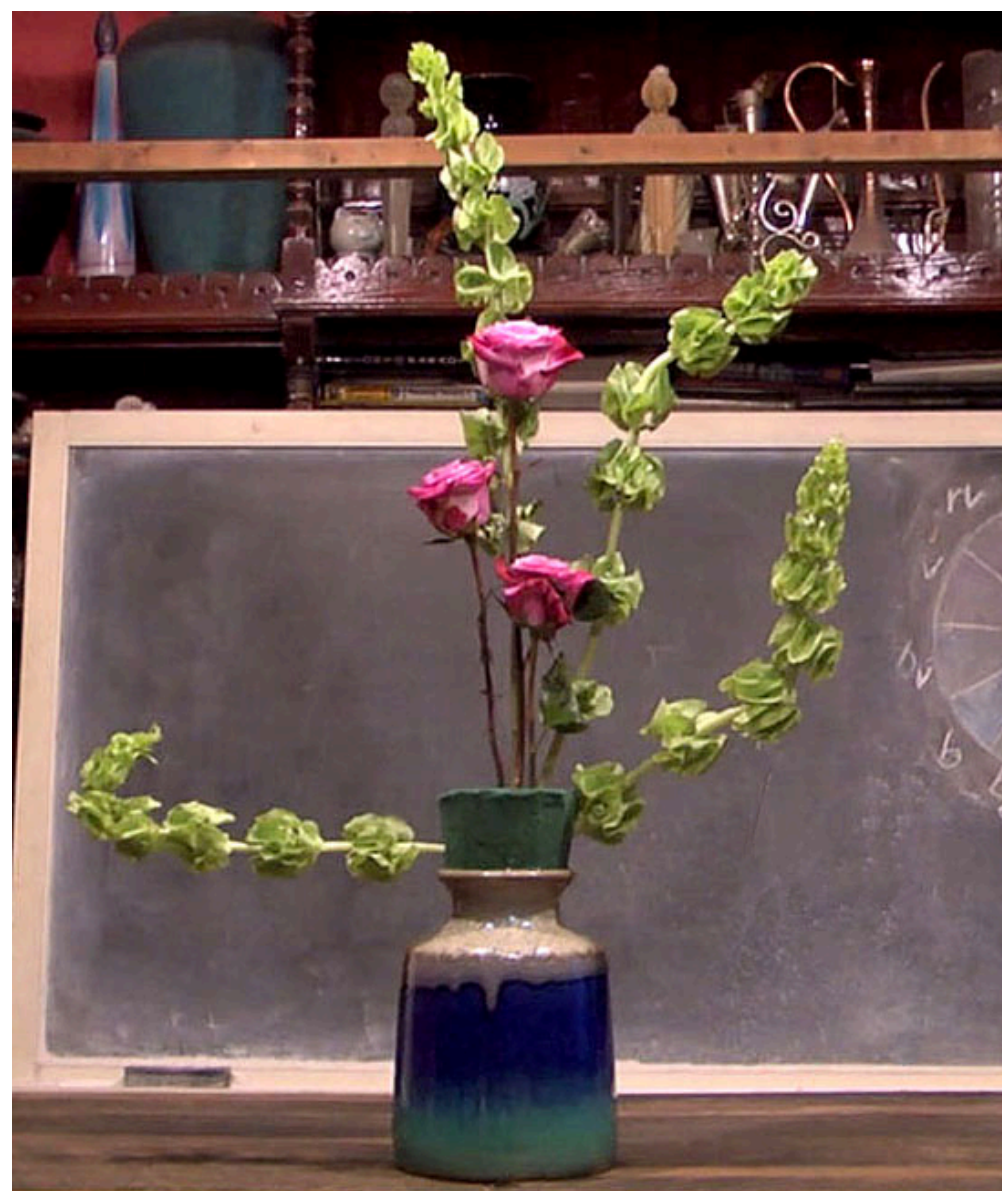
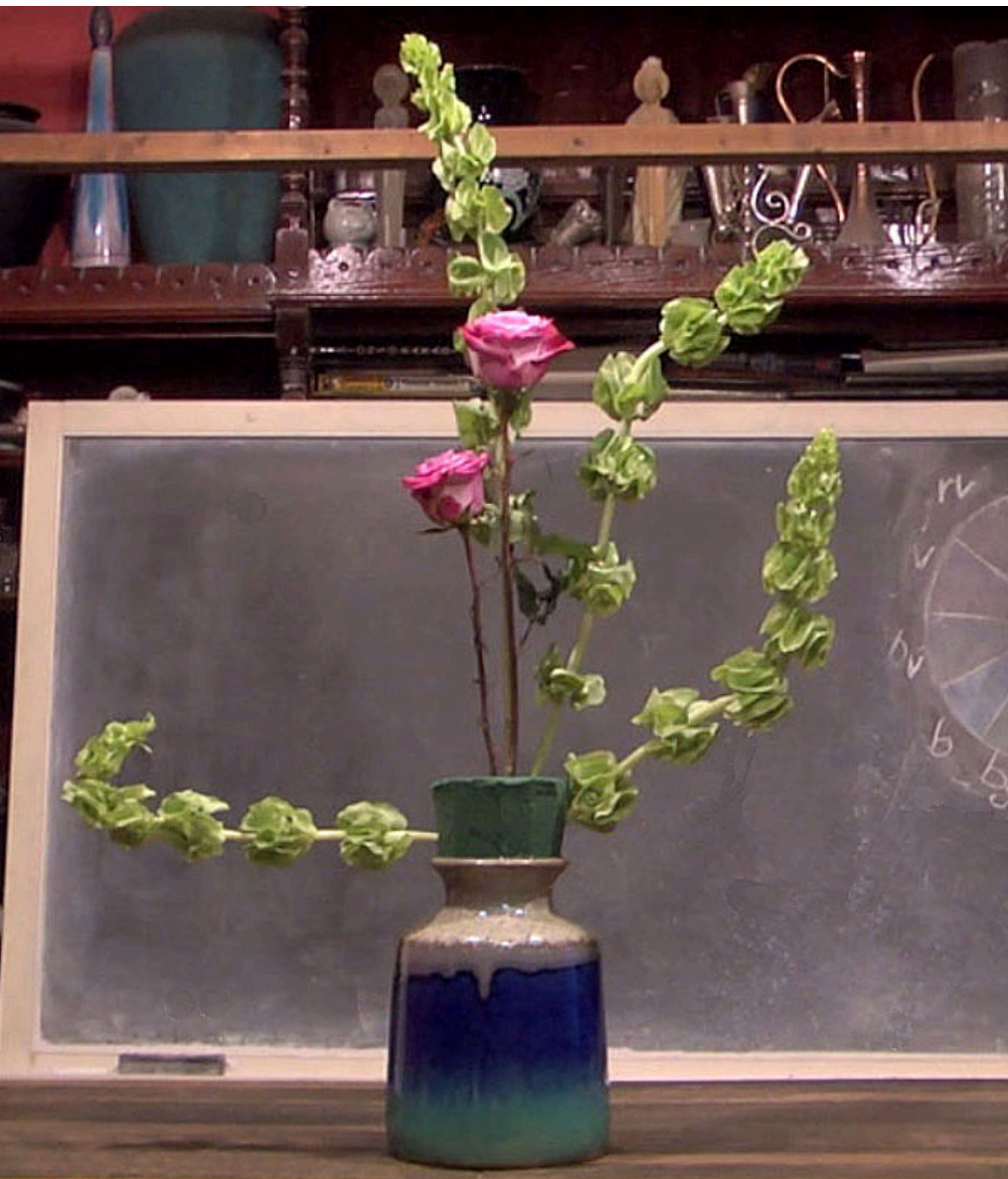
Why? Because we have a lot of confidence in you. If you can make one you certainly will be capable of making the other. We are showing you how to do a reversed one. If you would prefer to create your design as a regular L, that is fine too. The idea is to learn an L shape. Either variation will work fine. (It's giving you even more skills!) Consider: Place two of these on a mantel for double visual impact!



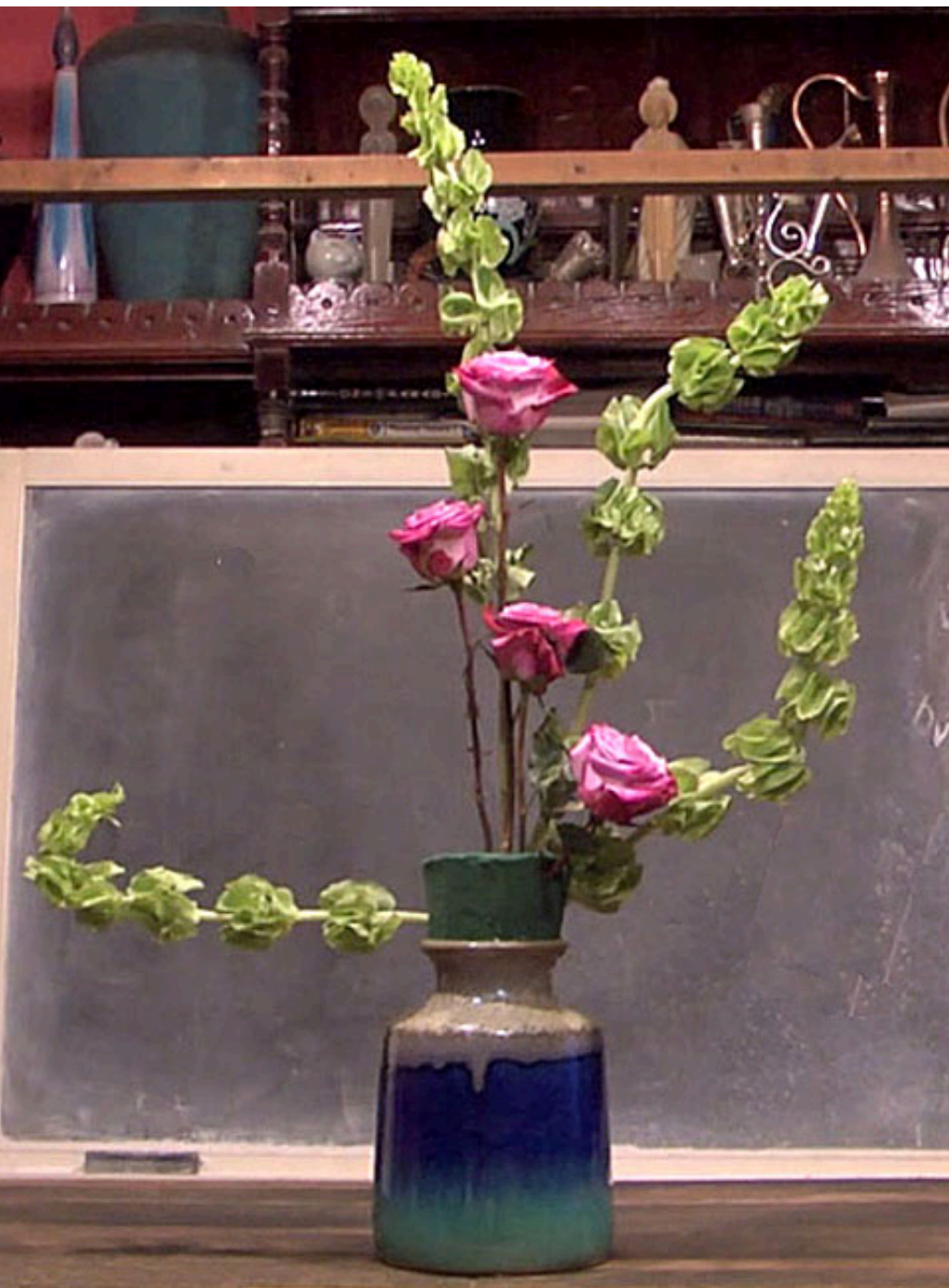
You can never go wrong with roses. .

Let's echo the bells of ireland with some roses starting at the top as shown.....





Notice that we are using a step like approach. One rose is higher to the right. A second is lower to the left. The third is slightly lower to the right... gradually making the roses shorter as we lead the eye from the top of the design down towards the container.



Think of the roses like little stairs.

Alternatively: We could have eliminated the bells of Ireland entirely, placed one or two roses higher than those shown, and created the line using only roses. It gives a different look.

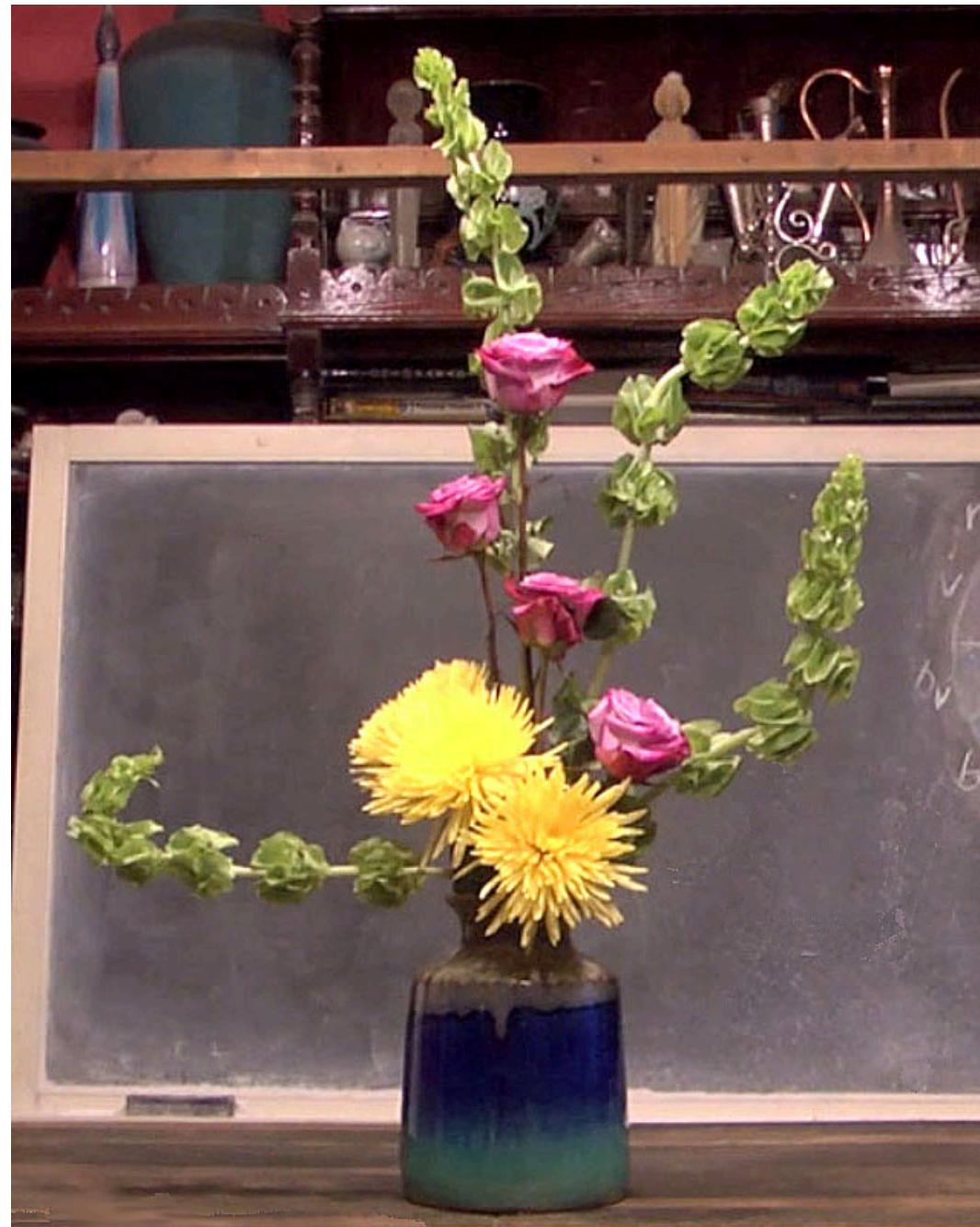
I think mixing a linear flower like the bells with the roses adds contrast and visual drama to the arrangement.



We need to fill in to the bottom section of the design where the vertical from the top intersects with the section shooting out to the left side. We could continue to do this with roses, but let's play with something else.

Fuji Mums will work well for this. They are large and colorful. They have an interesting texture too.





Place two more fuji mums as shown.

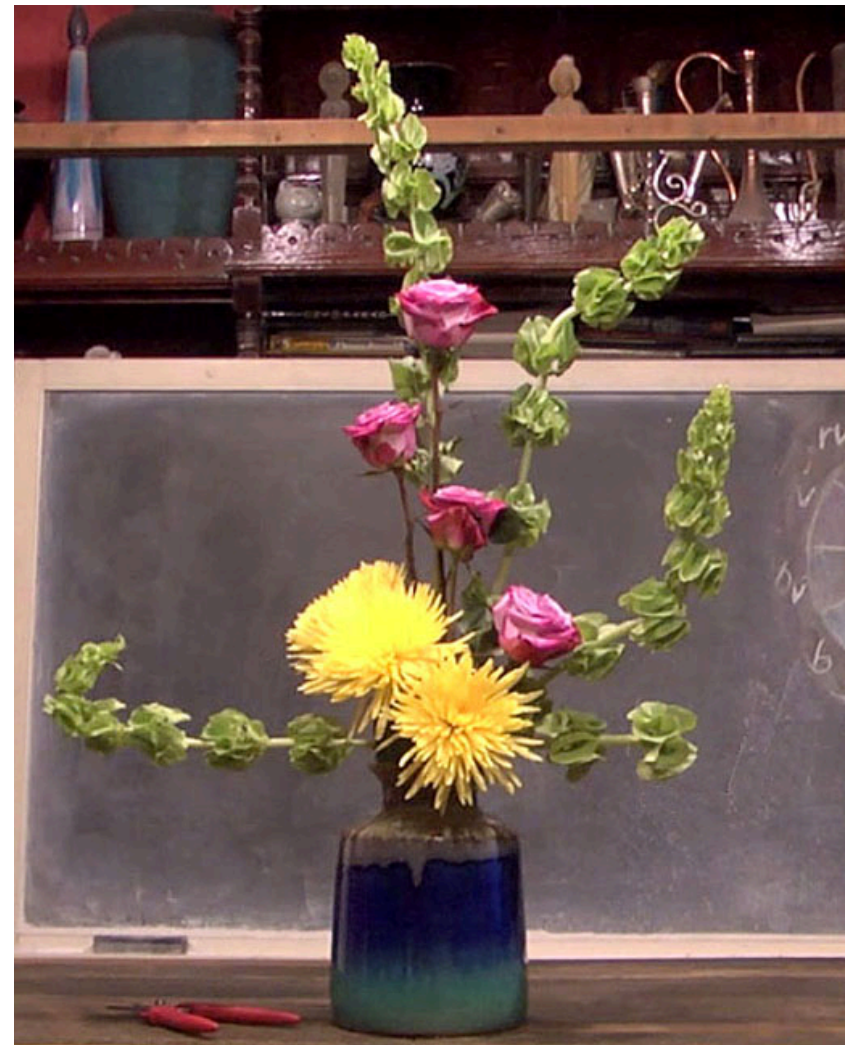
We have a fancy name for the area of the design where we placed the fujis.

We call it the **focal area** of the arrangement.

Usually a focal area is defined as the part of the design that tends to initially attract the eye. It has a very strong amount of visual weight.

In line arrangements it also tends to be at the convergence of the various linear elements.





Here is a little trick that is kind of fun. We could simply leave the bells as shown on the prior page. There is an illusion of the two lowest bells forming a gentle crescent.

But notice what we've done here. We can also take a bells of Ireland and clip a small section of stem and place it over to the right. Now we also have the illusion of a bell of Ireland going along the base of the design from left to right. It is optional. But it does make the design more interesting.

Now we can finish the arrangement with three roses going out to the left at the bottom of the design.

The arrangement is lovely and could be considered almost completed at this point.





If you want to make this arrangement feel even more dramatic and you want to create more visual interest, take some branchy material like curly willow and start placing it into the top and upper right section of the arrangement.



Continue adding some curly willow to the bottom left section of the design.





Isn't it amazing how the branchy stuff affects the arrangement?

Branches may not be for everyone. If you have more conservative tastes, simply stop at the last step with the three roses at the lower left, and don't add any branches.

It is always important to make sure your mechanics are covered. Adding a few pieces of baker fern towards the front and also around the backside of the design assures that the foam is not visible. While we are saving this step for last, we could have also done this just before the placement of the fujis.

Once you get the idea of “L’s” all kinds of neat possibilities become available to you. Notice that you can play with not only the directions of the L but the internal proportions as well.



Some Questions To Consider:

- 1. Why is an L shape design a line arrangement?**
- 2. What are alternative names for the category of design that L fits into?**
- 3. The choice of container that Dr. Steve used for the L was critical. True or false and why?**
- 4. Why did Dr. Steve start by using bells of Ireland in this line arrangement?**
- 5. Do you think the same trick could be applied to creating other line designs? Why or why not?**
- 6. There is only one direction an L can be made. True or False.**
- 7. What is a reversed L shape?**
- 8. Could this L shaped design be made using only mass or form flowers?**
- 9. What is an alternative to putting the three fujis in the bottom.**
- 10. What is the name given to the area of the design where the fujis were placed?**
- 11. Explain what the name for that area means.**
- 12. Dr. Steve has an investment in a curly willow farm. That's why he used the curly willow in the design. True or False. If false, then why did Dr. Steve use curly willow towards the end of the design?**



I think that you can see how once you've mastered vertical arrangements, that L's can offer all kinds of additional neat possibilities for your designing.

We hope you enjoyed this online lesson. We certainly enjoyed presenting it to you.

At Rittners Floral School in Boston we provide floral design instruction that includes a wide range of different styles and techniques.

Folks from all over the US as well as abroad, learn floral art skills from Rittners Floral School because we are great floral designers, and just as importantly because, as you can see, we are outstanding teachers!!

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