



## Composition. Still Life. Floral Bouquet.

There are so many different composition ideas to choose from when you want to create a floral bouquet still life. It could be full of many small, medium and large subjects as vases, plates, fruits, drapery etc. Or, it could be just one flower in a simple glass. All of them will look beautiful and impressive.



Yuko Nagayama

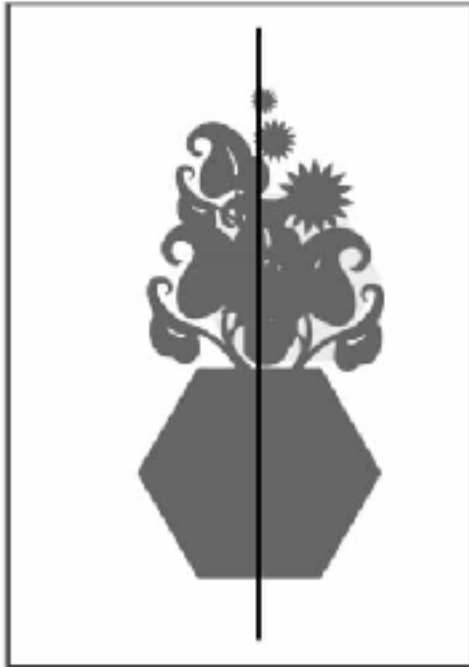


Michael Vrubel

What are the secrets of balanced composition?

**Part 1. Flower location.**

**Symmetrical** gives you feelings of balance and the correct order.



Vase with Flowers  
Jan Davidsz. De Heem, 1606-1684

Still Life with Irises in a Ceramic Vase  
Jan Brueghel de Oude, 1568-1625



Flowers in a Blue Vase  
Jaan Baptiste Semeaen Chardin, 1699-1779

**Equilateral Triangle** gives you feelings of perfect stability.



Flowers in a Vase with Shells and Insects  
Balthasar van der Ast, 1628

**S-shaped** composition gives you feelings of asymmetry inside of symmetry. It is breaking the static model and provide a more dynamic and live feeling.



Flowers in a Blue Vase Willem  
Van Leen, 18th

Some people would agree that an absolutely ordered and symmetrical algorithm is very boring. Some people find it very attractive. Some people tend to like more alive, dynamic, moving compositions with the presence of a floating energy. So, how to make a symmetrical composition is more interesting and alive?

Let's try to find the logic of asymmetry inside of symmetry.

### **Rhythm in the floral composition.**

Rhythm is a repeating of alike subjects. When we create a bouquet composition we can repeat the same subjects, the same sizes, the same "spots" or "sectors" a few times. For example, if you add a white daisy to a bouquet, you need to add a couple of daisies or white flowers with a similar size to the daisy.



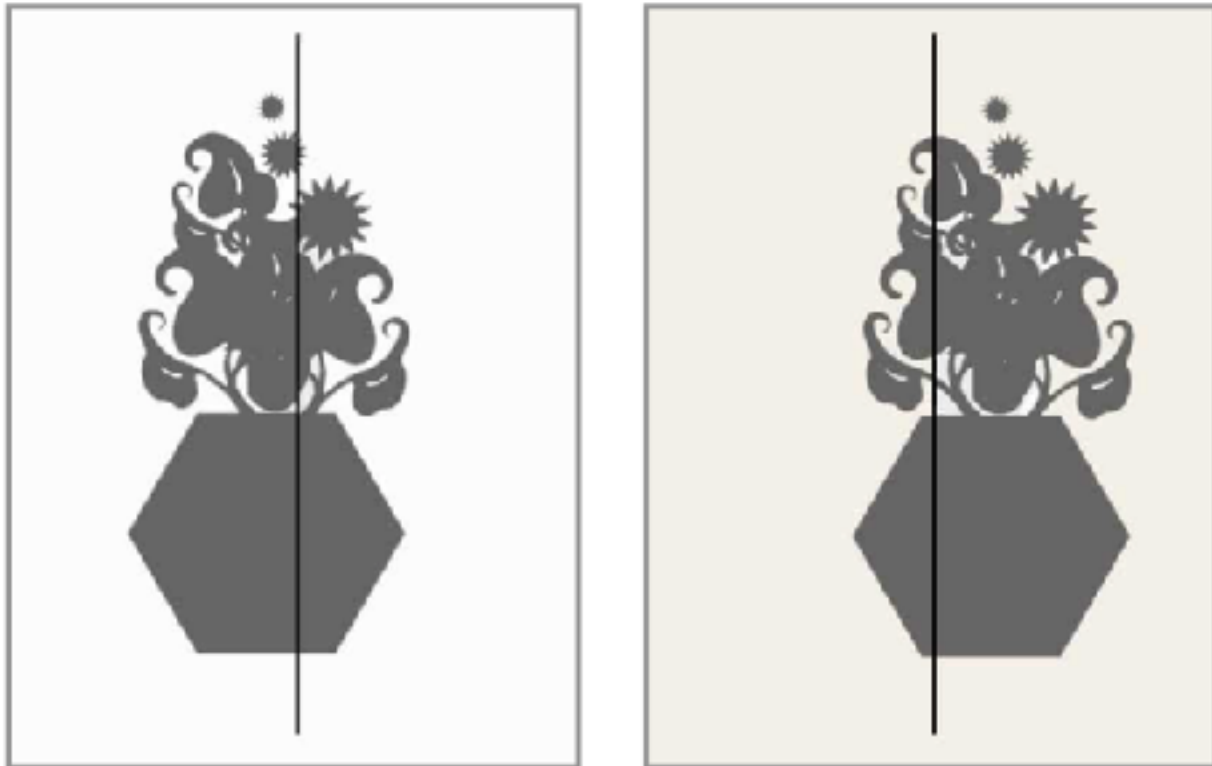
To create a balance in a **symmetrical bouquet** you need to repeat the same size (colour, shape) of flowers in asymmetrical order. You need to pay attention on the size of the repeating subjects and distance in between them.

The most balanced pattern is when repeating elements have three sizes: large, medium and small. For example, one large daisy will be facing you, the second daisy will be partially open and the third daisy will not be open yet. Please remember, the distance in between the repeating elements should not be equal.

Once you move the vase from the central line the composition becomes more alive and interesting. Your composition is now asymmetrical. What we need to do to fix the “broken” balance of the composition?

*A visual exercise.*

Look at these two composition and try to understand which one looks more balanced to you.



*Explanation:*

When we move the vase to the left the visual unbalance is less pronounced than when we move the vase to the right. This visual illusion happens because the right side of the painting is drawing our attention more than the left side of the painting. We get used to receiving information by reading from the left to the right, therefore our attention is always “drawn” to the right side of the painting.

Please, remember this visual trick.

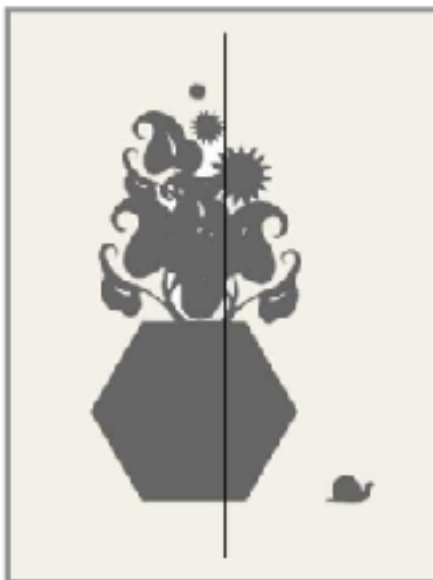
The vase “moved” to the right side of the painting will be always more difficult to create balance for.

What tricks you can use to balance asymmetrical composition?

First you can arrange the flowers making them stick out of the central part of bouquet. You can add long branches with small buds and leaves, decorative grass or herbs etc.



The second way - you can add small subject on the table next to the vase, thereby “filling” the empty part of the composition.



You can use background as an additional “subject” to balance your composition. For example, a mirror or large window frame behind the vase.

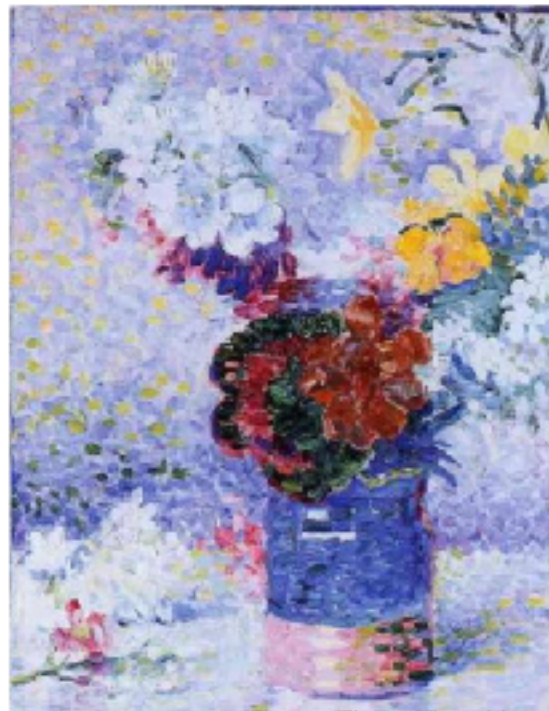


Bouquet in front of a Mirror  
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1876



Flowers and Fruits  
Konstantin Korovin, 1911

There is another way to restore the balance in your asymmetrical composition. You can create bright and colourful accents in the “lightest” (less busy) part of your painting.

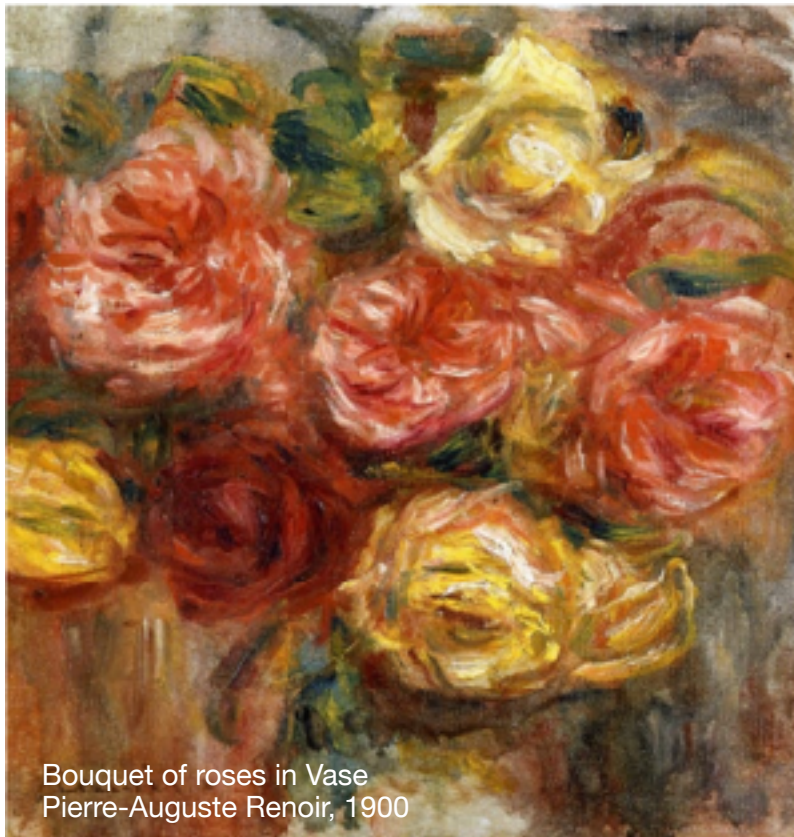


Flower in a Vase  
Henri-Edmond Cross

**The size of the flowers in your painting.**

There are so many different ways to create your composition.

To show the beauty of the flowers and let the viewers sense their fragrance by “blocking” the background and bringing a few larger flowers closer to the viewer.



Bouquet of roses in Vase  
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1900



To tell the story behind your composition you can add different subjects on the table, for example necklace, a tea cup, butterfly, stone, photo frame etc.

What story you would like to create? Can you see what these painters are trying to say to you? Look forward to talking with you next class to discuss your vision of the composition of your drawing or painting.



Still Life with Flowers  
Ambrosius Bosschaert, 1617



Flower in a Grotesque Vase  
Orsola Maddalena Caccia, 1635



Flowers and Fruit  
Henri Fantin-Latour, 1866



A Woman Seated beside a Vase of Flowers  
Edgar Degas, 1865