

# 5 STEPS TO CONFIDENT FLATLAYS



I'M STEPHANIE, A CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DESIGNER,  
AND STYLIST. I HELP COUPLES DESIGN WEDDINGS  
AND CREATIVES DESIGN SHOOTS INSPIRED BY  
THEIR STORY.

I started styling flatlays back when I was a teacher desperate for creative relief. It was in our humble newly-wed kitchen that I continuously let our meals get cold trying to get “the shot”.

It pained me that they could never look the way I wanted them to. I didn't have the right backdrops or props and I just didn't quite understand them- all I knew was that something, \*ahem\* a few things were wrong!

I believe that flatlays can radically shift your story-telling abilities and elevate your brand. They can make a 30k wedding look like a 70k wedding. They can make a new business look like it experienced, distinctive brand.

I've broken my flatlay process into 5 steps to guide you through my preparation as I approach each wedding or brand shoot. These steps will help you move toward each flatlay with confidence knowing that you have prepared.

An architect doesn't design a home without gathering all the information they can. A teacher doesn't create a lesson without studying the students involved. Just so, a creative doesn't approach a flatlay without doing their homework or bringing their toolkit.

HELLO!





How many of you are internally kicking and screaming to that hour or two during weddings when you have to style back to back flatlays? How many of you feel like you know one way to do them, so you repeat the same thing over and over and over again? How many of you just can't seem to find a way to curate props for them?

## I'VE BEEN THERE...

It can be frustrating and extremely stressful, especially when you are under pressure of a wedding or shoot schedule. I remember those feelings distinctly.

I remember fiddling with props and wedding details for moments that seemed like hours and STILL nothing ending up looking right. I remember wrestling with whether or not a flatlay needs minimalism or maximalism. I remember scouring the internet just praying for the right prop to fall into my lap and coming up with nothing.

## BUT NOW...

It takes me less than half the time it used to when I first started with flatlays. I have a confident mindset along with a plan when I arrive at any wedding or shoot. I choose when a flatlay needs minimalism or maximalism. I still scour the internet for hours for the right props, BUT I have an idea of what I am looking for, I know key words to search, and I know where to look.

## SO WITH THAT...

# 5 STEPS TO CONFIDENT FLATLAYS

## I CLIENT CONSULTATION

Get to know your client!

## II SIMPLIFIED DESIGN

Breakdown how you are going to photograph and style the details.

## III DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Choosing the backdrops and props that you will use.

## IV ARCHITECTURE STORY

Telling the story of the client through styling the details.

## V ARCHITECTURE DIRECTION

What images to capture.



ASK QUESTIONS

Who are they?  
What vibe do they bring to the table?  
Are they relaxed?  
Do they love patterns?  
Are they refined?  
Do they like structure?

# CLIENT CONSULTATION



IF IT'S A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER.

What emotions are they trying to evoke?

What story are they trying to tell?

What do they want to communicate to the client?

CLIENT CONSULTATION



Once I have these, I then move to colors and what's being photographed.

# CLIENT CONSULTATION



## WHERE AM I CREATING?

I prefer an interior window or an exterior spot with an overhang or some sort of shadowing bearing object. Indoor is slightly more helpful when it comes to the exterior elements such as wind. It adds insult to injury when you feel the satisfaction of finally arranging a flat lay you love and then everything gets swept up in the breeze.

# SIMPLIFIED DESIGN



## WHAT AM I CREATING WITH?

Am I styling an invitation suite?  
Bridal shoes? Jewelry? All of the above?

Or am I styling a small business' product? Their process?

There should always be a general shot list to follow when creating flat lays. If it's a wedding, you will have all the wedding details, bridal details and most often, the grooms'. If it's a brand, let's say a florists', you'll want every piece that they use within their process or whatever falls within the story they're wanting to tell.

# SIMPLIFIED DESIGN





# VENDOR CREDITS

## I PAPER GOODS

Lined Goods

## II FLORALS

LB Floristry

## III BACKDROP + RING BOX

Layout Collection

## IV ARCHITECTURE STORY

Telling the story of the client through styling the details.

## V ARCHITECTURE DIRECTION

What images to capture.



Besides creating the flatlay, this is my second favorite part. I love thinking through props and backdrops in a way that is unique to the couple or business owner.



## FOR WEDDINGS

What colors do they have in their wedding?  
What moods and styles have they chosen for their wedding?



## FOR BRANDS

What is their brand story?  
What pieces have inspired their brand?  
What is their heart behind their business?

# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Ok, now for my favorite part. Bringing all the pieces together to create the story-telling. This is where you do the thing- styling.

For this wedding, I knew all the details in advance because I designed it. I knew the couple, the mood, the style, the colors, and the design elements. I was able to prepare ahead of time, which doesn't always happen.

If you can do any photographs or find out any of these elements that go into a wedding or brand ahead of time, I highly suggest doing so! Ask your bride to send you pictures of the invitation or what colors her wedding is. You could even include it in your questionnaire to them throughout your process!

Another option is to contact the florist to provide some extra pieces to style with or get creative with foraging. I always bring scissors and clippers just in my styling kit just in case!

ARCHITECTURE STORY

## PHOTOGRAPHING THE WORK

Use your iPhone to help gauge the flatlay progression, because it helps you see the arrangement taking form while still giving you the freedom to move pieces. It also helps you see which pieces are crooked.

When you have a camera in your hand, it makes it more difficult to manipulate objects.

Start with the full photographs, then take photographs of each detail. You don't have to do it this way, but it can help you with remembering what all you've photographed. Once you've zoomed in, trying all the different nooks that you find within the vignette.

# ARCHITECTURE DIRECTION





# VENDOR CREDITS

## I PAPER GOODS

Lined Goods

## II FLORALS

LB Floristry

## III BACKDROP + RING BOX

Layout Collection

## IV RIBBON

Frou Frou Chic

## V CLAY PINCH DISH

Jen Vosler



# STEPHANIE ABBITT

STEPHANIEABBITT.COM  
@STEPHANIEABBITT  
HELLO@STEPHANIEABBITT.COM