

ABSTRACTION - WHEN IT IS AND WHEN IT ISN'T

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Lots of disagreement comes up when modern arrangements are to include abstractions. Most of our arrangers, in rose shows, know how to create a modern arrangement. They don't "know" what makes an arrangement ABSTRACT.

The basic premise is that an arrangement cannot include a rose which has been "abstracted". That means the bloom itself, or any form of that bloom - like a bud, must remain intact. The leaves may be removed, but the flower has to look like a rose bloom. The bloom should be an identifiable form of that variety. Let me clarify the point; an arrangement having only hard buds, and no other stages of development of that variety, should lose points under CONFORMANCE.

MINOR ABSTRACTIONS - There are three:

- (1) Wiring a leaf
- (2) Painting or treating dried plant material
- (3) Trimming, clipping, bending fresh and/or dried material into new form.

These are the abstractions that most of us see in shows. Leaves are often twisted, turned, wired, glued or trimmed to make a new shape. Please note there is nothing said about the bloom. My feeling is that it is to remain in the same form that it grew. These may be "minor", but they can have a "major" effect in the design

MODERATE ABSTRACTION - There are two:

- (1) Selection - using materials distorted by nature, insect or disease.
- (2) Placement - using some components in non-realistic ways.

This is often seen in shows. These are what we call "WAY OUT". These are the arrangements where foliage is removed totally from the roses" roses hang upside down from a thread, or foliage skeletonized by Japanese beetles provide the foliage for the design.

COMPLETE ABSTRACTION - This is the preponderance of non-realistic groupings but not everything in the design must be abstract; but abstraction is DOMINANT

There are six elements on which to determine whether abstract concept is dominant overall.

- (1) Plant materials used in a way different than the plant grows.
- (2) Components juxtaposed rather than transition/gradation.
- (3) Inter-penetration of space.
- (4) Non-radial placements. (Not from a single point of emergence, components not being neatly arranged)
- (5) Dynamic balance. (Versus visual balance)
- (6) Unexpected color combination.

In actuality, we see complete abstractions quite often: blooms are upside down or coming from many directions, giving little consideration to natural growth; often, only large exhibition blooms are used with no intermediary sizes; shocking color combinations are used. Non-conventional containers are used. The entire space allocated for the arrangement is used. The best designs of this type give consideration to disguising the mechanics of the arrangement.