

Wild Rose Study by Stephen Hayes

First Fire:

When you start painting wild roses think about the lights and darks. I think of medium tone as light and lighter. There are always different degrees of values as I go dark. I started this painting by blocking in my colors and working very light. I call it "painting on air". Next, my flowers were given a little detail. Fire at .016 on each fire in this project.

Second Fire:

I think about the background first. This is accomplished by setting in medium tones and then giving good punches of color in between the petals. Always remember irregular shapes create regularly. No two petals are alike. The petals are more square than round. After applying the background I might do some washes of color inside the flower. I do this by using very light colors.

Looking at the background, seeing the shapes of colors that are small, medium, and large in size and irregular, in these shapes, I find flowers and start painting in the center of the flowers. Then I try to find petals and paint them in, I leave the petals very illusionary and sometimes I put in great detail or half and half, then flow them around the new flower. I never paint in all my flowers in one setting or one fire. This helps to give extra depth to the design. If you paint all your flowers and all your leaves, stems, buds, and everything else in the first firing they will be at one level. Paintings which are painted in different firings will have much more depth. Always remember porcelain painting colors are transparent. Learn to use the transparency of the colors. Learn to brush different colors on top of the old colors as this will give more reality.

Third Fire:

Look at your piece. Find another flower or half flower and some foliage. This is a design of wild roses with wild rose leaves. Leaves come in different colors. So learn to use different colors in your leaves. Remember foliage is secondary; it's not the primary design. Learn to give an illusion of all the flowers and subjects in the background; you don't have to tell everything. Let the viewer have some imagination in your painting. Remember when you paint a subject: the first brush stroke perfect, the second time you touch it you bruised it, and the third time you killed it. Get out of death row and start giving life to your painting.

After painting and teaching for 52 years, I've come to the conclusion that there is no perfect flower, just as there's no perfect person so enjoy the irregularity of your painting. Art doesn't have to be realistic. It can be abstract or it can be a suggestion. It can be as you like. So have fun and enjoy what you are doing and others will get on the wagon and enjoy it too.