

## Denver Gem and Mineral Show theme: Mineral Oddities

Mineral oddities are those specimens that have characteristics that are different – that sets a particular mineral specimen apart from those that are just beautiful, although oddities can be beautiful. Oddities though, have a strength of personality. This strength can result in a mineral display that is truly memorable.

Some examples of mineral oddities are all pseudomorphs (including encrustation pseudomorphs) such as quartz after anhydrite, calcite after ikaite (AKA glendonites), hematite after siderite, goethite after calcite or muscovite after schorl. Other pseudomorph oddities are fossils replaced by minerals such as pyritized snails or opalized belemnites. Distorted crystals of all kinds are odd such as pseudocubic quartz crystals, quartz gwindels, faden quartz, flattened or elongated minerals such as pyrite bars and other crystals showing preferred directions of growth, scepter crystals of quartz, tourmaline or even phenakite and copper, gold and silver dendrites or wires. Also “odd” is the preferential, epitactic growth of one mineral on specific crystal parts of other minerals.

Twins are always unusual such as rutile or chrysoberyl sixlings, Japanese law quartz twins, feldspar twins, spinel twinning in galena, etc.

Minerals or rocks with anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or phytomorphic shapes will always be eye catching. Known mineral examples are the snail rhodochrosite from South Africa, the camel goethite from Crystal Peak, the seahorse and golden bear gold nuggets from California, and the owl image in agate from Mexico. Chinese viewstones (qishi [奇石] or literally strange stones) fall into this group. Humanoid shapes of questionable delicacy would also be odd and might attract unnecessary attention.

Mineral fakes are also odd; they should attract necessary attention for recognizing what not to fall victim to such as glued aquamarines in feldspar, cinnabar crystals glued on matrix, laboratory grown sulfur crystals, radiated smoky quartz crystals, carved quartz scepter crystals, or dyed zeolite crystals and geodes (agates).