

# Examples of Stencils and Embossing

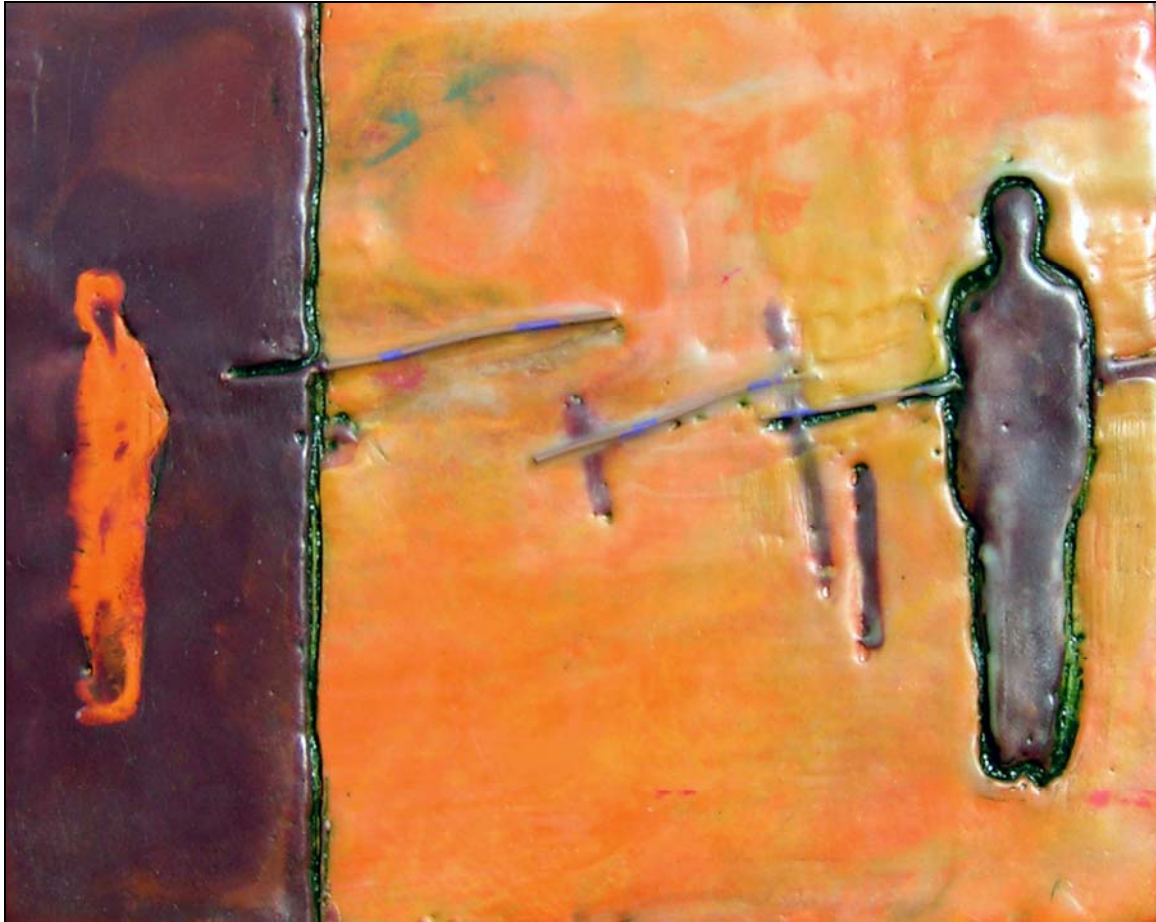
National Encaustic Conference  
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Linda Womack, *Untitled*, 6" x 6", Encaustic, 2009

First I built up 8 – 10 layers of wax with a different color on each layer. While the last layers were still warm to the touch I pressed in rubber stamps (leaf images), nail heads attached to a board (grid pattern), and cookie cutters (abstracted flower). For the red flower shape the cookie cutter was first dipped in red wax then while still very warm used as a stamp into the surface.

**Sheary Clough Suiter**  
[www.backdoordesign.com](http://www.backdoordesign.com)



*Fences, 5" x 6 ¼", encaustic*

Both figures use stencils. The embedded figure on the left: Sheary built up wax inside the stencil, fused lightly, removed stencil, used blue masking tape to make the vertical line, and filled in and covered the entire rectangular area with wax of a different color. Then using a razor blade held at ninety degree angle, scraped back down to reveal the embedded image, fusing with heat gun to finish.

The raised figure on the right: Placed stencil on painting, "drew" an outline into several previously fused layers of wax with a clay stylus tool. The outline is fused, then wax is brushed onto the shape, fused, repeatedly alternating with further carving away of the excess wax that melts into the outlined perimeter, leaving a very definite edge. Finished with contrasting pigment stick to fill in the outline.

Linda Womack  
[www.lindawomack.com](http://www.lindawomack.com)



Linda Womack, *Seeking Without Knowing*, 20" x 30", Encaustic, 2009

Several techniques are used in this painting, but the stencil pattern was made using a purchased stencil and applying dry pigment through it directly onto the wax. After the stencil was removed the pigment was fused into the wax surface.  
Be sure to use a mask and gloves when working with dry pigments!

Paula Roland

[www.paularoland.com](http://www.paularoland.com)



*Archaeologica, Encaustic monotype*

1. I use masking in encaustic monoprinting by apply decals, tape, etc to the paper before and during printing layers.
2. I also apply paper masks and stencils to the melted wax on the plate.
3. I use sticky back frisket film (like clear contact paper) on encaustic paintings to mask while painting. Fuse then remove.

Linda Womack  
[www.lindawomack.com](http://www.lindawomack.com)



Linda Womack, *Dream in Shadow*, 13" x 13", Encaustic & joint compound, 2008

I applied joint compound onto a wood panel through a plastic stencil and let it dry, then painted as usual. I scraped back to the stencil shape in areas. Wax was fused through household screening for the leaf image in the lower right corner.

**Lissa Rankin**

[www.lissarankin.com](http://www.lissarankin.com)



*Community of Souls*, 16" x 16", Encaustic, Oil Stick on Panel, 2007

To create *Community of Souls*, I used a stencil cutter; a heated instrument with a sharp tip that you can buy at craft stores, to cut 2 stencils out of overhead projector film--one, that I used in the background of the piece, is a filigreed pattern. For the one I used on the surface, I cut ovals into the film. Apply the stencils to a smooth surface, I painted over the stencil, fused, lifted up the stencil, then fused again, accenting the details with oil stick.

Linda Womack  
[www.lindawomack.com](http://www.lindawomack.com)



Linda Womack, *Bloom*, 13" x 13", Encaustic & joint compound, 2008

I applied a swirl of joint compound onto a wood panel and let it dry, then painted as usual. I built up 3 – 4 layers of clear medium on the left side, fusing in between each layer, then pressed fresh sticks into the wax while warm, leaving the impression of branches. When the wax cooled I filled in the impressions with an R&F Bronze Pigment stick. The flowers are dried blooms covered with a coat of clear medium.

Elise Wagner

[www.elisewagner.com](http://www.elisewagner.com)



*Neutrino Pass*, 40" x 40", Encaustic, 2007

Elise hand cuts stencils by ironing tracing or vellum paper over the surface of the painting. Once secured, she draws the stencil onto the ironed down paper with a large felt tip sharpie then hand cuts the stencil with an Xacto knife. After cutting and before applying wax, she burnishes the paper further securing it with the bottom of the Xacto knife to prevent the stencil from seeping wax once applied.

Linda Womack  
[www.lindawomack.com](http://www.lindawomack.com)



Linda Womack, *Sing After the Storm*, 30" x 30", Encaustic & mixed media, 2009

There are several techniques combined in this work, but the part that relates to stencils is the scalloped line between the light and dark areas. I used store bought stickers in an oval shape pressed directly onto the wax to create the line I wanted, then painted and fused my wax with the stickers in place. I pulled them up when the wax started to cool and get cloudy, but well before it was cold.

## Encaustic Stencil & Embossing Demo 2009 National Encaustic Conference

### Embossing

A variety of natural and manufactured materials can be used to press directly into your wax surface including:

Rubber stamps	Cookie cutters
Lace or other fabric	Computer parts
Sink drain plugs	Metal sewing bobbins
Sea shells or fresh plant materials	Wire mesh

These items can be pressed into warm or cool wax for differing effects. Many of these items can also be pressed into an ink pad before stamping them into the wax, highlighting the embossed surface. If the items are metal you can dip them in wax before pressing them into the wax for a stamping effect.

### Stencils

There are several ways to cut your own stencils to form lines, shapes and create imagery in your wax surface. These techniques offer simple ways to develop striking forms. Some materials you can use for stencils include masking tape, card stock, transparency sheets, frisket, and cookie cutters.

The tricks to a successful stencil are:

1. Knowing how to fuse your wax depending on the type of stencil and effect you want
2. Sensing when to pull it up off the surface.

In many cases you'll want to paint wax through the opening in your stencil then fuse it with the stencil in place. After fusing, wait until the wax gets cloudy before gently removing the stencil. Experiment with several techniques until you find the one you like best. Stencils can also be used with pastels, oil painting and graphite instead of wax.

### Resources

- I find most of my favorite embossing tools at second hand stores in the kitchen or garden sections, or at my local scrap yard or hardware store.
- You can purchase a variety of stencil cutters, frisket films, and x-acto knives from **Dick Blick Art Supplies** ([www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)).
- Purchase a Paper Shaper from **Joann Fabrics** ([www.joann.com](http://www.joann.com)).
- You can find a good variety of pre-cut stencils and embossing tools at **Plaid Online** ([www.plaidonline.com](http://www.plaidonline.com)).
- My book, *Embracing Encaustic: Learning to Paint with Beeswax*, gives you step-by-step instructions on using simple stencils plus info on image transfers, adding texture, incising lines and more! Find out more at [www.embracingencaustic.com](http://www.embracingencaustic.com).

## **National Encaustic Conference**

This presentation was originally made at the National Encaustic Conference in 2009 and is available for free download at [www.embracingencaustic.com/projects.html](http://www.embracingencaustic.com/projects.html). Photos from the conference are available at [www.lindawomack.com/blog/](http://www.lindawomack.com/blog/).

## **About the Presenter**

Linda Womack shares her love of encaustic painting through national gallery exhibits, books, blogs and live workshops. She is the author of Embracing Encaustic: Learning to Paint with Beeswax and the founder of the Oregon chapter of the International Encaustic Artists. For more information, please visit her website at [www.lindawomack.com](http://www.lindawomack.com).

## **Many Thanks!**

Thanks to the generous artists who shared their time and talent to help make this presentation possible.