



Embracing Encaustic

Learning to Paint with Beeswax

DISCOVER

By Linda and William Womack





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Getting Started

Basic Supplies

In encaustic painting, beeswax, resin and pigment are layered to produce a deep, translucent surface that captures and reflects light. You can paint with wax alone or collage other materials into it, but you must fuse each layer with heat after applying it.

All artists have their favorite tools, but for basic encaustic painting you'll need:

- **A rigid support**—luan or birch wood work well.
- **Hot palette**—A pancake griddle, skillet or crock pot keeps the paint liquid while you work.
- **Encaustic paint**—you can mix your own or buy it professionally mixed.
- **Metal tins to hold the paint**—tuna or cat food cans work well.
- **Natural bristle brushes**—hog bristle brushes from a hardware store will do fine.
- **A heat tool**—a heat gun, propane torch or quilting iron to fuse the paint to the support.
- **Scraping tools**—ceramic and paint scraping tools work well in wax, especially when they are made of metal.

That's it! There are many more tools to try, but this will get you started without breaking the bank.





Collage with Wax

When you collage items into your projects, the type of materials you choose will determine the technique you should use.

Thin or Porous Materials

Materials like tissue paper, dress patterns, paper towels, patterned napkins, light weight fabric and dried plants can be added by painting clear medium right over the top of them and fusing well.

- 1. In the case of delicate materials like leaves and flowers**, paint “with the grain” following the structure of the plant. Doing so will ensure that the plant lies naturally in the collage.
- 2. When using images that are stamped or printed onto thin paper**, the white areas will disappear leaving only the stamped image or the other colors in the pattern visible. This gives a wonderful effect! The example here uses a patterned napkin.





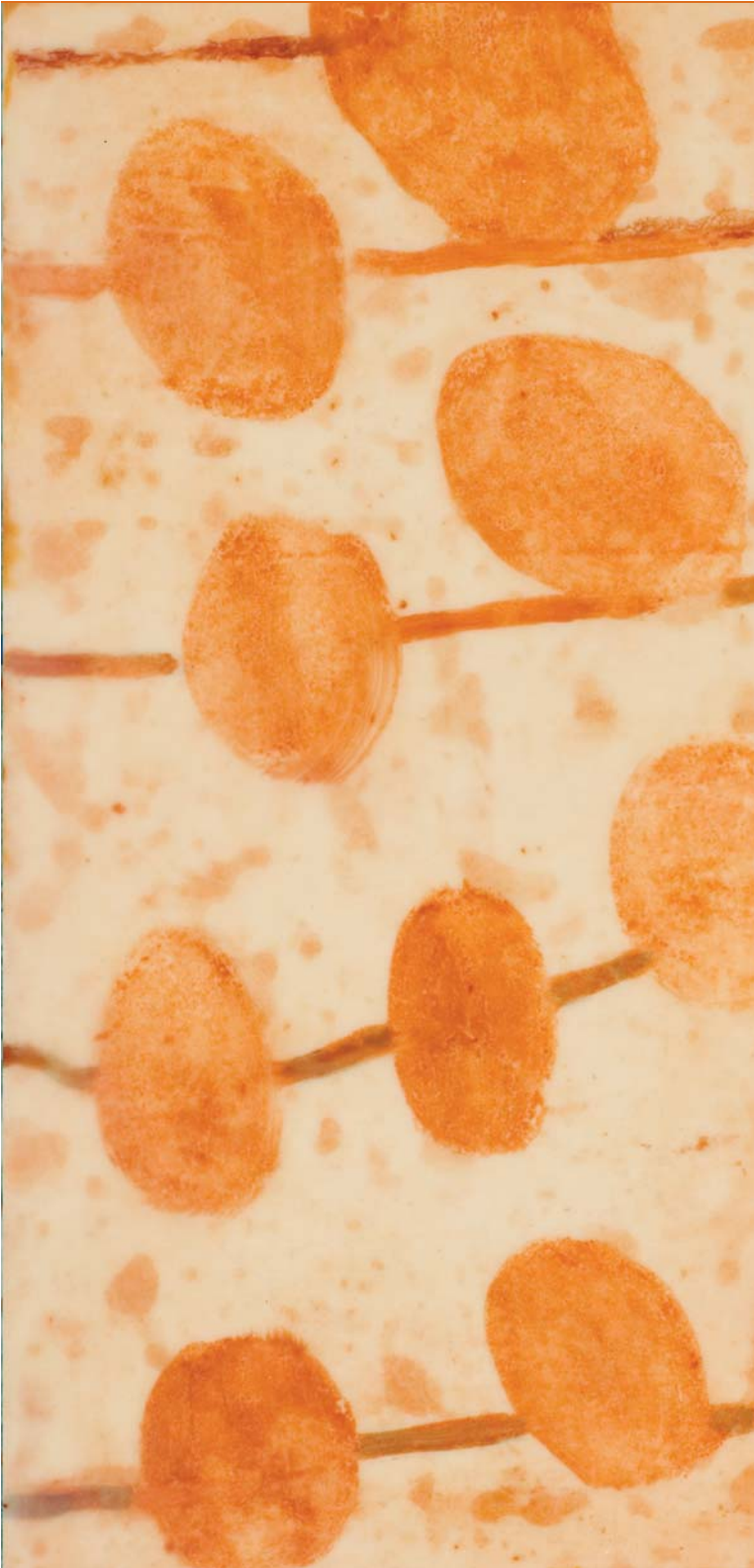
Bridgette Guerzon Mills, Remembering

2007, Encaustic, inkjet photograph and lace on wood, 8" x 8"

"I printed a color photograph of the tree and adhered it to the wood panel with encaustic medium, adding multiple colors of encaustic paint to create the ground and sky. I embedded a piece of lace into the wax and then inscribed lines with a sharp tool to add texture."







Gallery

The art you'll see in this section reflects work that uses the properties of painting with wax and the techniques presented here to their best effect. Some of these artists use techniques that are beyond the scope of this book, but I hope their work will serve as inspiration for you to continue exploring this exciting medium.

All of the artists represented throughout the book have been gracious enough to allow me to share their work with you, and for that I am grateful. *Embracing Encaustic* wouldn't be nearly as interesting without these talented painters. Their contact information, including web sites when available, can be viewed at www.embracingencaustic.com. I hope you will contact them and thank them for their contribution!

Diana Gonzalez Gandolfi, Returning (Diptych)

2007, Encaustic monotype mounted on board, 12" x 21"
(cropped on right panel)

"This one-of-a-kind encaustic print was pulled from wax applied to a warm metal plate and then mounted on to a board. The images in this print were created by layering images rather than by a single pass. To create the rocks on the left panel, wax paper stencils, previously coated with dense encaustic color, were placed on top of a warm plate (150 degrees) and printed over a previously pulled image using a barren and a etching burnisher to apply pressure. The right panel was created by double printing, each time changing the intensity and transparency of the color."

Photo Credit: Greg Leshé





Janet Bartlett Goodman, Sam

2005, Encaustic, color pencils, oil paint, watercolor, rice paper, oil stick,
on cradled Claybord™, 24" x 24"

"Most of the background is painted and drawn directly on the panel using watercolor and pencils. Nine pieces of rice paper were used, with a photograph of Sam's face printed onto one. The body was painted and drawn on to another. The rice paper is pulled through encaustic medium and adhered to the panel. The rice paper becomes transparent so the under painting on the panel becomes visible. Oil stick is rubbed over the whole piece and another layer of encaustic medium is applied and fused."





Linda Womack, Altering the Path

2007, Encaustic, hand made paper, material, oil paint, pastel on wood panel, 13" x 16"

"I applied thin strokes of oil paint to the first layer of wax and let it dry. The collage was made up of patterned paper, a page from a 19th century Japanese receipt book, fabric and encaustic paint. I used tape to form the diagonal line, and cut a mask out of cheesecloth in the shape of a bird to protect the colors beneath. The edges of the bird mask and the area representing a wing were painted with white wax in order to give texture to the outline of the image. I used a ceramics tool to incise wavy lines into the wax then highlighted them with white pastel before fusing lightly."

