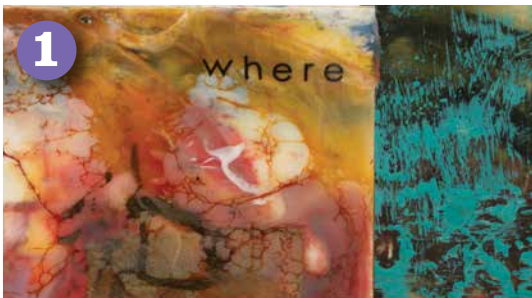


exploring encaustics

4 free encaustic art and painting techniques

presented by cloth paper scissors®



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MICHELLE BELTO

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PATRICIA GAIGNAT



I'm happy to share with you *Exploring Encaustics: 4 Free Encaustic Art and Painting Techniques*, a free, downloadable eBook. Our team has pulled together four articles by some of our favorite encaustics experts for you. Whether you're curious about how to paint with encaustics or you're comfortable with them and simply want some fresh inspiration, you've come to the right place. Each of the featured artists gives you a basic encaustic process and then a more complex technique for taking your art further. Browse the entire download before you begin, as you'll find helpful hints for the beginning encaustic artist throughout.

First you'll discover "Encaustic on the Cheap: Building Up Layers," in which Michelle Belto tells you how to use materials that are likely already in your art stash to experiment with encaustic painting. In this demo, you'll start your piece with an underpainting and then add texture and dimension to the artwork.

Once you've warmed up to the basic process of using encaustics, read Kimberly Lambert Gibson's article, "Encaustic Release Technique: Creating Shapes in Wax." Here she walks you through the steps of preparing your substrate, creating a template, and then painting the shape you've created.

In "Encaustic Collage, A Medium for Journalistic Musings," Patricia Seggebruch shows how to use encaustic collage to tell a story. In this piece, she describes how to choose, arrange, and fuse the paper layers; embed objects; make an image transfer on the wax; and add lines of color with pigment sticks.

In "Multi-layered Wax Backgrounds: Tips for Using a Stylus with Encaustic Paints," Pat Gagnat starts with an overview of encaustic technique, including how to heat the wax, fuse the surface to meld the layers, and the all-important safety tips. Then she delves into how the stylus works, choosing the right surface to paint on, creating backgrounds, collaging, combining collages and backgrounds, and how to use your backgrounds.

As always, thank you for taking the time to develop your artistic knowledge and skill with *Cloth Paper Scissors*. Enjoy *Exploring Encaustics: 4 Free Encaustic Art and Painting Techniques*, and share your resulting art with us at clothpaperscissors.com!

Warm regards,

Cherie

Cherie Haas

Online Editor,

Cloth Paper Scissors Today

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Exploring Encaustics: 4 Free Encaustic Art and Painting Techniques

presented by

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Where mixed media
artists come to play



clothpaperscissors.com

encaustic ON THE cheap

building up layers



BY Michelle Belto

1ike most artists, I have an innate sense of adventure. When I see something new that I would like to try, I get juiced! If you've been tempted to try encaustic painting but have been intimidated by the unfamiliar tools and processes, this project is for you. Most everything you need can be found in your studio or your kitchen cabinet. Matt board and beeswax are materials that are easy to explore, and I trust that once you have experienced encaustic painting, you will fall in love enough to invest in higher quality encaustic materials to create your art.

One of the most basic processes of encaustic painting is called building up. It involves working in layers and will give you those luscious, translucent pieces of art that you have been drooling over.

the underpainting

1. Create an interesting design on the matt board. I used a pencil, black permanent marker, and some watercolor paints to create an underwater cave. Write, draw, stamp, and/or color to complete the image.

Leave some areas white so that there will

be light sections in your finished painting. Allow the painting to dry before continuing.

note: Make sure that the underpainting is bold enough to see through several layers of wax, but nondescript enough to fade into the background.

2. Working in a well-ventilated area or outside, place the wax in the tin can and place the can in the electric skillet. Heat the wax to melting, being sure to check the temperature often.
3. Holding the paintbrush horizontal to the surface of the matt board, apply 2 thin layers of wax. (Figure 1) Dedicate this brush for use with wax only.

MATERIALS

- Matt board or illustration board, 5" x 7" or larger
- Drawing tools: pencils, markers, etc.
- Paint (It's important to use non-acrylic water media for this process.)
- Paintbrushes, 2 or more, for painting and for wax application
- Stamps and stamp pads
- Beeswax or encaustic medium
- Tin can, small, for melting the wax
- Electric skillet or griddle, surface covered with heavy-duty foil
- Surface thermometer
- Heat or embossing gun
- Oil pastels
- Tissue paper
- Scissors, paper and fabric
- Cooking oil
- Paper towels
- Nylon stocking or soft cloth

optional

- Oil paints
- Alcohol inks
- Mica powders
- Book foil





Figure 1



Figure 2

caution

If you are using beeswax, heat the wax only to melting (148°–150°F). If you are using encaustic medium, don't go beyond 200°F. Use a surface thermometer to keep track of the temperature of the wax as it is more reliable than the thermostat that comes with the appliance.

4. Working in a circular motion, apply the embossing gun over the surface of the painting to fuse the layers. Continue until the wax becomes glossy. Allow to cool.
5. Add areas of color and some marks on the surface of the wax with the oil pastels. Oil pastels take well to the wax surface and can be blended easily with your fingers. Notice how the overlapping bubbles help to create the illusion of depth. (Figure 2)

6. Fuse lightly to set the pastels. Allow to cool.

note: It's important to fuse the oil pastel or it will smear when you add the next layer of warm wax.

7. Add a layer of wax to protect your work.

add texture and dimension

1. Cut out shapes from the tissue paper and gently press the paper shapes into the wax with your fingers. I used fish shapes. Fuse lightly, allowing the existing wax to penetrate the tissue. (Figure 3)





Figure 3



Figure 4

2. Warm the wax around the outer edges of the canvas and press the textural fabric into the wax. Carefully remove the fabric. When the wax is cool to the touch, add more color by rubbing complementary colors of oil pastels into the debossed areas

and into other naturally occurring textural areas of the piece.
(Figure 3) Alternatively, oil paints can be used in place of the pastels.

3. Remove any excess oil pastels/paints by rubbing the affected area(s) with paper toweling "wet" with cooking oil. Fuse to set the oil paints.
4. Add a protective layer of wax over the entire surface, fuse, and allow the wax to cool.
5. (Optional) Apply your favorite finishing materials. Alcohol inks work well to add a gloss, mica powders show off texture, and book foils make great ending statements. (Figure 4) Do not add any wax over metallic elements.
6. When the piece is cool, buff the surface with a nylon stocking or soft cloth for a high shine. ●

michellebelto.com



encaustic release

TECHNIQUE

Adapted from
CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®
July/August 2013

creating shapes
in wax



BY Kimberly Lambert Gibson

If you have tried encaustic painting, you know that painting with wax is *much* different than painting with paint. Much to my dismay, I discovered that I couldn't create any crisp images with the wax.

After much trial and error, and experimenting with a variety of materials, I finally found a way to make crisp wax images. This technique has its quirks, but that is the nature of encaustic painting. You can go in and fix the problems or you can embrace the irregularity.



MATERIALS

- Foam brush
- Glue, PVA
- Substrate, flat (Any type of wood or MDF will work. I use Ampersand™ Encausticbord™.)
- Decorative paper
- Encaustic medium (I use R&F brand.)
- Tin can, recycled, or an encaustic tin
- Fry pan, electric
- Thermometer (I use an R&F thermometer.)
- Painter's tape
- Heat gun
- Gloves
- Paintbrushes, natural bristle brushes (I use hake and R&F brushes.)
- Marker, permanent
- Paper, white
- Grafix® Wet Media Dura-Lar™
- Scissors or craft knife and cutting mat
- Rubbing alcohol
- Paper towels
- Freezer paper
- Encaustic paint (I use R&F titanium white and Mars black.)
- Wire, 22-gauge, 7"
- Burnishing tool (I use the Utrecht® 2½" Curved Burnisher.)
- Soap or dental pick



Figure 1

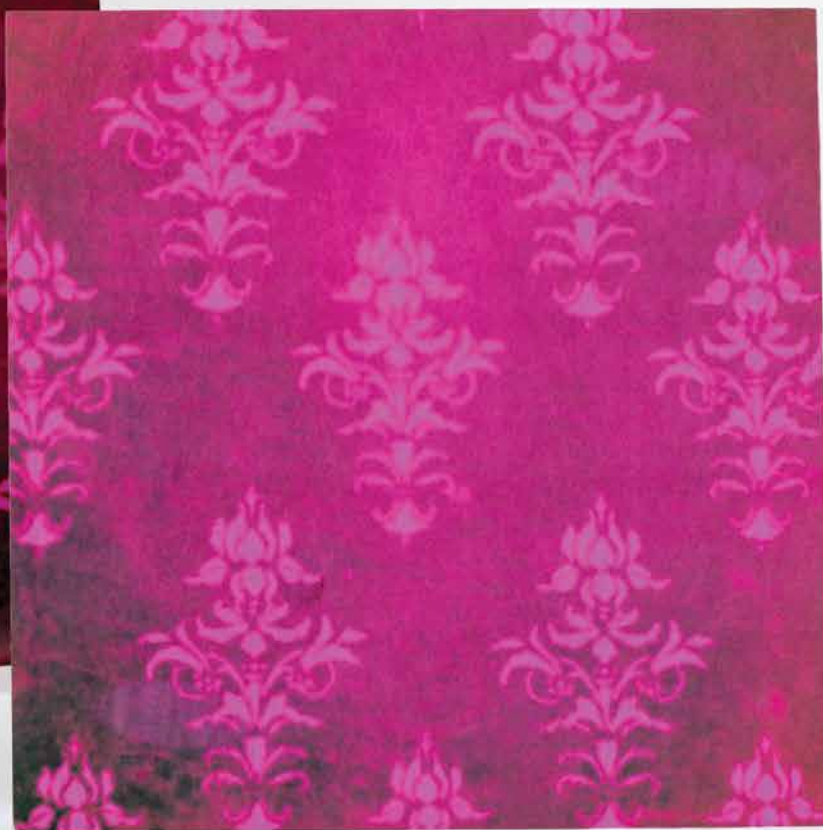


Figure 2

preparing the substrate

1. Using the foam brush, spread glue evenly onto the substrate. Then use your fingers to smooth the decorative paper onto it. (Figure 1) Let the paper dry overnight.

note: Make sure that none of the glue gets on top of the paper as the wax will not stick where there is glue. Also, don't use so much glue that it seeps through the paper.

2. Place the encaustic medium in the can or encaustic tin and place it in the frying pan. Melt the encaustic medium, making sure it is completely melted and it is at 200°–220°F.

caution: You never want the wax to get above 220°F.

3. If you want clean edges, tape the edges of the board now or you can clean them when you are done.
4. Warm the substrate surface with the heat gun.

5. With gloves on, apply one coat of medium to the substrate and then fuse it with the heat gun. Wait until the wax is no longer shiny and then apply a second coat of medium and fuse it again with the heat gun.

(Figure 2)

note: Gloves protect your hands from the heavy metals in the pigments and can save you from getting burned.



Figure 3



Figure 4

creating the template

1. Sketch out the shape you want to create. (Figure 3) Mine is a keyhole cover. You can draw it onto paper and then trace over it onto the Dura-Lar or you can draw directly onto the Dura-Lar with the marker.

tip: Put a piece of paper under the Dura-Lar so you can see what you are doing.

2. Cut out the template with the scissors or use the craft knife and mat. (Figure 4)
3. Clean the marker ink off the Dura-Lar template with rubbing alcohol and a paper towel. You don't want the ink to transfer to the wax.
4. Place the template onto a piece of freezer paper, ensuring it is perfectly flat. Make certain the right side of the template is facing down because you will be placing the template on the substrate wax-side down.

notes

- Graftix Wet Media Dura-Lar is safe to heat up to 235°–240°F and does not emit any harmful chemicals into the air when heated.
- The wax left behind on the freezer paper after the template has been lifted off can be heated and scraped off with a clay loop tool and put back into the heated wax container. This saves a lot of wax.
- Graftix Wet Media Dura-Lar can be cut in some die-cut machines.
- You can add a second encaustic release on top of the initial encaustic release, if desired. Make sure you fuse the bottom one before adding the next one.

painting the shape



Figure 5

1. Paint up to 4 coats of encaustic paint onto the template, making sure not to overlap the brushstrokes.
2. Fuse the wax on the template with the heat gun. Fuse all the layers so the wax is almost a puddle on top of the template, but don't fuse so much that the wax falls off the template.
3. Gently pull the template off of the freezer paper. (Figure 5)
tip: If the template doesn't remove cleanly (i.e. there is wax in the openings), take a piece of the 22-gauge wire and go around that section of the template to remove the wax. If the wire gets sticky with wax (Figure 6) you can heat it with the heat gun to clean it and continue.
4. With the heat gun, warm the area on the painting where you are going to place the template. Warm it just until you see the wax shine, not so that the wax melts.
5. Place the template on the warmed substrate, wax-side down.
6. Burnish the top of the template with the side of the burnishing tool. Some of the wax might slip out the edges. Use the tip of the burnishing tool to gently clean it up. Make sure the template is evenly and completely burnished to the surface. The smoother you burnish, the better the release will be.
note: The burnishing tool will also get dirty from any wax that is on top of the template. Clean it by warming it with the heat gun and then wipe it on a paper towel.
7. Let the wax cool completely. This could take up to an hour.
8. Remove your gloves and scrape some soap under your fingernails. Gently pick at the side of the template to

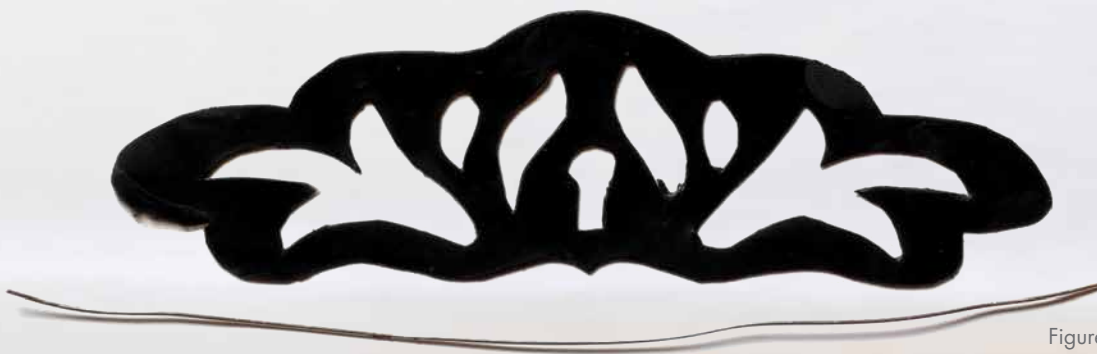


Figure 6



Figure 7

remove it from the wax. Alternatively, use a dental pick to help release the template. If there are areas of wax that lift off with the template, simply burnish those areas again and lift the template off from another direction. You might need to work with it a little. If you let it cool completely it should lift right off. (Figure 7)

9. Once the template has been removed, put the heat gun on low and fuse the image to the substrate. You will see your encaustic release shape start to contract a little and the edges start to curl. When the edges have curled up this means they have been fused into the wax background.

note: Do not overfuse. It can cause the wax to contract too much, creating holes or separations in the encaustic image. If this happens, touch up the area using a small paintbrush and then refuse.

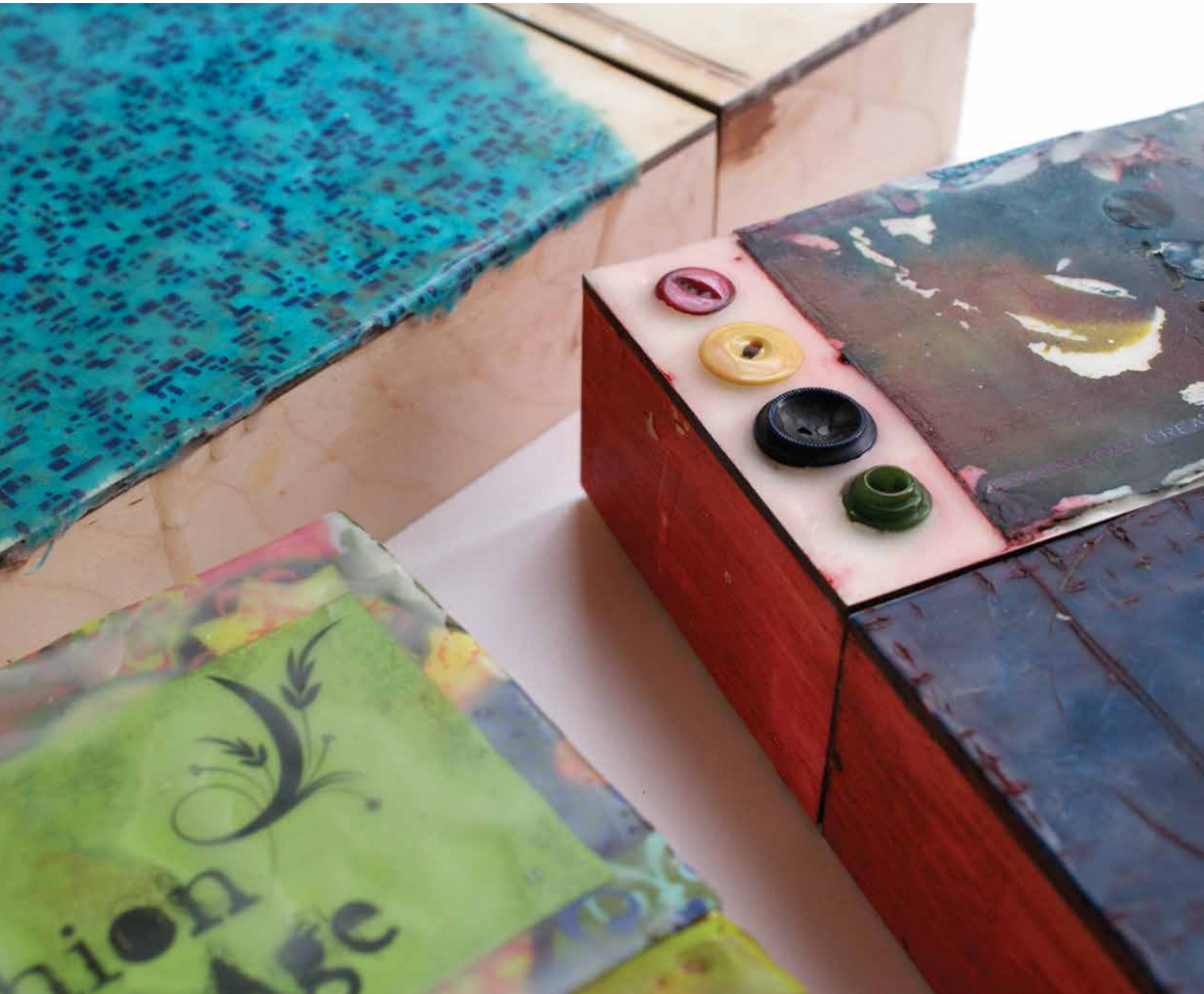
Finish your encaustic piece with more encaustic release shapes, collage, and/or other encaustic paint techniques. ●

kimberlylambertgibson.com

encaustic collage

a medium for journalistic musings

BY Patricia Baldwin Seggebruch





I don't journal. I didn't grow up with a floral, pink, plastic, locked diary, nor did I pen my thoughts in a collection of notebooks hidden under my mattress. It just wasn't part of my world. So imagine my surprise when about three years ago I began a series in wax that was very reminiscent of journalistic musings.

During these past three years I've come to not only thrive in the expression of emotions in wax journaling, but have taken up pen and paper to write

pages of musings as well. The joy of self-expression in wax is like no other I have identified with. To be able to share it with an audience and see

MATERIALS

- Encaustic palette or a griddle reserved for this purpose
- Hake brushes
- Printmaker's tins (seamless metal ink cans)
- Ampersand™ Claybord™, smooth: 8" x 8" x 2" and 4" x 8" x 2"
- Encaustic medium (wax medium)
- Heat gun
- Assorted art papers
- Pigment sticks
- Awl
- Metal ruler

their connection to the emotions and images I have worked into the wax is a soul-opening, creative lifeboat that has propelled not only my artistic path, but my emotional expression and self-expression, too.

The techniques introduced here are varied and geared toward the encaustic artist who has at least dived into the basics of wax painting, if not become an expert.

directions

Each of my pieces consists of two Claybord surfaces, as called for in the materials list. I work back and forth between the two units to ensure a visually cohesive finished piece, and when the design is complete, I secure the pieces together permanently. When starting, I set out with a general idea of what I want to "say" in the wax, and choose art papers to set this into motion. Once I feel I've achieved a sense of what I intend to translate to the wax, I consider the texture and also decide whether to add words, letters, and/or numbers, and whether to scribe into the wax to make a statement.



1. Choose art papers that speak to the message you want to translate into the wax: colors, textures, and patterns that begin to tell your story. With the right base papers to begin your journaling—colors and patterns that play into what you plan to build in the wax—you establish a foundation on which to base the subsequent journaling story. For

instance, in “My Heart has Wings” on page 40, I chose to begin with vibrant green paper to suggest new growth and a fresh start. Cut or tear the papers as desired, and then set them aside.

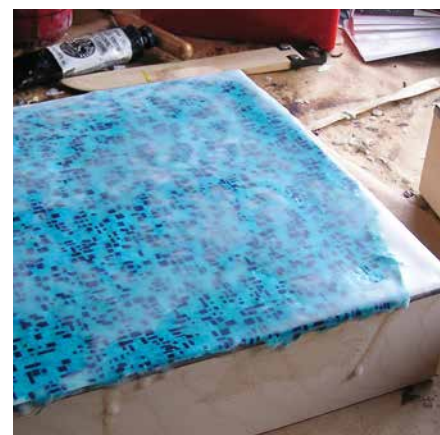
2. Apply the heat gun to the 8" × 8" Claybord until it is warm to the touch. Then spread a layer of wax medium over the entire surface to

create a primed layer. Heat again with the gun in order to fuse this wax layer to the board.

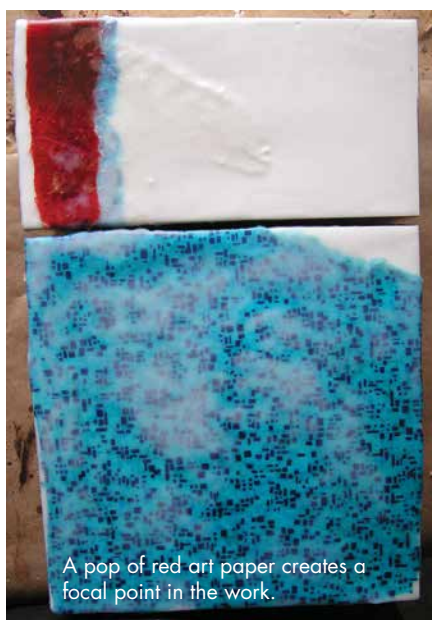


note: I put large amounts of wax into printmaker's tins and place them on my palette (griddle) to melt the wax. This way I have plenty of melted wax at the ready.

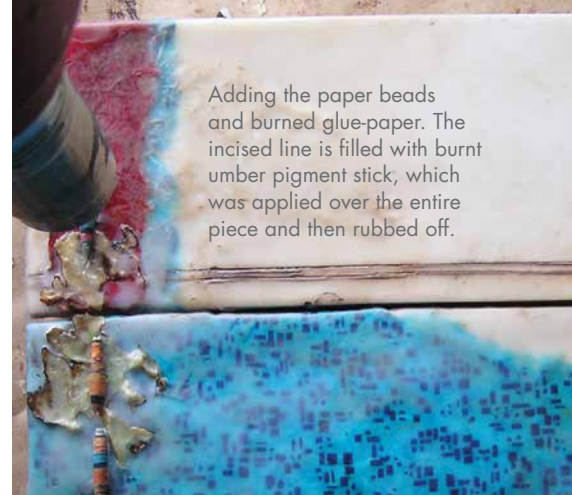
3. Once the wax has cooled slightly, apply your precut art papers to select areas. (You may choose to cover the entire 8" × 8" surface with the paper.) After you have added the art paper, apply another layer of wax medium over it and fuse again with the heat gun to incorporate this added layer of paper and wax to the initial primed layer.



4. Work the 4" × 8" piece in the same manner as the larger piece, following steps 2 and 3.



to place them and embedded them in layers in a manner similar to the previous collaging process. (Burned glue-paper is tissue paper or other that I've smeared with wood glue and then hit with a propane torch flame. The flame "cooks" the glue on the paper and burns it into the paper, creating a very cool new look. Always take extra caution when working with an open flame.)



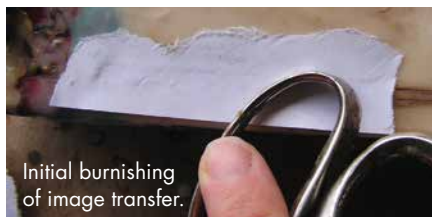
- If you wish, add words, letters, or numbers to make a statement. To do so, just tear portions of text from papers and embed them in the layers as you did previously.

note: I felt that the inclusion of burned glue-paper and handmade paper beads set the tone nicely. I simply added a bit of hot wax to the area where I wanted

6. If desired, scribe into the warm wax to create some incised lines. In the example, I used an awl and a straight edge to create two parallel lines in the 4" x 8" piece.
7. Once you are satisfied with your scribing, allow the wax to cool to room temperature and then rub pigment stick into the incised lines and shapes.

tip: I like to rub the stick liberally over the entire surface, allowing any imperfections in the wax surface, as well as the incised lines, to catch the pigments. I then remove any excess with a paper towel.

8. To add an image transfer in the form of a phrase, type your phrase, print it in mirror image, and then make a copy. If the wax has cooled, warm it gently with the heat gun and place the copy facedown on the wax. Burnish the back of the copy paper to transfer the words to the waxed surface.



Initial burnishing of image transfer.

9. Dampen the paper with a few spritzes of water. This will relax the fibers and cause them to release the image to the wax. Burnish again, and then peel away the paper; the words will remain.



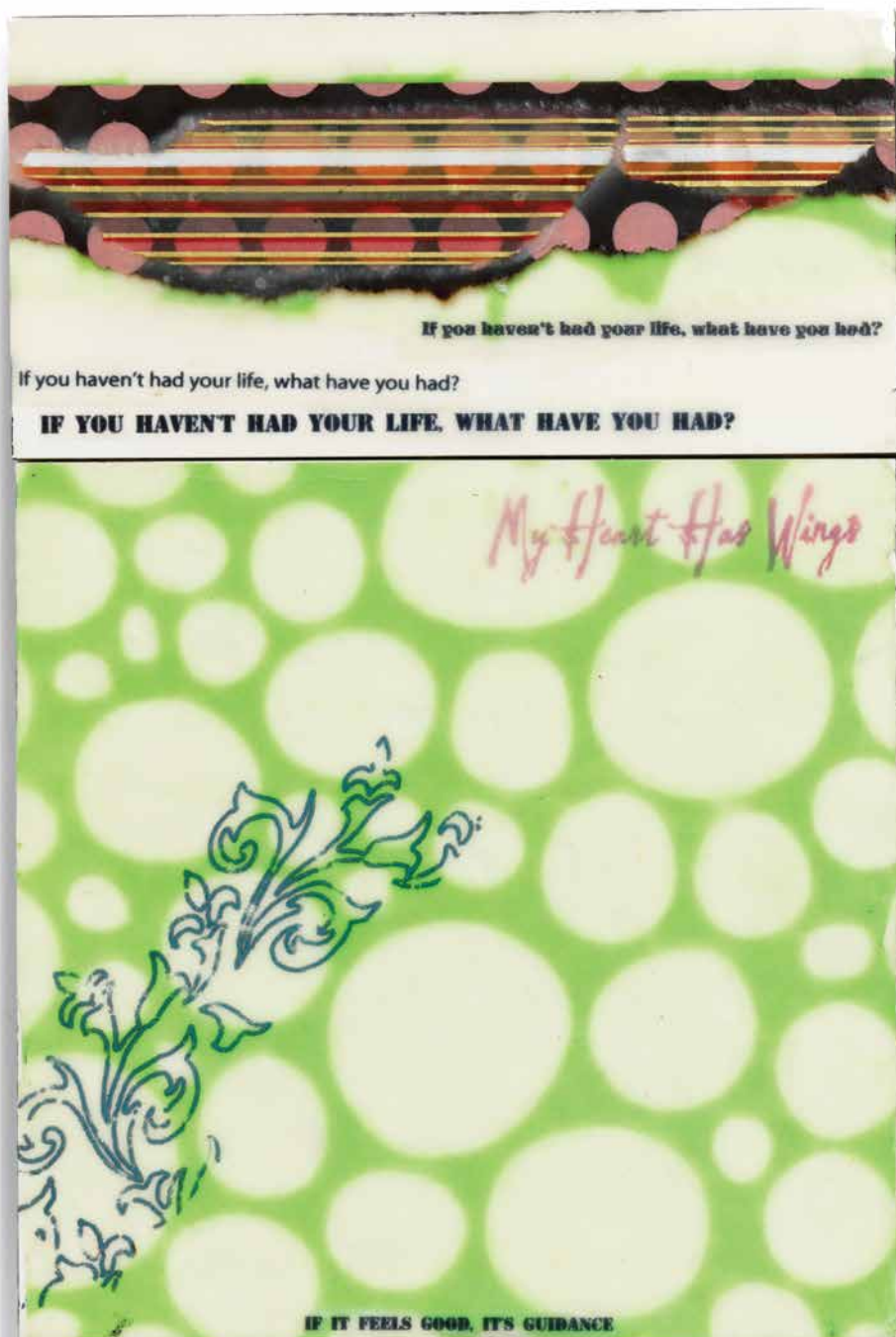
Burnishing a second time with water.

10. Reflect on what you've done to be sure it speaks cohesively. Did you successfully translate your message

to the wax? If not, play with the surface until you are satisfied.

11. To finish, the boards can be fused together permanently with heavy-duty glue or screws, or left separate. ●

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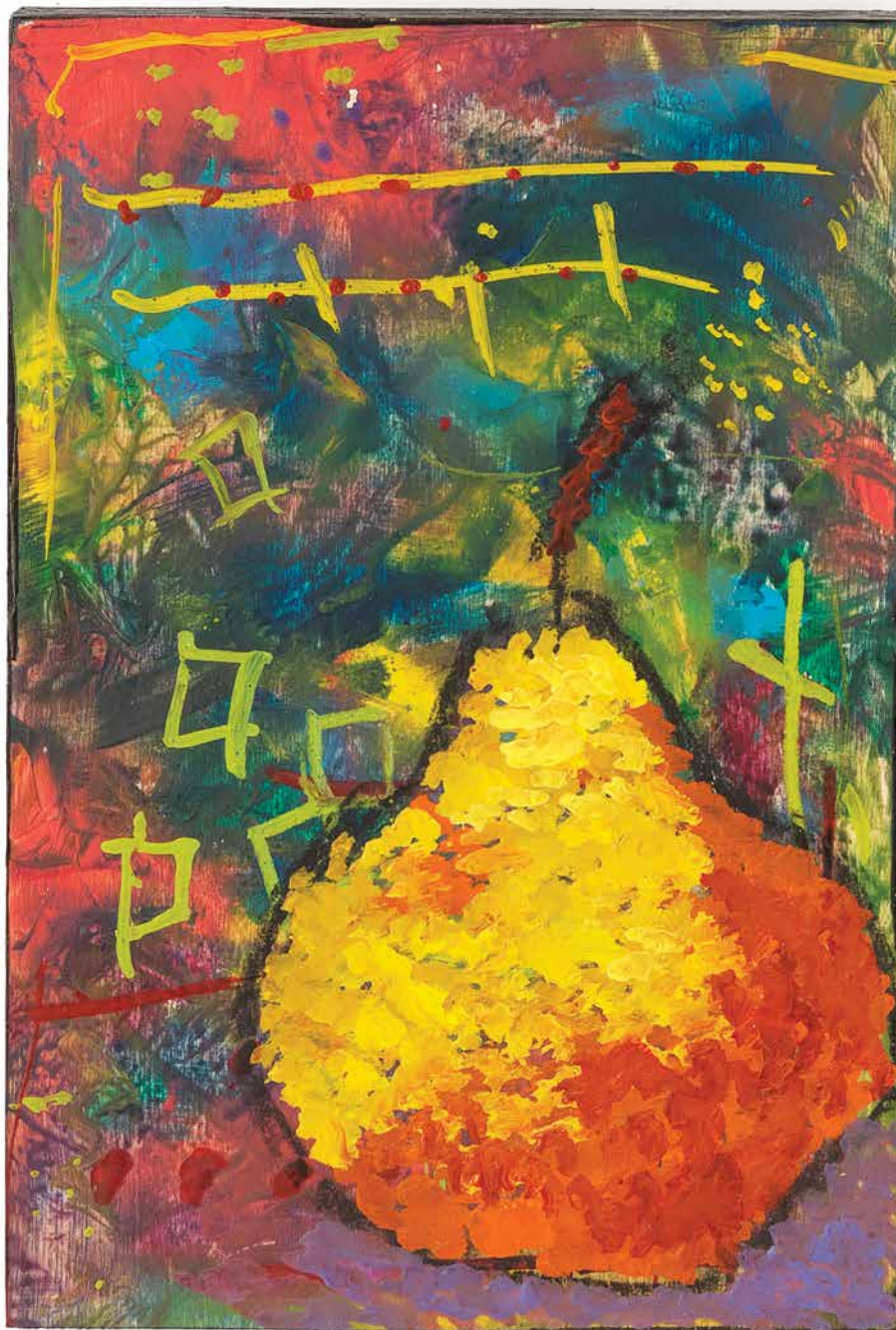
multi-layered wax backgrounds

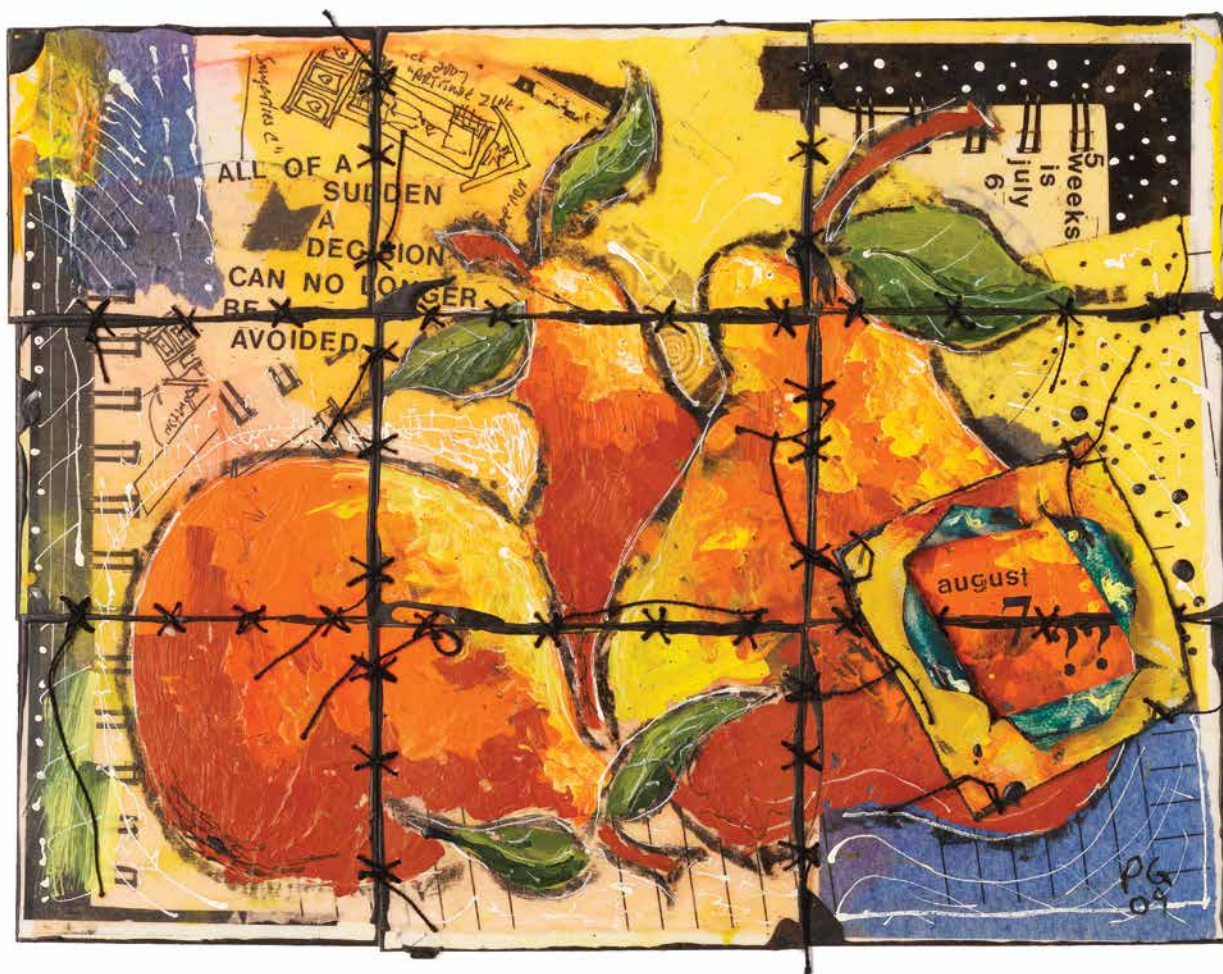
Adapted from
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November/December 2009

tips for using a stylus with encaustic paints

a bit more than a year ago I started working with beeswax and encaustic paint. One thing I didn't particularly like, however, was using the bristle brushes for painting. It frustrated me (instant gratification is my mantra), so I didn't do any painting. I was also annoyed that, except for when I incised them, it was difficult-to-impossible to get a decent line. I knew a line could be made by gouging into the wax, spreading a different color into the gouge, and then scraping the surface, but that didn't appeal to me at all. Somewhere, while surfing the Internet, I learned about a stylus that could be used with wax. I quickly ordered the Hot Wax Art Stylus and was totally delighted. It has added another dimension to my art.

BY Patricia Gagnat





safety tips

- The skillet temperature should not exceed 220°. At 250°, encaustic fumes become toxic and will start smoking. Use a thermometer to check that the temperature gauge of the skillet is accurate.
- Good ventilation is necessary. Open a window and use a fan facing away from the work area to draw any fumes away from you.
- The metal shaft and tips of the Hot Wax Art Stylus get very hot. It is important to be conscious of where you put down the tool and pay attention when reaching for it.
- The heat gun gets extremely hot, and it is necessary to get in the habit of turning it off after every use.

I've been making backgrounds with the hot wax tools by painting, collaging, and using a combination of both. I was doing that before but now it is quite a bit easier and, frankly, more fun. Creating backgrounds is a useful way to develop some expertise in the use of these tools, since backgrounds don't usually have to be precise or perfect. Before getting

started, here are a few basic instructions on encaustic painting.

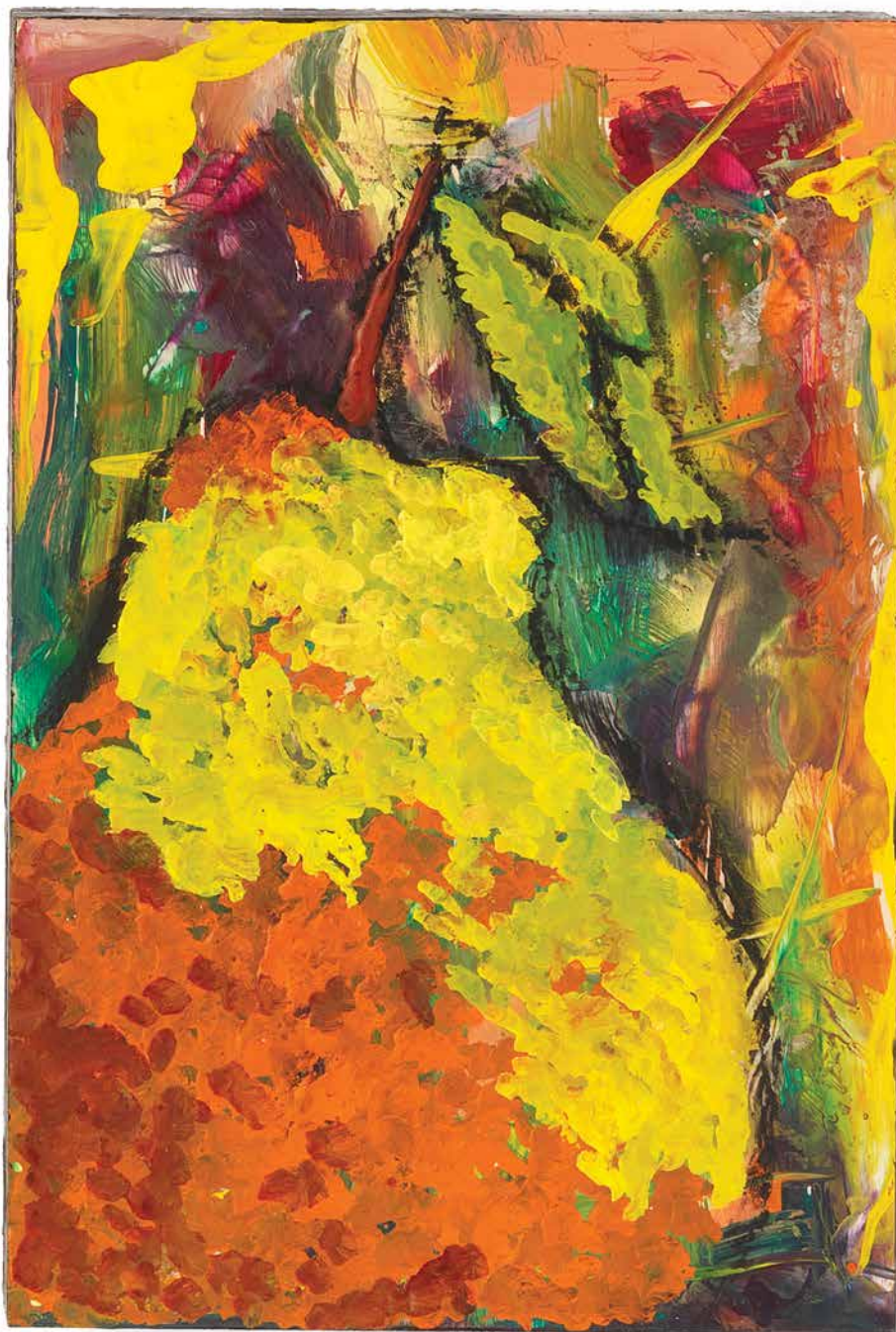
things to know

HOW THE STYLUS WORKS

When you hold the hot calligraphy or brush tip to the surface of a block of encaustic paint, the paint melts and is

MATERIALS

- Hot Wax Art Stylus with calligraphy, brush, and flat tips
- Beeswax
- Encaustic paint
- Wood panels
- Heavy watercolor paper, printmaking paper, or uncoated artist canvas
- Electric skillet with temperature control
- Thermometer
- Heat gun
- Tacking iron or small quilting iron with on/off switch
- Fan
- Absorbent collage material: paper, fabric, fibers
- Stencils
- Paper towels
- Charcoal



drawn into the tool by capillary action. The heat from the tool keeps the paint in molten form while you apply it, but it instantly hardens when it touches the surface.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SURFACE

The background substrate needs to be rigid and absorbent. I work on wood, heavy watercolor or printmaking paper,

or uncoated artist canvas. For any surface other than wood there is the danger of bending and cracking the wax, so keep in mind that the finished piece should be mounted on an inflexible surface.

FUSING

Keep the heat gun moving, aiming it all over the surface until a slight “sweating” or glistening effect appears. This will

cause the beeswax or encaustic paint to fuse to the surface and will prevent separation of the layers. This initial fusing should be hot and thorough. All other fusing should be performed more carefully with thought to how it will affect the appearance of the artwork. This is important because the heat gun can end up moving and distorting the wax as it melts.

creating backgrounds

PAINTING

Since I tend to work in a series, I often make several backgrounds while I concentrate on a totally different piece. Because the tools get very hot, I rest the iron and whatever tip I’m using on a plain bit of wood cut to a size I would like to work on later. Here is how I build up other layered backgrounds as I work on my current piece.

1. Wipe any leftover encaustic paint onto the extra wood surface when it is time to change colors on your work-in-progress. I treat this piece of wood as if it were a scrap paper for cleaning off my brush. Also, before you finish with the color, pick up some more of that same color and randomly spread it onto the extra piece of wood. There is no need to plan placement unless, of course, you have a specific idea in mind.

tip: To make sure all paint is removed from the tool before loading it with another color, just wad up some paper towels to protect your hand from burns and wipe the tips carefully.

2. As soon as the wood substrate is mostly or completely covered with encaustic paint—many colors or few—use the iron to go over the wax, smoothing and blending as you go. It is relatively easy to avoid muddying

the colors. Lifting the iron off the surface during this process will produce some interesting patterns in the paint.

tip: If you do end up with “mud,” simply heat the wax, scrape it off, and apply another color. Fuse as described previously.

3. On the resulting colorful background, use the calligraphy tip or the corners of the brush tip to take contrasting colors and draw lines and squiggles and make drips and drops.
4. With a stencil and the brush tip, dab heavily with more encaustic. A heavy application will cause the stenciled image to rise up from the surface and add some tactile texture along with the visual. Fuse carefully so as not to disturb the texture you create.

Make several of these and you will have some cohesive backgrounds to use at a later time.

COLLAGING

1. Melt the beeswax in the skillet (see Safety Tips) and dip heavy paper and/or uncoated artist canvas into the pool of clear beeswax, coating the substrate on both sides. Alternately, you could cover one side of the paper/canvas by using a brush and working quickly. This will result in a rough surface that can be smoothed out with an iron. The fusing process will also smooth out the surface.
2. Iron thin, absorbent collage papers, fabrics, and/or fibers onto this beeswax surface. Overlapping will result in interesting effects. The hot iron will melt the beeswax, causing it to permeate and encase the collage items. Fuse and continue to collage and fuse until the background is to your liking.



COMBINING PAINTING AND COLLAGE

3. Collage on top of the previously painted wood by ironing thin elements so they are encased in color. Be aware that this ironing will smooth out any rough texture that you created before.
4. With the brush tip, paint on top of the collage, obscuring or highlighting select areas. Paint again using stencils for some surface texture and interest.

note: Some of the paint colors are opaque and others are quite transparent. Creating backgrounds is a good way to experiment with the various types and colors.

5. Using the calligraphy tip and encaustic paint (and a little practice), write a journal entry, scribble, make drips and other marks, or make a sketch. Try putting down an alphabet stencil and use the tip to outline the letters. Fuse again, carefully, so as not to melt the lines.

using your backgrounds

Don't get too attached to these beautiful multi-layered backgrounds, because they are just the beginning.

1. Backgrounds that are created on paper and canvas can be used as is or cut up and used as collage elements themselves. Sew or staple them to each other or to other flexible backgrounds. Or nail them to the wood backgrounds, creating three-dimensional pieces.
2. Add other un-waxed items such as buttons, metal pieces, or beads. Keep in mind that glue will not hold these items in place on the wax, so be inventive. To add these items



to waxed paper or canvas, simply sew them on. I use a needle that is dedicated for use with wax so I don't cross contaminate another project. If the paper or canvas is already attached to a board, gently hammer a nail through the button or bead hole. I usually leave the nail head sticking up a tiny bit so I don't break the bead or button in the process. You can also hammer a nail or staple through a thin piece of metal or put the staples across the corners of the metal piece to hold it in place.

3. Using charcoal, draw an image on the wood background. Fuse very carefully until the point where the charcoal no longer rubs off but before the heat causes it to disperse and blur.

note: You will need a lot of practice to judge this point; fuse a little bit at a time.

4. Leave as is or take the brush tool and make a painting. Dab or smoothly apply the paint; allow the background to peek through or cover it completely.
5. Fuse again, carefully, when you decide the artwork is finished.

These techniques will result in beautiful, multi-layered backgrounds. Everyone will be astonished at the amount of time and effort you put into something just to cover it up. Only we will know how easy and enjoyable the whole process was. ●

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