

Introduction to Encaustic Collage Encaustic Collage, History & Materials

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What Is Encaustic?

Encaustic is a Greek word meaning "to heat or burn" process, from melting the beeswax and varnish to fusing the layers of wax. Encaustic consists of natural bees wax and dammar resin (crystallized tree sap). The medium can be used alone for its transparency or adhesive qualities or used pigmented. Pigments may be added to the medium, or purchased colored with traditional artist pigments. The medium is melted and applied with a brush or any tool the artist wishes to create from. Each layer is then reheated to fuse it to the previous layer.

History of Encaustic

Encaustic painting is an ancient technique, dating back to the Greeks, who used wax to caulk ship hulls. Pigmenting the wax gave rise to the decorating of warships. The use of encaustic on panels rivaled the use of tempera in what are the earliest known portable easel paintings. Tempera was a faster, cheaper process. Encaustic was a slow, difficult technique, but the paint could be built up in relief, and the wax gave a rich optical effect to the pigment. These characteristics made the finished work startlingly life-like. Moreover, encaustic had far greater durability than tempera, which was vulnerable to moisture. Perhaps the best known of all encaustic work are the Fayum funeral portraits painted in the 1st through 3rd centuries A.D. by Greek painters in Egypt. A portrait of the deceased painted either in the prime of life or after death, was placed over the person's mummy as a memorial. ancient times. It is notable how fresh the color has remained due to the protection of the wax.

The 20th century has seen a rebirth of encaustic on a major scale. It is an irony of our modern age, with its emphases on advanced technology, that a painting technique as ancient and involved as encaustic should receive such widespread interest.

Earlier attempts to revive encaustic failed to solve the one problem that had made painting in encaustic so laborious – the melting of the wax. The availability of portable electric heating implements and the variety of tools made the use of encaustic more accessible. Today it is gaining popularity with artists around the world.

Care of Encaustic Art

These paintings are extremely archival, but as with any fine art, care should be given to them. There should be no fear of the work melting in normal household conditions. The wax and resin will not melt unless exposed to temperatures over 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Leaving a painting in a car on a hot day would not be advisable or hanging a painting in front of a window with direct desert-like sun. They are also sensitive to freezing cold temperatures.

Some encaustic colors tend to "bloom" or become cloudy. To remove bloom, simply rub the surface with a soft cloth or nylon stocking. Over time the surface retains its gloss as the wax medium continues to cure and harden for up to 1-3 years.

Materials List

Encaustic Collage

Encaustic Paper collage is a technique that involves combining tissue paper and encaustic medium on a wood panel to create a compositional piece of artwork. The tissue paper defines the shapes and color, and this project's encaustic medium is both an adhesive and varnish. This workshop is excellent for anyone curious about working with the encaustic medium and appreciates abstract expressionist art and beyond.

Encaustic (in painting and ceramics) decorated by burning in colors as an inlay, especially using colored clays or pigments mixed with hot wax

Encaustic Medium

A combination of filtered beeswax and damar resin. The recipe is generally 85% beeswax and 15% damar resin melted and filtered out together.

Layering Encaustic art is all about thinking in layers. That layer of the medium is what creates that foggy, dream-like surface, characteristic of encaustic art.

Waxing: The application of the medium involves heating and "Painting" the medium onto the surface. An ideal surface for encaustic would be a wood panel or a prepped board designed for Encaustic artwork.

Fusing: Once applied, each layer of wax must be fused to the previous layer. We create this fusion by applying heat from a heat gun in a circular motion to the top layer.

Materials:

Encaustic medium: The wax that we use in class was made by Fanne Fernow and can no longer be ordered L! Here is another place to order the medium: <https://www.dickblick.com/products/r-f-encaustic-medium/>

Hot Plate: Any old Pancake Griddle will work just fine. Consider that once you use the skillet for encaustic art, it is now permanently used for art projects and no longer good for cooking with. I found the current griddles that we are using at the Goodwill. If you prefer to buy new, this would be an example of one that would work just fine. https://www.amazon.com/Presto-07047-Touch-Electric-Griddle/dp/B0051XSIO6/ref=sr_1_5?crid=2CTJNXU9KZI02&keywords=pancake+griddle&qid=1562617943&s=home-garden&sprefix=pancake+%2Cgarden%2C229&sr=1-5

Heat Gun:

I use a Porter-Cable, PC1500HG, 1500 Watt Heat Gun; any similar heat gun will also work! This is a link to the heat gun that we used in class

https://www.amazon.com/PORTER-CABLE-PC1500HG-1500-Watt-Heat-Gun/dp/B004Q04X44/ref=sr_1_7?crd=3MW5TRN5DX25V&keywords=heatguns&qid=1562618231&s=hi&prefix=Heatgun%2Cgarden%2C222&sr=1-7

Wood panel:

We will be using a 10 x10 inch, cradled basswood panel. You can order them online in packages or in singles at <https://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-studio-wood-panels/>

Encaustic Brush: This is my favorite brush for waxing wide, flat layers.

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/r-and-f-encaustic-hake-brushes/#photos>

Non-Bleeding Tissue Paper:

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/spectra-kolorfast-tissue/>

R & F Encaustic Gesso

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/r-and-f-encaustic-gesso/>

Other helpful supplies:

- Oven Mitts!
- Blue tape- for protecting your backs and sides of the wood panel.
- Extra-wide Freezer paper- for protecting your work area
- Masking Tape: Taping down freezer paper
- Fiskars Pruning Snips- Excellent scissors for cutting out intricate shapes
- Stainless Steel Food Containers such as https://www.amazon.com/Winco-SPJL-606-Anti-Jamming-6-Inch-Standard/dp/B001VZ5B9I/ref=pd_cp_79_1?pd_rd_w=n7dXV&pf_rd_p=ef4dc990-a9ca-4945-ae0b-f8d549198ed6&pf_rd_r=EQA1PHDP38MXSB4CJZB4&pd_rd_r=950b2218-a1c3-11e9-b53b-0f76579948e0&pd_rd_wg=M3jM8&pd_rd_i=B001VZ5B9I&psc=1&refRID=EQA1PHDP38MXSB4CJZB4