

**BECKY BLACK
JULIA FOSSON
BEN HECHT
AHAVANI MULLEN**

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encaustic arts

Volume 7, Issue 2
SPRING 2017

**JENNIFER PRETZEUS
TECHNIQUE: SHARI REPLOGLE
JAMES EDWARD SCHERBARTH
ALICIA TORMEY**





Encaustic Arts Magazine is a digital magazine, published semi-annually by the Encaustic Art Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The magazine is published online in December and June. This is our 13th issue.

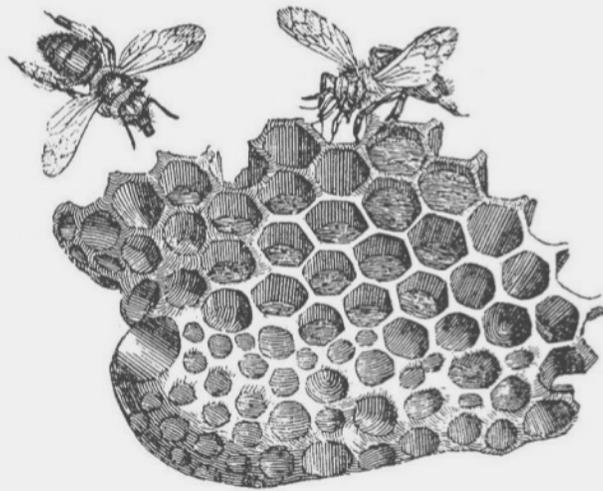
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We will continue to offer free access to back issues of the magazine prior to the Winter 2016 issue. Click here to read them.

A new feature we are offering to our readers is the option to purchase hard copies of select back issues of the magazine. You'll find details and information here.

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A note to readers about hyperlinks in the magazine: When you click on a hyperlink, another window will open in your browser. Depending upon your internet connection speed, this may take a few moments to load. Simply click on that new tab for your browser to view the linked website, and then click back on the magazine tab to go back to reading the magazine.

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The first thing you'll see once the magazine loads is the cover of the magazine. Click on the arrow > on the far right of the viewer to open the magazine. The arrows (on the far left and right middle of the viewer), for all viewing options are how you turn the pages. You can also use the < or > to go to the last or first page. (Those arrows are located at the very bottom far right and left of your screen. You'll notice that the page numbers are also located at the very bottom of your screen on the right).

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Double Click this page, scroll to bottom of linked document for more details on the icons you see on the magazine viewer.

Dear Readers, encaustic/wax artists and collectors:

I am excited and amazed that we are publishing our 13th issue of this magazine. Time has flown by. We appreciate all of you who have elected to subscribe and the positive feedback has been wonderful. I am also happy to hear from those of you who purchased hard-bound copies of the magazine. It is great to be able to offer that feature through our software.

We continue to share with you — diverse encaustic/wax artists, and our Technique section has gotten many rave reviews throughout the world, especially the more isolated regions. This issue, Shari Replogle shares information on the encaustic/shellac burn technique. Be sure to check out her YouTube channel with an assortment of videos on encaustic techniques including [Shellac Burn](#).

The more the Encaustic Art Institute (EAI) expands its vision as an umbrella for the Encaustic Arts Magazine; the growing workshops and demonstrations through EAI; and now the Museum of Encaustic Art; I continue to realize that the impact is not just on the Encaustic/Wax community at large. Patrons, art collectors, educators, other art-related non-profits, and the tourists, are including encaustic/wax medium within their awareness more and more. The fastest growing medium in the nation!

Thank you once again for your support and your interest in our efforts to expose a select group of encaustic/wax artists and their inspiring creativity within each issue. Enjoy!!

Douglas Mehrens
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Dear Readers:

In the Spring Issue, we feature artists pushing the boundaries of traditional encaustic as a medium. These artists are using encaustic alone; with inks; oil sticks; resin; watercolor; oil paint; cold wax medium; dry earth pigments; minerals; rust; shellac; sand; ash; sculpted encaustic. To me, the beauty of seeing all these different ways of working with encaustic is that it presents new possibilities to consider. Seeing all these combinations of materials added to encaustic medium may spark me to try something a little different. Or not. We each have our own unique way of working. It's important to allow ourselves the freedom to experiment to find what serves us best — whether that is through using beautiful straight-forward encaustic medium and pigmented encaustic, or with something a little out of the traditional definition of encaustic. It may not change my way of working to see another artist using a novel material, or novel combination of materials, but it encourages me to consider other tools that may serve me now or at some point in my art-making. It's just interesting to see what other artists are doing, how they think, how they manipulate whatever material they're using to express their ideas. I hope you will feel the same way when you look at the work in this issue.

Thanks for reading!

Kari Gorden
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SPRING 2017

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EA LOGO DESIGN BY NANETTE NEWBRY, STUDIO 2055

SPRING 2017 Issue Cover Art: BEN HECHT, Aquas Aliis Vitrius, (detail), encaustic, on birch panel, 40 x 30 inches, 2016 Courtesy of the Artist

ENCAUSTIC ARTS MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED BY:

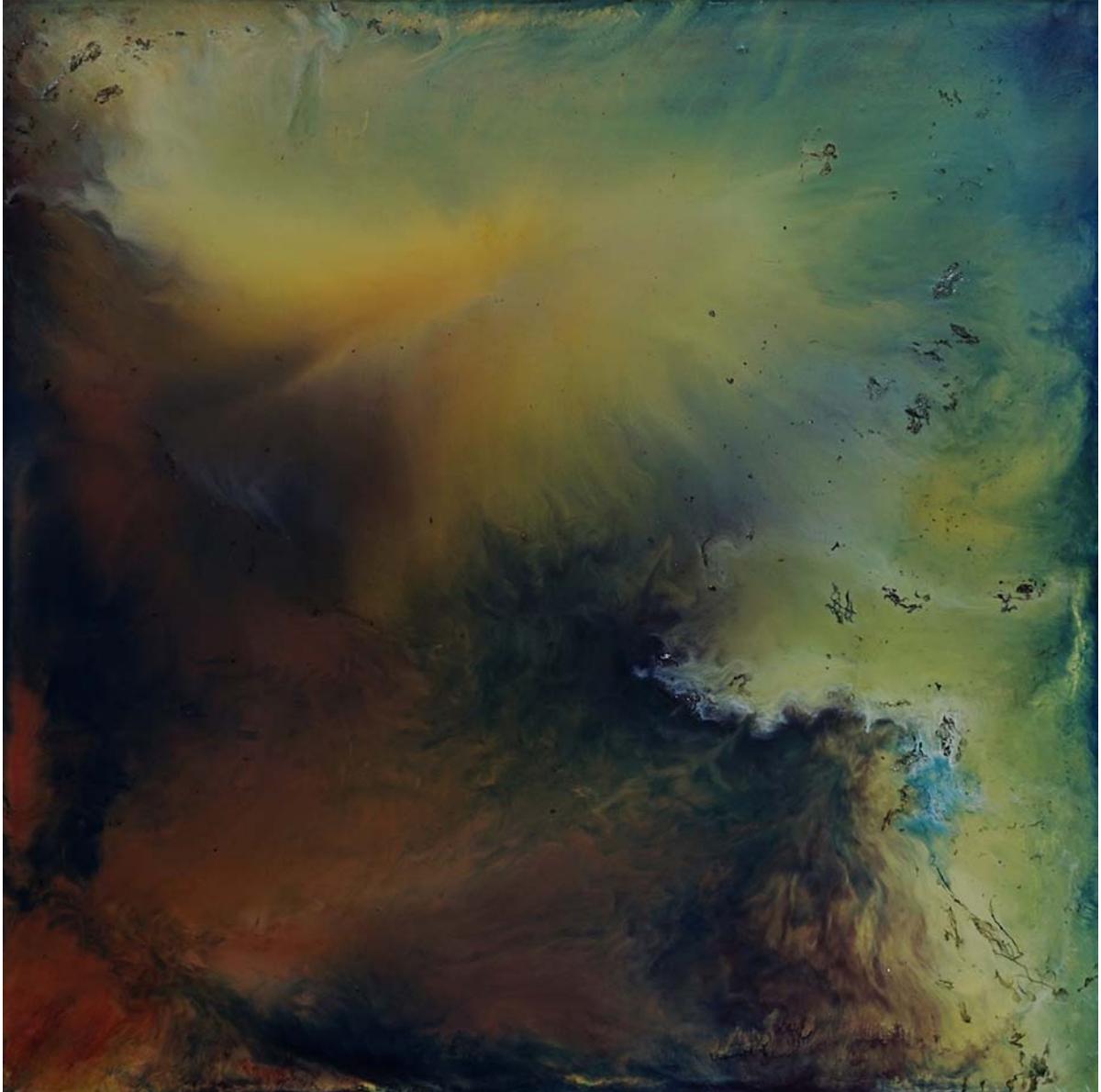
THE ENCAUSTIC ART INSTITUTE

OFFICE: 18 COUNTY RD 55A,

CERRILLOS, NM 87010-9979



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BECKY BLACK

Merging Abandonment



Frozen In Time, encaustic, on birch panel, 30 x 42 inches, 2014

Image Details, previous page:

Morning Break, encaustic on birch panel, 24 x 24 inches, 2015

Drawing and ceramics were my first artistic loves; drawing hands and feet and creating hand-built ceramic pots occupied many hours in my youth. I tried all types of painting mediums, but none of them grabbed me, that was until encaustics. Back in 2001, while at an art opening, the featured artist, Melissa Battersby, was showing large beautiful luminous paintings. I was with a friend and we asked her, *"How did you create the luminosity in your work?"* She replied, *"I am not going to tell you"*, and she was not joking. Every time Melissa was alone, we'd go up and say, *"come on, give us a hint"* with her replying *"no"*. This dialogue went back and forth for over an hour until we finally wore her down and she stated, *"I live in Palm Desert, I paint outside when it's over 100 degrees, I use my hands as a paintbrush and I am not telling you anything else"*. After we arrived home, my friend Googled "paint" and "heat" and discovered the world of encaustic supplies and purchased some, even though he knew nothing about them.

When the supplies arrived, he set up a 3' x 3' birch panel canvas to work on. I was totally overwhelmed by the tools of the trade: a hotplate, heat gun, and melted beeswax so I said, *"You paint, I find all these tools intimidating"*. I proceeded to watch, from over his shoulder, as he laid down and fused the encaustic paint. After a few minutes I said, *"I think I can do this, let me give it a try now"*. He handed me the pot of melted beeswax, the paintbrush and stepped aside. In just a few minutes of painting I felt HOME, home like I have never felt before. Within 5 minutes I felt like I had been painting with encaustics ALL OF MY LIFE, it was a surreal experience.



Leap, encaustic, on birch panel, 24 x 18 inches, 2014



Invitation, encaustic, on birch panel, 42 x 30 inches, 2015

Merging

*Longing hearts of deeply whispered passion
merging into a peaceful delight.*

*Finding you soaring in deep blue skies and laughing
our way into lives of wonder and surprise.*

*Eyes so pure and deep of soul drawing me into a
quandary where lifetimes pass and love invites.*

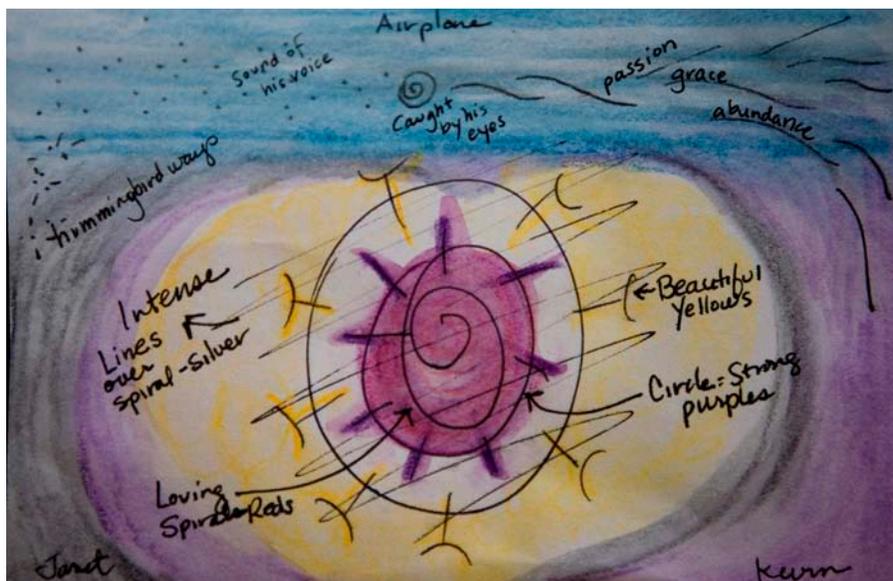
*Yes. I open my life and heart to you with ease and grace
to discover sacred spaces of joy and gratitude.*

*Abundance is our playground of intention and co-creation
of lives shared and celebrated.*

*I love you as the precious and beautiful woman, who has stirred
me to inhale the sensual fullness of what it means to be loved so
freely by the delicious sweetness of your playful affections.*

*We choose this merging and allow the love of lifetimes to emerge
with our sacred intentions softly spoken and danced with delight.*

©KB 2006



I draw from two passions, inspired writings and the ocean. The inspirations that run through me are vibrant and seemingly alive in the molten state of the encaustic paint. The nature of encaustics, its' flow, richness, natural depth, and translucency is simply enthralling. Each painting has a life of its' own, that no one can own. Every piece that comes through has a story to tell and offers guidance in how to usher it forth, birth it, if you will. I'd like to share one such story.

Kevin and Janet asked me to create a painting that would represent their union. They were to be wed in 6 months and thought the painting would make a lovely wedding present to one another. Kevin was familiar and confident with my process so they gave me free rein to choose the design and colors. I asked them to share how they perceived themselves. Kevin also sent a poem, "*Merging*", describing his feelings for Janet and their union. I spent time reading and being still with their words, from which a beautiful image emerged of a blue sky, purple, black and silver sides and shades of swirling orange in the middle. I drew a little version of what I saw with crayons. Kevin and Janet asked me to tune into them, while painting, so their energy would be imbued into the piece.

When I started their painting, the imagery just flowed through me; in two days their 3-foot by 5-foot painting was almost complete. The pace and pulse in which the painting poured through was just remarkable. Then abruptly, everything just stopped. I could not "hear" or sense the piece anymore. Time passed, the wedding was approaching; yet the painting remained SILENT. Everything in the painting was done except for the center, it was just a little off. The painting had been mute for about one month when Kevin and I spoke on the phone; he asked how the piece was coming along. I shared of the silence and the ability to paint for only those first few days. Kevin replied, "*Thank goodness! Janet and I were going through a deep process and we didn't want that energy in the painting.*" After a few more months, Kevin called again; the report was the same, SILENCE. I shared that for some reason the paint kept separating from the canvas and it looked like a spider web. Kevin said, "*Thank goodness! Janet and I were feeling like our minds had been filled with cobwebs*". Kevin and I concluded that the wedding ceremony would perhaps open the flow of communication with the painting, and while on their honeymoon it just might speak again. So, the painting as a wedding present was taken off the table.



Breath of Stars, encaustic, on birch panel, 48 x 48 inches, 2016



River of Light, encaustic, on cradled birch panel, 36 x 60 inches, 2016



Rebirth, encaustic, on birch panel, 48 x 36 inches, 2014



Merging Abandonment, encaustic, on masonite, 36 x 60 inches, 2007

After the wedding, Kevin and Janet were off on their three-week honeymoon. I was pleased about the idea of being able to finish the painting while they were away. Every day, I would go into the studio anticipating the possibility of catching a whisper, but every day the painting remained the same, quiet and still. One week passed, then another. With only two days of their honeymoon remaining, the painting spoke, one word. One word, loud and clear ABANDONMENT. The painting then showed me an image of throwing white paint, with abandonment, onto the canvas, in the area that was "just a little off". I was concerned; I could ruin the piece with this action. But I *trusted*. I trusted what was revealed, trusted the process so far; so I would trust this vision of THROWING titanium white encaustic paint onto the canvas with ABANDONMENT. In just 10 minutes of hurling paint onto the canvas *Merging Abandonment* was complete.

When Kevin and Janet returned from their honeymoon they asked about the painting and how the process unfolded. I told them of my experience of the continued silence, hearing the word abandonment just two days prior to their return, and then seeing myself throwing white paint onto the canvas. Kevin then asked, "*Becky, when you heard the word abandonment what was the hour?*" He proceeded to tell me, that at the exact time I mentioned, he and Janet were on a beach discussing their new company; specifically, the need to go all in, with abandonment, in order for the company to fly. *Merging Abandonment* taught me to trust; trust a flow that is beyond logic, a flow that leaves gems of grace along its' way. So, when someone asks, how long does it take to paint a painting? I like to say 2 days, 6 months and 10 minutes.



Shoreline, encaustic, on wood panel, inside beehive frame, 5 x 19 inches, 2016



White Caps, encaustic, on wood panel, inside beehive frame, 5 x 19 inches, 2016

I've asked a few people their experience of living with one of the paintings that have come through and here is what they have to say. Roger writes, *"For the past six or seven years, a wispy cloud of light has floated in a blueish sky above my writing desk. It's a relatively small encaustic painting, maybe ten inches high by seven inches wide. It's called Wolf Moon. In Native American mythology, January's full moon is the Wolf Moon, the time when wolves roam and howl. As I gaze into the painting, images of wolves appear and disappear within the swirls of white on blue. The wild spirit of the painting fills the room and calls forth imagination. I look at a cloud and see a wolf. I glance at moonlight and it animates itself into tangible feeling. It happens every day, every night, year after year. That's the power of Becky's work."* Lori's experience, *"I get the sense that the realm of the invisible one's know that they are invited to show up. Becky knows this and they do. Standing and viewing these colorful encaustic paintings is an initiation of the spirit. A teaching. For me it was a first, feeling the language of art beyond words where time stops and possibility begins with each gaze. Her art has inspired me to remember and revisit the living realm of the subtle."* From Suzette, *"When I look at her paintings I am reminded of the depth and intimacy of being alive - of creation expanding itself through countless nuances and variations."* For Doreen, *"The encaustic medium is a divine connection for Becky...as she not only brings through symbolic colors and shapes, but there's an uplifting healing energy to her artwork."* Rollie's sense, *"Her paintings make me feel at peace, while simultaneously activating my curiosity and imagination. The encaustic art has so many dimensions to it and Becky enfolds the hidden raptures that await our mortal selves. Each painting has a voice that can be heard if you listen carefully and joyfully."*



Spiraling Mandala, encaustic, on birch panel, 48 x 48 inches, 2014



Fathomless, encaustic, on birch panel, 48 x 48 inches, 2015

Upcoming show: Laguna Art-A-Fair, June 30th - September 3rd 2017

art-a-fair.com



Aerial, encaustic, on wood panel, inside beehive frame, 5 x 19 inches, 2015

BIO

"The encaustic paintings that come through embody a luminous depth of movement and expansiveness into mysteriously sensual otherworlds."



I was born and raised into an artistic family in Long Beach, California. My focus was on drawing and ceramics until 2000 when I moved to Laguna Beach and shortly after began painting with encaustics. The rich and luminous quality of encaustics instantly captivated me, awakening a yearning to express a lifetime of sensual images seen and unseen, known and unknown. For me, the act of painting is about flow, about listening, about stories. The beeswax, when applied to a canvas and then heated, yields form from an ethereal formlessness.

Gallery

Laguna Gallery of Contemporary Art, Laguna Beach, California <http://www.lgoca.com/>

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2015 – 2017 Art-A-Fair, Laguna Beach, California
- 2016 – 2017 LGOCA at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Laguna Niguel, California
- 2013 *Cascade AIDS Project*, Portland, Oregon
- 2008, 2016 *Art That's Small At City Hall*, Laguna Beach, California
- 2008 *Art For The Environment*, Irvine, California
- 2007 *Project Skimboard 3*, Laguna Beach, California
- 2007 Sandstone Art Gallery, Laguna Beach, California
- 2007 Cove Gallery, Laguna Beach, California

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JULIA FOSSON



Beach Chair, encaustic, on cradled lauan panel, 20 x 20 inches, 2016

Image Details, previous page:

In Plain Sight #4, encaustic, paper, ink and oil, on cradled lauan panel, 20 x 20 inches, 2016

Let me first say thank you Encaustic Arts Magazine for the opportunity to be in the Spring 2017 issue. I am now in my 15th year working solely in encaustic. I think back about my journey and how amazing it has been and can't wait to see my future body of work. I continue to progress based on positive feedback but also allowing the challenges and mistakes to help me along the way.

My technique is slightly different from other encaustic painters as I create a smooth surface. I don't use a lot of texture in my work, not to say that I don't ever have gouges and raised areas, but for the most part my works resemble tiles due to the smoothness and shine I generate from buffing. I feel this is so important to be able to see into the wax and not be distracted from the texture. I love the 3 dimensional components without it really being 3 dimensional. When you look at the painting, which I like to frame with floater frames, you can see the dripped edges. Before I begin with the pigmented encaustic I have 10 layers of wax on the board. This allows me to use more heat to create the smooth texture and not lose the integrity of my images or painting.

I am a background painter, meaning I let the background tell me where I am going with a piece, whether it will be a chair, a tree, house or nothing specific. Sometimes the backgrounds are so much fun or have a very unique look I don't want to interfere with their beauty. The background is the backbone, the structure that sets the foundation of the painting. This is why I paint with so many layers, I am building something, and I want it to be strong and support my thoughts and hopefully create thoughts for the viewer. I love telling a story in each painting and asking the viewer to listen visually. I often embed things in my painting, not mixed media wise but with words hidden, thoughts hidden giving you a piece of me within my art without distracting the viewer from their thoughts.

I work in several series; I like change and have found certain styles I can never give up creating. For instance when I moved to North Carolina I really thought I might stop painting chairs, but found out quickly in the progressive arts world of Asheville, these chairs were loved. I think chairs are wonderful they resonate and touch so many folks. Chairs are probably one of the most designed items and have been a part of all of our



Patio Chair, encaustic and oil, on birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2004

lives. You might not think about a chair, but as soon as you pass a chair, you have a thought, like whether you want to sit in it, or does it remind you of your childhood. I have had many people comment on the chairs and to hear them tell their story and them listening to mine about a particular chair brings about many conversations. I first began making chairs with only 3 legs, looking as though the chair would tip at any minute because I felt in life we teeter. And then one day a gentleman asked why 3 legs and I began to tell him why and he said that many years ago they purposefully made them with 3 legs, as it was easier to balance. I think that is when I really took more of an interest and started painting many types of chairs not just my crazy 3-legged ones. One of the most popular chairs is the old diner chair. You want to be in there and I really hope you feel what I am trying to say with the titles of these particular chairs.



Latitude and Longitude, encaustic, on birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2015



Trying to Be Quiet, encaustic, oil, on birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2015



Sharp Top Trail, encaustic, on cradled birch panel, 16 x 20 inches, 2016

Another series, "*Mountain Series*" began when I was building a house in North Carolina and didn't paint for a year. When telling people I was an artist, they would ask if the beautiful mountains in the area inspired me. I didn't really think so until the first paintings that I completed were abstract mountain ranges. These pieces are



Laurel Springs, encaustic, on cradled birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2016

filled in the center with many colors and I use the heat gun versus the blowtorch so I can move the wax. I love the use of white space to highlight each of the pieces; I think it helps to draw you into the mountains.



Listening, encaustic, on cradled lauan panel, 24 x 24 inches, 2012

“The art of conversation lies in listening.” — Malcolm Forbes

I said earlier that I want the viewer to listen to my paintings visually, which makes me consider what listening is all about. Most of the time we don't really listen, we hear but don't listen, so I started a new series called *“Listening”*. They all have titles related to listening and my hopes were to stir the thought in the viewers how they, others or we listen.



Wind, encaustic, on cradled luan panel, 30 x 30 inches, 2016

The pieces are unique; they have circles filled with many colors of wax, layers upon layers so that they appear built up. The beginning background is usually white or beige with oil paint heated into the wax. I love this series because for me there is a peaceful quietness though filled with circles full of color. I feel the impact from both the background of the black oil paint with the boldness of the circles speak volumes.

In late 2016 I began incorporating works on paper into paintings on panels, you can see an example on the right, where the piece is hung over the painting with wax string. I know I have only begun to scratch this surface of work. I have always loved the look of wax on heavy watercolor paper. I am in the process of understanding where I will go with this new work. I am excited to experiment with hanging options, back lighting and multi paper layers. I want my hanging option to be organic like the wax and almost create another dimension versus a frame.



In Plain Sight #1, encaustic, paper, ink and oil, on cradled lauan panel, 48 x 20 inches, 2016

I have chosen these next 4 images to give you an idea of what I mean by being a “background painter”. All the examples are rich in color, depth and detail that draw you into the paintings, for me they have a very organic feel or flow, taking the viewer on a journey into the painting. Artists regularly step back and spend time evaluating



Close Up 1, encaustic, oil stick, on cradled lauan panel, 2016

Close Up 1, from the *"Mazarine Garden"* series, this technique uses oil paint and encaustic.

with purposeful focus looking at the full canvas, evaluating and determining what's working and what's not. Looking is physical and seeing is mental, so we step back slowing down and taking the time to see the details of the work in all stages. So when I step back and look at my backgrounds I sometimes get lost and I love it.



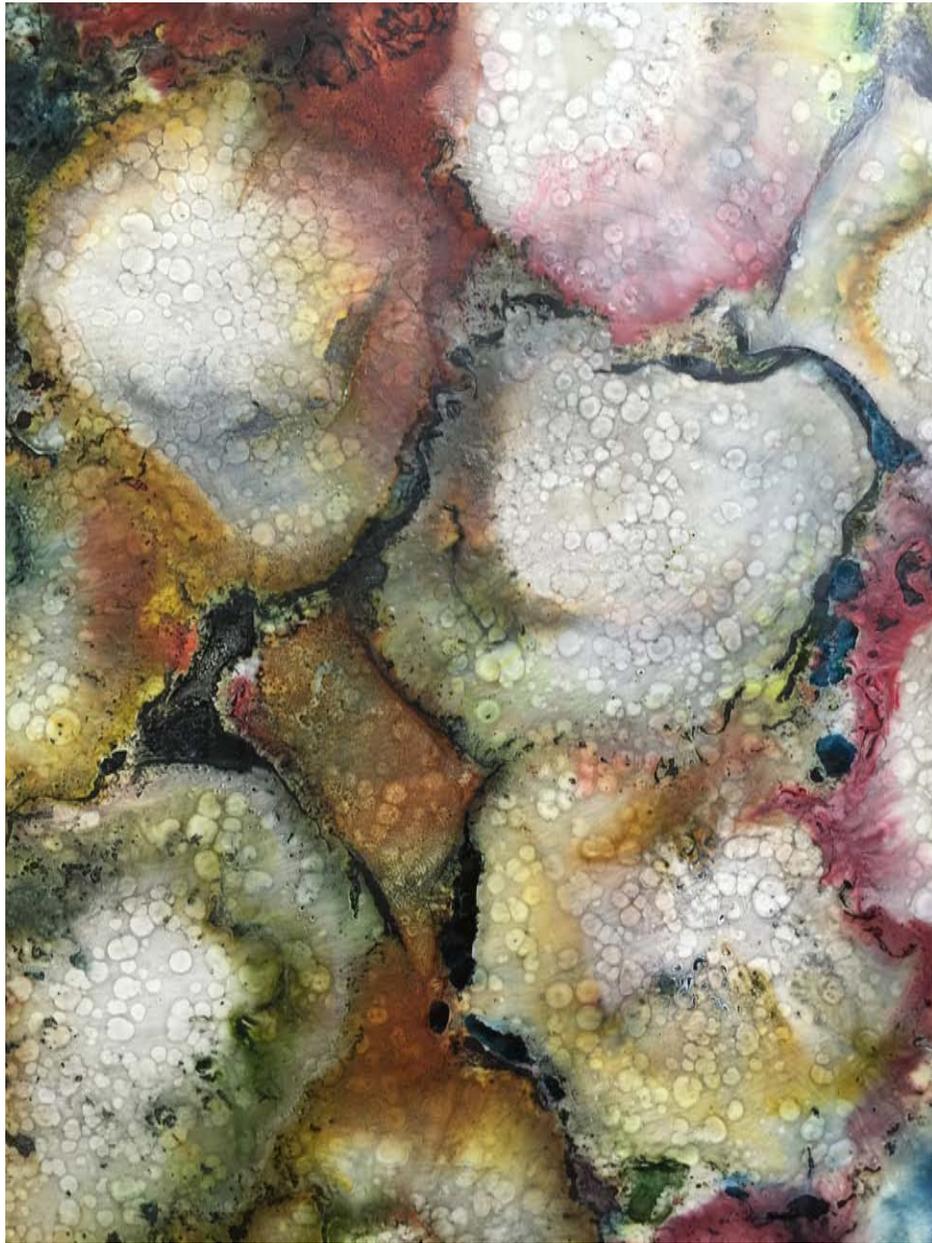
Close Up 2, encaustic, ink, oil stick, on lauan panel, 2016

Close Up 2, this is from the *"In Plain Sight"* series. This technique is with encaustic, ink and oil paint. In this process I over-heat the wax, but love the depth in this technique giving the viewer many places to get lost in the painting.



Close Up 3, encaustic, ink, oil stick, on lauan panel, 2016

Close Up 3, this is from the *"In Plain Sight"* series. This technique is with encaustic, ink and oil paint.



Close Up 4, encaustic, ink, oil stick, on lauan panel, 2016

Close Up 4, this is from the *"In Plain Sight"* series. This technique is with encaustic, ink and oil paint.

I am excited about the future and my encaustic works. I look forward to new creations and sharing my stories in my paintings and creating special commission pieces. I will teach again someday, I feel I have a lot to share. Stay tuned and I hope that you will visit my [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).



Attempt To Quiet My Brain, encaustic, on cradled lauan panel, 40 x 36 inches, 2014

Watch this short Artist Profile to learn more about Julia Fosson's encaustic process.



BIO

Julia Fosson now lives in Asheville, NC a vibrant arts community. She began her painting career after leaving her job for 20 years as a Hand Therapist treating traumatic injuries. She will tell you she tried every medium out there and finally found a comfort in oil painting.

Her journey to encaustic came in the early 2000's when a studio mate said her oil's looked like encaustic. This said she explored and found a love and passion for painting encaustically. It didn't take long for it to define her as an artist, she attributes her now success to being in Asheville and surrounded by such talented artists and her clients embracing her work.



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BEN HECHT

Foreign and Familiar, A View from Above



Aguas Aliis Vitrius No. 7, mixed media encaustic, on five birch panels, each 66 x 60 inches each, 2016

Image Details, previous page:

Aguas Aliis Vitrius, detail, encaustic on birch panel, 40 x 30 inches, 2016

"There is nothing new except that which has been forgotten."

—Rose Bertin, milliner and dressmaker for Marie Antoinette

What does it feel like to look upon one of my artworks? What does it make you think about or remember from your own life and personal experience? Do you feel inspired and full of wonder? Or does the composition just fade into the background as so many pieces of contemporary abstract art do?

As an artist and imaginator, these are question I ask myself often. It is not enough that I strive to bring a creative vision to life in a manner that is fulfilling to me, its creator. My aim is to strike a chord in others and make them feel and think in new ways about Nature and the world around them. To feel connection, if even for a fleeting moment.

Hecht's art is at once literal and highly abstract. Through his use of aerial drones and unexpected combination of materials like beeswax and resin, Hecht is able to gain a perspective on the natural world that is immediate and recognizable yet foreign and mysterious.

But I am a cheater. I'm not going to pretend I work totally from scratch to bring about this lofty vision in my creative practice. Instead I have an unwitting partner in crime. In fact, I'll venture to admit that this cohort is really 95% responsible for the sense of wonder and awe I **may** inspire in those looking upon what I create. So who is this mysterious other?



Aquas Litus Vitrius No. 27, Installation in St Regis Monarch Beach Resort
mixed media encaustic with UV resin, on wood panel, 70 x 170 inches, 2017

"All in the eye of the beholder - Some of the most destructive forces in the world (Fire & Water), can also have the power of beauty.

— Martin R. Lemieux



Artist with, ***Mare Tranquilitatis***, Installation in Park Place on the Harbor San Diego, encaustic, on birch panel, 74 x 74 inches, 2016

Nature, and her repeating patterns, manifest in both rhythmic and violent manners is the crux of my work. I am there to act as a conduit and occasionally a conductor. I am not original in this regard. I come from a long line of artists who do their best to harness the power of the natural world in order to bring beautiful objects into this world. It is a struggle, a push and pull of how much to rely on the beauty of Nature and how much to deviate in order to make something that feels new and fresh. The

Impressionists had their unique use of light, the Fauvists had their brilliant saturated colors, and the cubists employed fractured, jutting shapes. Whatever the method, each of the artists in these movements had some sort of unique outlook or transfiguration to frame a view on the inherent beauty that is all around us. Nature and her amazing and sublime patterns doesn't need artists to help exhaust her. It's there evident in the veins of the smallest leaf or the majesty of the grandest mountain. But it sure doesn't hurt to try and offer a fresh view to those who might not be looking with awe and wonder anymore.

“Do or do not, there is no try.” — Yoda



Artist with *Aquas Litus Vitrius Triptych No. 4*, mixed media encaustic, on wood panel, 60 x 128 inches, 2016

As an artist making his way within a contemporary aesthetic, I will admit that I am not sufficiently content to just toss in a horizon line and say, “it’s basically an abstract sunset!” Neither am I fulfilled at the prospect of creating something as literal as a plein-aire painting of a coastline. Although I do often feel greatly inspired when I look upon some artworks in each of these categories. It’s just not quite enough for me to pursue them in my creations. I want to push harder into abstraction without going too “Rambo” on colorfield technique. I want the viewer to *feel* like they are looking at the ocean without necessarily consciously knowing they are. I want them to almost experience a sense of *déjà vu* when they look at one my landscapes but not exactly know why it feels familiar.



My success in that endeavor is mixed. In my [machina obscura](#) series I blend images of the ocean with amorphous landforms that are made up from high altitude topographical images I shoot with my Canon dSLR, macro images of rocks and strata, and all of these layers are combined and painted on with thick colored encaustic. Often I will do a shellac burn on the earth tone sections and embed in 19th century ephemera like pocket watches, compasses, and custom made music boxes. It's a series that is hard to classify.



Machina Obscura Tempus 1, mixed media encaustic, on wood panel, 90 x 67 inches, 2014



Synapse, Installation at Scripps Research Institute Research Institute, mixed media with chemistry glassware and encaustic, on birch panel, 66 x 44 inches, 2015

The [aquas aliis vitirus](#) artworks, which are by far my most popular for large scale public installations, seem more abstract but are actually the most literal. I take those photographs from a few hundred feet above the churning, oxygen laden waters of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. But because I am directly above the water, the unusual perspective is enough to remove the image from the known view of the ocean we have from the safety of the shore and allow the artwork to read as abstract image.

I am interested in walking the delicate line between literal and abstract and I take great pride when I feel I do it successfully. I recently installed a large [trptych](#) from my *aquas aliis Vitrius* series in the St Regis Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point and I was especially elated when I had the chance to overhear a couple onlookers in a heated chat as to whether they work looking at water, lighting, or something else. I thought to myself, *I've got em!* which to me means not that I care what conclusion they eventually came to (don't know, I stopped eavesdropping) but that I was able to pull them out of whatever they were doing and become interested enough to look closely and ask themselves questions.

So how do I do it? How do I walk the line between literal and abstract without ever making it feel like I am one or the other? To answer, I have to take you back some years. As a boy in the 70s I was always climbing up trees or jumping off balconies in my mom-made superman cape. I even broke my arm once when I foolishly flung myself from a balcony into the ice-plant below! (Apparently I didn't get the message that the unseen forces that lifted up Christopher Reeves were in fact movie magic.) Unbeknownst to me at the time I would go on to form a lifelong interest in an aerial view of the world.



Later on this would manifest in the purchase of a fixed wing ultralight (like the one in the movie [Fly Away Home](#)). The view from 6000 feet above the ground in a totally open air flying contraption really does give one a distinct

view of the patterns and shapes in the land and water below. What was once familiar is now wholly foreign. Crashing waves suddenly become repeating parallel-ish lines; jutting mountains flatten out to become abstract forms of color and shape. Familiar becomes strange and new. I eventually crashed that machine (which sadly would not come as a surprise to anyone who knows me and my awkward lack of coordination).



I then moved on to paragliding and paramotoring. Low and slow, but still a birds eye view of the world below. I've been doing that since 1999 and I have every intention of continuing it until my body says I can't. Most recently I have moved on to using drones to achieve the birds-eye view of the world that so inspires me. Regardless of the technology I employ, the intention remains the same. How do I create a dynamic balance between that which appears foreign and strange but feels familiar and welcoming.



Aquas Litus Vitrius No. 4, mixed media encaustic, on wood panel, 60 x 60 inches, 2017

My newest work using the drone and thick layers of encaustic along the California coastline especially focus on this desire to show a unique perspective on something typically not seen from directly above. How do I help my viewer experience the sensation of a familiar place, but retain the wonder and off-kilter awe of something new? It's an ongoing struggle and a challenge I find continually rewarding.

Capturing a New Process for Beeswax

Encaustic painting has been a central part of my process since around 2003. Photography, especially aerial imagery, has been there since as far back as junior high. Combining both and now incorporating new techniques, especially “captured encaustic in resin” has been my focus for the last few years. Honestly I love encaustic and don't need to extoll its virtues in this article as most readers know the material so intimately.



Instead I hope to share some atypical uses I have found for beeswax in the hopes others might discover new methods for their art methods as well. My latest process, which is employed in a somewhat different manner by some extraordinary artists in Japan, is what I have termed “captured encaustic in resin.”

Basically I paint layers of thick impasto encaustic (mostly in titanium white but also in some hues of blues and greens) and separate each layer with a thin layer of two-part UV resin. This creates a fascinating 3D effect that is hard to demonstrate in photographs but looks quite stunning when looking at an artwork up close. Moving one's head from side to side, the thin resin layers create an even deeper three dimensionality than the sculptural layers of encaustic alone. I'm definitely in love with the process but I don't use it all the time as its very time consuming to do.





Aquas Litus No. 7, detail, and installation view, encaustic, on birch panel, 40 x 30 inches, 2016

In recent years I have become reluctant to classify my work as encaustic and instead now opt for that vague and often overused term “mixed media.” While I love everything I can do with tempered beeswax and I still am mesmerized when I watch it move around haphazardly on my painting ground, or pool into unexpected shapes as it cools, I find that it is the combination of encaustic and other materials that excite me the most. Currently it is the use of resin, ephemeral and archaic antique inclusions, and original photography that I find most compelling. I have even moved into using Legos and computer components for my [urbicus](#) series.



But who knows where that will lead. Isn't that really the most exciting aspect of what it means to work with encaustic paints nowadays? We have so many other materials that may or may not work well with our treasured medium and it is up to us to experiment and find our unique niche expression with a material that has been in use for millennia.





Urbicus San Diego, detail, mixed media with encaustic, Legos, computer components and UV resin, on wood panel, 60 x 48 inches, 2016



Forma Vitrius, mixed media encaustic and UV resin sculpture, 105 x 22 x 6 inches, 2016

“When your technique and your ideas support each other and the image becomes the vehicle of that expression, then you will have found your voice or niche”.

Henry Bateman - British Artist

BIO

Ben Hecht is a San Diego, California based artist. His work is focused on mixed media encaustic combined with his original landscape photography of nature, primarily aerial views of the ocean. Hecht's work is in the permanent collection of a variety of important institutions, with a particular emphasis on large scale corporate placement.

Some of his permanent installations include Montage Resort in Laguna Beach, St Regis Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, Park Place on the Harbor in San Diego, Park Laurel in San Diego, Chapman University in Orange County and The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, CA.

Hecht has been a professional artist since 1992. Hecht received both his B.A. in Fine Arts and his M.A. from University of California at Santa Cruz.

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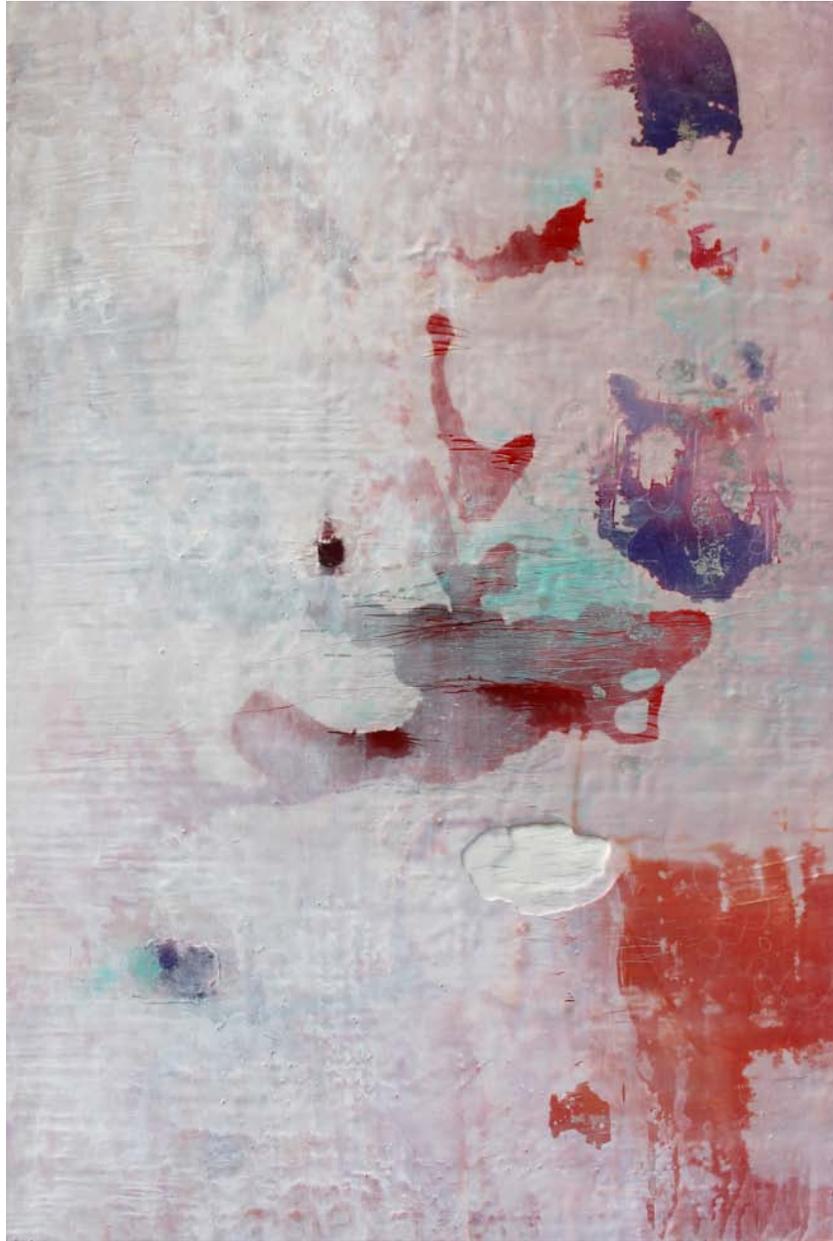
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/BenHecht>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/benhechtart/>





AHAVANI MULLEN



Oneness Tears, encaustic, watercolor, oil, aluminum, charcoal, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 32 inches, 2016

Image Details, previous page:

Oneness Tears, (*detail*), encaustic, watercolor, oil, aluminum, charcoal, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 32 inches, 2016

Art is the outer vesture of love. Art, like love, is a force of oneness with the Infinite. When we create a piece of art, we are really re-creating or reflecting some beauty of the Infinite.

~ Sri Chinmoy

My works have evolved from silence. The most essential element in art making for me lies in the process itself, in cultivating stillness and reverence while working. It is intuitive and spontaneous, exploring the fruitful periods and the droughts of spiritual experience, the natural cycles of creation, preservation and transformation.

The finished works of art are a relatively permanent record of these moments, a snapshot of the intangible placed inside a physical object. They navigate and define an intermediate space between the outer and the inner, the seen and the unseen. These images wish to serve as a vehicle for a moment of contemplation, a fleeting breath beyond the earthly.

When I remember times throughout my life in which I've had the most profound interactions with works of art, they are experiences ripe with a playful, light quality. With these works, I wish to recreate the fragrance of those moments.



Cosmos Seeds, encaustic, oil, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 48 inches, 2016

I am fortunate to have been born into a family of women artists, and I have identified as an artist for as long as I can remember. When I was in my early twenties I had an inner experience that confirmed this knowledge in me, revealing a kind of certainty and confidence with the world of visual art, that we would always know each other intimately.

Like so many artists, long periods of time are spent in the studio just looking at the work in progress, just meditating before the work, allowing myself to really see what exists there.

In my series *Ocean Inside the Drop*, the organic matter I embed in the work such as vines, paper and silk, as well as the use of natural, cellular-like forms, creates visual links between two worlds, visible and invisible. These remind us of our connections to nature as human beings, and our inherent divinity and perfection because of it.

Because encaustic paint is built up layer upon layer, it is particularly well-suited to the atmospheres I wish to evoke. I have found that beeswax has a rich, earthy organic quality as well as an ethereal transparency and luminosity, which allows me to capture a kind of subtle divine light as it is manifested in the physical, material realm.



Ocean Inside the Drop II, encaustic, graphite, aluminum, oil, on cradled birch panel, 40 x 30 inches, 2016



Untitled 53 (Microterrain), encaustic, on salvaged wood, 4 x 2.25 x 1.5 inches, 2015

Over the past two to three years I have been working in a variety of media, most heavily in encaustic paint, on wood grounds and reclaimed materials. Some of my work is evolving into more sculptural, 2.5-dimensional pieces as I have discovered salvaged wood, and found new constructions that can be made with these materials. My *Microterrain* series is the beginning of this exploration. In working with these pieces, I found myself responding to uneven surfaces, shapes and crevices, the actual history of each object. These surprising and playful dialogues in topography and scale informed new thinking about working with encaustic as well, engaging with its inherent sculptural qualities.



Rhythm of Birth and Death, (diptych), encaustic, oil, graphite, on cradled birch panel, 30 x 80 inches, 2016

I often use words and melodies to guide the movement of the work. In these cases, I draw on devotional Bengali poetry and musical compositions. Some of these are centuries-old lyrical songs by Rabindranath Tagore, and others are more contemporary haunting melodies by Sri Chinmoy. I feel that the themes within specific songs and poems are able to guide my movement through the process, much like mantra is used to concentrate energy. Often they carry me through a sea of uncertainty and unknown territory during the process, like a ship passing through a rough patch of water from shore to shore, from start to finish with the work. It is satisfying to know that the message and fragrance of that particular poem or song is embedded inside the work on a cellular level.



Fragrance, oil, cold wax, charcoal, graphite, watercolor, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 48 inches, 2015

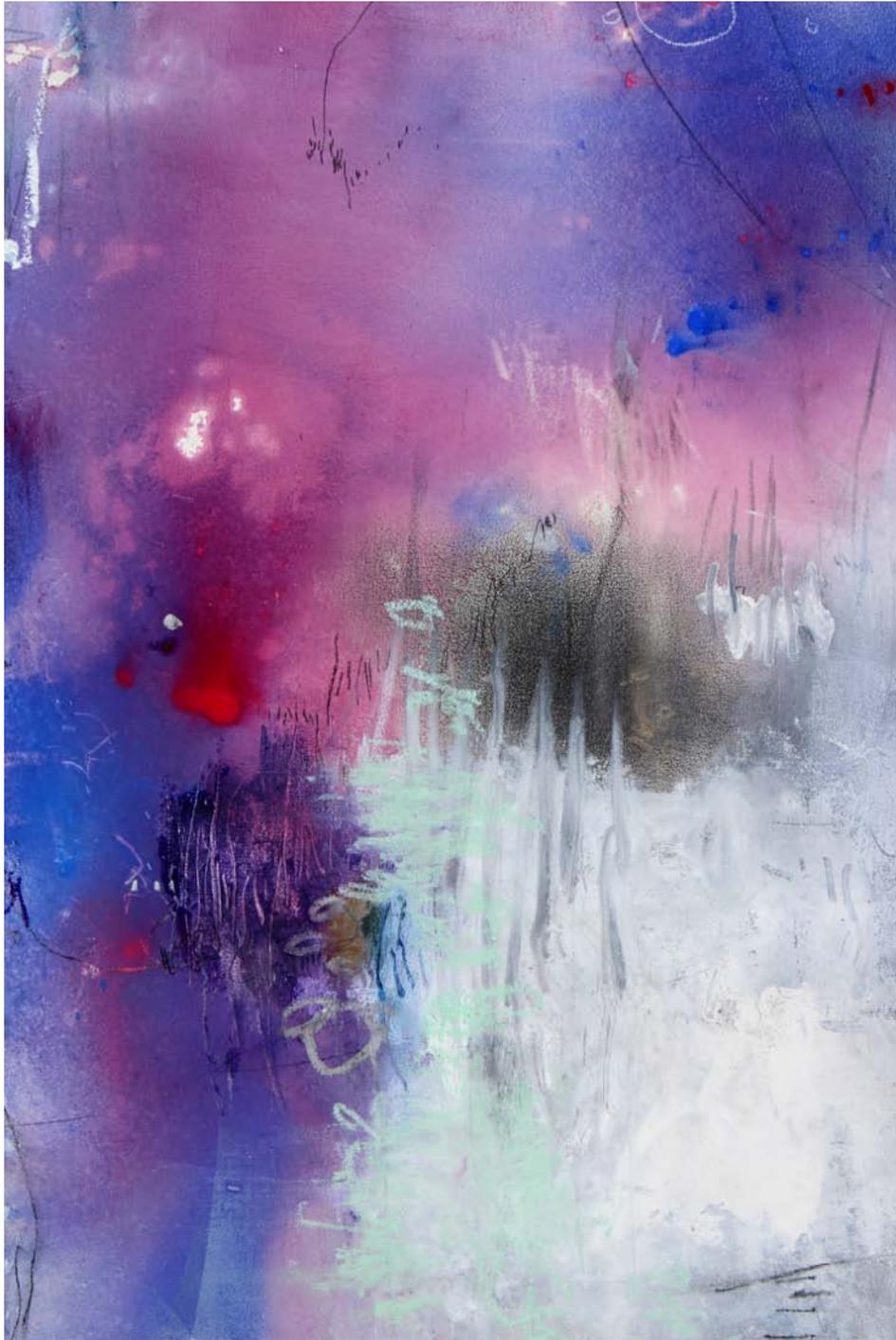


Jubilant, encaustic, oil, on cradled birch panel, 36 x 36 inches, 2017

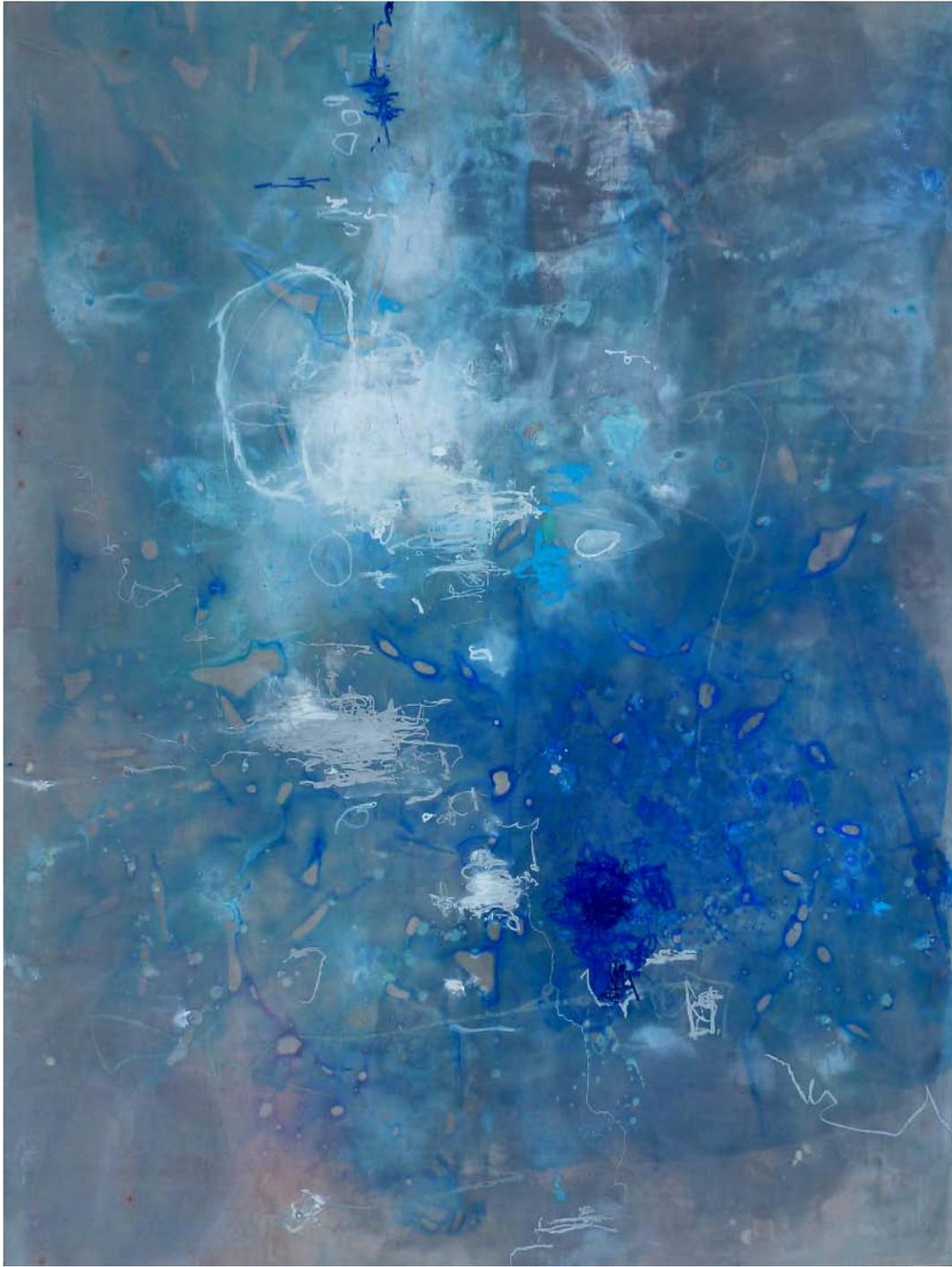
I feel so many of us wish to contribute something positive to our world, in various spheres of life. Having studied and engaged in art and spirituality for over twenty years, I feel strongly that my offering lies in creating visual art from this perspective. By allowing my meditation practice to inform my studio practice, and vice versa, I can explore the depths of each in a satisfying way. It leads me to ask, “Where can I bring a quality of elevation to what exists in this vast world of contemporary visual art? What can I contribute to it on a level of expanding consciousness?” The only clues to answers I have ever gotten to these questions direct me back to the intention and process, and lies in that mysterious moment of creation — laying down paint, directing a line, carving a surface.



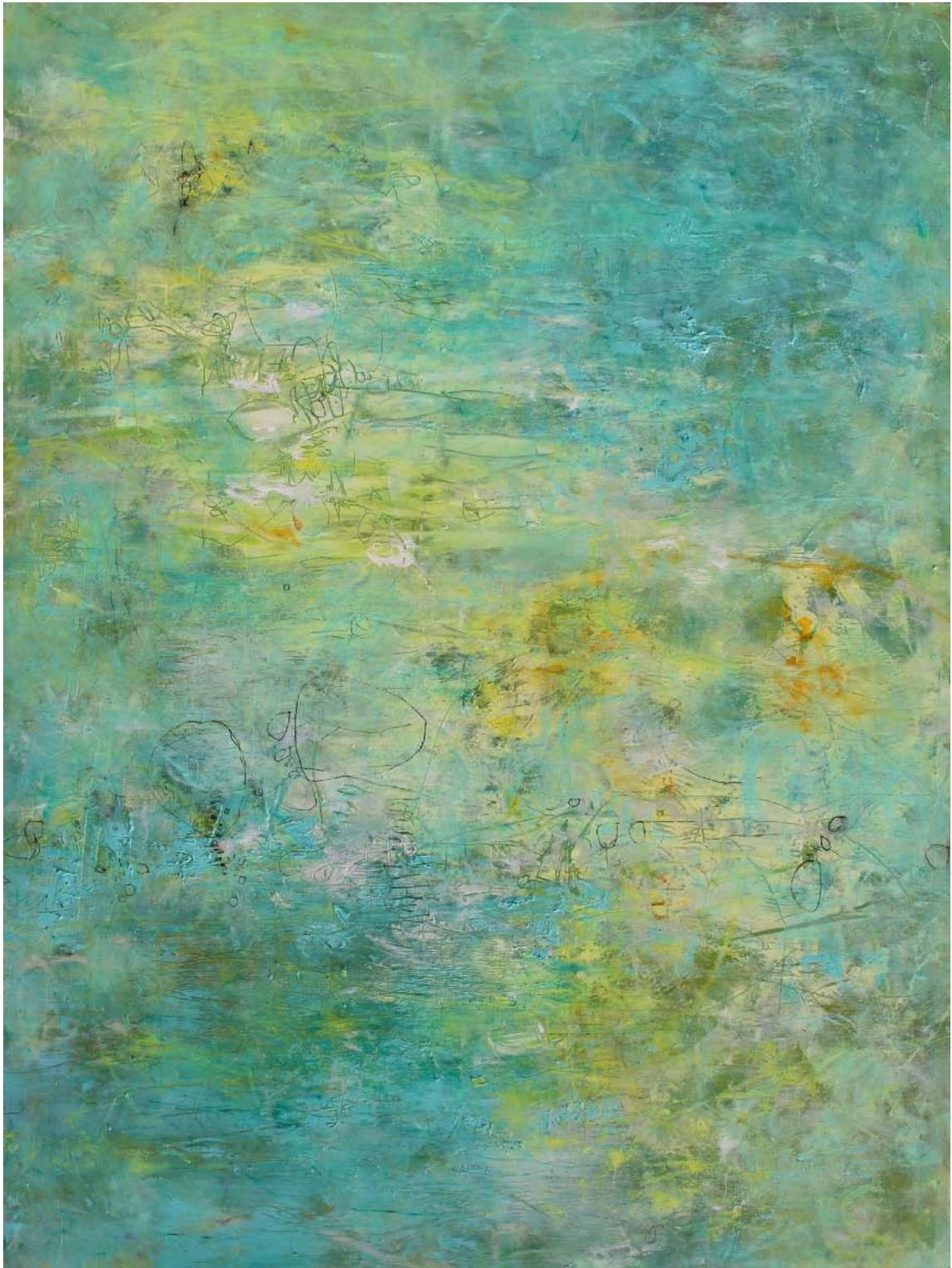
Light Pools, encaustic, watercolor, silk, graphite, oil, on cradled birch panel, 55 x 60 inches, 2015



Immensity, (detail), oil, cold wax, charcoal, graphite, watercolor, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 48 inches, 2016



Boundless, encaustic, watercolor, graphite, oil, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 36 inches, 2015



Adoration Gifts, oil, graphite, cold wax on cradled birch panel, 40 x 30 inches, 2016



Unfolding, oil, cold wax, graphite, watercolor, on cradled birch panel, 48 x 36 inches, 2017

BIO



Ahavani Mullen is a visual artist who works in a variety of media, constructing paintings, images and 2.5-dimensional work that have evolved from silence. Rooted in a contemplative journey that spans over two decades, her work navigates a space between the seen and the unseen, and serves as a record of the intangible. Ahavani is honored by having received awards from James Rondeau, Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as grants from 3Arts, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Illinois Arts Council. Her most recent solo exhibitions in Illinois include those at Olivet Nazarene University, South Suburban College and Morpho Gallery. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums nationally and internationally, and is held in numerous private and corporate collections. She is represented by Circa Gallery in Minneapolis and Chicago Art Source Gallery. She balances her full time studio practice with teaching. Born in Minneapolis, MN, she received a B.A. from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN in 1996. Ahavani is currently based in Chicago.

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JENNIFER PRETZEUS

Desert Muse



Walking Home, (diptych), encaustic, dry earth pigments, ash, azurite, charcoal, horsehair, oil paint, on cradled board, 18 x 48 inches, 2016

Image Details, previous page:

Cerrillos, encaustic, dry natural pigments, ground turquoise, charcoal, oil paint, horsehair, on board, 12 x 12 inches, 2015

“With time you learn to see what is absent: the spring in the winter, the mountain lion in the devoured stag, the flows of water that carved the dry land, the bygone feet that walked the path into being, the living in the dead, the movement in the stones. . .If you come here seeking something particular you may find only it. Or find nothing. But if you come seeking the desert it will be given to you in time. . . .It will be given to you as story and music”.

— From *Desert Music* by Rebecca Solnit

It finally hit me when I came to the high desert of New Mexico. Inspiration. I was instantly moved by the elegant simplicity of overlapping planes, the rhythm of textures, the graceful line of the horizon and the overall openness that allowed me to fully breathe. I love the history of the place and how it holds visible memories spanning centuries—the revelations contained in layers of geology, a dry river bed etched in the landscape, an adobe structure returning to the earth, perhaps only making its presence known by a depression where a kiva once existed.

I’d been taking painting courses at an art center in Chicago every weekend and often struggled to come up with subject matter. After living in Chicago for 15 years, my husband and I decided it was time for a major change and moved to Albuquerque. Just weeks before moving, I took my first class in encaustics at the same art center. I’d seen a few encaustic pieces at the international art exposition *ART Chicago* and was fascinated and intrigued by the depth, translucence and luminosity of the medium. Even though I was busy with packing and planning a cross-country journey, I figured I’d better fit this class in, since I wouldn’t have an opportunity like this in New Mexico. I couldn’t have been more wrong about that.



Shift, encaustic and dry natural pigments, azurite, charcoal, horsehair, on cradled wood panel, 16 x 32 inches, 2015

Soon after arriving, I took a couple of weekend workshops with Santa Fe encaustic artist Ellen Koment. She is a great teacher who introduced many techniques and encouraged experimentation; I really began getting a strong sense of all of the possibilities with this medium. Then I learned about the Encaustic Art Institute (then in Cerrillos, now in Santa Fe) and became a member. I was pleasantly surprised to find that there were so many other encaustic artists not only in the state, but in the country. Around the same time, I was working diligently to incorporate nature into my life (something I was beginning to long for in Chicago)—hiking regularly and exploring New Mexico. Knowing a little about how the old masters created paint, I began to wonder if I could somehow incorporate all of the spectacular colors I was seeing in the landscape into my work. While hiking in the badlands near Cuba, NM, I filled about a dozen zip lock baggies with various colors of dirt and clay. I reached a whole new level of excitement and motivation once I discovered that I could utilize the actual land that was inspiring me in my work.

The Process

I start with clumps of dirt or clay that I've gathered, place them in a bag, and break them up with a mallet. Next, I grind the dirt with a mortar and pestle and then sift that through a fine sieve purchased at a pottery supply store. As a base, I usually start with 2-3 layers of encaustic medium on a board before using a brush (or sometimes my fingers) to sweep the dry pigment onto the wax and then use a torch to fuse it into the wax. It takes numerous layers — anywhere between 2-5 — to build up a rich color. Often I layer different colors to add more depth and/or interest.



Mica Mine, encaustic, dry natural pigments, mica, horsehair, on board, 7 x 10 inches, 2014

In addition to dirt and clay, I also grind up rocks and minerals I find. I've been a rock collector since elementary school, so the search is especially fun! A blueish-colored shale that I found near Battleship Rock in the Jemez Mountains becomes a green-grey when added to the wax. Mica, gathered from Ojo Caliente, NM, doesn't grind up finely, but I can sprinkle the glitter-sized pieces into warm wax or use larger pieces of it. I also incorporate ash and charcoal from fires I've built. Because the ash is so fine, it usually takes 5-10 layers to achieve the desired results.

Gathering the materials myself or receiving them as gifts, of course, gives the process and the work additional meaning for me. Horseback riding is a favorite activity of mine, and I've discovered that horsehair creates a beautiful, delicate line when added to the wax. The mica mine at Ojo Caliente is one of the most magical places I've visited in New Mexico, and I love that that unique mineral has also found a place in my work. A dear friend recently gave me a small box of azurite pebbles that he received as a gift during a Native American ceremony by a woman who uses stones for healing and balancing. Ground and sifted, the azurite turns a deep, rich blue once embedded in wax. Another friend recently gave me some strands of horsehair from the tail of her beloved, departed horse, Trooper. In many ways, some of the pieces become reliquaries, of a secular sort.

All of these materials, especially with the dirt and clay, then become a part of the work through the same processes that have shaped our earth—through the layering of sediment, scraping, carving and heating. Even as I am in my studio (a.k.a. my garage . . . with the door open for ventilation), I am at the mercy of the forces of nature. In the summer it is often too hot, in the spring too windy, and in the winter often just not possible to be working. But battling the elements, while at times frustrating, also takes me to a deeper level when creating my work.

Crossing Paths

I was honored to have recently been selected by the Open Space Visitor Center Gallery in Albuquerque for an exhibit that explored my personal relationship with the land, specifically, my favorite hiking trail in Albuquerque — the Pino Trail (#140) in the Elena Gallegos Open Space. Entitled *Crossing Paths*, the show examined the idea that when we separate ourselves from nature, we lose the very connection that sustains us. (Show dates were January 14th - March 19th, 2017.) Half of the show consisted of 7 encaustic pieces depicting large boulders along the trail, which, to me, are like pieces of art in an outdoor sculpture garden. Because I hike there so regularly, the boulders have become like friends. (Fellow hikers have probably wondered who the crazy woman is talking to and stroking the rocks.) The other 8 pieces in the show incorporated pieces of scrap metal. I was inspired by the interesting rust patterns on the metal and found the juxtaposition of the cold hard steel against the soft, translucent, organic wax intriguing. These pieces represent the interrelatedness and necessary exchange between nature and man. I utilized other natural elements in some of these pieces, such as pollen and flower stamens. The show was a tribute to this trail and, on a larger scale, to this landscape that has inspired me.



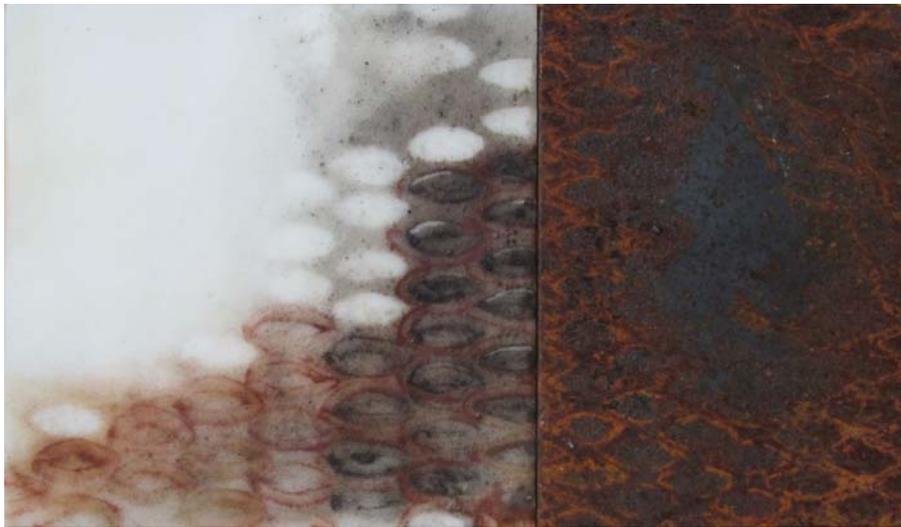
Balance Rock, encaustic, dry natural pigments, ash, horsehair, oil paint, on cradled wood panel, 16 x 16 inches, 2016



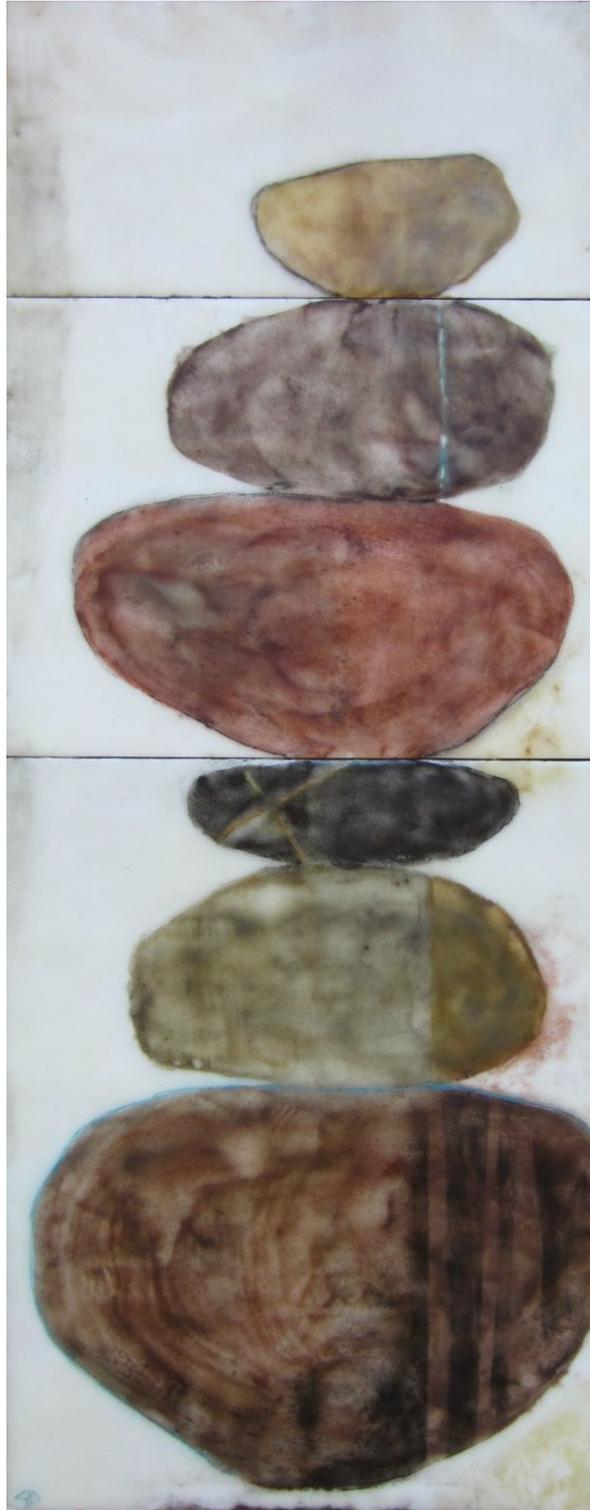
Healing Rock, encaustic, dry natural pigments, ash, azurite, charcoal, horsehair, oil paint, on cradled wood panel, 16 x 16 inches, 2016



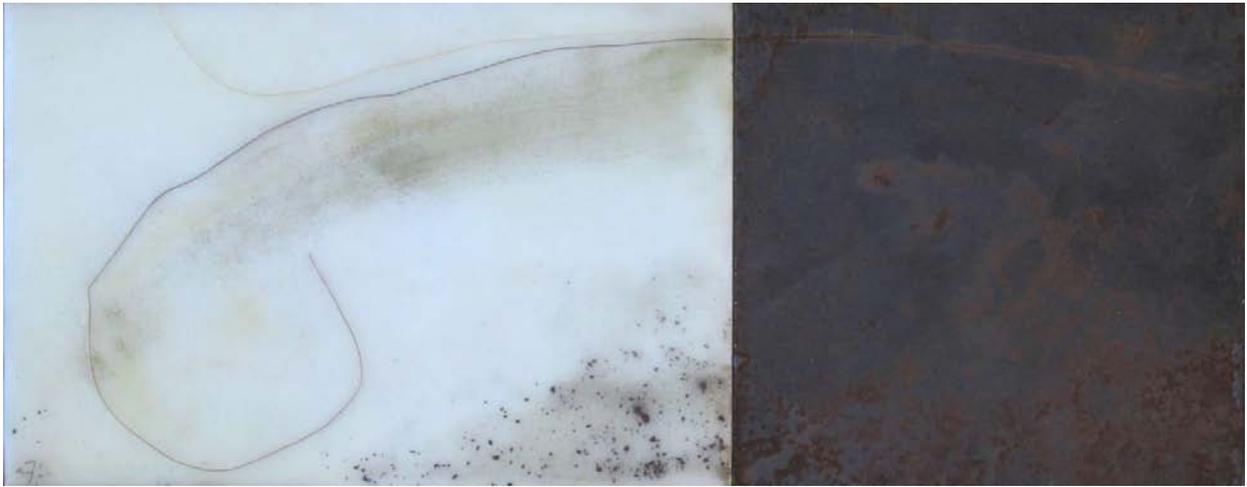
Family Stones, encaustic, dry natural pigments, ash, charcoal, horsehair, oil paint, on cradled wood panel, 16 x 16 inches, 2016



Hive, steel, encaustic, dry natural pigments, on board, 6 x 10.25 inches, 2016



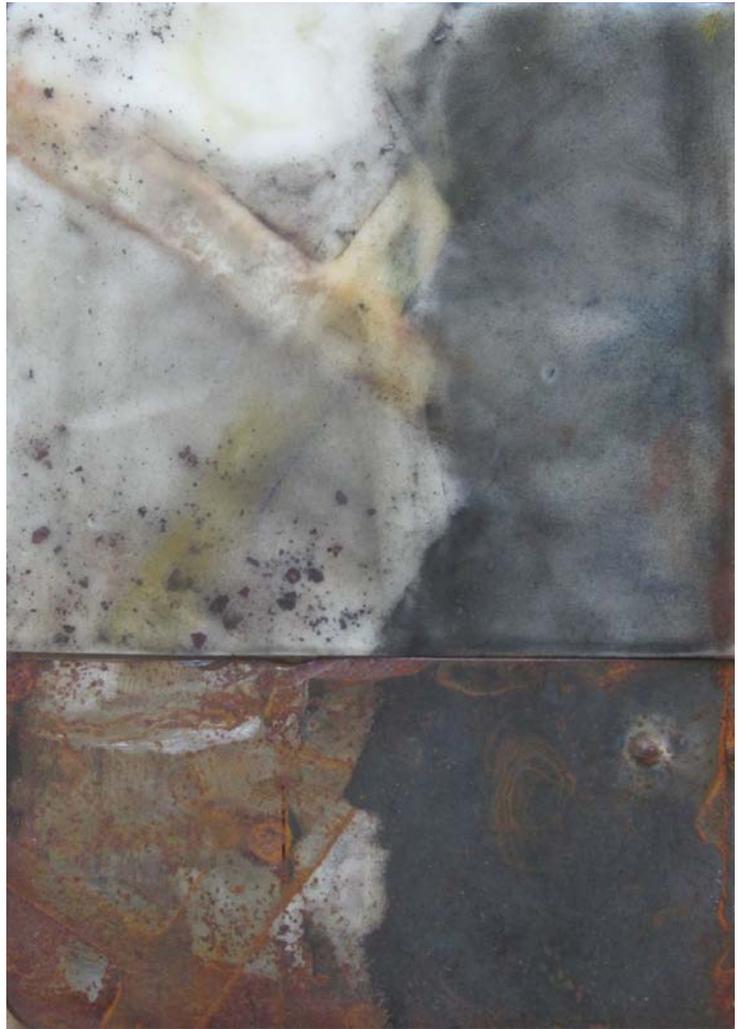
Cairn, encaustic, dry natural pigments, charcoal, oil paint, on board, 11 x 28 inches, 2015



Fronde, steel, encaustic, dry natural pigments, rust, ash, horsehair, on board, 4.75 x 11.5 inches, 2016

“The austerity of the desert is also uncountable wealth, a hoard to be sifted through...the constant shift from overwhelming vastness to the detail at your feet, the harsh beauty of the terrain unrolling in the distance, the eons recorded in the stones, an endless, ongoing, unfinished list, a wealth so uncountable it takes the world to hold it.”

— From *Desert Music* by Rebecca Solnit



Storm, encaustic, dry natural pigments, rust, mica, on board, 7.75 x 11 inches, 2016



Artist-made dry natural earth pigments

BIO



Jennifer Pretzeus is a New Mexico based visual artist currently focusing in encaustics. She studied graphic design and advertising at Kent State University in Ohio. Following graduation, Pretzeus continued her education at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and at the Evanston Art Center in Chicago, where she took her first class in encaustic painting about 10 years ago. The direction of her art shifted after moving to New Mexico in 2006, as she and her art were deeply affected by the land and the environment. In addition to working in the medium of encaustic, Pretzeus also creates jewelry containing found natural objects and constructs welded steel sculptures utilizing scrap metal. Her work is exhibited at the Museum of Encaustic Art in Santa Fe. In October 2014, her piece "Acoma" was awarded Best of Show in the National Juried Encaustic/Wax Exhibit at the Encaustic Art Institute, in Santa Fe.

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T E C H N I Q U E



SHARI REPLOGLE

“The Burn”
Shellac Burning Technique



Sanibel Sunset, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 4 x 4 inches, 2017

Image Details, previous page:

Windows of Light, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 10 x 10 inches, 2016

My approach and love for encaustic comes from a deep desire for experiment and adventure. What can or will happen next are the things that both excite and inspire my return to the studio and the sweet delicious aroma of my warming vat of beeswax every day.

After working for 15 years with metal, I was drawn to encaustic initially because I wouldn't have to trade in my beloved torch. I was fascinated by the magical and organic nature of this medium. The manipulation of the wax and the ability to manipulate other materials sculpturally once the wax was applied fascinated me. It wasn't long before I was completely consumed with discovering the endless possibilities encaustic could provide in my art practice and became immersed in the medium.

Often times when playing with a new idea in my process, I work out the concept on smaller masonite boards. This allows me to really experiment and cultivate an idea and see what directions I can take it in. I take notes and paste them on the back of the board detailing the process, what I was attempting vs. what the actual result was. The thin masonite boards are easy to store and become indispensable reference guide for me in the studio. I will usually do a series of 4 - 8 boards for any one idea before taking it on to the task of a larger panel. This is a time of pure exploration and discovery.



A View From Up Here, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 10 x 10 inches, 2016



Durness, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2017

Shellac:

Shellac in its organic state comes from the secretions of the lac bug in the trees of the forests in Thailand and India. After heating and liquefying these secretions to filter out and alleviate the insects and bark, the cooled and dried sheets are then broken up into a dried flake form that when dissolved with ethanol create the liquid shellac. As an artist I am drawn to nature for my inspiration often looking to the natural landscapes or organic makeup of what nature produces to guide my ideas. I enjoy the use of such natural materials as beeswax and shellac when creating my art.

My Process:

The movement of the shellac within the encaustic wax is pure poetry in motion. The shellac begins where it is applied on top of the cooled wax surface, but when heated or ignited entangles and entwines itself within often causing beautiful veining to occur. This natural alchemy that occurs between the fluid shellac and wax is as fascinating to watch happen as the result is mesmerizing.

The end result of the shellac burn conveys action and energy to the viewer.

I usually work in a landscape format when working with shellac. I think it has a very natural and organic appearance that lends itself to this format. Just like the medium of encaustic itself, the shellac burn technique has infinite possibilities into how it can be transformed.

When I begin a painting with a shellac burn process, I have my color palette and initial concept in mind but usually little else in the way of a formal idea of the final outcome. I allow the actions of the wax and shellac to guide me in the initial layers of the painting. I usually work on ceramic floor tiles under my substrate. They are inexpensive at the home improvement store and absorb the heat from the fusing. It is also a good idea to always have a fire extinguisher handy.



Poppies, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 36 x 36 inches, 2016

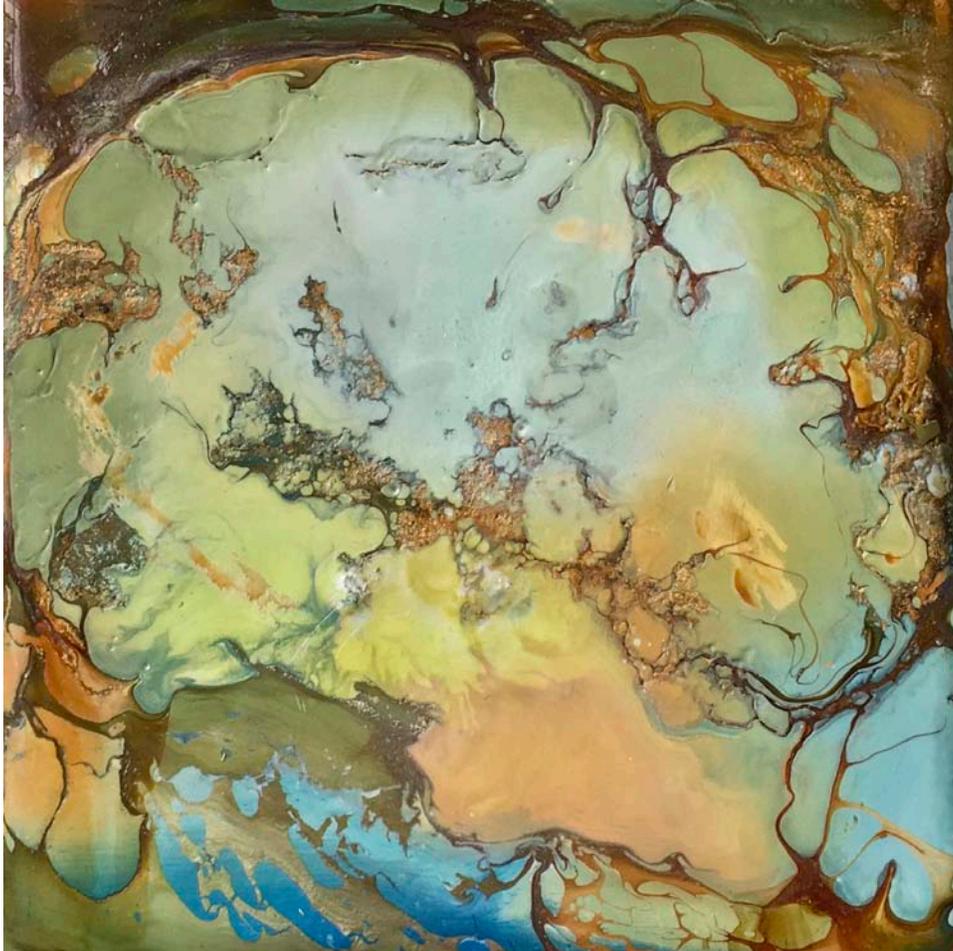


Malin Sea, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2017

I begin on a panel with a strong foundation of multiple layers of encaustic medium fused flat. I then begin adding pigments. This can be anything from oil paint, paint sticks, soft pastels etc. Different pigments lend different effects. All pigments are then fused into the encaustic surface. The shellac can be added with a rag or brush.



Shellac can be used in the natural amber state or clear. Pigment can also be added directly to either type of shellac. Shellac can be applied to the entire encaustic fused surface or in sections. It can be fused wet or dry both resulting in completely different wonderful effects in the wax. The idea of a “shellac burn” often creates a lot of excitement both from fellow artists who are new to the experience, and collectors, over the actual igniting flame of the encaustic surface. This will happen if the shellac is fused wet with a torch. A lot of artists enjoy the dramatic spontaneity of this effect. The ethanol in the shellac will ignite and burn off when heat is applied before the shellac is dried. Although this is a fascinating process to watch, it should be noted that it provides almost no control whatsoever over the outcome. The result from the heat usually is actually an over fusing where the shellac burns too hot and retreats down to through the encaustic medium toward the wood substrate below leaving interesting small lines and striations remaining on the surface.



River Bed, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 4 x 4 inches, 2016



River Fairies, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 4 x 4 inches, 2017

Often times when ignited in this manner the pigment can disappear almost entirely with the shellac down into the depths of the wax leaving only remnants of color. This can be simply remedied by adding another layer of pigment. If I use the wet method on a larger piece I will work in igniting smaller sections with the shellac around the painting. The larger the section of shellac that you apply and ignite, the hotter the shellac will burn and in turn can overheat your medium as well. This can actually have a negative effect of resulting in a tacky mess (not to



mention a fire). Applying and igniting the shellac in smaller sections of the painting can still have the exciting burn off effect as the alcohol burns and the shellac moves and contorts within the wax and actually leave more interesting marks and striations this way than igniting larger portions.

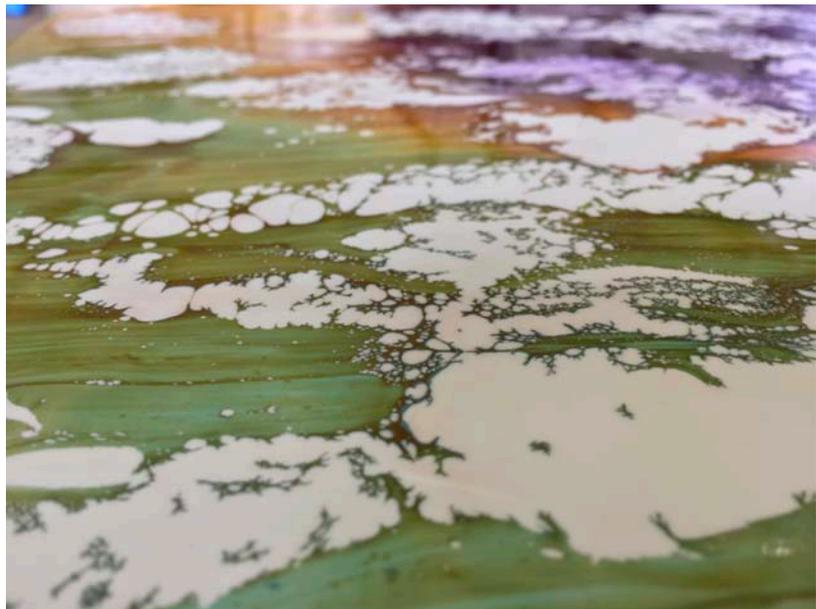
For a completely different effect I apply shellac and allow it a few minutes to dry on the encaustic surface. This can provide a lovely webbing effect when fused. I either wait for the shellac to dry before applying the heat , or use a heat gun on a low setting to fuse the layer. Just like fusing a regular pigmented encaustic layer, the longer you apply the heat when fusing, the more the wax will change and transform. I usually make my initial foundation layers white so this is what the webbing effect of the shellac pulls back and reveals when reacting to the heat. But, any color can be added as your initial base layers.



Summer Play, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 4 x 4 inches, 2016

Either method should always be approached safely with protective work surface, protective clothing, no loose hair, and proper ventilation. A fan blowing is not recommended during this process. If using the wet process be aware that the flame is often hard to see but it should be assumed that it has been ignited and proper caution taken when working with a live flame.

The shellac burn for me is a building process that takes many thin layers. I go back and forth adding more pigment, wax, and shellac fusing between each layer. Unlike encaustic medium, shellac requires drying time. It never fully mixes with the wax so after a few layers it may become too tacky to work with and



have to be set aside to dry overnight. For the shellac process I always work in a series of works at once so that I can go back and forth with fresh eyes and at the same time allow a little bit of extra cool down time and not overwork the shellac.



River Stones, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 8 x 8 inches, 2017



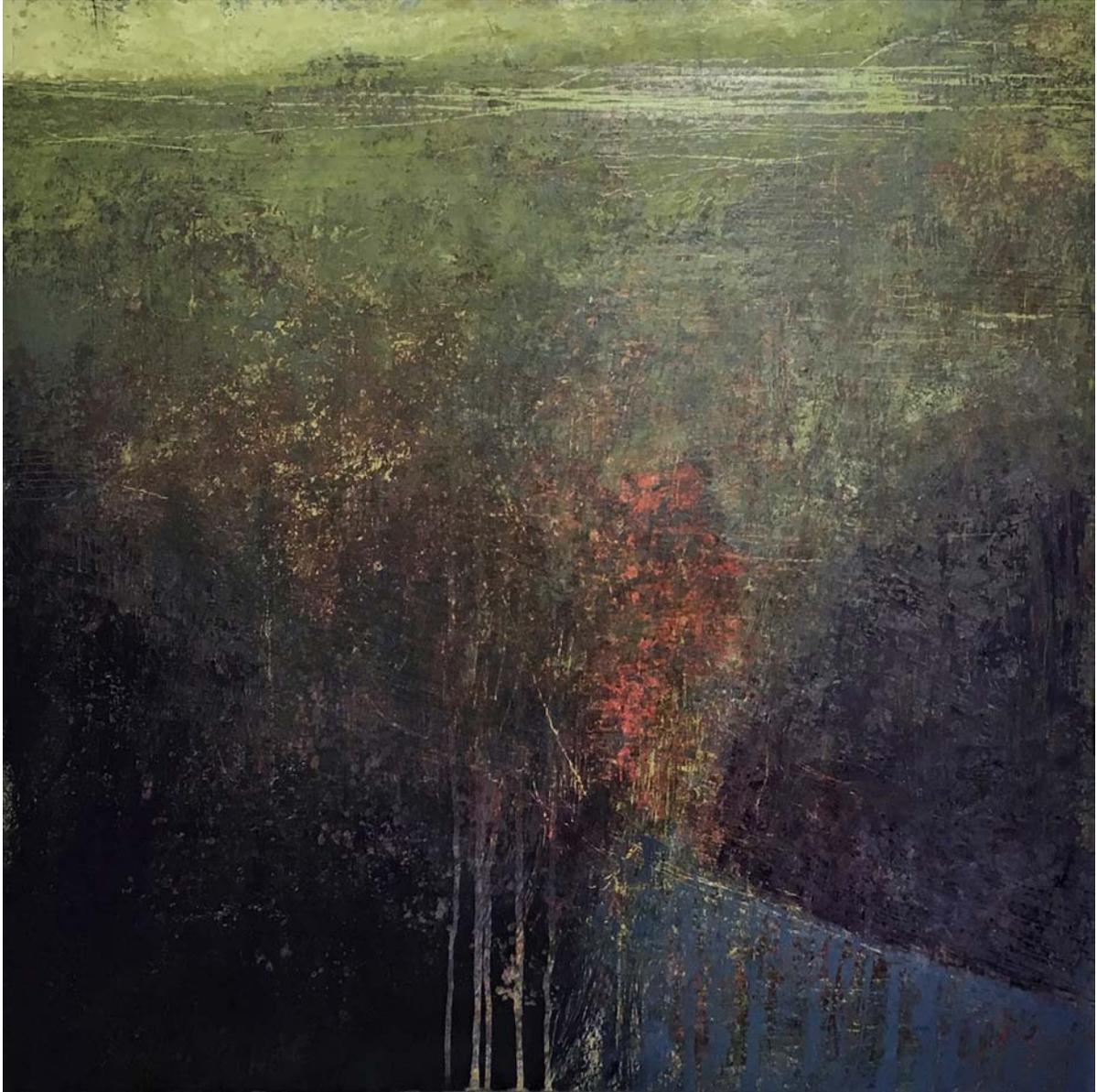
Sea Witch, encaustic, shellac, on wood panel, 20 x 20 inches, 2015

BIO



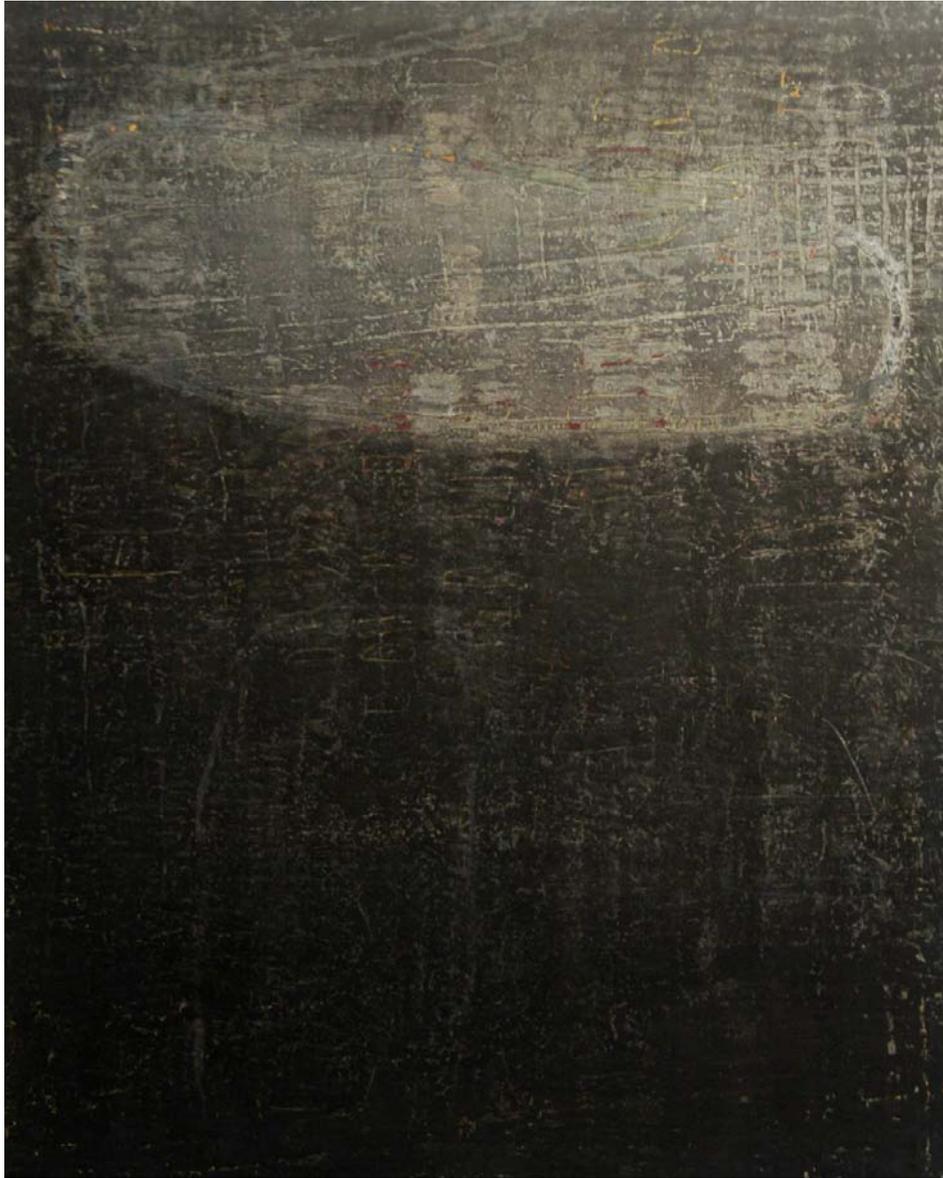
Shari Replogle shares her love and passion for encaustic techniques on “Wax on Wednesdays,” her [YouTube channel](#). She offers in depth workshops online in her “Encausticology “ adventure series of self-paced workshops and in her studio in downtown Cincinnati. Her current workshop schedule can be seen on her blog at www.playswithpaper.blogspot.com

Website: www.sharireplogle.weebly.com



JAMES EDWARD SCHERBARTH

Oil, Wax, Stone
— my journey to abstract painting



Stone, oil, cold wax medium, on cradled panel, 30 x 24 x 2 inches, 2015

Image Details, previous page:

Ollantaytambo, oil, cold wax medium, on cradled wood panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, 2016

Evidentiary Marks

*learning about my celtic ancestry,
gathering experiences through travel,
appreciating the sacredness of what was
and the beauty of what is,
all contribute to my personal language
of textures, gestural mark-making
and the evolution of my art*

*layers of grime and dirt,
the edginess of graffiti
or the elegance of a hand written note,
the turbulence and serenity of nature;
layers of history;
memories acquired over time
and into timelessness.*

*recording the evidentiary marks of life,
synthesizing layers of
color, line, and texture
I intuitively
construct, deconstruct,
collect, blend,
erase, blur,
mark and clarify -
mimicking the natural processes of
accumulation and erosion,
growth, decay and renewal,
creating new
landscapes, language and patinas . . .*



Still Life, oil paint on canvas board, 8 x 10 inches, 1960

My first painting was created when I was 12. I copied an image from a magazine. I still have it. I knew then that I wanted to be an artist, but as is so often the case, life intervened. While art has always been a part of my life it was several decades later before it became central to my life. That occurred when I saw my first oil and cold wax painting. I immediately sensed that this was the medium for me. A couple of months later that was confirmed when I took a workshop introducing me to cold wax medium used with oil paint and other media. This supple medium used with the additive and subtractive process of layering and colour interactions provided me the vehicle I had been searching for to express my creativity. This introduction occurred nearly a decade ago and was truly a transformative experience.

On a hot, humid Midwest weekend, this late-life returnee to art, found myself standing at the intersection of timing, uncertainty, desire, fear and hope. Just three long-fast days later I realized that I had taken a quantum leap forward, that first step, on my personal art journey. *"A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step"* said Lao Tzu and so began my journey into abstract painting with oil and cold wax medium.

In the beginning I was painting mostly abstract landscapes most of which had the obligatory horizon line. Then I went through a period where I would not allow the horizon line to remain. In my pursuit of abstraction I spent time resisting that horizon line until I accepted the fact that there are degrees of abstraction. I am painter deeply inspired by nature, by my surroundings and my travels, so if a horizon line comes into play okay, and if not, that's okay as well. These days they show up with less frequency.

During this struggle I was reminded of Agnes Martin's comment: *"Of all the pitfalls in our paths and the tremendous delays and wanderings off the track, I want to say that they are not what they seem to be. I want to say that all that seems like fantastic mistakes are not mistakes, all that seems like error is not error; and it all has to be done. That which seems like a false step is the next step."* With each new painting my education continues one step at a time.

As I manipulate this medium creating complex surfaces and textures and with the mark making I utilize, a "style" is evolving. Through a daily studio practice I continue to acquire the techniques and marks that allow me to move freely between abstract landscapes and non-objective imagery. Painting teaches me playfulness, experimentation, letting go and patience.

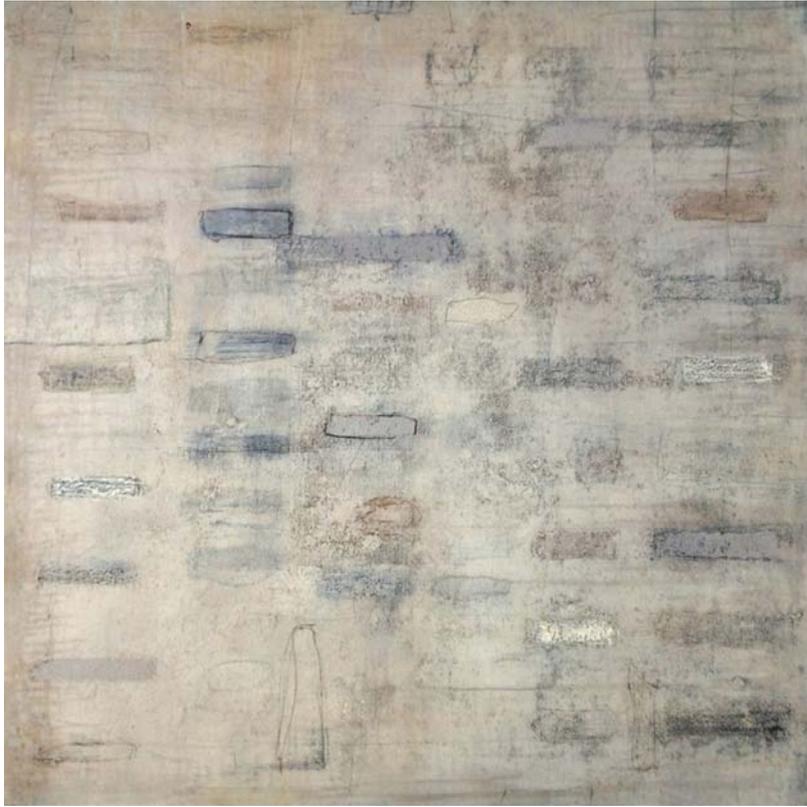


Downpatrick II, oil, cold wax medium, on cradled panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, 2016

As my work developed, the paintings began stockpiling. I had arrived at a point on my journey where I needed confirmation that my art could engage people so I began to exhibit my art. To my delight, not only was it well received, it also garnered a few awards, recognition and sales. Equally exciting — people wanted to learn about the process.

Not only was my art developing and accepted, it was allowing me to resurrect the dream of my youth. From that first painting I wanted to be an artist and a teacher, but my dream was derailed during the late 60's and into the 70's. It was during that time that I spent a year in Vietnam with the US Army, followed by a decade of undiagnosed PTSD and other life challenges. Now four decades later, having found my way through all of that, I was living my dream. Coming full circle, I now understood that all the past experiences and lessons learned were preparation to take my next step. In 2013 I opened a working/teaching studio in the Northeast Arts District of Minneapolis. Now many other artists come to my Midwest studio to learn about this fascinating medium and I have the privilege of sharing this process and my approach to abstraction. Simple beeswax has enriched and expanded my world in many wonderful and unexpected ways.

Later that same year, while visiting Ireland I encountered the next significant change in direction on this journey. Visiting Neolithic sites I learned about an ancient Celtic Alphabet and the Standing Stones of Celtic Tradition. The alphabet, Ogham, is also known as the Tree alphabet with each of its characters named for a local species of tree or shrubbery. Instantly my love of landscape, of textures and patinas, and of language merged with this new knowledge into a flood of inspiration. In that moment my Ogham Series was conceived. Not wanting to replicate the letters or to spell out anything literally I decided to reduce the alphabet to its basic component: a simple mark, a line. This mark and all that Ogham represents became my starting point. As I use and explore this mark it evolves and morphs from a simple mark, to a shape, a rectangle, a symbol of stone, or even the stone itself. Used repetitively this simple mark creates patterns and textures with abundant abstract possibilities for me to explore.



Celtic Code I, (Ogham Series), oil, cold wax medium, on cradled panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, each, 2015

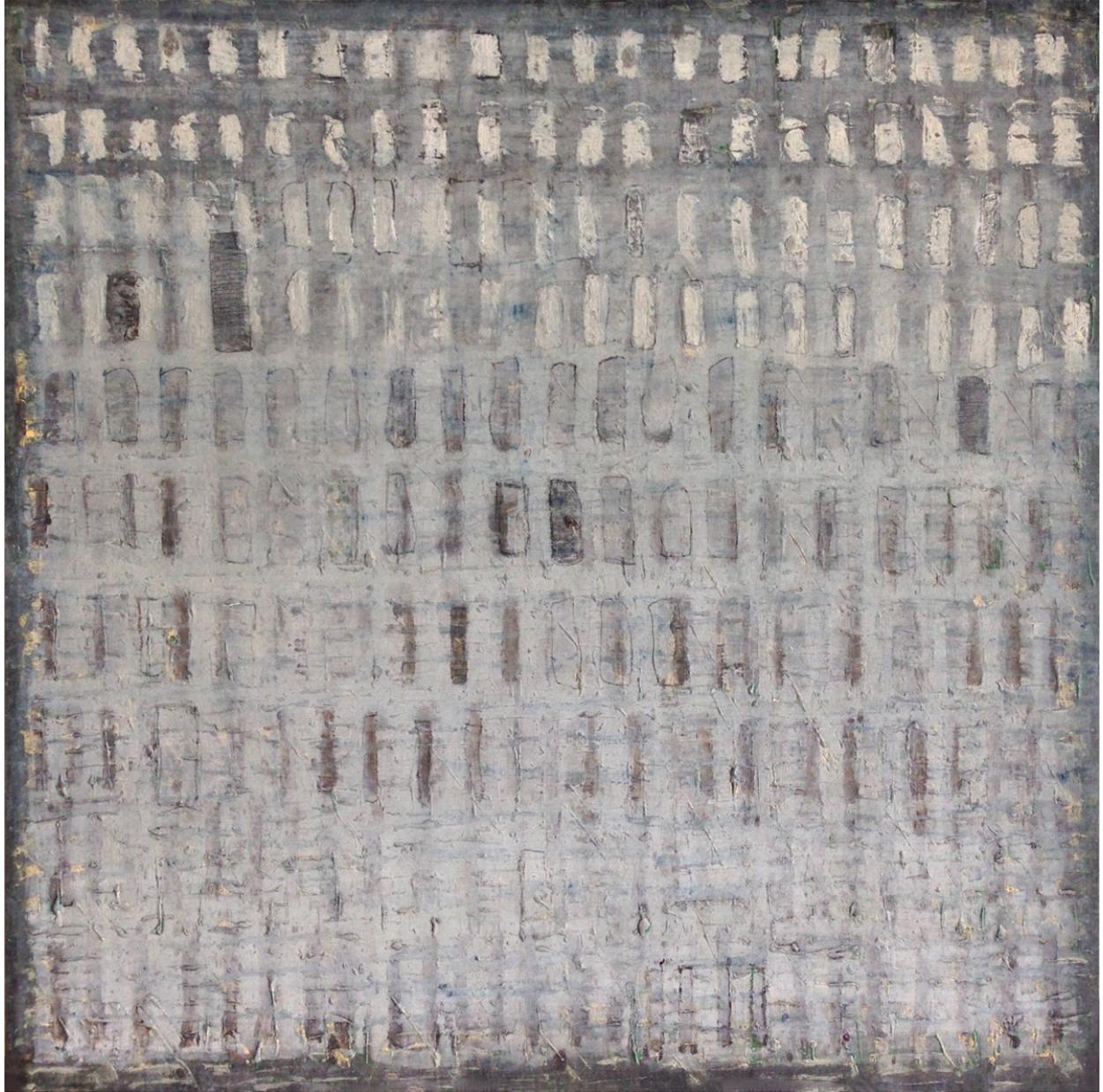


Celtic Code II, (Ogham Series), oil, cold wax medium, on cradled panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, each, 2015

Moving effortlessly from a single mark or line to a shape and back, this mark making can be an expressive gesture, an asemic language, a shape, a standing stone, or the trunk of a tree. Used repetitively, these marks cluster and arrange themselves into patterns suggesting ancient memos or weathered stone surfaces or fog veiled atmospheres in which to get lost. Through this mark making, this ancient ritual of painting, I attempt to reflect the timelessness of Nature and the evidentiary marks of human existence and human endeavor.



Ogham CCXXII, (Ogham series), oil, cold wax medium, sand, on cradled panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, 2014

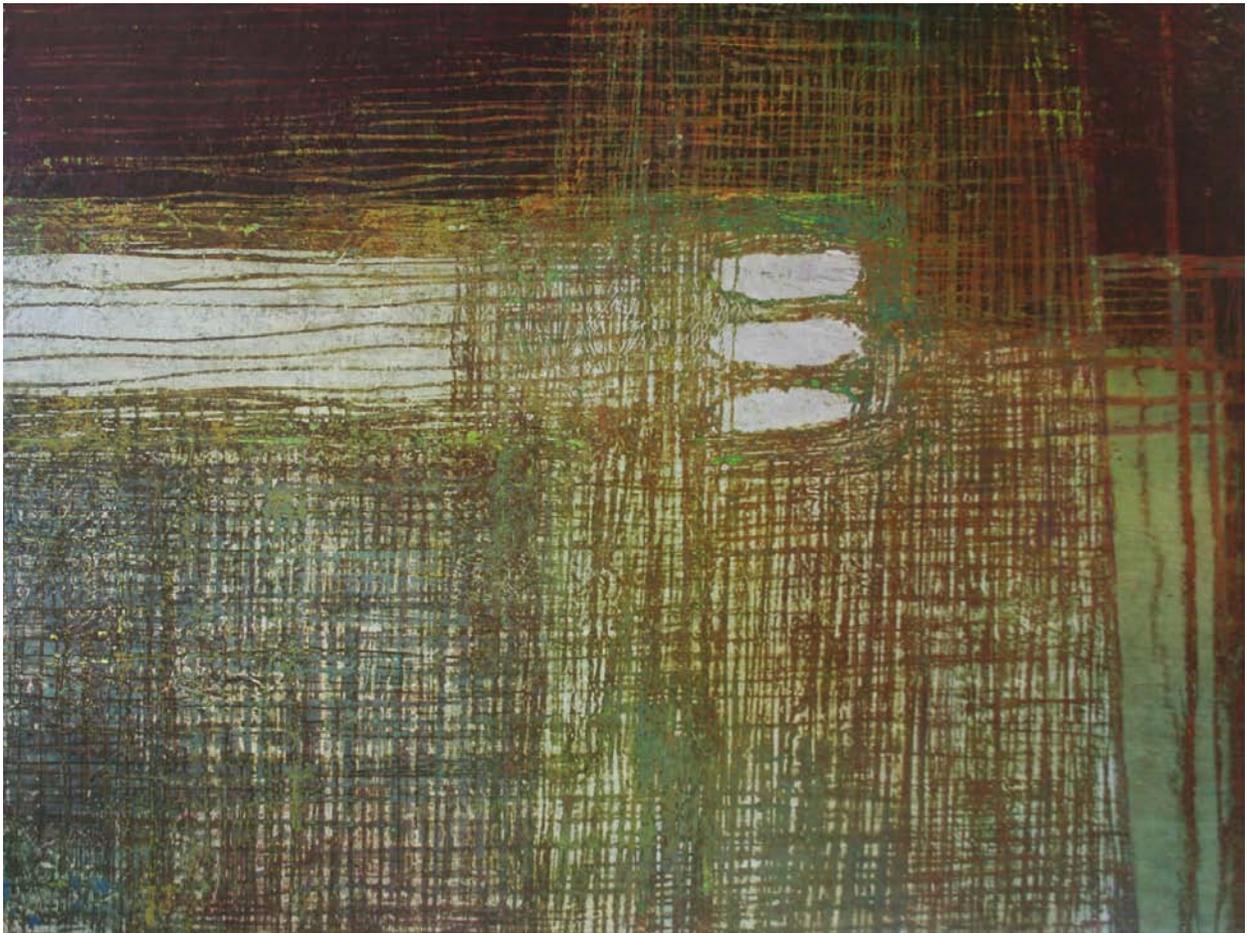


Revisionism, oil, cold wax medium, on panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, 2015

In tandem with the physical process of painting I am constantly engaged in an intellectual, emotional and often spiritual conversation with the work. I watch and listen to find those evocative leads, those “signposts” which guide my palette choices and my final imagery. The process is never completely random or accidental, but rather a deliberate, multi-layered obstacle course of adding and subtracting, of choices and decisions. Some work and others clearly do not, but all of them contribute to the complex simplicity I strive to achieve. Through a combination of trust in my process with purposeful, passionate exploration of form and content, I manipulate the medium, pushing the paint to intentionally be “more”. This builds a sense of history and allows evidence of the process in the final surface. When I have achieved this goal I find a painting provides multiple points of access welcoming a wide range of viewers’ perspectives. Practicing this process continues to expand my arsenal of preferred and proven techniques for developing the complex simplicity I seek. My journey continues every day that I show up and paint. Focusing on my intentions I see my work maturing, acquiring a depth and complexity resulting in increasingly intriguing and compelling imagery.



Unearthed, oil, cold wax medium, Irish sand & peat ash, on cradled panel, 36 x 48 x 2 inches, 2017



Celtic Connections, (Ogham Series), oil, cold wax medium, on panel, 30 x 40 x 2 inches, 2016

In my pursuit of complex simplicity, that richness of texture and surface in my paintings I find myself traversing a topography somewhere between the territories of Agnes Martin at one end and Sean Scully on the other. After seeing an exhibit of Martin's work I gained a new appreciation for her powerful, geometric minimalism and simple palettes while at the same time seeing Scully's large, organic geometry with his rich, earthy palettes resonates deeply with my personal aesthetic. These are two of the artists that continue to inspire and inform my thinking as I continue my journey. Next stop on the journey is my first two person show in Spring 2017 at [Artistry](#) in Bloomington, MN. Entitled [unravel / unearth](#) it pairs my paintings with the wire and mesh sculptures of [Kristi Kuder](#) . It will be a beautiful exhibit of line, shape, texture and complex simplicity.

And so my journey continues . . .



Celtic Spring, (*Ogham Series*), oil, cold wax medium, on cradled wood panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, 2016



Silent, (Ogham series), oil, cold wax medium, on cradled panel, 30 x 30 x 2 inches, 2016

BIO



Jim is an award winning artist recently featured in [*Wabi Sabi: Painting with Cold Wax*](#) by Serena Barton (2015) and in the definitive resource [*Cold Wax Medium: Techniques, Concepts & Conversations*](#) by Rebecca Crowell and Jerry McLaughlin (2017). He maintains a working and teaching studio in the historic Northrup King Building in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. Here he shares his process and his approach to achieving authentic abstraction through his class Process, Purpose and Passion: Oil and Cold Wax Abstract Painting. In September 2016 he enjoyed the opportunity of sharing his workshop with an international group of artists at Loft 11 in Paris, France. Jim grew up in the Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta and Detroit areas which instilled in him a global awareness, the thrill of new experiences and a passion for travel. These influences continue to inform his art as he explores our world culling inspiration from both urban and exotic places ranging from the UK, Ireland and France to Vietnam, Mexico and Peru.

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Website: www.mnartists.org/jescherbarthcomcast.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/James-Edward-Scherbarth-ART





ALICIA TORMEY

Art Lab



Swoon, encaustic, shellac, ink, on cradled birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2015

Image Details, previous page:

Specimen Study, encaustic, shellac, ink, on cradled birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2014

“The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science.”

~ Albert Einstein

Every encaustic artist feels like a research scientist at some point in time as we work with our melting temperatures, experiment with substrates and figure out the best wax-to-Damar ratios. I often think of my art studio as a private laboratory and the scientist in me loves to research and experiment. I suspect I'm not alone in this thinking so it is with this spirit of “Art Studio turned Science Lab” that I present to you a few of my studio findings and techniques.

The delicate lacing that results from a shellac burn has become the most recognizable technique that I incorporate into my work and one that I am most frequently asked to talk about. It would be difficult for me to fully share my experiences with encaustic and not include a segment on shellac as part of the discussion.

Shellac, a humble yet radiant material, has made its way into nearly every encaustic painting to come out of my studio in the past two decades. When exposed to heat on the surface of encaustic, shellac starts to soften and melt before the wax beneath it begins to liquify. The difference in melting temperatures between the encaustic and shellac causes the shellac to breakup and form sprawling, weblike patterns over the wax as it's being burned.

The most surprising fact that I enjoy sharing about shellac is that, just like beeswax, it also comes from an insect. What the honeycomb is to the bee, shellac is to the Lac bug. That's right...shellac is made from a wax-like substance that is created by the Lac family of insects. Lac bugs excrete this waxy material to build tube-like tunnels around the base of trees and other vegetation as they create colonies. These tunnels are then harvested, filtered and dried and then reconstituted in denatured alcohol to create the shellac products that you find on store shelves today.



Gaudium, encaustic, shellac, ink, on cradled birch panel,
30 x 24 inches, 2014



Desire, encaustic, shellac, ink, on cradled birch panel, 24 x 18 inches, 2015

It's my not-so-scientific opinion, that the waxlike insect matter that is the main ingredient of shellac also makes it compatible with the natural insect material of the beeswax in encaustic medium.

The most dramatic and varied shellac burn effects are created using a blowtorch but less varied burns are also achievable with a heat gun. The shellac must be applied to an encaustic surface in order to get the weblike textured effect. Use caution when working with shellac as it is highly flammable and should be burned only when it has completely dried. Always keep a fire extinguisher handy and remove all flammables from your working space. I have created a separate area in my studio to handle shellac that is a safe distance away from my main work surface where I regularly use an open flame.

Shellac is only sold in two forms: In it's natural color as Amber Shellac, and a filtered version of the Amber that is sold as Clear Shellac. If you want to paint with different colors you will have to make your own shellac paint by adding dry pigments before applying it to your painting surface. Amber will always give you better burn results than the Clear because it has more insect based material in it. If handling dry pigments makes you uneasy you can still create gorgeous surface patterns in your work by using the amber shellac directly as it naturally has a rich golden color all on its own.

Check the labels carefully when purchasing shellac because it has a shelf-life of about 3 years in the unopened can and will last for 6 to 8 months once the can is opened. The first number to appear in the Lot number on the lid is the year it was manufactured. For instance a 5 = 2015 and 6 would = 2016 and so on. When creating colors they will last about a week in your studio so only mix up what you think you will use in a few days time and keep it well covered when you are not using it. The odor will change when your shellac is no longer usable, similar to when fruit gets overly ripe, and you will notice a difference in the burn response when it's time to discard your shellac.



Overflow, encaustic, shellac, ink, on cradled birch panel, 16 x 16 inches, 2014

After much experimentation in the “lab”...I prefer to work with a sponge brush applicator to apply the shellac and these must be discarded after a day or so of use. Sponge brushes begin to breakdown when exposed to the denatured alcohol in the shellac for longer periods of time but in my experience the sponge brushes are still the best method for getting shellac down on your painting.

There are so many variables that influence the characteristics of your shellac burn. Things like drying time, introduction of pigments, surface application and heat sources all play a role in the quality of your burn effects. This is why I have created a comprehensive segment on the subject of shellac burns as part of my encaustic workshops.

The burn effects of shellac have heavily influenced my own work as an encaustic painter over the years and continue to play a significant role in the overall composition and



Detail from **Sacred Ground**, showing the effects of a shellac burn. Encaustic, shellac, on cradled birch panel, 24 x 48 inches, 2016

aesthetics of my art. I’m inspired by the organic properties of all the materials that I use: beeswax, Damar resin, earth pigments and shellac. I push these elements into exaggerated organic imagery of explosive botanicals, abstracted landscapes and ethereal waterways that all speak to the origins of the materials used to create them.

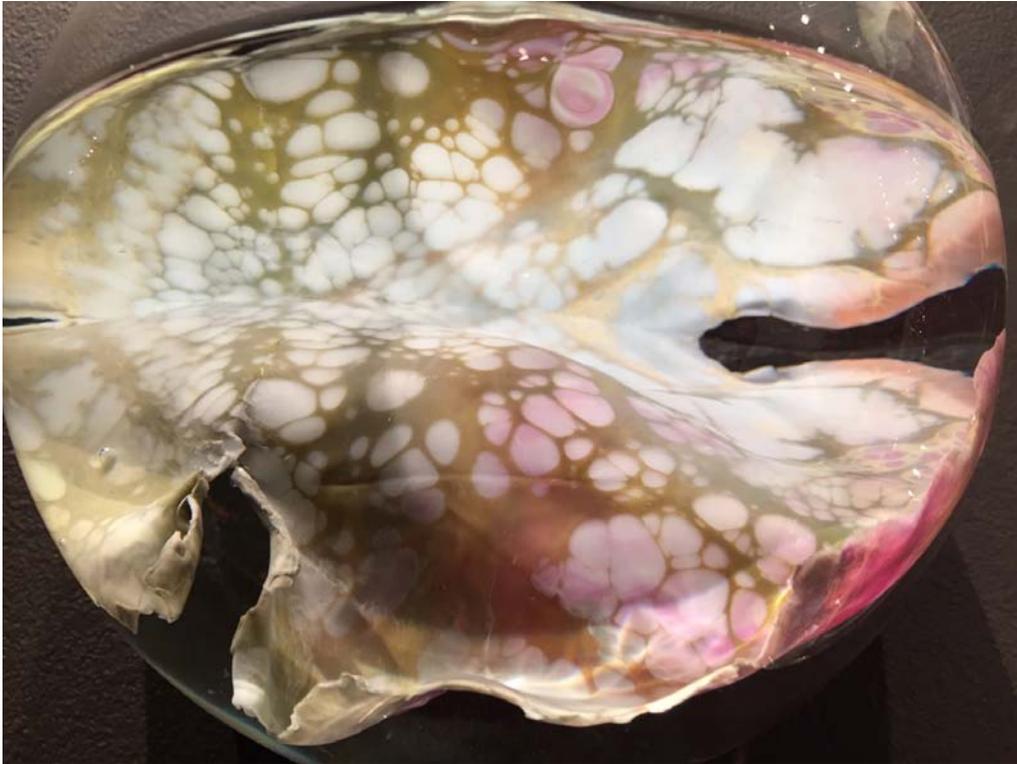


Tourmaline, encaustic, shellac, on cradled birch panel, 12 x 12 inches, 2014

In recent years I have begun to explore working 3-dimensionally with encaustic as a way to expand the supernatural world that I have created through my encaustic paintings. In an ongoing body of work I call my "Specimen Series", I create otherworldly creatures and organic fossils that I imagine being elements collected from within the complex fields and mysterious tide pools of my landscapes. These Specimens become natural field study samples collected for examination and preservation back in my studio. A studio now transformed into a Natural History and Science Laboratory to my imagined encaustic universe with me as the sole historian in charge of preserving it all.



Image of Aquatic Specimen on display to show scale, glass vessels housing sculpted encaustic "Specimens" that are suspended in alcohol



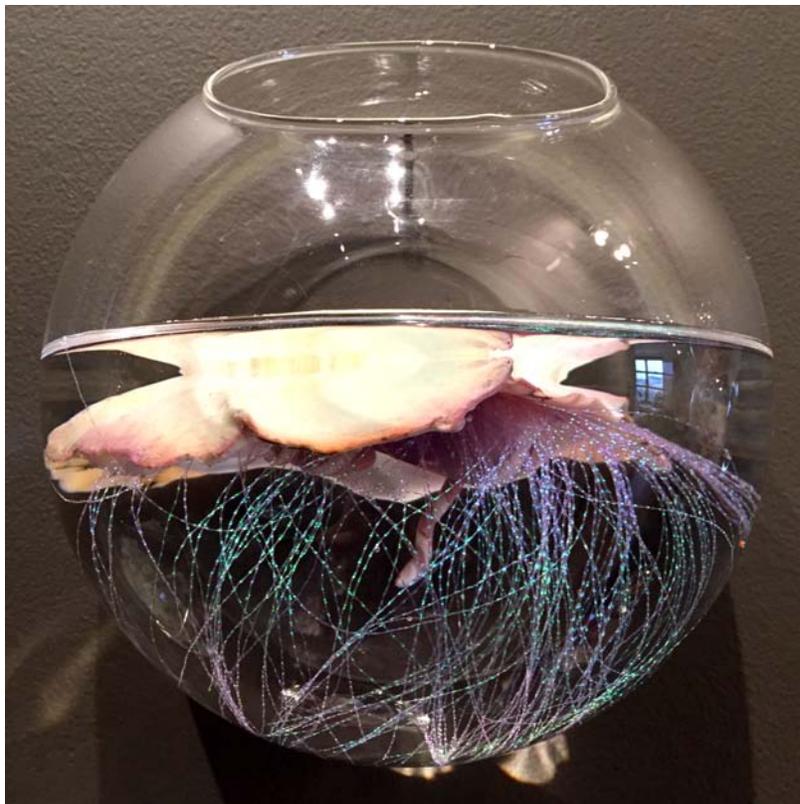
Aquatic Specimen II, sculpted encaustic, alcohol, in glass vessel, 8.5 x 8.5 x 6 inches, 2016



View from below, looking up, *Aquatic Specimen IX*, sculpted encaustic, alcohol, glass vessel, 8.5 x 8.5 x 6 inches, 2016



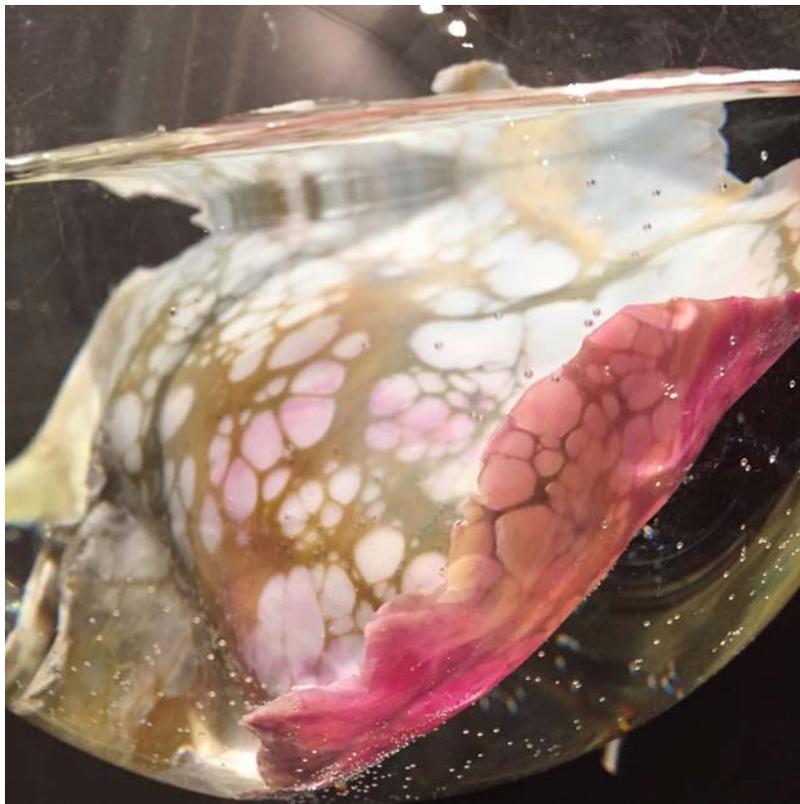
Aquatic Specimen VII, sculpted encaustic, iridescent mono filament, alcohol, glass vessel, 8.5 x 8.5 x 6 inches, 2016



Aquatic Specimen III, sculpted encaustic, iridescent mono filament, alcohol, glass vessel, 8.5 x 8.5 x 6 inches, 2016



Aquatic Specimen IV, sculpted encaustic, iridescent mono filament, alcohol, glass vessel, 8.5 x 8.5 x 6 inches, 2016



Aquatic Specimen II, sculpted encaustic, iridescent mono filament, alcohol, glass vessel, 8.5 x 8.5 x 6 inches, 2016

In 2014 I was awarded a grant from Artist Trust, a non-profit arts organization based in Washington State, to continue my pursuit of this ongoing body of work. In a recent installation I began to submerge sculpted encaustic specimens in glass vessels filled with various liquids that further connect them to the etherial waterways of my paintings and bring the work back to the semi-scientific aspect of my inspiration and creative process. My most recent work is still very much in the experimental stages and I look forward to continuing my creative "research" in the art "laboratory" otherwise known as my encaustic studio.



Emerald Tide, encaustic, shellac, on cradled birch panel, 18 x 24 inches, 2014

Watch Alicia create in her studio:



BIO



The paintings of Alicia Tormey have been described by The Boston Globe as "Wild and intoxicating...with jewel tones, spacial complexity...abstract passages and giddy motion".

She is best known for her organic imagery and unusual painting methods and has recently begun to expand into sculpted encaustic pieces that directly relate back to her two-dimensional works. In addition to being a full-time exhibiting artist, Alicia also regularly conducts private and group encaustic workshops from her studio that is located in the historic Inscape Arts Building in downtown Seattle.

In 2014 she received a *Grant for Artists Projects* award from Artist Trust and currently has several encaustic paintings on display at the American embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Tormey's art has also been featured in numerous publications, exhibitions and public collections throughout the United States and abroad. She is a graduate of the Art Institute of Seattle and currently paints and resides in the city of Seattle, Washington.

Email: art@aliciatormey.com

Website: aliciatormey.com

Instagram: [@aliciatormey](https://www.instagram.com/aliciatormey)





1 2 Orange tailed-bee. (*B. lapidarius*)
3. Moss or Carder bee. (*B. muscorum*.)

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Beginning Encaustic/Wax Classes at the Institute

The Encaustic Art Institute will be holding classes June 25, July 9, August 13. Go to our website www.eainm.com for details on the summer 2017 schedule.

- *Classes are limited to 8 people*
- *Hours: 10 am to 2 pm*
- *\$125 per person*
- *Instructor: Douglas Mehrens*

For more information, contact Douglas Mehrens: 505.989.3282, or email.

All proceeds go to support EAI, 501c3



Douglas Mehrens
Encaustic Art Institute Founder/CEO

Encaustic Art Institute
632 Agua Fria St, Santa Fe, NM 87501

Encaustic Art Institute JOIN US

Located in Santa Fe, New Mexico — the third largest art market in the US — EAI has members from across the U.S. and Canada. The Institute's gallery/workshop is in the Historic Railyard Art District, and we welcome encaustic/wax artists with all levels of experience at any stage of their careers.

Celebrating our 13th year as a 501c3, we rely solely on membership fees, donations and grants. 70% of every sale of artwork goes to the artist. For only \$100 a year, you become a part of the only Encaustic Institute in America. Your membership helps us realize our mission of expanding awareness of the encaustic medium by providing a gallery and workshop area for members, and teaching the medium through the Institute and school systems.



Benefits for EAI members:

- Market access and exposure for your art
- Invitation to display work in members-only shows
- Creates a web-wide community of encaustic artists
- Education opportunities through programs & workshops
- Free admission to all EAI fund-raising exhibits
- Member websites are listed as live links on EAI blog

To become a member, click [HERE](#)
To donate or become a volunteer, contact :

**Douglas Mehrens at
mehrens@eainm.com**

**Encaustic Art Institute
632 Agua Fria St, Santa Fe, NM 87501
www.eainm.com**

Advertise in

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We offer competitive rates as well as a special discounted rate for artists and for not-for-profit arts organizations.

For more
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Purchase hard copies of BACK ISSUES of Encaustic Arts Magazine. The Winter 2016 and Spring 2017 issues are also available to order as hard copies. Click the green ORDER PRINT tab of the magazine viewer.

Pricing and more information [HERE](#).





Courtesy of the Artist
ANNA TABERKO
Click [here](#) to see more
of her animated kaleidoscopic GIFs

Please continue to our “Bee Feature”





Protecting the BEES



The Obama administration, rushing to secure its environmental legacy, has increased protection for a humble bumblebee.

The rusty-patched bumblebee, once common across the continental United States, has been designated an endangered species by the Fish and Wildlife Service: the country's first bumblebee, and the first bee from the lower 48 states, to be added to the register. Seven bees were previously listed as endangered, but they are found only in Hawaii.



Since the late 1990s, the population of the rusty-patched bumblebee has declined by nearly 90 percent, a result of a combination of factors, including exposure to pesticides, climate change, habitat loss and disease, federal wildlife officials said. The species, once found in 28 states, the District of Columbia and two Canadian provinces, is found today only in small pockets of its once-sprawling habitat. The designation will accelerate efforts to protect the bees' habitat and to reduce the use of pesticides that are killing them.





SPRING 2017