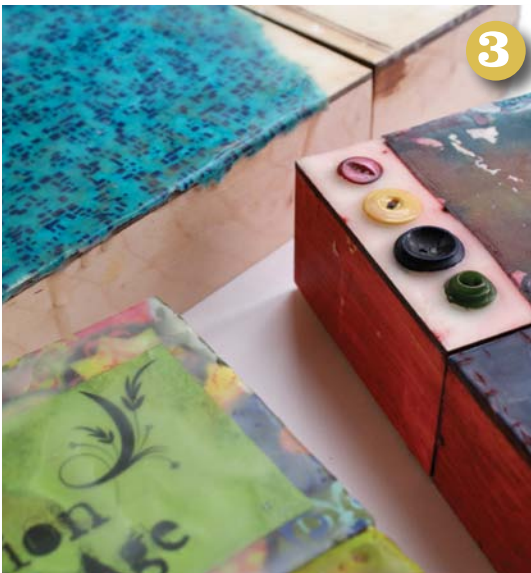


# exploring encaustics and encaustic art free articles demonstrating encaustic collage and encaustic painting techniques

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**1** **two beeswax 'books'**  
PATRICIA GAINAT

**2** **multi-layered wax  
backgrounds: tips for using  
a stylus with encaustic paints**  
PATRICIA GAINAT

**3** **encaustic collage: a medium  
for journalistic musings**  
PATRICIA BALDWIN SEGGEBRUCH

**4** **burned glue & paper:  
playing with fire**  
PATRICIA BALDWIN SEGGEBRUCH



**I**n the past year, I have become enthralled with encaustic collage—and I'm not the only one. More and more mixed-media artists are exploring this technique, traced back to the ancient Greeks, that allows you to enrobe papers, fabric, and found objects in beeswax and paint. The warm, rich, glossy result is captivating!

In this free downloadable eBook, *Exploring Encaustics and Encaustic Art: Free Articles Demonstrating Encaustic Collage and Encaustic Painting Techniques*, we've pulled together four articles by two of our favorite experts on mixed-media encaustic art, Patricia Baldwin Seggebruch and Patricia Gagnat. Each artist gives you a basic encaustic process and then a more complex technique for taking your art further.

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

on, creating backgrounds, collaging, combining collages and backgrounds, and how to use your backgrounds.

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

Patricia Gagnat takes encaustic to the next step, creating an assemblage of little books from torn journal pages, fabric, metal, and embroidery, mounted on a wood substrate in "Two Beeswax Books." The books are actual panels made up of the little books created from the encaustic collages and an art quilt.

Finally, Patricia Seggebruch wraps it up with "Burned Glue with Paper: Playing with Fire." Here Patricia uses glue, tissue paper, shellac, and encaustic supplies to bring a whole new depth to encaustic art. This is definitely an advanced technique, but it is definitely worth exploring if you are ready to push the encaustic envelope.

Get ready to enjoy the rich rewards of encaustic art with *Exploring Encaustics and Encaustic Art Free Articles Demonstrating Encaustic Collage and Encaustic Painting Techniques*.

Warmly,

**Cate Prato**  
Online Editor,  
*Cloth Paper Scissors Today*

**cloth paper**  
scissors COLLAGE ARTISTIC  
MIXED-MEDIA DISCOVERY

**Exploring Encaustics  
and Encaustic Art:  
Free Articles Demonstrating  
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*presented by*

**Cloth Paper Scissors®**

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Where mixed media  
artists come to play



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# two beeswax ‘books’

This all started with a journal entry about a day spent in Connecticut driving around and viewing art in a couple of venues with a friend. That entry has been enlarged, ripped, cut up, and made unreadable. But, when I look at these pieces I remember, and that is why they are “books” to me.

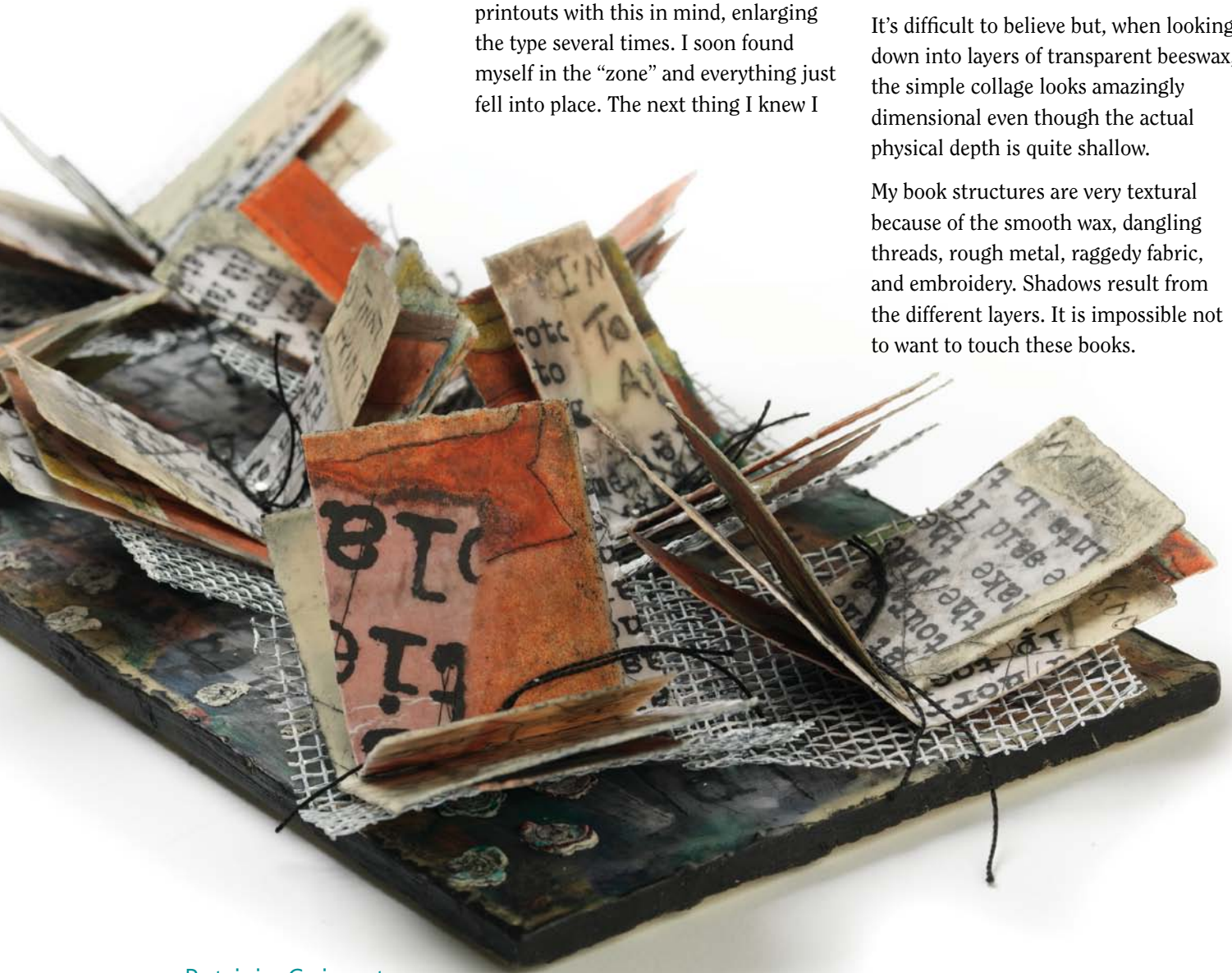
Adapted from  
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January/February 2009

I decided to use this journal entry in my art and prepared several pages of printouts with this in mind, enlarging the type several times. I soon found myself in the “zone” and everything just fell into place. The next thing I knew I

was left with a series of books, each one the same but somehow different.

It’s difficult to believe but, when looking down into layers of transparent beeswax, the simple collage looks amazingly dimensional even though the actual physical depth is quite shallow.

My book structures are very textural because of the smooth wax, dangling threads, rough metal, raggedy fabric, and embroidery. Shadows result from the different layers. It is impossible not to want to touch these books.



BY Patricia Gaignat



## MATERIALS

- 1 or 2 electric skillet(s) with temperature control
- Thermometer
- Heat gun
- Tacking iron
- Fan
- Beeswax
- Encaustic paint
- Absorbent substrate(s), such as 140-lb. watercolor paper, wood panels, and/or fabric
- Collage material: tissue paper, paper, fabric, fibers
- Tweezers or tongs
- Scissors
- Natural paintbrushes
- Stencils
- Water-based ink (I used Sumi inks.)
- Vegetable oil
- Paper towels

### optional

- Needle and thread
- Hammer and nails
- Staple gun
- Metal mesh
- Craft felt, beads, buttons
- Pellon® Peltex (an ultra-firm stabilizer that's fusible on one side)
- Credit card or piece of plastic
- Texturizing tools, such as palette knives, dental and etching tools, nails, produce mesh
- Sandpaper

## directions

There are many different ways to work. This is just the way I, a novice, proceeded.

## getting started

1. Place the beeswax in the skillet and allow it to melt into a puddle.



Above (detail on previous page): "Outing Vol. II" • 6" × 12" × 2" • "I constructed seven little booklets and mounted them on a 1/4"-thick wood base that had been collaged, incised, and stenciled. I used some old monotype images that were printed on heavy printmaking paper and dipped the paper in the beeswax pool, encasing it in wax. Small rectangles of various sizes were cut from this, and simple books were assembled using three different-sized rectangles; painted metal mesh was added as covers. The booklets were sewn with a simple pamphlet stitch, arranged on the board, and carefully nailed to the board through the sewing holes."





**note:** The beeswax comes in a solid block. For my purposes in making the collages I needed a large amount of beeswax so I melted the entire block. Use your discretion regarding quantity.

2. In another skillet, melt a bit of encaustic paint; this will be used for the stenciling. Hold down the end of the block in the skillet until a bit melts. A palette of many colors can be prepared in this manner. I happened to have access to two skillets, but it is possible to work with just one quite easily.

**tip:** Dedicate some brushes to this process. They won't have to be cleaned, ever; just let the wax harden and the next time they are used lay them in the skillet and the wax will melt. It is a good idea, though, to keep a brush for each different color so the colors don't become muddled.

## collage

I mainly use torn tissue paper, text printed on ordinary printer paper, old Xerox® copies, and fabric. Glue is unnecessary since the wax holds everything together.

1. Working right next to the electric skillet, use a 2" brush to coat the substrate (watercolor paper, wood, or fabric) with a layer of beeswax. Move the brush from the pool of beeswax to the substrate quickly since the wax will solidify almost immediately. There will probably be brush marks and perhaps uneven distribution and absorption of the wax. When coating paper, some parts will absorb the wax before others. Alternatively, hold the paper with tweezers or tongs and dip the paper in the beeswax pool, thus coating the entire paper in a layer of wax.



**note:** The encaustic will not adhere to acrylic paint, gesso, or Plexiglas®.

Below (detail on previous page): "Outing Vol. III" • 17" x 24" • "This 'book' ended up as an art quilt. Starting out as a large sheet of watercolor paper torn into three pieces, all three sections were worked on simultaneously using the collage, stenciling, and incising techniques. Using a buttonhole stitch and #8 embroidery floss, each collage was joined onto its own sandwich of torn fabrics backed with craft felt, finished with beading and hand embroidery, and then sewn to another larger piece of felt that had been collaged randomly with even more fabric. Because the piece was quite floppy, I decided to back it with a piece of Pellon Peltex covered in fabric that was cut a bit larger so it would show on the edges. Everything was joined with more hand embroidery, this time with #5 perle cotton, and some buttons."

2. Using the tacking iron on a medium heat setting, "iron" the surface of the wax. It will melt, smooth out, and immediately harden again. In this way, manipulation of the surface is possible.
3. Aim the heat gun all over the surface until a slight "sweating" or glistening appears. This will fuse the beeswax or encaustic to the surface and will prevent separation of the layers. This initial fusing should be hot and thorough, and this fusing process should be repeated on each additional layer.

## cautions

- The skillet temperature should not exceed 220 degrees. At 250 degrees encaustic fumes become toxic and will start smoking. Use a thermometer to check that the temperature gauge of the skillet is accurate.
- Good ventilation is necessary—open a window and use a fan facing away from the work area to draw any fumes away from you.
- The heat gun gets very hot; it is important to get in the habit of turning it off after every use.



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**note:** When performing subsequent fusing steps, keep in mind how the heat will affect the appearance of the artwork. The heat gun can move and distort the melting wax.

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4. Add another layer of beeswax and fuse it with the heat gun until you are satisfied that there is enough coverage and that it has been absorbed by the substrate.
5. Place a piece of collage material onto the beeswax-covered substrate (for this exercise the collage material will be paper, but fabric and fiber will work the same way). Using the tacking iron, iron the paper. The wax under the paper will melt and be absorbed into the collage paper and will soon “encase” it.

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**caution:** Be careful while ironing; the paper can slip around. I found that using a pair of tweezers or a toothpick to hold down one edge of the paper prevents slipping.

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6. Fuse this layer with the heat gun.
7. Go back to the skillet and brush on another layer of beeswax and fuse again.
8. Lay down another collage element, iron the piece until it is covered by wax, and fuse again. Repeat steps 5–8 as many times as desired.

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**tip:** If the collage element looks wrong, just melt the surface a bit and, using the tweezers, lift off the element and smooth the surface with the tacking iron. Alternatively, scrape off the surface with an old credit card or a palette knife.

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## stenciling

This technique can be done at any time, even between layers. I tend to do the stenciling right before incising because I

like the lines to be incorporated into the rough, carelessly stenciled image.

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**caution:** Don't use plastic stencils or synthetic brushes—they may melt.

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1. Using a commercial stencil or one cut out of cardboard or cardstock, dip a natural bristle brush or palette knife into the encaustic paint on the skillet (see step 2 under Getting Started). Quickly dab/scrape the paint in the stencil opening. Repeat this a few times, moving quickly, as the encaustic hardens quite fast. For these pieces I used the holes in a cardboard coffee sleeve as a stencil.
2. Before removing the stencil, scrape off any excess wax with a palette knife or old credit card to smooth out the surface, if you wish. I like the surface to be rough and bumpy so I just pull up the stencil and enjoy the imperfections.
3. Repeat as many times as needed and with any number of colors.
4. Moving around the piece, fuse with the heat gun very carefully and lightly until a glistening or “sweating” occurs. Be careful: too much fusing at this point will start to move the wax around and the stenciled images will start to melt and distort.

## incising lines

It is difficult to get a fine line using encaustic. I was taught the following technique and have become addicted to it. If you are not happy with your collage, this just might tie it all together.

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**note:** If this procedure is used it should be the last step, because adding a further layer of hot beeswax will obliterate any marks already incised and inked.

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1. Using an etching or dental tool, draw and/or write into the wax. You can also lightly rub sandpaper over the surface to create fine scratch marks.
2. Pour a dollop of water-based ink right on the waxed surface and spread it all around with a paper towel, being sure to get the ink into any incised lines or scratches. Don't worry about being messy. Put some vegetable oil on another paper towel and rub it onto the surface. This will remove any ink that was not trapped in the incised lines.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you are satisfied with the effect achieved.
4. Fuse very carefully, moving the heat gun lightly around the piece. You don't want it to move the wax around and distort your lines. Look for a very slight glistening and then stop. Do not use the tacking iron at this point.

## curing

The beeswax and encaustic will solidify immediately. As the weeks and months pass it will further harden, or in other words, cure. Since the melting point is so high, it will not be affected by ordinary room temperatures. That being said, encaustic artwork should not be hung in direct sunlight or left in a car trunk where the temperature just might get high enough to melt it. Freezing temperatures might cause cracking. ●

Learn more about Patricia and her art at <http://reclinerart.posterous.com>.

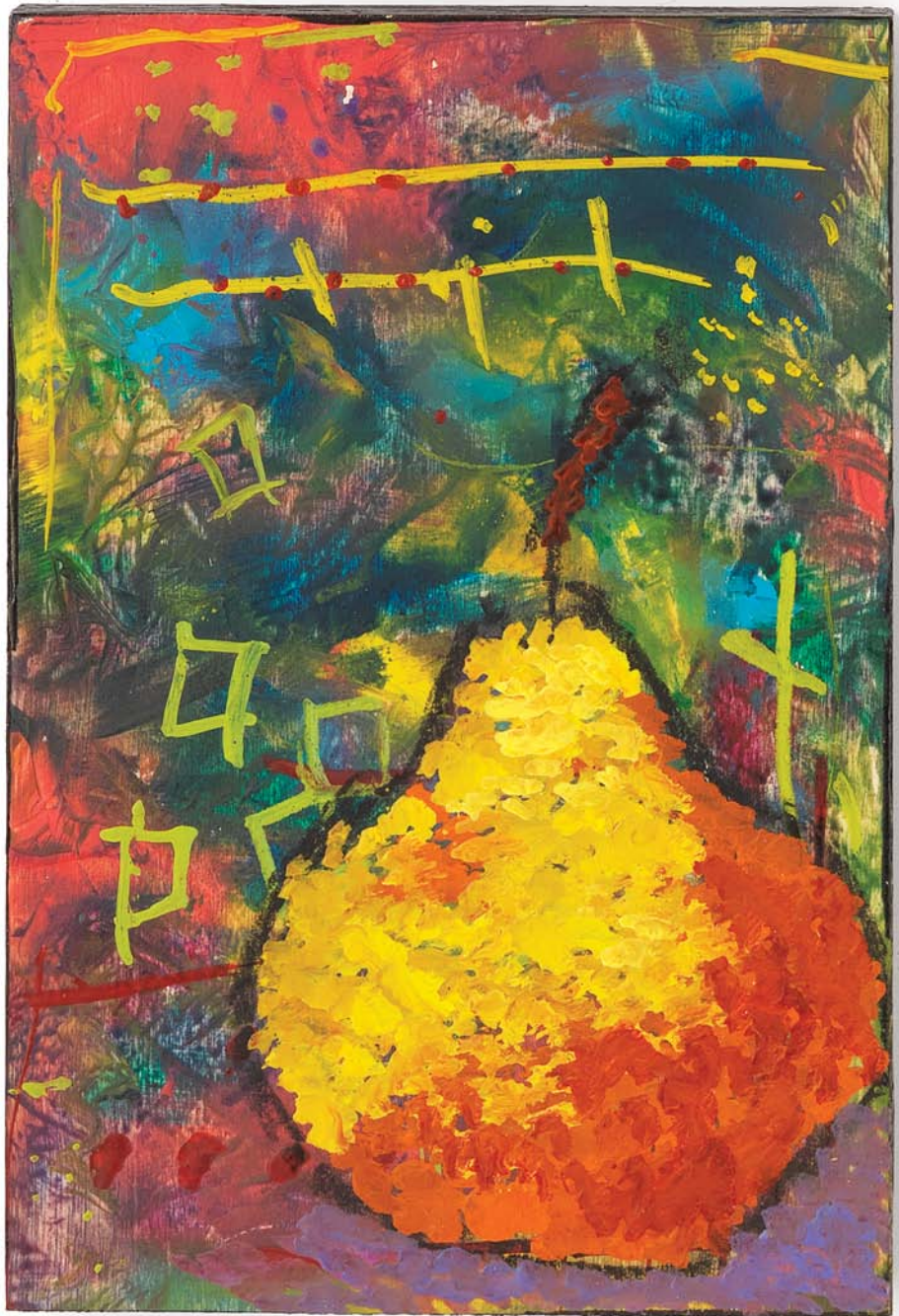


# multi-layered wax backgrounds

Adapted from  
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November/December 2009

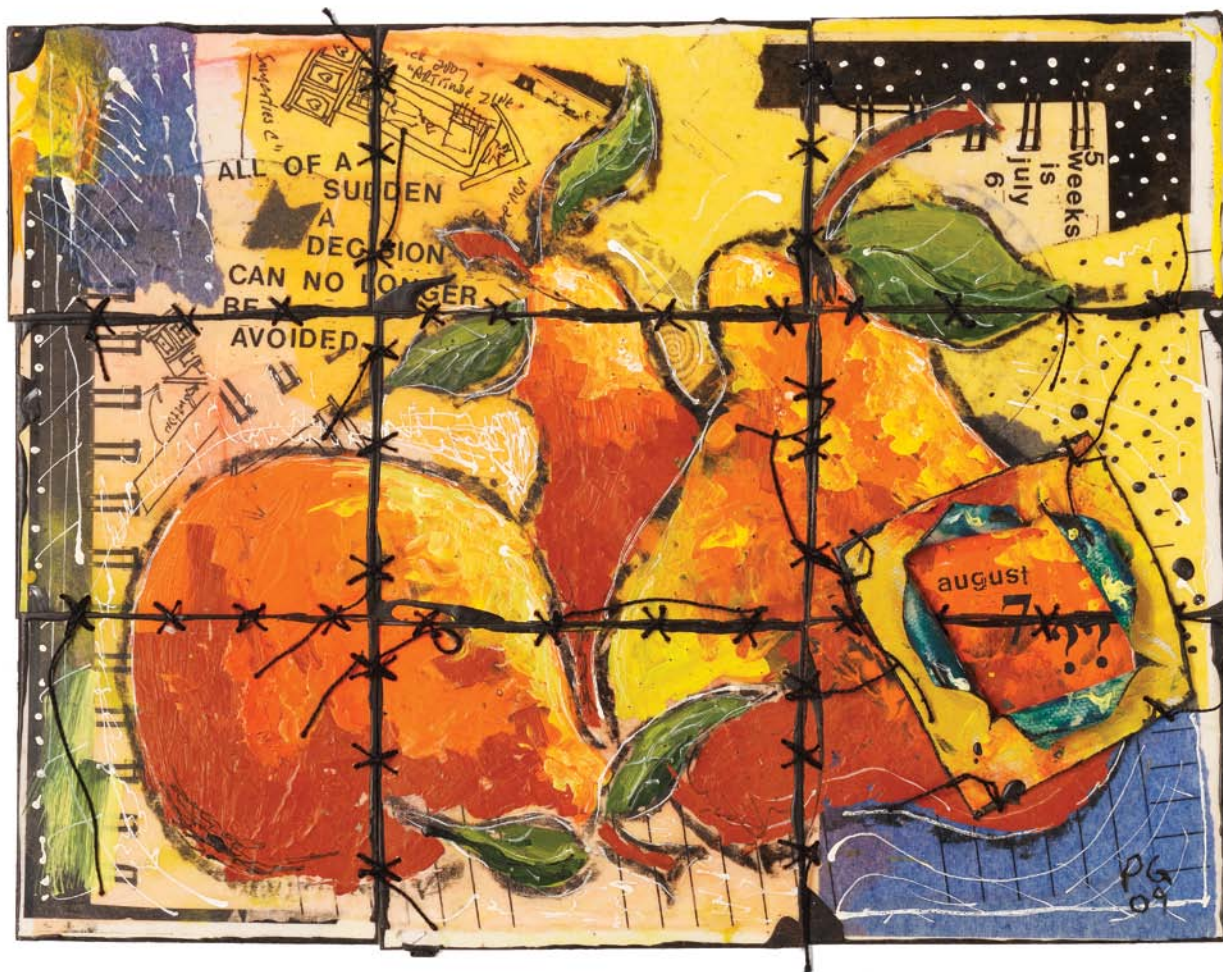
## tips for using a stylus with encaustic paints

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



**BY** Patricia Gagnat





## safety tips

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

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

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

## things to know

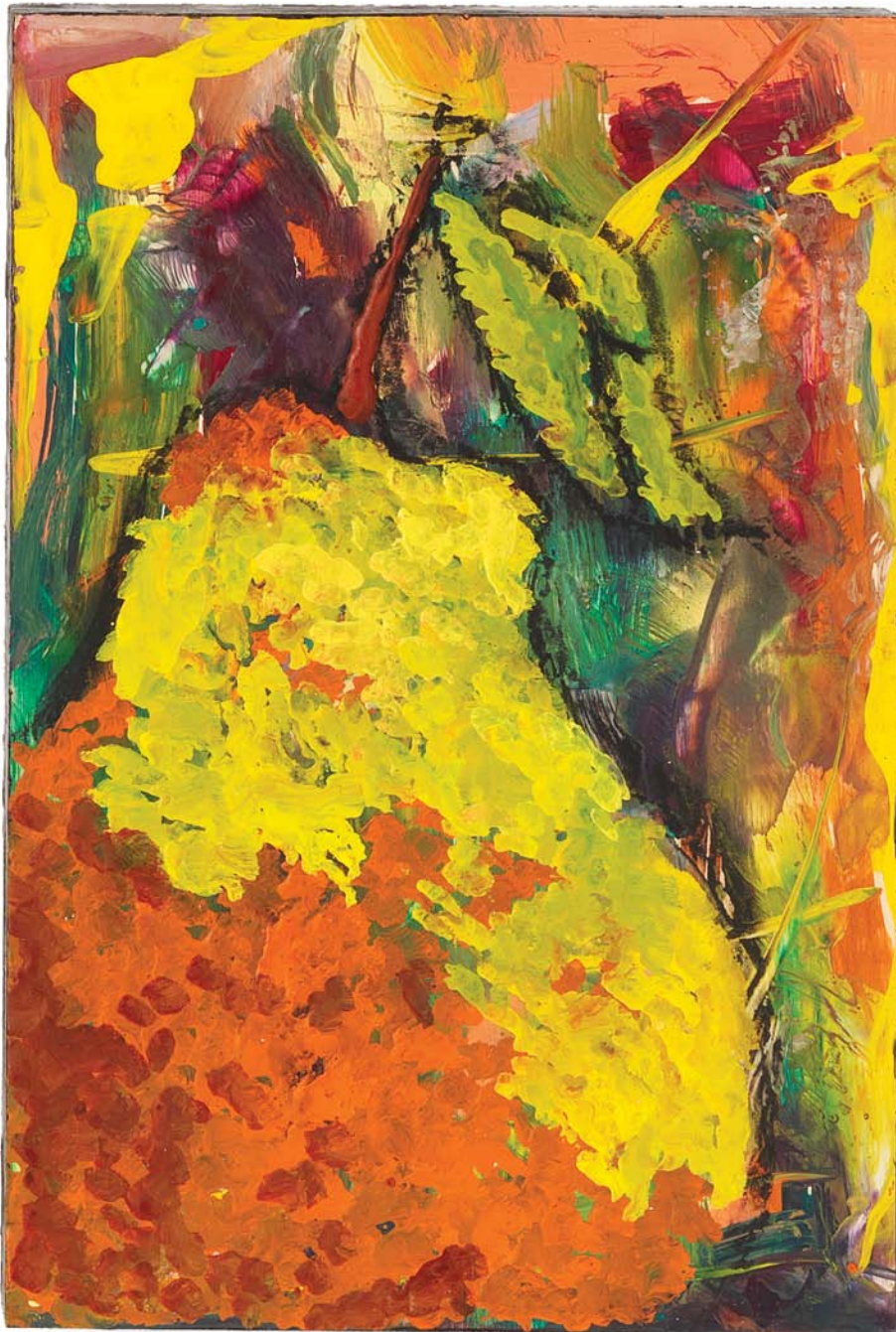
### HOW THE STYLUS WORKS

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

## MATERIALS

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





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

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SURFACE

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

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

## FUSING

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

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

## creating backgrounds

### PAINTING

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

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

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

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



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

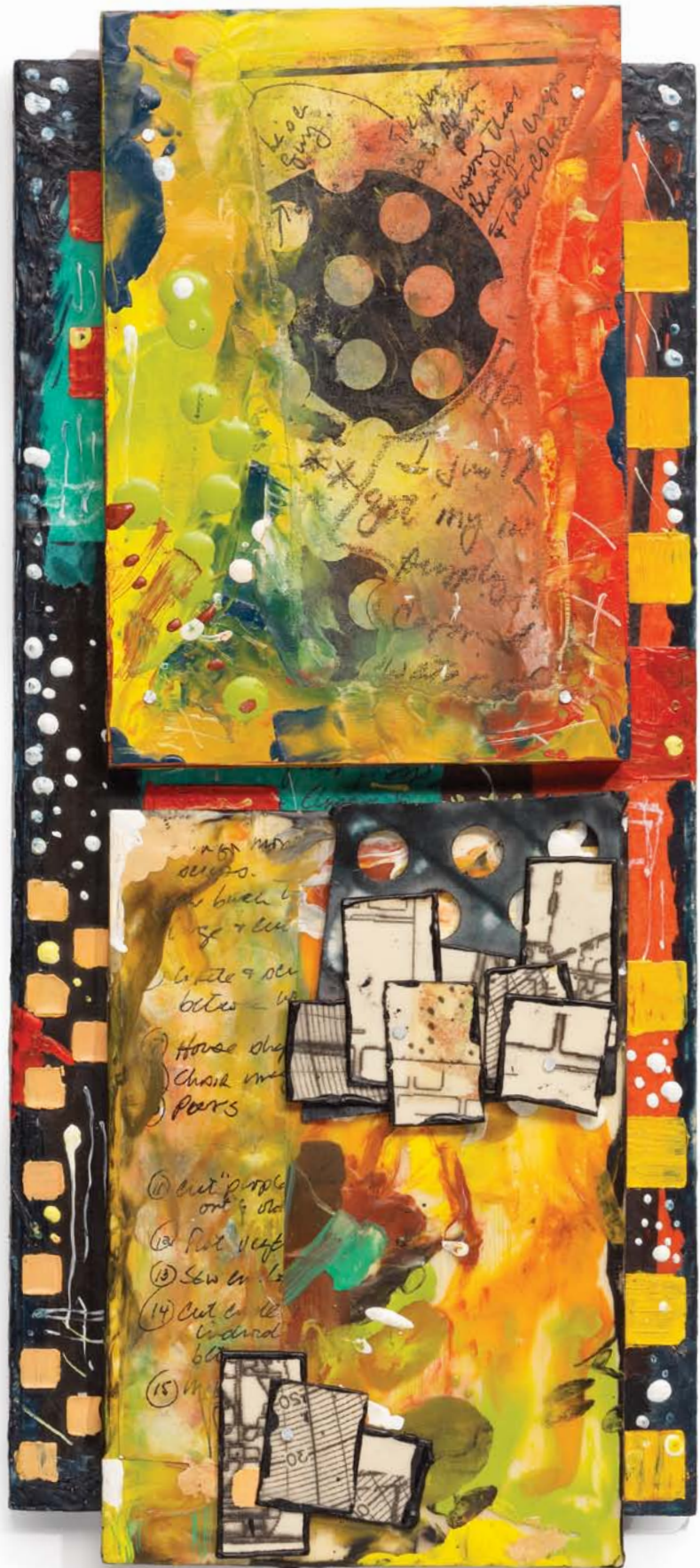
**tip:** If you do end up with “mud,” simply heat the wax, scrape it off, and apply another color. Fuse as described previously.

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

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

## COLLAGING

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





## COMBINING PAINTING AND COLLAGE

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

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

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

## using your backgrounds

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

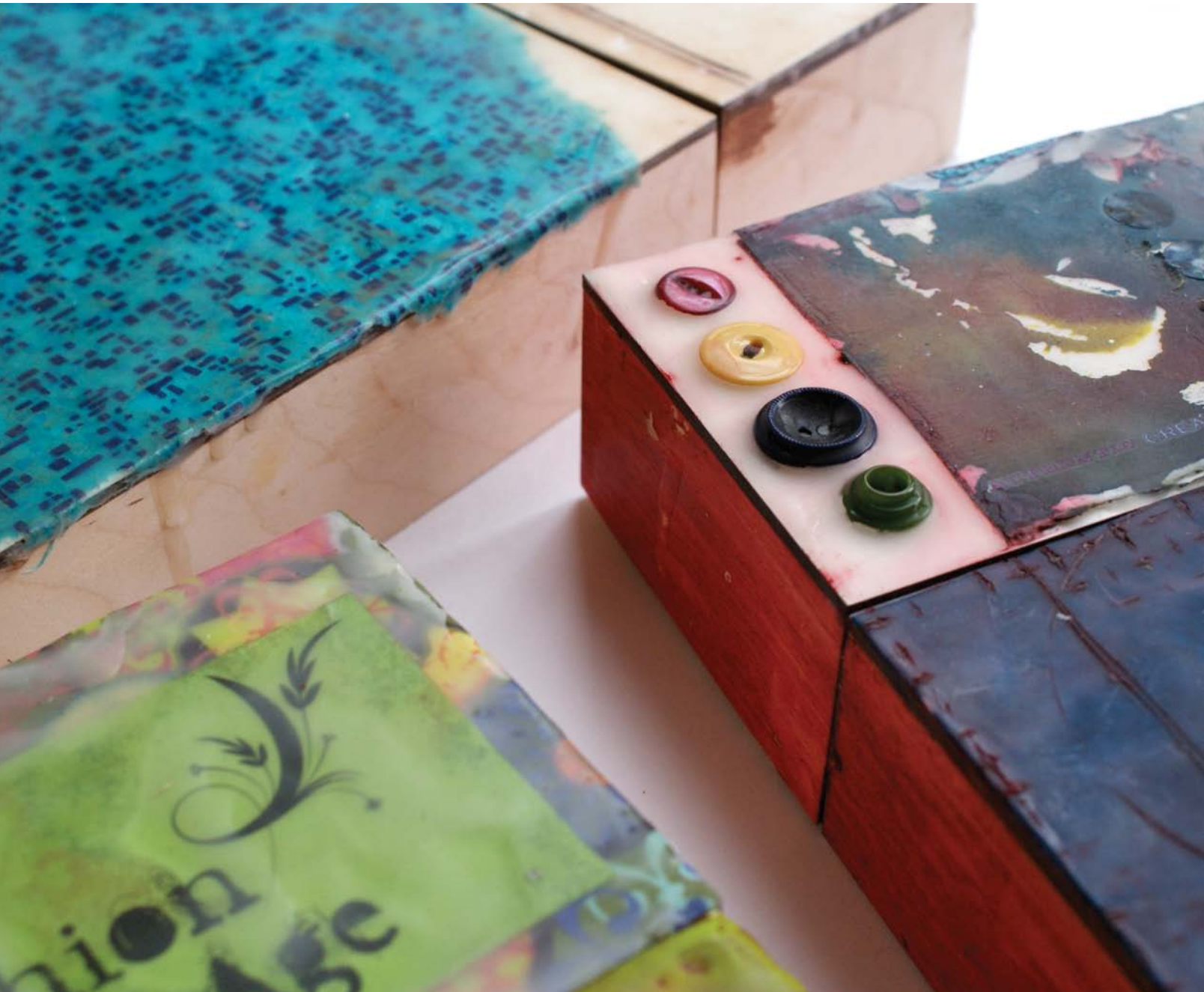
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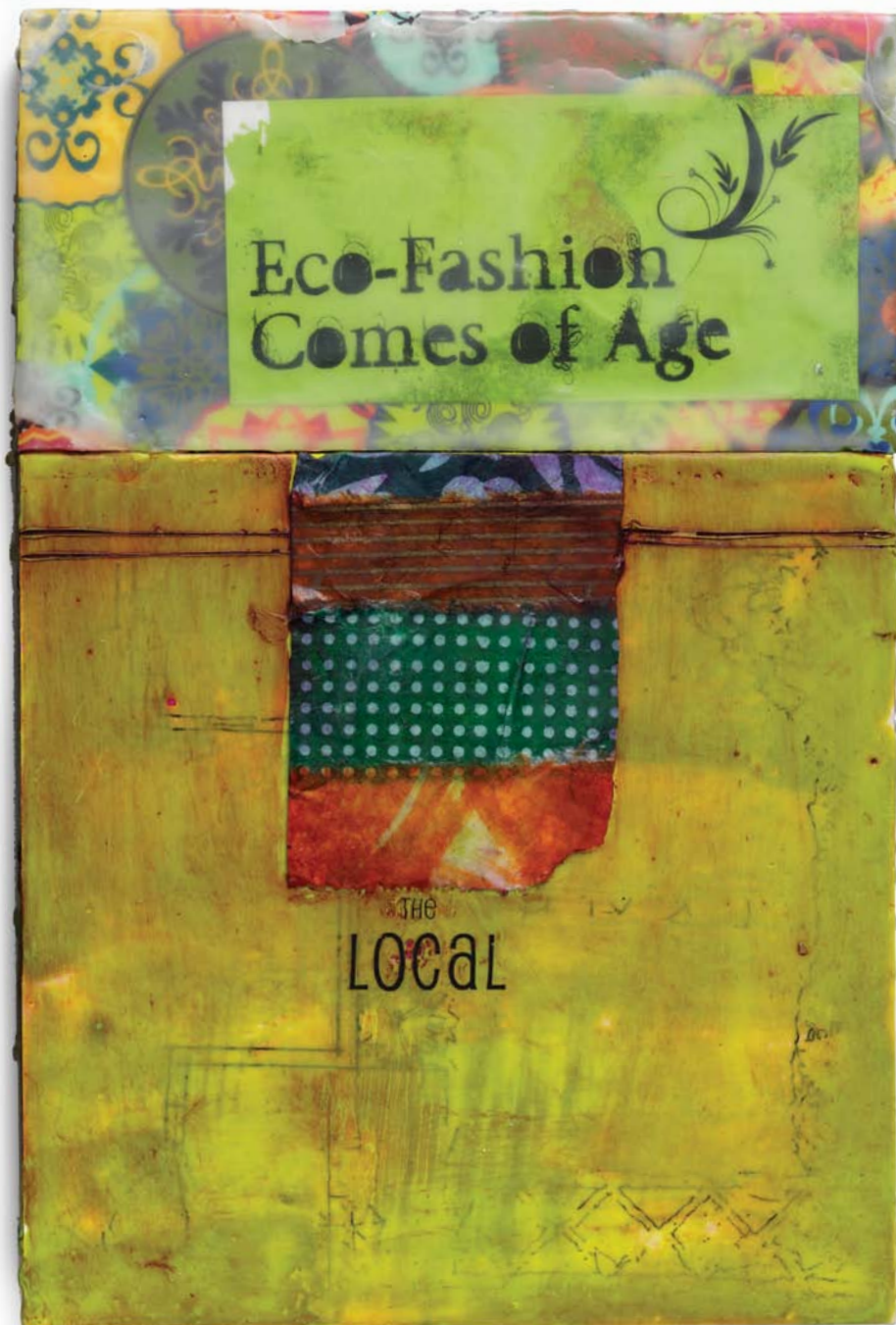


# encaustic collage

## a medium for journalistic musings

BY Patricia Baldwin Seggebruch





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

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

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

## MATERIALS

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

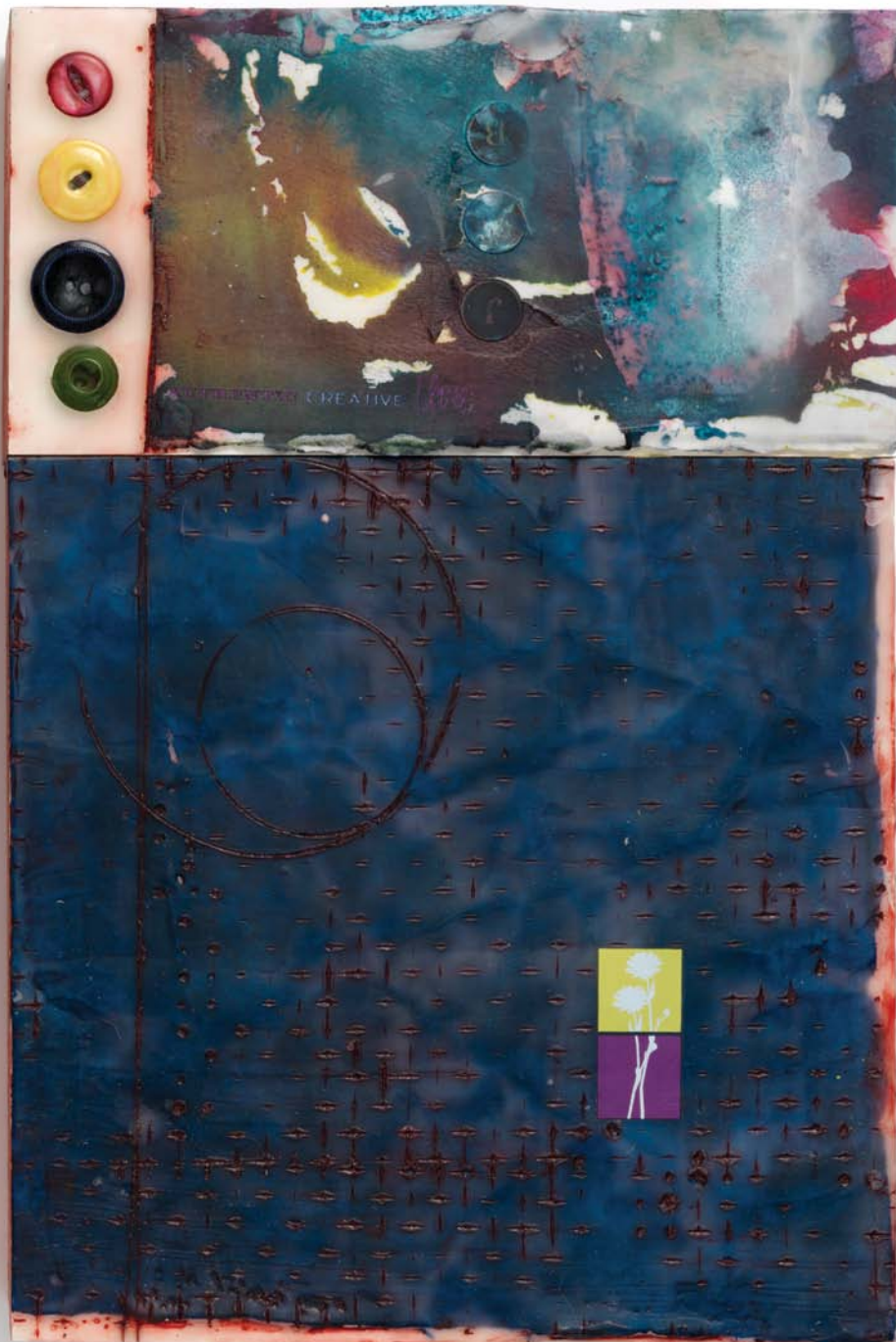
their connection to the emotions and images I have worked into the wax is a soul-opening, creative lifeboat that has propelled not only my artistic path, but my emotional expression and self-expression, too.

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

## directions

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





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

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

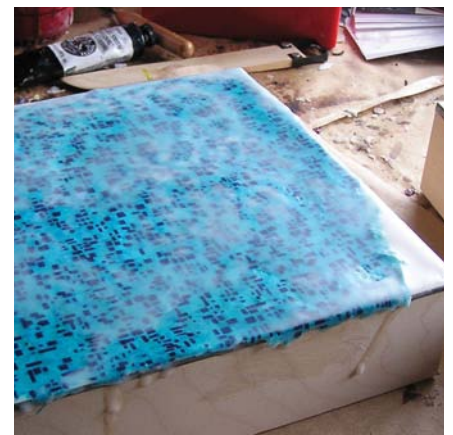
2. Apply the heat gun to the 8" × 8" Claybord until it is warm to the touch. Then spread a layer of wax medium over the entire surface to

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



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

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



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

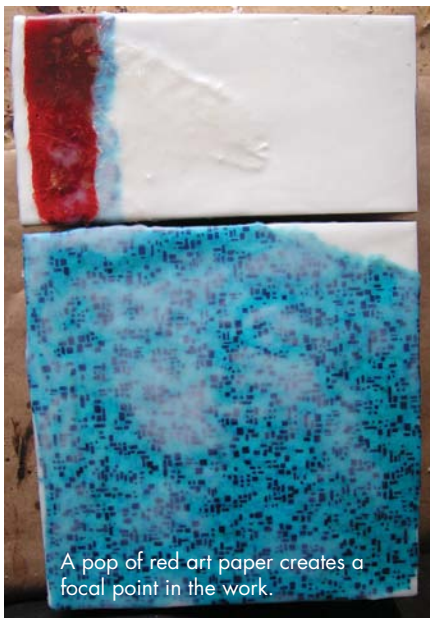




A torn paper is added to the 4" x 8" piece to unite it with the 8" x 8" piece.

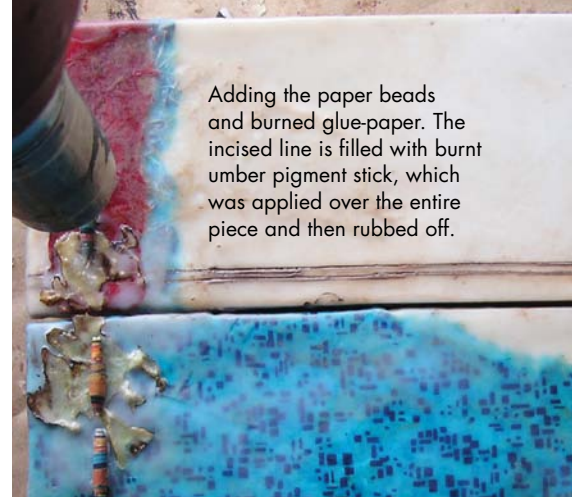


Additional papers are applied to the 4" x 8" piece.

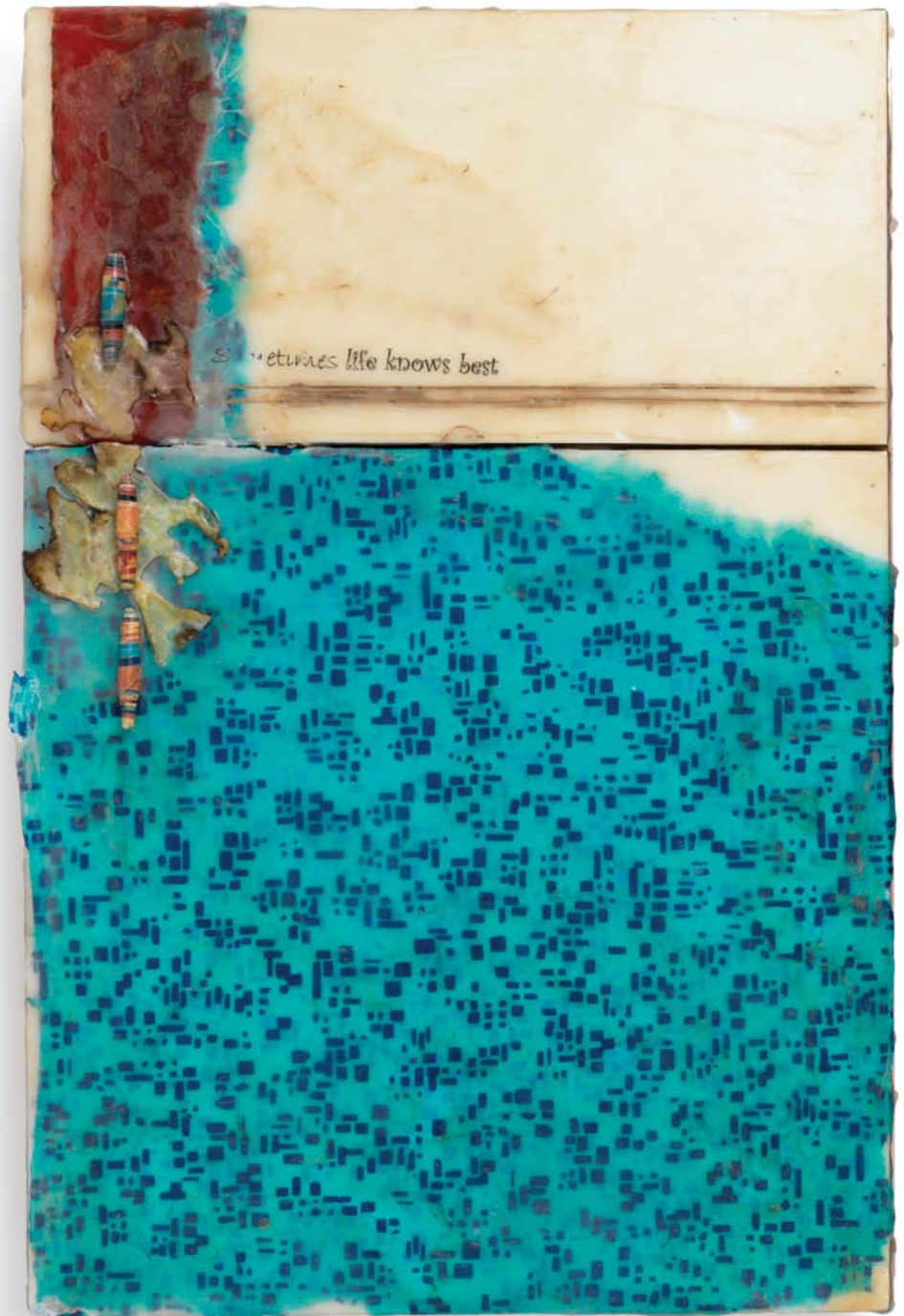


A pop of red art paper creates a focal point in the work.

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



Adding the paper beads and burned glue-paper. The incised line is filled with burnt umber pigment stick, which was applied over the entire piece and then rubbed off.



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

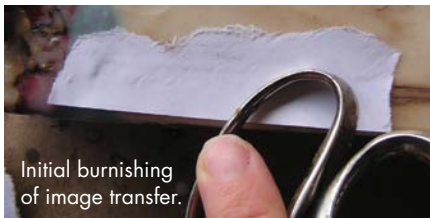
**note:** I felt that the inclusion of burned glue-paper and handmade paper beads set the tone nicely. I simply added a bit of hot wax to the area where I wanted



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

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

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



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

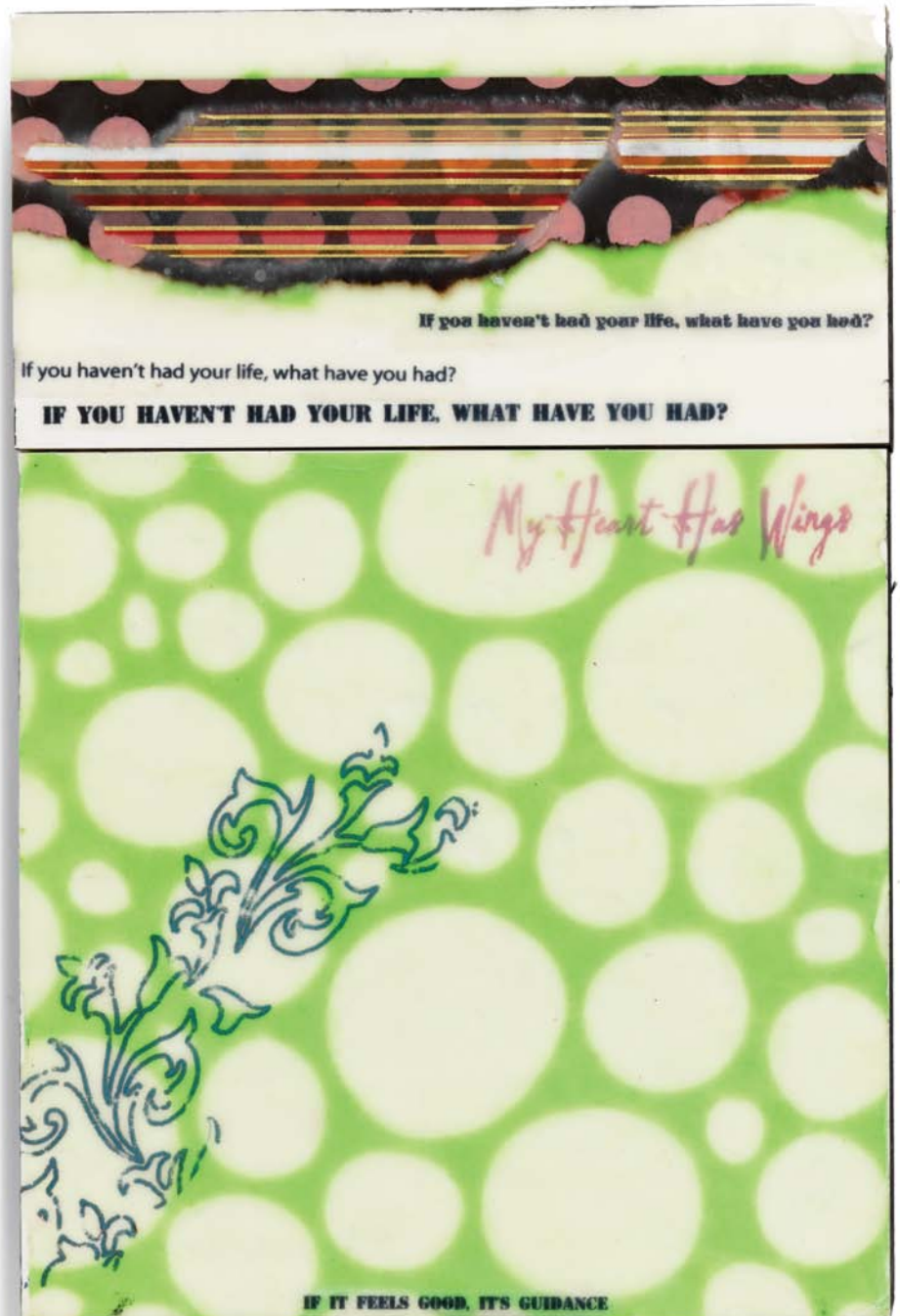


10. Reflect on what you've done to be sure it speaks cohesively. Did you successfully translate your message

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

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

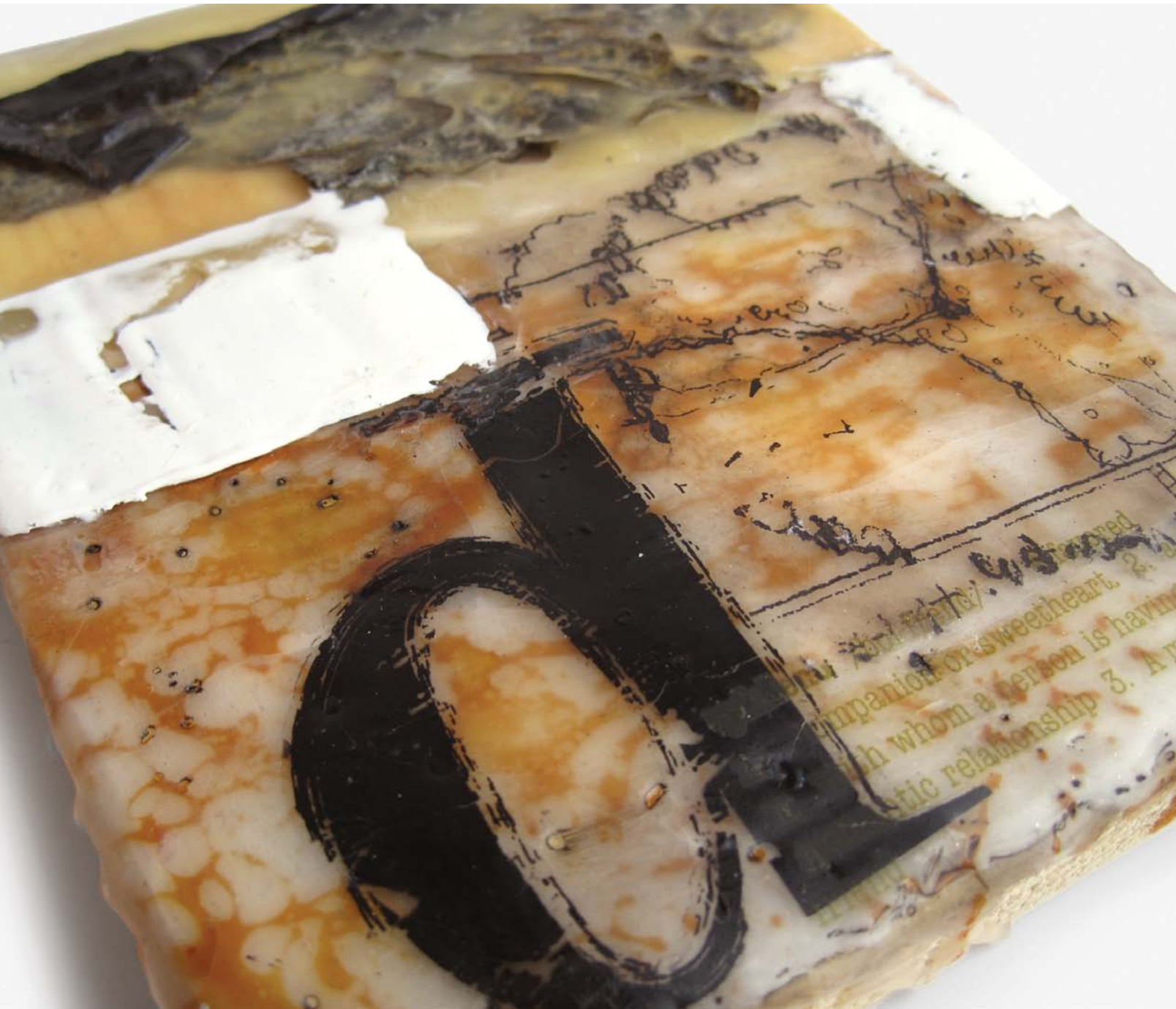
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# *burned* glue & paper playing with fire

Adapted from  
CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®  
March/April 2010



BY Patricia Baldwin Seggebruch



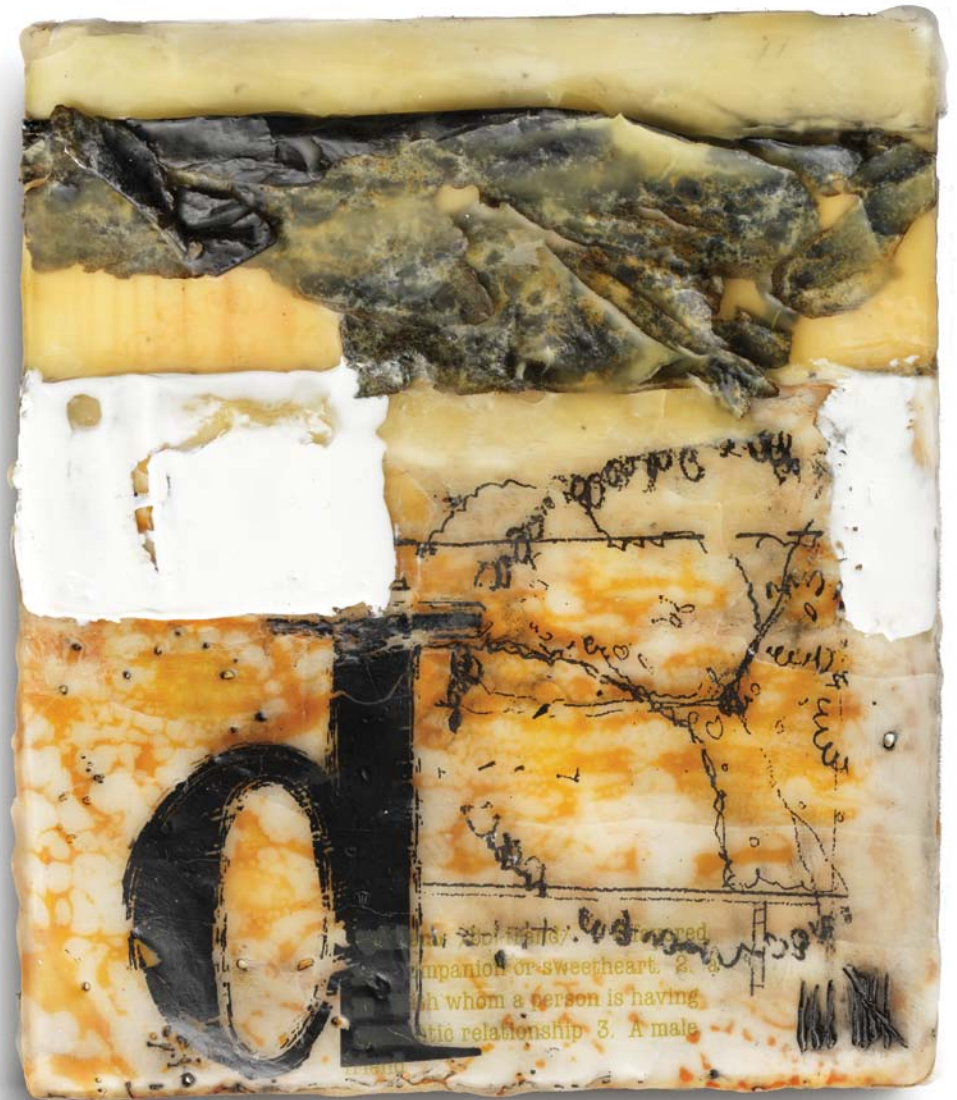
I've discovered that there is nothing outside of my zone of artistic interest that can't be enhanced and made more appealing with my burning technique. Burned papers and fabrics add a whole new depth to my encaustic creations.

One of my students introduced me to the wonder of wood glue burning after she'd seen me demonstrate burned shellac, a process in which shellac is painted over an encaustic piece and then burned away. The burning and the shellac residue leave behind interesting patterns.

A glue burn is a similar application. But who'd have thought that a simple Elmer's product on a brown paper grocery sack could produce such wonder? The very satisfying organic color of the wood glue married well with the brown paper sack and the subsequent blackened curls of burn left after the torch had been applied. But, leave it to me to not leave it there!

## MATERIALS

- Tissue paper (or other paper of choice)
- Elmer's® wood glue
- Blow torch
- Wood (cut to desired size)
- Masking tape
- White wax
- Clear encaustic medium
- Wide brush
- Shellac
- Image for transfer (toner-based photocopy)
- Rub-on letter of choice
- Respirator
- Heat gun
- Burnishing tool



Above (detail on previous page): "Is it a D?" • 6¼" x 5¼"

Brown paper was interesting and produced very satisfying results, but there were so many other different papers and products beckoning me to burn. So, I took up old paintings, tissue paper, and sewing patterns. Drawing paper, Japanese silk tissue, sumi, and waxed paper all fell victim to my artistic blaze. And I still could not stop. Fabrics of cotton, silk, and wool became test tracks with threads, yarn, and ribbon going under the flame as well. Oh the wonder of new possibilities and the scrumptious excitement in pairing them with beeswax.

## cautions

Burning glue is a flame-based and therefore smoke-based technique. Use extreme caution and take the appropriate precautions with this process.

- Work outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.
- Wear a respirator.
- Work on a flame-resistant surface.



The reason this technique works—not allowing the paper or fabric to ignite and go up in flames and disintegrate—is that the wet glue acts as a protectant, while at the same time drying and cooking on the paper to join in a whole new creative look.

**note:** For the finished artwork featured on the first page of this article I used colored tissue paper. The samples shown on this page were created with striped tissue. The technique for application of glue and burn is the same for any material, though the results differ greatly depending on the material used.

## the burn

### directions

1. Lay a sheet of tissue paper on a non-flammable surface. I do this on the concrete floor of my garage. Apply the wood glue to the tissue paper in a generous pour, and then smear it over the entire surface. I use my fingertips.
2. Once the paper is thoroughly covered, ignite the torch and begin to burn (*Figure 1*). I like to keep the flame somewhat close to the surface and hold it in spots to bubble and burn the glue as it dries. Move the torch in patterns over the glued paper, or burn the edges and then come in towards the middle with a lighter burn. Burn deep in some sections and lighter in others to create contrast in the final papers, allowing more options in creative use (*Figure 2*).

**note:** It can take upwards of 5 minutes to burn a sheet of 8½" × 11" paper with this process, depending on the depth of glue on the paper.



Figure 1



Figure 2

3. When you are satisfied with the burn, set the piece aside to dry completely.

**note:** I often work many burns throughout the day so that a large stack

is available at a moment's notice. These lovely burned papers have become an integral part of my assorted art paper stash.



# waxing

## directions

1. Mask the upper  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cut wood with masking tape.
2. Paint the white wax over the lower  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the wood using a wide brush (*Figure 3*), and then fuse it to the wood by quickly passing over the wax with a heat gun. Remove the masking tape.
3. For your image transfer, it's necessary to use a photocopy of your selected image; the copy must be toner-based, not ink-based, to transfer. Place the copy face-down over the warm white wax and burnish to transfer the image. Wet the back of the copy paper lightly to relax the fibers and release the image to the wax.
4. Balance the transfer with a rub-on letter. I used the letter "d" and then did a quick shellac burn (as described in the introduction) over the white wax to pull together more of the organic feel I was aiming for.
5. Add several layers of clear encaustic medium to create a look of depth with the underpainting, pushing it back, so to speak, under the translucent layers.
6. Adhere a piece of the burned paper with a thick brush of clear encaustic medium over the area of wood you preserved with the masking tape resist (*Figure 4*), and then do a quick fuse with the heat gun.
7. Add a brush stroke of white encaustic paint over the midsection as an added focal point.

Keeping the whole painting neutral and maintaining a simple design pulls the entire piece together and maintains my



Figure 3



Figure 4

original goal of creating a natural, organic painting. ●

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