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Care and Displaying Encaustic

Wax is impervious to moisture and will retain its look over time, making encaustic the most durable of all artists' paints. Although it has the highest archival rating, the surface of the painting needs special care to ensure it is not scratched or exposed to extreme heat or cold.

A question that inevitably gets asked is, "Will it melt?" Although it would take extreme heat to harm a painting, the durability of encaustic is similar - you wouldn't want to put any fine art in direct sunlight, whether it would melt or not.

There is a distinct difference between daylight and direct sunlight. An encaustic in indirect daylight will not be harmed. My paintings are often hung with southern and western exposures - however, they are in indirect light and receive no direct sunlight. Heat and extreme cold, however are concerns. My paintings work very well above a fireplace mantle when installed a safe distance from the firebox.

One artist told his collectors, "Wax melts at 150 degrees F (65 degrees C). If the paintings are melting in your house, you've got a bigger problem – your house is on fire!" *Reference: The Art of Encaustic Painting by Joanne Mattera*

Bloom is a dusty look that can appear on the surface of the painting. This can be caused by elements in the medium that reach for the surface during curing. This will cease after a few months. The guideline for caring for a new painting and ensuring minimal bloom, is to buff the surface of the painting once a month with an old t-shirt (being careful of the seams!) or a chamois.

Simple steps for encaustic care:

- *Keep artwork between 35-120 degrees – out of direct sunlight and out of the trunk!
- *The surface will scratch - Handle the support, not the edges or surface of the painting. If a scratch occurs, consult the artist, who may agree to refuse.
- *Buff the surface of a new painting once a month with an old t-shirt (being careful of the seams!) or similar cotton cloth or chamois. After the first few months, regular care can be adjusted to suit the collector, but I suggest buffing a minimum of 4 times a year.
- *For transporting a small work, it is best to create an inner box with glassine attached to side opposite the top of the painting. If an inner box is unavailable, pack encaustic with glassine or parchment (baking) paper above the surface of painting, next wrap the piece with bubble wrap – BUBBLES FACING OUT. Place the wrapped art in a cushioned box with pH-Neutral surface when transporting. For shipping, ensure your inner "box" or wrapped piece is placed inside another box with lots of cushioning (peanuts) between it and the outside box. This serves as insulation for the work as well as cushioning. Mark the top of the box "Top" and mark "This Side Up" with arrows around the box to keep the work face up. NOTE: Large works and works traveling overseas need custom crating. For additional details and extra care during shipping, please contact me.

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Care and Displaying Acrylic

My acrylic paintings are given a protective isolation coat and cured for 72 hours prior to applying 2 coats of Golden archival varnish. This process is allowed to dry an additional 72 - 120 hrs before installation or shipping.

Often, my acrylic paintings incorporate aspen leaves or other elements. These final applications of detail work are close to the surface of the piece. Each work is treated to extra layers of medium to ensure all elements are permanent then treated to my archival finishing process as described above. Extra consideration is needed for the surface of these works when transporting or cleaning - simply using extra care when applying any outside pressure to the work.

Simple steps for acrylic care:

*For cleaning an acrylic painting, it is best to lightly dust the surface regularly with a feather duster or similar. If a painting is in need of extra dusting, carefully turn the painting upside down (keeping the piece vertical) and gently shake the painting to remove extra dust, then use a feather duster or similar to finish the cleaning. Turn the painting back to the top and re-hang! If extra cleaning is needed or if you have a question, please contact me.

*To transport an acrylic work, pack the painting in plastic (clean garbage liners work great), next wrap the piece with bubble wrap. Place the wrapped art in a cushioned box for shipping. Large works and works traveling overseas need custom crating. For additional details and extra care during shipping, please contact me.