

## Encaustic Station Directions

1. Encaustic is a Greek word meaning “to heat or burn in” (enkaustikos). Encaustic painting, also known as hot wax painting, involves using heated beeswax to which colored pigments are added. The liquid or paste is then applied to a surface—usually prepared wood, though canvas and other materials are often used.
2. **When working with hot wax and heat gun and plates you need to be very careful and cautious. Think before you do!!! *You must watch all of the videos on Encaustic before trying it.***

3. See this web page for details and pictures:



4. Encaustic Step-by-step:
  - **1. Melt your wax:** The wax is prepared by melting “encaustic medium” into a hot plate, until it is liquid. (R&F Paints suggests a temperature for encaustic medium between 170 and 200 degrees F).
    - You can use transparent or opaque wax, depending on the effect you’re going for. And, you might even want to have one hot plate of each, so you can experiment with both. For example, if you’d like to collage papers or photos into your wax and have them show up clearly, you can use the transparent wax. For a more subtle, hazy effect, try the opaque wax. You can even go back and forth.
  - **2. Brush on your wax:** With your wax completely melted, go ahead and brush your first layer onto your encaustic board (or plain wooden panel). At this point, just familiarize yourself with the medium, and play with the wax as you put it on the board. Brushing on the warm, aromatic, buttery wax is an experience to enjoy all by itself!
    - **Brushing:** As you lay down your first layer of wax, keep in mind that encaustic artwork is typically comprised of several layers

of thin wax. Make sure that the wax AND the brush remain hot, so you can brush on a thin layer at a time. Keeping each successive surface warm is also key in getting the layers to hold together.

- **3. Start collaging in elements:** Begin laying down your collage materials between layers of wax, such as a dried flower, or piece of newspaper. A sheet of music, or an old family photo can also be marvelous.
    - Remember that whatever you put down first will be more deeply buried in the wax layers, and not show up as well as the items you layer in towards the top. You can create different effects depending on where you place your papers.
  - **4. Fuse each additional layer of wax:**
    - A very important part of encaustic painting is fusing the wax layers. Each time you put a layer of wax down, you will fuse the wax, gently, with a heat gun.
    - Using a heat gun takes some practice, but essentially you'll want to "brush" a low flame back and forth over the entire board. This creates a bond between the layers of wax, smoothing over any uneven texture.
    - You'll eventually discover your own style of fusing, but just remember that when you start out, fusing takes a lot of attention! Be sure to set a metal plate below your encaustic board when fusing, so that you won't damage or burn the table that you're working on. Also, have a fire extinguisher at hand and be sure that any scraps of flammable paper have been moved off the table as well.
  - **5. Scrape, scratch, and texturize**
    - Once you get some layers down, it's fun to play with creating designs or textures in the wax by scratching or scraping it with any sort of sharp objects. Have fun experimenting! You can make patterns, or make abstract lines. There are many ready made tools as well.
5. Make sure you put your name on your encaustic pieces and save for your visual journal pages.
  6. Watch the demo videos here to learn some of the various techniques.