

Michele Messenger

Encaustic Painting

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Encaustic (Greek for 'to burn in' or 'to heat') is a centuries-old technique that is enjoying a resurgence with much healthier studio practices and a wide array of supplies — both encaustic-specific as well as borrowed! I am excited to have the opportunity to demo encaustic painting at the April Heritage Fine Arts Guild meeting. I will bring a lot of my favorite tools and a few small boards to work on to show some techniques including how to make the most of wax's translucency (or not!), stencils, carving, mark-making and more. Encaustic medium and paint need to be molten in order to be workable, so that means I'll have tins of melted wax on a pancake griddle. Each layer of encaustic needs to be fused to the layer below, so that means a heat gun and/or a butane torch. We'll have the smell of melting beeswax along with the force of massive heat, all to make some interesting art!

artist bio

Michele Messenger is a Denver, Colorado-based encaustic painter. The ancient form of painting with a mix of beeswax and tree resin has been enjoying a happy renaissance in the last decade or so — perfectly timed with Michele's discovery of it. She was drawn to another artist's booth at an art fair, was allowed to touch the paintings, and promptly took the next encaustic workshop she found. That was followed by a happy stint as an assistant in two- and three-day encaustic workshops at the Art Students League of Denver. Michele says the her favorite part of creating encaustic paintings is to show off the transparency of wax when layered over mono and screen prints. On the opposite end of the spectrum is heavily-pigmented wax that has a unique and luscious (almost taffy-like) aspect to it. But nearly all of her work features texture and mark making that is highlighted with an oil paint wash. Additionally Michele tries to source beeswax from people she knows including a neighbor, a sister and, currently, a wonderful wife/husband beekeeping and honey-producing team in North Dakota. Michele's encaustic paintings have been featured and sold at various art shows throughout Denver, Brooklyn and Charleston (SC). She is represented at Westward Gallery in Denver and Balefire Goods in Arvada (CO) and is a Sync Gallery (Denver) 2022 Contributing Artist. Additionally she participates in two to three art fairs in the Denver area every (non-pandemic) year allowing her to meet fellow art lovers, encaustic newbies, and just generally wonderful people. Michele's people are from Illinois. The family moved to Indiana at the end of her grade school years and she moved to Colorado in her early 20s. She's been married to her husband for a shocking 36 years and is a freelance graphic designer in addition to her thriving encaustic artistry.