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By [Chris Bergeron](#)

Daily News staff

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## Buzzing about art New England Wax artists mount encaustic exhibit at Framingham gallery Encaustic artists are "Breaking Boundaries" at Fountain Street Fine Arts

FRAMINGHAM - Members of New England Wax are "Breaking Boundaries" by exhibiting a fascinating selection encaustic paintings and sculptures at Fountain Street Fine Art gallery.

Fusing techniques of "hot wax painting" dating to ancient Egypt with contemporary approaches and materials, 21 artists are showing encaustic works that transcend the genre in exciting ways.

Suzanne Hauerstein uses encaustics to paint vividly colored scenes of domestic life that evoke simpler times.

Made from bubblewrap, paper and electrical parts, Holly Berube's spikey encaustic "Star Globe" shines like a glowing sea anemone.

Catherine Weber mounted eggshells and tree bark covered with encaustics on kitchen tiles that she fixed onto an oak frame to create "Landscape in Five Parts, blue" which makes decay look lovely.

The Southborough artist "loves working with encaustics" but "doesn't want to be known as just an encaustic artist."

"I don't want viewers who look at what I've made to think of it as an 'encaustic' but to have a moving visual experience," she said.

Gallery owners Marie Craig and Cheryl Clinton said they accepted a proposal from New England Wax, an organization of encaustic artists, to host an exhibit because it "fit our mission to stage individual and group shows in different mediums by members and non-members."

Lauren O'Neal and Sara Zela, the director and former gallery manager, respectively, of Lamont Gallery, Phillips Exeter Academy, N.H., selected about 33 works from 21 New England Wax members for the show.

After viewing about 60 works, O'Neal said she and Zela chose at least one work by each artist because they wanted to give "a broad perspective" of how group members "were each breaking boundaries in new ways" to make original art.

O'Neal said encaustics are increasingly popular because it is "a sculpted medium" that lets artists create works that combine "vivid, beautiful colors" and tangible surfaces.

"In so much of our lives, we're surrounded by glossy, almost immaterial images," she said. "People have a real desire for the tactile and sensory experience of working with and viewing encaustics."

The name encaustics derives from a Greek word meaning to "burn in," referring to the use of heat to fuse together different materials.

Craig explained encaustic artists traditionally add colored pigments to heated beeswax to make a paste they apply to surfaces such as wood or canvas with special brushes and tools to create images ranging from the real to the abstract.

"The artists in this show have pushed the limits with a wide range of their own techniques and experiences," she said.

Clinton predicted viewers would be struck by the "richness of encaustic artists' palettes" and how they incorporated "found objects" into their work to create unusual surfaces that suggested complex ideas.

Leila Weinstein Stokes said since 2008 she's been making a "natural progression" from creating monoprints to working with encaustics because she enjoys "the way things come out at you" on their surfaces.

The artist from Hingham covered old linen sheets she found in her mother's attic with beeswax and colored pigments and twisted them into sinuous shapes to make her triptych titled "Folds."

A landscape architect, Weinstein Stokes said the tactile aspect of encaustics lets her capture "the patterns of snow and undulations of water" in her work.

"I'm excited by the three-dimensional potential of working with encaustics. It makes the images seem if they are coming off the canvas."

Eight years ago, Pamela Dorris DeJong switched to encaustics because she was drawn to the "luminosity" of a material that lets her express light in different ways.

"I've been searching my whole life as an artist for a material that conveys transparency through layers," said the Ashland resident who works as school nurse in a Framingham elementary school.

DeJong, who's been painting since high school, is showing two striking works titled "Connections" from her Healing Series that reflect her efforts to use the act of painting to recuperate from surgery on both feet. She described painting during her recovery as a "meditative process" in which she used seven layers of encaustics, shellac and silver leaf to express "healing on a cellular level."

"I was thinking how nerve synapses send messages through tissue. There's seven layers (of encaustics) in those paintings," said DeJong. "That how I think about life with its layers of knowledge and understanding. I tried to depict that in my paintings."

For Weber, working with encaustics has forced her "to break boundaries" of old habits so she could grow as an artist who uses new materials to express herself in new ways.



At Fountain Street Fine Art in Framingham, Lelia Weinstein, with her encaustic work, "Folds," at left. Daily News Staff Photo/Art Illman

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"It's forced me out of normalcy to think differently, especially by working with found objects. It's forced me to be resourceful and look around and figure out how new ways," she said. "Give me some old bed sheets, egg shells and a ball of wax I can create something interesting."

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"Breaking Boundaries: An Exhibit by the Artists of New England Wax"

WHEN: Through Jan. 26

WHERE: Fountain Street Fine Art, 59 Fountain St., Framingham

INFO: 508-879-4200; [www.fountainstreetfineart.com](http://www.fountainstreetfineart.com)

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