



CARING FOR AND SHIPPING ENCAUSTIC

Encaustic artwork should be cared for as you would any fine art piece. Work can be stored, wrapped in glassine and bubblewrap (be sure the bubbles are facing out so they don't make imprints in your work) at room temperature and out of direct sunlight. Encaustic can be wiped clean with a soft cloth. If the piece is especially dirty, it can be wiped clean with a water-dampened cloth.

The greatest attribute of encaustic is its exquisite surface quality. A good deal of this gets lost when the painting is framed behind glass. Glass does protect the surface from denting or scratching, but if the painting is properly exhibited, stored, and shipped, this danger is minimized. Almost all encaustic works exhibited today are done without being glassed. We suggest framing with glass only when the painting is done on paper that is not completely dipped in the wax, or if it is extremely old (as in the case of the Fayum portraits). In addition, framing behind glass can intensify the heat (particularly from gallery lights or sunlight) causing a greenhouse effect that could soften or even melt the wax.

There are many options available and most professional framers will have the experience and knowledge to assist you in making the best decisions for your work.

SHIPPING ENCAUSTIC WORKS

For good reason artists are often concerned about shipping or transporting works in encaustic. Encaustic in extreme situations is vulnerable to cracking, chipping, flaking, or softening (or worse, melting). This is especially true when the shipment or transportation is done in very hot or very cold temperature conditions.

Keep these points in mind:

- 1) Pack it so that nothing touches the wax surface.
- 2) Insulate against temperatures under 40°F and over 80°F.
- 3) Insulate against shock (jarring, dropping, etc.).

The following guidelines apply to paintings, 30" x 30" or less. Packing for larger

and/or 3-dimensional work may be done in the same manner or may have to be designed differently for the specific work. Please feel free to call us if you need suggestions for difficult pieces.

Packing so nothing touches the surface

Surround the painting with side strips at least 1/4" higher than the painting's surface. Even if there already is a high frame on the painting, it should still have side strips. These strips can be made from 3/16" foam core taped tightly to the sides of the painting or frame (tape to the back of the painting or frame and tightly at the corners). A lid of foam core can then be attached over the top with tape. If the lid seems too flexible, double its thickness. It is also a good idea to tape a sheet of foam core to the bottom of the painting since the foam core serves as insulation. Your painting is now protected by an inner box.

Insulating the painting

Insulating against hot or cold temperatures is in many respects the same as insulating against shock. There are companies that sell pre-made insulated shipping boxes that can make shipping artwork a bit easier.

The foam core inner box should be wrapped with several layers of bubble wrap (use extra bubble wrap on the corners). It should then be put in an outer box filled with polystyrene (Styrofoam) peanuts. If the piece is heavy, use thick sheets of foam rubber (such as thick weather stripping) instead of peanuts, which can be too easily crushed.

The painting should be kept vertical, which helps to distribute any shock (think in terms of a diver diving into the water head first instead of belly first). Delicate assemblages, on the other hand, may be better off if kept horizontal to avoid putting too much downward pressure on the adhesive holding objects to the surface of the painting. However, if the objects are light and the adhesive is strong, the piece can be packed vertically.

In all cases the bottom of the box should be well padded with additional layers of bubble wrap or thick sheets of foam. To know if you have put enough packing material in, shake the outer box vigorously. If you feel the inner box moving, add more packing material.

If the artwork is light, the outer box can be made of corrugated cardboard. If the work is heavy or it is being transported over a long distance, a plywood crate will give better protection. We recommend 3/4" plywood for large work. Small, light work can be crated with 1/2" plywood.