

Sandra Koberlein

Statement

My work begins with heat. Encaustic painting is a process built from molten beeswax mixed with natural resin, and every piece I create carries the quiet memory of that warmth. When the wax melts, it releases a subtle, honey-tinged scent - soft, earthy, and comforting. That scent becomes the first layer of the artwork, a reminder that these paintings are born from something once fluid and alive.

As the wax cools, it transforms into a surface that feels both solid and delicate. If you were to run your fingertips across it, you'd notice gentle rises and dips, like the terrain of a small landscape. Some areas are smooth and glasslike, others textured with ridges, scratches, or impressions pressed into the wax while it is still warm. These variations are intentional. They hold the rhythm of my gestures, the pressure of my hands, the speed of my movements. The painting becomes a record of touch.

Encaustic allows me to build layers- sometimes dozens- each fused with heat so they become one body. You might imagine these layers the way you'd imagine sediment in the earth: thin sheets of time, each holding a trace of what came before. Even though you cannot see through them, the depth is there. You can feel it in the subtle thickness of the surface, in the way the edges soften or sharpen depending on how the wax was shaped.

Because the medium responds to temperature, the artwork is never entirely still. On a warm day, the surface relaxes slightly; on a cold day, it tightens. This sensitivity is part of its character. The painting continues to breathe with its environment, long after the moment of creation.

Emotionally, my encaustic pieces aim to hold a sense of quiet intensity. The wax captures gestures the way memory captures moments- imperfectly, but with honesty. Each mark is a trace of movement, each texture a small echo of intention. The work invites slow exploration, the kind that rewards patience and curiosity.

Ultimately, these paintings are not just visual objects. They are tactile landscapes, shaped by heat, touch, and time. They are meant to be felt—physically, emotionally, and intuitively. My hope is that, even without sight, you can experience the warmth at their origin, the textures that define them, and the quiet stories held within their layers.