

Encaustic Care Tips

By Kathleen Waterloo

- 1) **Buff with soft fiberless cloth *gently*** to clean, remove grime or fingerprints, or to return to gloss finish. Ideal cloths are soft t-shirts or silky pantyhose. Avoid flannel, rough cloths, or ones with many loose fibers. They will scratch or leave tiny fibers imbedded in the surface.
- 2) **Avoid exposure to cold temperatures for extended periods of time.** Cold will make the wax/panel brittle and susceptible to cracking. Ideally avoid temperatures 60 degrees F and below.
- 3) **Avoid bubble wrap directly on surface** as it leaves marks. If wrapping/shipping, use clear plastic sheeting, wax paper, or glassine directly on the surface followed by cardboard to protect. Bubble or foam wrap can then be applied.
- 4) **Keep out of direct sun** or heat source. Heat may make the surface feel ‘tacky’ but will not alter appearance. Remove from source of heat and the surface will cool back to normal. Encaustic will melt at 162 degrees F.
- 5) **Do not use cleaning solvents** or water to clean the surface.
- 6) **Wax is a natural material** and efflorescence does occur as the result of water oxidation. (This also occurs in brick and in egg tempera paintings.) Over time—possibly as soon as a month—a matte finish will appear on the painting surface. Both gloss and matte finishes are acceptable and each have different appearances. To return to a gloss finish, see note 1. The older the painting, the better it buffs as a result of the paint and wax medium tempering over time.
- 7) **Use care and avoid sharp objects** and excessive touching. Finger oil can build up on the surface.