

PAINTING WITH HOT WAX

by Fiona Geiser, Ph.D.



It is baffling to me why I persist in painting with hot wax. Furthermore, I wonder, whatever possessed me to embed my own photograph in wax along with dried flowers and red beads. I even created a similar ridiculous hot-wax painting of my husband, Ted. Friends ask me how Ted feels being surrounded by dried flowers and I just tell them that he does not care how surreal a scene is as long as there is something recognizable. Nothing, NOBODY, escapes my persistence to preserve an image in hot wax, even my Irish Setter, William.





The equipment is shown above. My heat source is a pancake griddle where I place a special heat-tolerant board, called Ampersand Encausticboard. I coat the board with a special wax that melts at higher temperatures than candle wax. The Romans and Egyptians both painted with hot wax. Egyptians cultivated honey bees and found many uses for honey as well as for the wax. I think that I like the technique because I really have to concentrate – wearing special heat resistant gloves and assuring good ventilation and control of the temperature. I actually work at temperatures lower than when I cook – where I also have to concentrate even when I fry an egg. But instead of a yellow egg, I produce a shiny spiral painting.

