



NEWS RELEASE

Encaustic Invitational

Exhibition Opening: May 2 - July 19, 2008

Artist's Reception: May 2, 2008, 5 – 8 pm

Five Artist's Gallery Talk: May 2, 2008, 7 pm

The Story of Encaustic: History and Process, May 29, 7 pm

Encaustic Workshop: June 7, 10 am – 5 pm

Missoula, MT / April 24, 2008 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / The *Encaustic Invitational* showcases six artists from the region who have chosen encaustic as their primary medium. All of the artists invited are well established and have been exhibiting their work for many years. Some of these artists have worked with encaustic for decades, whereas others are relative newcomers to the process; all are still exploring the possibilities of this ancient medium. The artists invited to participate are Sara Mast, Leslie Van Stavern Millar, Shawna Moore and Suzanne Truman, all from Montana, and Joseph Goldberg and Wendy Franklund Miller from the Spokane area.

The medium of encaustic has recently gained popularity as it lends itself to the contemporary urge to layer found images and to create densely textured surfaces with minimal imagery. The application of layers of wax and pigment allows for a deep foundation of image and color. The adhesive and translucent qualities of wax used in the process allow artists to add collage and textural elements to the image.

The encaustic medium involves the layering of molten wax with pigment to build up an image. As the word suggests, (Greek: en+kaein-“to burn in”) the encaustic process involves an application of heat. In ancient times, this may have been achieved by repeatedly heating metal spatulas and keeping the wood or coal flame hot under pots of wax. Today encaustic artists keep electric irons, hot plates and blowtorches on hand.

This is the first exhibit at MAM solely devoted to encaustic work. At first glance many of these artists seem to have a similar aesthetic and approach. Moore, Truman, Goldberg and often Miller all create work within a reductivist mode, usually with little representative imagery. The complexity of the painting appears as one looks closely at the work and notices the depth of the surface and multiple layers of color and texture embedded within.

The medium of encaustic lends itself to mimicking and evoking natural surfaces and the connection is only reinforced by the scent of beeswax that accompanies most encaustic work. It is not surprising that an overarching element in this exhibition is the influence of the natural environment, particularly in the work of Mast and Millar, and the artists' representation of images may have the quality of being both a macro- and microcosmic view of the world. Whether the wax medium stems from the body of a bee or a vast petroleum field, the works draw us in to take a whiff and look closer.

Exhibition curated by Renee Taaffe, Missoula Art Museum Curator of Education. The complete exhibition text is available on-line and within the exhibition.

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact Renee Taaffe, Curator of Education, reneet@missoulaartmuseum.org , 406.728.0447 x228

List appropriate staff to this event.

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. MAM educates, challenges and inspires the community through contemporary art. MAM preserves our emerging cultural heritage through the development and conservation of its art collection. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tues-Fri, 11AM-5PM, Sat, 10AM-5PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.

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