

John Angell Artist Statement

I have been working in encaustic for about five years and it has opened up a whole new world for me. I love using it in combination with my original photographs to create one-of-a-kind works of art. I feel it brings a depth of color, luster, texture and mystery to my work. My work is largely based on photos from my travels to exotic locations as well as my X-rays and MRIs. The images may be digitally altered and combined with additional media to create artwork that straddles photography and painting.

My work has many influences, from centuries-old Chinese and Japanese landscapes to African tribal masks, Color Field painting, Theatre of the Absurd, Pop art, Abstract Expressionism, Hunter S. Thompson, Dada, Surrealism and the American Dream. I am captivated by the beauty of abstraction in works of humans and nature, their intersection and the ravages of time on both. I draw on my own adventures in living, foibles and shortcomings.

In my work, I seek to create pieces which raise questions, poke fun and spawn contemplation. I prefer to work small as I feel that draws the viewer in closer and makes a more personal connection. At its best, I hope my work tells a story which is not always known to me and allows new interpretations with each new viewer.

My current work includes several different encaustic portfolios. My BodyWork collection is taken from my X-Rays and MRI's which I colorized and manipulated. To me they can read as semi abstract, almost Abstract Expressionist pieces in some cases. While the images are extremely clinical, they are also very intimate, actually looking beneath my skin. This is a commentary on the aging process as well as an explosion of color or internal landscapes. I have always wanted to age gracefully and am doing my best, but wouldn't have all these images if everything was perfect. When life gives you x-rays, make art.

My more representative photo encaustic work often contains images from our travels, each with its own story. While my lovely wife pays rapt attention to the history and meaning of the sites we visit, I am drawn to the visuals. In the studio, I may ascribe possibly cryptic context and history to these images through juxtaposition and interaction with the wax, color, other images or objects... or not. Sometimes it just is what it is.