

R & F Newsletter

Summer / Fall 1996

Volume 2 Number 1

A New Newsletter

For all of you patiently awaiting the second issue of our newsletter, here it is. We didn't forget about you. We apologize for the inordinate wait, but in return, we have many new developments to tell you about.

First of all, we moved. Our new shop is in Kingston, New York. This was the main cause of our delay. But we were also waiting until we were ready with our **new colors**. All your phone calls have let us know how much you've been looking forward to them, too. Now that the new colors are ready, we're planning a **redesigned**

encaustic palette, heated encaustic spatulas, and even more new colors.

For those of you wanting to attend one of our **workshops in encaustic technique**, we are now set up and beginning to schedule.

The one final bit of news is that we have had to raise our prices, which will go into effect September 1st. We have tried to hold down the cost to you, and, in fact, this is our first increase in two years. What is most important, however, is that we maintain the very high quality of our handmade paints and still be able to stay in

R&F Has A New Home

Our former shop in West Park was a charming stone and wood building in a lovely bucolic setting. It was also a mere 650 sq. ft., and we were bursting at the seams. So we packed up our molds and our mills and our crayons and moved 10 miles north to Kingston.

Kingston is a historic Hudson River port that has seen better days. But it has a lot of empty factory spaces, and this has given rise to a burgeoning community of artists. The situation enabled us to afford a larger space and participate in the local art scene.

In laying out a new shop, we had the opportunity to house more than just a paint making operation. Since we are one of the only producers of encaustic paint, we serve as a

source of information about encaustic technique and materials for artists around the world. This has led to traveling to different areas of the country to give demonstrations, lectures, and workshops. Why not, we thought, combine our teaching and promoting of encaustic right here along side our manufacture of it? Why not make a real encaustic center?

So part of our space has been set up as a permanent room for giving demonstrations and workshops. The additional wall space allowed us to set up The Gallery at R&F, a gallery

Our New Address

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A New Home... continued

specializing in works in encaustic paint and oil sticks. The inaugural exhibit opened on December 16. It was an eclectic show featuring incredibly diverse work by artists just from the Kingston/Woodstock area.

May 4th was the opening of our first one person exhibit. Entitled "Physiognomies," Jim Haskin's paintings in encaustic worked over photographic portraits are a combination of modern day technology with an ancient painting medium. His exhibit extended out into the lobby of our building where he hung two 12 ft. high totems. Jim is the manager of R&F Encaustics, so many of you may already know him from phone conversations.

Our June show, entitled "Trackings...," exhibited paintings by Tracy Spadafora, a sculptor and painter from Rosendale, NY. Her work collages

scraps of text and other found materials which she overlays with encaustic and oil stick.

This July we participated with other Kingston galleries in a city-wide exhibit of children's work sponsored by the Art Society of Kingston. The exhibit at R&F was -- not surprisingly -- works done in encaustic by young artists aged 8 - 17. The paintings were done during a weekend workshop in May. Of course, in the case of toxic colors, melted crayons were used in place of the real thing. But in every other way this was a serious, as well as delightful, show.

In mid-August we will exhibit encaustic paintings on paper by Pamela Blum, Associate Professor of Art at Illinois State University in Normal, IL. Her show, entitled "Fragilities," will consist of groups of free-form papers that are layered and project from the wall.

New Colors Are Finally Here

In our March 1995 newsletter we proposed 18 possibilities for new colors and asked for your input. The decisions we made flowed in part from our telephone conversations with many of you over the last year. We have settled on 10 colors for right now, although the general consensus was to want to make them all. No doubt, we will add most of the others at a later time. So thank you for your help. We hope you feel rewarded by the outcome.

As those of you who have worked with our Pigment Sticks know, the characteristic that distinguishes them from the mass market oil sticks is their painterliness. These are not just another mass produced crayon. As sticks of high quality oil paint, they are made to respond to the painter's touch with all the nuance and suggestiveness of brush work. One of the considerations, therefore, in developing new colors is not simply *what color* we should add but *how* that color should lay onto canvas and paper. This is a dimension of paint making often overlooked in the manufacture of oil sticks.

The artist's palette is not just a bunch of opaque hues like house paint. Pigments, in their individuality, have varying mass tones (opacity) and undertones (transparency). The interplay of these tones when laying on a stroke of paint is just as important as the color itself. When we formulate a new color we ask ourselves, "should it have brightness and density in its top tone or is it a delicate hue revealing subtle variations in its undertone?" Too much top tone on a color that has natural undertones makes the color cakey, too little when it should be more opaque makes the color weak. Since we work directly from the pigment with strict purity and without additives, finding the right balance is everything.

In expanding our range to 77 colors, we have met one very important goal. That goal is to create, for both oil sticks and encaustic paint, the first truly comprehensive palette, one that is neither frivolous nor gimmicky. Each color must prove itself absolutely necessary before being included. As always we welcome your feedback and rely on it in deciding where to go from here.

The New Colors.... *continued*

1. **Jaune Brillant.** Our Jaune Brillant is a deeper, warmer, slightly orange version of our Naples Yellow. The French name is traditional. In the past it has been applied either to a reddish form of Naples Yellow or to mixes of Cadmium or Chrome Yellow with Flake White. We have bridged the two traditions, using Cadmiums with iron oxides and Zinc-Titanium White.

Encaustic and Pigment Sticks .

2. **Dianthus Pink.** Here it is -- the gaudy, in-your-face, ultra-sweet, violent, vivid, outrageous, hothouse pink. We've had calls from many of you for this color. It's more intense than deKooning's pinks, but adding a little white easily takes it down.

Encaustic and Pigment Sticks.

3. **Quinacridone Magenta.** Deeper than Alizarin, it is the color of a rich dark velvet. It has a very thin top tone, opening immediately to the magnificent purple red undertone behind it. Although derived from a dyestuff, Quinacridones, like the Phthalos are powerful, very permanent pigments.

Encaustic & Pigment Sticks.

4. **Veronese Green.** The original 19th century color was favored by the French Impressionists (the English called it Emerald Green). It was a very bright green, but because it was arsenic-based, and thus very toxic, it went out of use. This is a mix of other colors in our line and is brighter and bluer than our Cadmium Green.

Encaustic & Pigment Sticks.

5. **Payne's Grey.** Payne's Grey is normally a blackish semi-transparent neutral color. Because of the delicacy of its dark tones, it is an alternative to black pigments and can be used to influence lighter colors without the sullyng effects of carbon and iron blacks. Our Payne's Grey is a mix of natural earths and Ultramarine Blue. It has a slightly reddish undertone that, viewed from an angle, has the look of charcoal.

Encaustic & Pigment Sticks.

6. **Brown Pink.** This is a transparent brown that makes an excellent glazing color. Its top tone is like a dark resonant Burnt Sienna, while its undertone is slightly pinkish and much cleaner than a Sienna.

Pigment Sticks Only.

FIGURE DRAWING COLORS

The development of our sanguine earths and sepia was the subject of much debate among our staff. What spurred us on was not so much the addition of specific colors as it was the search for sensuous fleshy undertones, colors that were not as dense and one dimensional as Mars colors. They needed to be semi-transparent, producing varied undertones for the subtle modulations of shape. We realized as we debated that the point in making them was to replicate the reddish chalks and sepia inks used by the Italian Renaissance masters. So, what had originally been planned as two terra cotta shades became, over time, our four figure drawing colors. They are hardly limited to that use, however. Ranging from pinkish to reddish to purplish, they also make sumptuous earthy landscape colors.

7. **Sanguine Earth Light.** A pinkish red like the worn facing on aged brick.

Pigment Sticks Only.

8. **Sanguine Earth Medium.** The warm, orange hue of wet red clay.

Pigment Sticks Only.

9. **Sanguine Earth Deep.** A plum-red maroon earth.

Pigment Sticks Only.

10. **Sepia.** Sepia is dramatically darker than the earthy reds. In making it, we imitated the deep purplish brown of squid ink, the traditional source of sepia. However, because squid ink is not lightfast, we used a highly permanent mix of iron oxide, ultramarine, and quinacridone.

Our Current Line

Brilliant Yellow X-Pale
 Naples Yellow
 Cobalt Yellow
 Cadmium Lemon
 Cadmium Yellow Light
 Cadmium Yellow Med
 Cadmium Yellow Deep
 Cadmium Orange
 Cadmium Red Light
 Cadmium Red Med
 Cadmium Red Deep
 Rose Madder
 Alizarin Crimson
 Warm Pink
 Warm Rose
 Cobalt Violet Light
 Cobalt Violet Deep
 Manganese Violet
 Ultramarine Violet
 Ultramarine Blue
 King's Blue
 Azure Blue
 Cerulean Blue
 Manganese Blue
 Cobalt Blue
 Indigo
 Prussian Blue
 Phthalo Blue
 Phthalo Turquoise
 Cobalt Turquoise
 Turquoise Blue
 Phthalo Green
 Cobalt Green Light
 Cadmium Green
 Cadmium Green Pale
 Chromium Oxide
 Viridian
 Green Earth
 Courbet Green
 Mars Yellow Light
 Mars Yellow Deep
 Mars Orange
 Mars Red
 Mars Violet
 Raw Sienna
 Burnt Sienna
 Raw Umber
 Burnt Umber
 Turkey Umber
 Greenish
 Titanium-Zinc White
 Neutral White
 Neutral Grey Pale
 Neutral Grey Light
 Neutral Grey Medium
 Neutral Grey Deep
 Intense Carbon Black
 Ivory Black
 Mars Black
 Lamp Black
 Graphite Grey
 Pearl
 Silver
 German Silver
 Pewter
 Brass
 Gold
 Copper

Encaustic Workshops

In the last fifty years there has been a steadily growing recognition of encaustic paint as an important 20th century medium. Starting with Karl Zerbe's work at the Boston Museum School in the 1940s and Jasper Johns' Flag paintings in the 1950s, there has been an explosion of work, both traditional and experimental.

Yet, for all the interest in encaustic and the significant role it has come to play in contemporary art, there is very little literature about it, and few, if any, courses are offered on it in the schools. This has created an increasing demand for encaustic workshops. In response to this, we have set up a workshop space here at

R&F complete with palettes and supplies. Many of you have already contacted us about when we will be ready. Now we are.

We will run three-day sessions, but longer sessions are also possible. The course will combine practice with with demonstrations of the wide variety of encaustic techniques. We will also show examples of historic and contemporary work being done today.

We are now in the process of scheduling for the year around. Call us and we will send you information regarding dates, accommodations (if you're coming from out of town), and rates.

The Mystery of the Disappearing Pigment Sticks

Several people have told us a story of pieces of their Pigment Sticks disappearing off a table or shelf where they had been left for a period of time. We've heard of fugitive colors, but fugitive sticks? Telltale signs in the form of little beads of color are usually not far off, leading to the discovery of the mysterious cause. The culprits, it turns out, are mice.

We, too, had this problem in our old shop. Artists aren't the only creatures who like the purity of our paint. The local little field mice seem to have a weakness for linseed oil. We'd come in in the morning to find nibbles on some of our unwrapped sticks. Not far away on a shelf we would discover their droppings, which would be the color of whatever Pigment Stick they had been chewing on (they obviously hadn't read the toxic labeling). So beware all you artists in your pastoral studios!

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Handmade Oil

inside...

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