

Rifka Angel
1899 - 1988

An Encaustic Pioneer



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by Richard Frumess
R&F Handmade Paints

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The unmatched beauty, permanence, and versatility of encaustic painting have led to its growing importance in the art of the last 50 years. Many would credit this to the influence of Jasper Johns' breakthrough work in encaustic in 1955, which helped establish the ancient wax-based paint as a contemporary medium. The actual introduction of modern encaustic to the United States came nearly 25



Rifka with Painting, photograph, date unknown

years before Johns' first work in the medium. Karl Zerbe, the restlessly experimental German émigré painter who headed the painting department of the Boston Museum School in the 1930s and 40s, is widely regarded as being the father of encaustic painting in the United States, but the person – now little known – who deserves credit as the first to employ encaustic and use it throughout her career was a Lithuanian-born painter named Rifka Angel. Angel's adoption of encaustic preceded Zerbe's initial experiments by several years.

From factory worker to artist

Rifka Angel (née Angelevich) was born in 1899 in the town of Kalvarija in Lithuania, the second of four children, to a middle class Jewish family.¹ As in many immigrant stories, her father moved to the U.S. and worked to bring the rest of the family over. Traveling alone, Angel arrived in New York at the age of thirteen. Her father got her a job working with him in a sweater factory. In spite of working twelve-hour days, she attended three years of high school where she developed a love of American literature. She later studied dance and made, by her account, comically unsuccessful attempts at nursing and secretarial work. Her first marriage, to a painting student at the Art Students League, introduced her to the world of art. Tiny in stature with a graceful figure, she became a popular model at the League, employing poses she had learned in her dance studies. It was through her modeling that she developed an interest in painting.



Bibliography cont ...

- Stavitsky, Gail *Waxing Poetic: Encaustic Art in America during the Twentieth Century*. The essay appeared in the catalogue *Waxing Poetic: Encaustic Art in America*, The Montclair Art Museum, 1999. Stavitsky was the curator of this exhibit.
- Tennenbaum, Shea *Impression of a Visit to Rifka Angel's Studio in the last days of December, 1952*, New Yorker Wochenblatt, December 25, 1953

Other sources

- Conversation with Blossom Douthat Segaloff, February 13, 2005 and extensive notes made by her on early drafts of this essay. Segaloff is Angel's daughter.
- Conversations with Ita Aber, January-February, 2005. Aber is an artist and art historian, who not only wrote about Angel, but befriended her and collected her work.
- Conversation with Rebecca Segaloff Hyman, January 23 and 31, 2005. Hyman is a granddaughter of Rifka Angel.
- Conversation with Reed Orenstein, January 22, 2005. Orenstein is the son of Beatrice Orenstein who ran the Park Avenue Gallery.
- Conversation with Regina Stewart, New York Artist Equity Association, January 17, 2005
- Conversations with Lawrence Eisen, 2003-2005. Eisen is the son of Ruth and David Eisen, who collected a large body of Angel's work.
- Letters from Rifka Angel to Ruth and David Eisen

Exhibitions

- 1930 Knoedler Galleries, Chicago
1931 Knoedler Galleries, Chicago
1932 Increase Robinson Galleries, Chicago
1933 Increase Robinson Galleries, Chicago
1934 Breckenridge Gallery, Chicago
1936 Carl Fischer Gallery, New York
1937 Findlay Gallery, New York
1938 Findlay Gallery, New York
1941 The Honolulu Academy of Fine Arts, Honolulu
1942 Findlay Gallery, New York
1943 The William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City [group show]*
1943 The Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Art, Kansas City [group show]*
1944 Roullier Gallery, Chicago
1949 ACA Gallery, New York
1954 Van Diemen Lilienfeld Galleries, New York [retrospective]
1959 Roland de Aenlle Gallery, New York
1963 The Park Avenue Gallery, New York [retrospective]

* This list appeared on the invitation to the 1963 Park Avenue Gallery show. The two Kansas City shows listed for 1943 were likely only one show since the Nelson and the Atkins were, from inception, one institution. Furthermore, Angel's memoir mentions only one show and gives the year as 1944, which is the only date in the records of the Nelson-Atkins Museum.

Collections

- The Art Institute of Chicago
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City
Smithsonian American Art Museum
New York Artists Equity Assoc. artists' bank. Angel had been a long time member of NYAEA. A significant collection of her work was donated to NYAEA by Ita and Joshua Aber. It is in turn being donated to college museums around the country.

Front Cover: *Greenwich Village*, encaustic on panel, 24" x 24", 1954

Opposite Page: *Rifka as a Teenager*, photograph, date unknown

Angel began her painting career in her early 20s. Untutored, "except for one term with [political cartoonist and painter] Boardman Robinson at the end of which time Mr. Robinson categorically pronounced me unteachable, I never once sought instruction."² But, according to Angel, her first watercolors "so impressed ... [Emil] Ganso, Ernest Fiene, Chaim Gros [sic] and Raphael Soyer [that they] all exchanged work with me." Praise and encouragement also came from John Sloan who pointed her to galleries where she began exhibiting with such later luminaries as Ben Shahn and Louis Ribak.³

In 1927, at the invitation of her sister, Angel went to Moscow where she was accepted into the Moscow Art Academy. Here too she persisted in her willfulness: "the instructor liked my work tremendously but refused to instruct me. I worked in my own free, uninhibited way..." After nine months in Moscow, she went to Paris, spending time with Isaac and Moses Soyer. The sketches she did there on tours around Paris



Hawaiian Women, encaustic on panel, 12" x 21", date unknown

with the German artist Carl Rabus formed the basis of her first one-woman show at Knoedler Gallery in Chicago in 1930.

Soon after her return to New York, Angel moved to Chicago where she married Milton Douthat, another former student at the Art Students League. They had a daughter, Blossom. With Douthat's urging, she approached C.J. Bulliet, editor of the weekly art magazine for the Chicago Evening Post. Bulliet's response was greatly encouraging. In his review of her show at Knoedler, he called her,

"a thoroughgoing modernist with a decided 'awareness' of the inner machinery of the new art movements. She is primitive and wise, sophisticated and naive..." [1930]



Milton Douthat, photograph, date unknown

Encaustic pioneer

In 1932 Angel exhibited her first encaustic paintings at the Increase Robinson Gallery.⁴ This was followed soon after by further encaustic exhibits in Chicago and New York. Douhat was fascinated with the ancient encaustics and their exquisite surface effects. This led him to research their history and materials, and with the aid of a paint chemist, he developed formulations based on different combinations of waxes. While Angel and Douhat were aware of the contemporary encaustic work done by Diego Rivera and the Spanish painter, Pedro Pruna, they realized that they were the first artists to seriously undertake this revival in the U.S.



Harvest Dance, encaustic on panel, 32'' x 38'', ca. 1940's

There had been many attempts over the last few centuries to revive encaustic from its slumber of nearly fifteen hundred years.⁵ In the 18th and 19th Centuries, European and American painters attempted, with limited success, to “rediscover the ancient secrets.” The memory of those experiments and the availability of portable heating tools, led to a revival of encaustic on a sustained level in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Through the 1920s, in Europe, and later in Mexico, James Ensor, Robert Delaunay, Pablo Picasso, Antoine Pevsner, and David Alfaro Siqueros were among the more prominent artists to try their hand at this rediscovered medium. Rivera went further than any of them executing a mural and a number of prominent easel paintings in encaustic.

resistant medium for murals. The manuals from that period and the early 20th Century rehash interpretations of ancient methods but give only slight indication of the use of modern equipment and materials. They furthermore differentiate very little between cold wax preparations, wax varnishes, and true encaustic technique. Even Max Doerner's influential *The Materials of the Artist and their Use in Painting* (English edition, 1934), with its numerous references to wax and wax recipes provides only the briefest description of the materials of encaustic and no guidance to the practice. There is still today a paucity of literature on the subject. The Pratt and Fizell and Mattera books remain the only ones in modern times dedicated totally to discussing examples and methods of encaustic painting. Moreover, very few art departments offer encaustic in their curricula.

¹² *Expression of Life: The Life and Work of Karl Zerbe*, video produced by the LeMoyné Art Foundation, Tallahassee, FL, 1988.

¹³ Aber, Ita, *Rifka Angel*. cit. All quotes of Ita Aber are from her article.

¹⁴ Angel painted on raw wood. A coat of wax well fused into the wood before painting would allow for the first layer of paint to adhere without having to fuse it so hot that it would distort the image being painted. An examination of areas of her paintings where the paint has chipped off from the support shows bare wood with no wax priming. But even where the paint has chipped off from a lower layer of paint, the break is clean, which indicates an incomplete fusing of one layer to another. As stated above, the vegetable waxes are harder and have a higher melting temperature than the more commonly used beeswax, making the application with the thin metal of a heated palette knife all the more difficult because it makes the paint lay on more thickly than when it is brushed on. This leads to the conclusion that the paint was probably fused with the iron at a lower temperature than was necessary in order to preserve the definition of the image. Encaustic paint is brittle and, when not properly fused, is vulnerable to jarring, cold temperatures, and warping of the wood panel. However, a majority of the paintings viewed do not show appreciable damage, despite the fact that many were kept in cold storage and the fact that the paintings were done on a variety of wood planks and hardboards, a number of which are considerably warped. Damage was possibly minimized by the multiple fusions discussed previously.

¹⁵ Aber, op. cit.

¹⁶ Tennenbaum, Shea, *Impression of a Visit to Rifka Angel's Studio*

¹⁷ Segaloff underscores Aber's point: “[Angel] always had her suspicions, but it wasn't until she underwent the colostomy in 1957 that she began to show signs of outright paranoia.”

¹⁸ Conversation with Ita Aber, January 3, 2005. Also, letters from Angel's correspondence with Ruth and David Eisen in the 1960s and 70s. In a letter dated September 30, 1966, Angel says she demanded “stiff conditions” of Galerie Balzac and didn't expect to hear back from them. She goes on to ask the Eisens if they and other collectors would be interested in sending to the gallery, at their own expense, paintings of hers from their collections so they could say the works had been shown in Paris.

¹⁹ Conversation with Ita Aber, January 3, 2005 and with Lawrence Eisen, March 24, 2004

²⁰ Aber, op. cit. In her essay, Aber says that when Angel had an ileostomy in 1962, she and several other collectors [Beatrice Orenstein of the Park Avenue Gallery, and Sophia Hammer] formed *Galleries d'Ange* through which they “purchased the bulk of [Angel's] work...so that she could paint unhampered by financial concerns.”

In conversations with Aber, she said that their support was often met with a mix of suspicion, irritation and gratitude. These attitudes are born out in Angel's letters to the Eisens.

²¹ See Gail Stavitsky's essay and Joanne Mattera's *The Art of Encaustic Painting* for a more complete picture of the effect of encaustic on contemporary art.

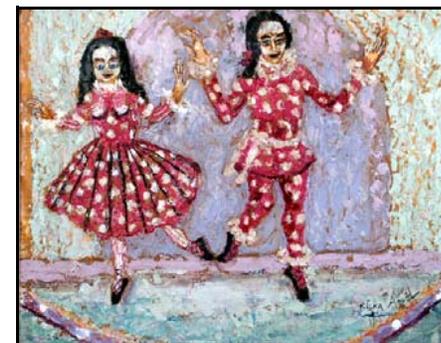
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Notes

- ¹ Much of this essay is based on Angel's unpublished memoir, written over a period of years. All quotes and any information about her life and work, unless otherwise attributed, are from this memoir. Additional information comes from notes provided by Angel's daughter, Blossom Douthat Segaloff.
- ² In her 1986 article, on Angel, Ita Aber states that Robinson "told her to return to her studio, saying she would lose her spontaneity and originality if she followed their curriculum."
- ³ Sloan (according to Aber) also "advised against art school." In Angel's memoir, the galleries that Sloan introduced her to were the Weyhe Gallery, the Opportunity Gallery, and the Jewish Art Center (where she exhibited with Shahn and Ribek in 1926). Segaloff, mentions that Alexander Calder was also one of Angel's friends during her days at the Art Students League.
- ⁴ Pratt and Fizell, *Encaustic: Materials and Methods*. Pratt and Fizell give this date as 1933, but Angel's memoir puts it at 1932.
- ⁵ Encaustic, whose history goes back to Greek painting of the 5th Century BC, went into a decline around the 3rd or 4th Century AD, in part because the need to heat the wax was cumbersome. The practice was almost totally eclipsed until recent times by the use of other mediums, such as tempera and later oil.
- ⁶ In stating that Angel was the "first" encaustic painter in the U.S., it is important to note that there are two trains of thought among historians regarding the definition of encaustic. One defines encaustic by its material – wax. The other defines it by the technique of working the wax with heat. The claim for Angel in this essay is based on the definition of encaustic as a technique. While *oil* or *acrylic* paints, for example, refer to the material that binds the pigment, *encaustic* (which derives from the Greek, "to burn in") refers to the technique of fusing the wax paint after it has been applied. This is not a mere semantic nuance. The application of heat is what gives to encaustic the optical and preservative qualities for which it is renowned.
- The evolution of modern encaustic, however, does not entirely follow such a neat classification. Danielle Rice in her essay, *Encaustic Painting Revivals*, goes by the definition of encaustic as a material. In this regard, she highlights two 19th Century American encaustic painters, the portraitist Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860) and the muralist John La Farge (1836-1910). Rice states that her inclusion of these painters is based on the broader definition of encaustic – that of any paint employing wax, regardless of its use of heat, "if it is claimed by its proponents to be related to encaustic." Peale seems to have worked in encaustic for only a short period of time, and his medium may have been a wax-modified oil paint. La Farge used encaustic as "a medium he preferred for decorative works throughout his career." Frederic Crowninshield, in his 1887 manual, *Mural Painting* (pp. 37-47), discusses at length the use of encaustic in murals around that time. His recipes are solvent-based waxes applied with or without heat. Furthermore, he mentions the inclination of muralists using wax to *not* fuse the paint in order to preserve the dead matte look of fresco.
- The generally accepted use of the term *encaustic* in the 20th Century refers to the technique of fusing the wax – thus the distinction of Rifka Angel. But the history that led up to its current revival rightly includes those earlier encaustic painters whose interpretation of encaustic, referring mainly to the employment of wax itself, helped to keep the concept of encaustic alive.
- ⁷ Pratt and Fizell, *op. cit.* The authors outline the methods and materials of these and other encaustic painters in their book.
- ⁸ Pratt and Fizell state that, "Miss Angel works with alternate formulae, depending on available materials, as follows:
- 3/4 Montan wax derivative
 - 1/4 Carnauba wax
 - Small piece of paraffin
 - or
 - 2/3 Synthetic wax
 - 1/3 Candelilla wax
 - Small piece of paraffin"
- Segaloff says she only ever saw her mother use the first formula.
- ⁹ Pratt and Fizell state that her paintings were fused with an iron *only after* the painting was complete. But Segaloff's account of multiple fusings is from her own observation of the process, and close inspection of the painting bears her out. This is an important point when considering problems with the chipping off of pieces of the paint film, discussed below.
- ¹⁰ Mentioned by Segaloff in her notes.
- ¹¹ Interest in encaustic in the late 19th Century was mostly preoccupied with its use as a moisture-

It is in the United States and Canada, however, where encaustic painting has taken the longest-lasting and most widespread hold. This resurgence is due in large part to the efforts of American painters of the 1930s and 40s. Similar to Douthat, Zerbe, whose first encaustics date from 1939, turned his attention to encaustic after reading references to the Fayum funeral portraits of ancient



Dance of Mannequins, encaustic on panel,
16" x 20", 1971

Egypt. Zerbe's importance to encaustic lies in his promotion of it through his teaching and painting, greatly influencing a number of next-generation artists and teachers, such as David Aronson and Reed Kay.⁶

Angel and Douthat, on the other hand, refused for many years to reveal their encaustic method. "...we felt about divulging our secret of encaustic painting as Degas felt about his secret of painting pastels. Degas went to the grave with his secret..." They did not take their secret quite as far. Angel did a demonstration of her encaustic technique at the Honolulu Academy of Fine Arts in 1941 and Douthat gave a radio talk on the subject on the Honolulu radio.

It is interesting to compare the materials and methods of Angel/Douthat with that of Karl Zerbe.⁷ Even to those familiar with encaustic, the variety of waxes is not always well known. The difference in those waxes, however, can confront the painter with considerable technical challenges. Angel, in her memoir, states that "we followed quite closely the ancients, except for superior waxes we were able to obtain." The formulas are based on exceptionally hard, high melting-temperature vegetable waxes, montan, carnauba, and candelilla waxes, which cool quickly. These were used along with paraffin and a synthetic wax.⁸

Zerbe's formulas employed beeswax, the traditional wax for encaustic, which he combined either with linseed oil or with damar resin and Venice turpentine. He then brushed his paint on and fused it *indirectly* with heat lamps and blowtorches, resulting in a uniform refined surface. Angel applied her paint laboriously with a heated palette knife and fused the painting with an iron pressed *directly* onto the paint. According to her daughter Blossom Segaloff, the iron she used was an old pre-electric solid-metal iron that had to be heated – no doubt, with little precision – on the stove. She then laid down wax paper over the painting and fused the painting layer by layer as it progressed.⁹



Slavonic Dance, encaustic on panel, 22" x 18", date unknown

This method created a thick, layered, encrusted surface, more labored but also more jewel-like, than her works in oil or water-color. Often she painted detail work, such as eyes and mouths, in oil over the encaustic, giving it one final fusing after the oil paint dried.

The achievement of all of these early encaustic painters is quite remarkable. No ready-made encaustic paint was commercially available. Angel's method, like many artists, was to stir dry pigment into muffin pans of molten wax.¹⁰ Nor did any

artists' manual of the time devote more than a small section on how to work in encaustic, if it mentioned the topic at all.¹¹ Encaustic technique is tricky. The process of heating and cooling sets up a dynamic of chaos and control that is unlike that of any other medium. Trial and error was the only road to proficiency. Zerbe himself says it took nearly two years before he had mastered the technique and could begin exhibiting his encaustics.¹² The resulting opulence of the melted wax colors is the reward for these labors. The contrast in richness between Angel's encaustics and her oils and watercolors is greatly evident.

Recognition

Ita Aber, in her 1986 essay on Angel, gives an interesting description of Angel's approach to her paintings that shows the regard she had for encaustic.

"Her work often followed a sequence: a drawing or watercolor sketch would be turned into a gouache or pastel, followed by an oil painting, with a final version of the image, sometimes years later, in encaustic on wood plank or masonite. In the 1960s she began to eliminate the oil stage, going from the conceptual stage directly to the encaustic."¹³

Yet, along with her showmanship was a person who deeply loved literature as well as art. She cultivated friendships with numerous unknown poets and with more celebrated literati, like Samuel Putnam, John Cowper Powys, and, particularly, Sherwood Anderson, with whom she carried on a correspondence for many years. She was also highly political. According to Segaloff, "she loved Roosevelt, always sided with the strikers in a strike, hated racism." But her art "was much more romantic than socially and politically conscious."

Of her work, Angel herself wrote:

"...I am often asked...in what category would I place my way of painting. Well, I began as a primitive and gradually matured into a kind of romantic realism or as in some of my painting romantic expressionism. Since I remained unteachable, I developed a wisdom of my own about the use of color and color, of course, is my forte. A wisdom which would probably horrify most academicians. I learned not only to use color decoratively within the panel, but to orchestrate with it, to create form with it and because my color is not conventionally limited, I display in my work unusually rich nuances and strangely provocative palette."



Vday Shnkar and Simkie, encaustic on panel, 12" x 14", date unknown

Angel died in May 1988. Her work, out of fashion, is now rarely acknowledged today. Perhaps, like ancient encaustic itself, it is waiting to be rediscovered at some later time. What should not be overlooked, however, is the contribution this self-taught "primitive" made to the renaissance of encaustic painting we have today. In an art world heavily dominated by men and quick-changing styles, it was a feisty,

diminutive woman "primitive" who planted one of the earliest seeds in this country and steadfastly nurtured it throughout her long career. Her contribution helped to put encaustic on the map. The significance of encaustic to the work of Jasper Johns, Lynda Benglis, Nancy Graves, Robert Morris, Mia Westerlund Roosen, Joan Nelson, Tony Scherman, and a host of artists now changing the face of the art world, shows the debt, long overdue, that is owed to one of the medium's pioneers, Rikfa Angel.²¹

A visitor in 1952 described the three tiny rooms of Angel's apartment as crammed with paintings – on all the walls, and in the corners “veritable mountains of paintings.”¹⁶ Yet, for all her productivity, Angel's last years were difficult ones. According to Aber:

“By the early 1950s Angel's ulcerative colitis began to take its toll and she suffered personality changes from her medication. In 1957 she had a colostomy, but still continued to work.”¹⁷



Self Portrait at the age of 75 Years, encaustic on panel, 7” x 6”, 1975

Also, around this time, her style began to change. The older work was richer, more evocative and harmonious. In work from the 1960s and 70s, her colors were brighter, her drawing more quirky, and her application of encaustic thicker. Aber attributes these changes to diminishing eyesight. Segaloff, feels her mother began to deteriorate mentally and that her art devolved into decorativeness.

Angel became reclusive. Bouts of paranoia and depression made her increasingly erratic and

suspicious of dealers and friends whom she felt were out to steal or damage her work. In 1966, Angel refused an invitation from Galerie Balzac in Paris to have a solo show there, despite their offer to pay all expenses for travel and accommodations plus \$5,000 in guaranteed sales.¹⁸ An exhibit with Knoedler in New York was cancelled when she withdrew at the last minute.¹⁹ Several times she sold the contents of her studio to raise cash for medical expenses.²⁰ Still, those who knew Angel in her later years describe her as tiny, fairy-like, eccentric, ebullient, optimistic, and charming, if also extremely problematical.

Her description of herself in her Chicago days reflects a combination of self-conscious eccentricity and charm.

“I dressed unconventionally, retaining a liking for the ballet tunics of my dancing days. I had dressmakers sew for me dirndl-style skirts and blouses with round, puffed sleeves, long before they were ever sported in stores... Usually, in spring, summer and early autumn, I wore a colorfully embroidered shawl on my shoulders instead of a coat. I had quite a collection of them in those days. My hair was adorned with jewelry in the manner of the women of the Renaissance. My toilette was a constant wonderment to the people of Chicago... The innocents were sure I was a Gypsy...”

Aber also discusses defects in her technique.

“...Angel rarely prepared her panels properly and her encaustic paintings often chip. (She has learned to restore the work with the aid of a hot palette [sic] knife.)”¹⁴



Art Appreciation, oil on canvas, 26” x 32”, 1933

Angel achieved a growing reputation during her five years in Chicago. In that time she had four one-person shows plus participation in exhibits at the Chicago Art Institute and the Whitney Museum. In 1934, one of Angel's paintings was selected to represent Chicago in the Museum of Modern Art's *Painting and Sculpture from 16 American Cities* exhibit. Inclusion in the show brought Angel a measure of national recognition. Her work in that show, *Art Appreciation* (1933), as described by Aber,

“...depicts Daniel Catton Rich giving a gallery talk to a group of disinterested matrons in the Picasso-Matisse room at the 1933 *A Century of Progress Exhibition*. In the background are Picasso's stark *Woman with a Fan* (1905) and a boldly patterned Matisse woman in an interior. The rigid formality of the women on the wall contrasts with the amorphous forms of the women in the audience, who, as a group, form a diagonal contrast to the floor striping in the Matisse.”

Quite sophisticated for someone so often catalogued as a “primitive.”

By 1935, however, with the depression in full swing, Douthat lost his job, and sales of Angel's paintings dried up. The family moved back to New York. There, Angel showed at Carl Fischer, Findlay, and Contemporary Arts Galleries and was a regular at the WPA Projects Gallery. She also had her champions among the critics. Emily Genauer, the Pulitzer Prize-winning critic for the New York World Telegram compared her work to Matisse and Chagall:



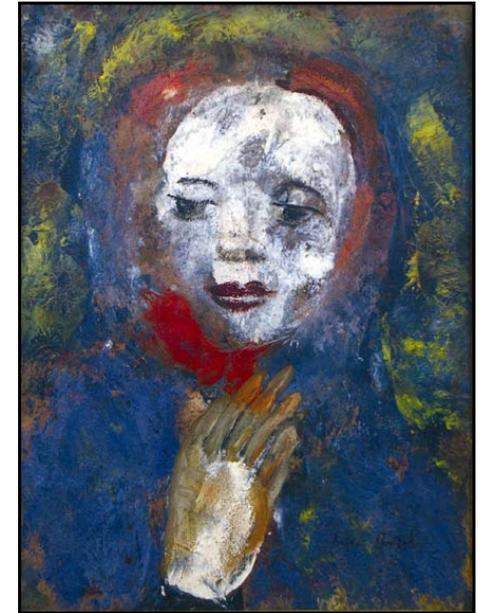
Scarf Dance, encaustic on panel, 18" x 26", 1947

"...Angel's 'Young Mother' which is invested with the opulence of texture, pattern and color of a Matisse, but lacks its vibrating vitality, is not nearly as decorative, but possesses greater substance and depth..." [1937]

"A new one-man show [of watercolors and encaustics at Findlay Gallery] by an American artist bears an interesting relationship to Chagall's work...like Chagall's [Angel's work] has something in it of Oriental fantasy, of intricate, imaginative pattern and of a combination of sophistication and naiveté." [1938]

The reference to Chagall affirms the dream-like whimsy characteristic of some of her work. Floating houses and people, flying horses, dancing rabbis invite such a comparison. Angel told Aber that she was not familiar with Chagall's work before then,¹⁵ According to her memoir, however, she says she knew of Chagall when she was in Paris and had arranged to meet him through the Soviet writer, Ilya Ehrenburg, but that Chagall was out of town at the time.

In 1940, Douthat, who by that time had become a naval draughtsman, got a job at the Honolulu Navy Yard, and the family transferred to Hawaii. The paintings that Angel and Douthat did in Hawaii were first exhibited at the Honolulu Academy of Fine Art. During that time, Angel had a recurrence of ulcerative colitis that she had contracted ten years earlier. The long illness forced her to return to the States to get adequate medical attention. After treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, she moved with her daughter to Kansas City to stay with Douthat's family and participated in an exhibit, in 1944, at The William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art-Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Arts.



Sonya or Remembering Dostoyevsky's Literature, encaustic on panel, 13" x 10", date unknown

Her paintings during the war years, as described by Aber in her essay,

"took on a very different tone; they reflected the anguish of a Jewish woman concerned with the fate of her family in Europe. Titles included *Hunger*, *Children Burning in a Fiery Furnace*, and *Tribute to the Jewish Victims of Hitler's Germany*...But there were also paintings filled with charm and whimsy, like the 1944 encaustic *U.S.O. Dance in Kansas City*."

Last years

By 1946 her relationship with Douthat had ended, and she returned to New York, moving to a third-floor walk-up apartment on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village. Three years later she had a show at ACA Gallery, with the help of Philip Evergood. She had three major exhibits after that, a 30-year retrospective in 1954 at Van Diemen Lilienfeld Galleries and a solo show at Roland de Aenlle Gallery in 1959. The third, a 40-year retrospective in 1963 at Beatrice Orenstein's Park Avenue Gallery, was her final exhibit.