

Structures for Encaustic Supports, Grounds, Presentation and Protection

Rule #1: "Encaustic works best applied to *RIGID* and *ABSORBENT* materials"

Rule #2: "Be creative; try anything, keeping Rule #1 in mind"

SUPPORTS

Physical structures for direct application of encaustic, or to provide structural support for another material or ground

Wood

Solid wood panel, *untempered* hardboard or masonite, plywood or luan, hollow core doors

Cradled or braced "boxes", floating braced panels, unbraced panels

Sculptural

Canvas

Not "just" stretched: stretched and waxed to wood panel

Cement/ cement panels

Cast cement (incl. colored, white), cement "backer board" (tile supports)

Sculptural

Ceramics

Tiles, sculptures, terra cotta, unglazed ceramic structures

Paper

Cast paper, paper mache'

Stone

Variable absorbency

Other (Rule #2 supports)

Tests: prying, freezing, dropping

Thin layers of wax

Non-absorbent: Metal, Plexiglas, glass, plastic, acrylic

Non-rigid: free hanging paper, fabric, stretched canvas

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GROUNDS

Materials applied to a support to create a surface for the application of encaustic

White Grounds

Gesso

Traditional:

Hide glue + chalk + white pigment (note: NOT acrylic gesso, see Rule #2)

Usually applied to wood panel

See R&F handout for instructions

Advantages: nice, smooth, evenly absorbent, very white surface

Disadvantages: tedious, time consuming process

Fredrix Gesso Ground Dry Mix

Crushed marble+ titanium white+animal glue

Easier to use: mix with water, wait 2 hours or over night, heat in water bath

Evans White ground ("Holy Grail")

R&F Encaustic Gesso

Easiest to use, right from the container.

Paper

Museum rag matt board

Watercolor paper, heavy

Printmaking paper

Glue onto support with PVA or acrylic medium

Undercoating with gesso (acrylic ok here!)

Plaster - can be textured or smooth

Drywall "mud"/ joint compound

Casting plaster: Vatican, winterstone, etc.

White cement

Binders: plasterweld, wire mesh

Encaustic

White pigmented encaustic as base layer

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Non-white Grounds

Cement

Grey or colored

Paper

Archival colored paper, matt board

Any of the above “white grounds” with added pigment

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Presentation and Protection

Unframed

Easier with smaller works

May wax or paint sides of support, but take care with edges and corners

Hanging paper edges

Framed

Especially important with larger work

Tight frame

Floating frame, wood or metal

