

# Encaustic on Washi

*Encaustic, heated beeswax mixed with pigment, was traditionally applied to wooden panels, but can very successfully be used on paper, and washi is especially good as it absorbs the pigment without flaking. The translucent nature of wax dovetails beautifully with translucent washi. Wax can also be used as a resist as in the textile technique of batik. What follow here are some suggestions of ways of using encaustic with washi:*

## TIPS & THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Encaustic can be applied directly to paper though we suggest working on a heated surface as it can be difficult to control the heavy impasto
- wax makes washi even more translucent creating interesting possibilities for layering: try laying a sheet with wax over a sheet with other drawn or painted marks
- other materials can be collaged or embedded into the wax layer
- use encaustic for monoprint: paint on heavy paper or board & transfer to washi by ironing (use tacking iron for small areas): this takes practice to keep colours from blending over-much
- keep your iron clean by covering the hot foot with a fresh piece of aluminum foil
- use wax as a resist in combination with wet media as in batik
- scratch into wax and rub paints or printing inks into scratches as a form of sgraffito (excess colour wipes off surface of wax, colour stays in the scratches)
- wax can make paper waterproof with interesting possibilities for working with paper sculpturally.
- adhesives won't work on paper with wax: consider joining pieces by stitching
- think ahead as to how work will be mounted/framed: if piece is to be floated then consider incorporating hinges into back of piece before applying wax
- Hot Cakes made by Enkaustikos are a convenient and easy way to use encaustic paints on washi

## PAPER SUGGESTIONS

- need a heavier paper to hold more impasto? Try *Usu Kuchi Extra Heavy*.
- *Kozo Card & Etchu Shikishi* are excellent and beautiful 100% kozo small-format cards with deckle edges.
- *Mura Koban* and *Suzuki Squares* are smaller format mid-weight papers, also deckle-edged
- *Gampi Smooth* retains a crispness if wax layer remains thin

## ARTISTS USING WAX WITH WASHI

- Milton Jewell, [www.japanesepaperplace.com](http://www.japanesepaperplace.com) (see *Inspiration Gallery archive*)
- Mary Jane Varro, [www.japanesepaperplace.com](http://www.japanesepaperplace.com) (see *Inspiration Gallery archive*)

## REFERENCES

- Hotcakes encaustic paints, [www.encausticpaints.com](http://www.encausticpaints.com)

