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### **Bio**

Celia Gray is a studio artist working primarily in encaustic painting. She received a BA from the University of North Carolina at Asheville in 2008 and in 2003, she completed the two year Core Student program at Penland School of Crafts, where she studied primarily blacksmithing and encaustic painting. She has also been a studio assistant and student for many additional intensives at Penland School of Crafts. Celia is now a local studio artist and showing regionally.

### **Artist Statement**

This recent series of landscape inspired, abstract, encaustic paintings investigate the balance between repair and decay, permanence and impermanence, and private and public. These ideas are realized in the physical process of encaustic painting and are investigated conceptually as they relate to experience; routines and habits that offer control to a person's daily life (collecting, hoarding, tallying, recording etc.)

Although these compositions are created without direct references, they are largely guided by a recent experience in Italy and research into its architecture, culture and landscape. From a balance of intellectual ideas, analytical critique, ambiguity and intuitive methods of drawing and mark making, I hope to engage the viewer in generating personal connections and associations specific to themselves and their own experiences.

### **About Encaustic Painting**

Encaustic painting is an ancient technique of painting with pigmented beeswax. The wax is kept hot in liquid form at around 200 degrees on electric hot plates while working. The surface is then worked through a series of layers, fusing each layer with a heat source (torch or heat gun). Surface effects and images are created using various methods of scraping, masking, incising, branding, and finally buffing. The final painting has been worked through many transparent and opaque layers. This unusual wax medium allows for an elusive depth and a unique tactile quality.

Though these pieces seem fragile and potentially temperamental, they are completely archival. Joanne Mattera, author of *The Art of Encaustic Painting*, proclaims encaustic paint to be the most archival paint medium that exists. People often worry about the possibility of the wax melting or becoming soft. Because encaustics' melting temperature is 150 degrees, the works can be hung or stored in normal living conditions (ie: not too much above 100 degrees and not below freezing), with no risk of any damage. A commonly asked question is whether it will be affected by direct sunlight through a window. The answer is no, if the climate is within this range.