

# Kristin Baxter, Ed.D.

Artist's Statement

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Playing, making messes, taking risks, and failing may not always be synonymous with making serious, “fine art.” Yet contemporary art post-studio practices often favor process over product. There is value in playful, sensory- and process-based art explorations. For instance, Elliot Eisner argues that “discovering the emotions that inquiry evokes, experiencing the feel of paint, the aroma of linseed oil, the touch of wet clay—these are a part of what is learnable from art and collectively contribute to its meaning.” Likewise, the meanings of my encaustic paintings come from the delight in sensory experiences with materials: smelling the warm wax and resin; watching the alchemy as the wax transforms - almost instantly - from a viscous liquid to a solid on the surface of the board; feeling the smooth surface as the wax is warmed again with a heat gun; and hearing the hum of fans blowing fresh air through the studio. As a professor who mentors future PreK-12 art educators, it is important that in my own studio art practice, I model what I suggest to my own students. That is, there is personal and pedagogical value in experimenting with art materials and processes with a sense of curiosity and playfulness. It is from this playful and curious place that, I believe, individuals can discover their personal values and put those values into practice for the betterment of our world.