

Karen Buttwinick

Artist Statement

I like to get my hands dirty with charcoal and paint. As a child with a rich imagination, creating art was one of the ways I "played". As an adult I also "play" while making art, but it has another role for me as well. I live with a misunderstood and complicated illness, so being creative now is also about escape, healing, and rejuvenation. I create silkscreens and paint in both acrylic and encaustic, an ancient art form dating back to the Greeks which involves the use of heated beeswax and colored pigments. I draw inspiration from the natural world, having been interested in organic forms since I was a teenager sculpting in clay.

In my paintings, I use pastels, oil sticks, collaged elements and photographs I have taken to create layered meanings and to enrich a viewer's sensory experience. Much of my encaustic work includes rich textural surfaces and luminous colors to create surreal and mysterious atmospheres that instill calm or inquisitiveness. In my photo encaustic pieces, I explore the emotional impact of light, color and form and currently have been exploring the sculptural quality and alluring beauty of succulents. I have always enjoyed the outdoors and appreciate the natural beauty of the San Francisco Bay Area where I live with my husband, son, daughter who is occasionally home from college, and dog, Tucker.