



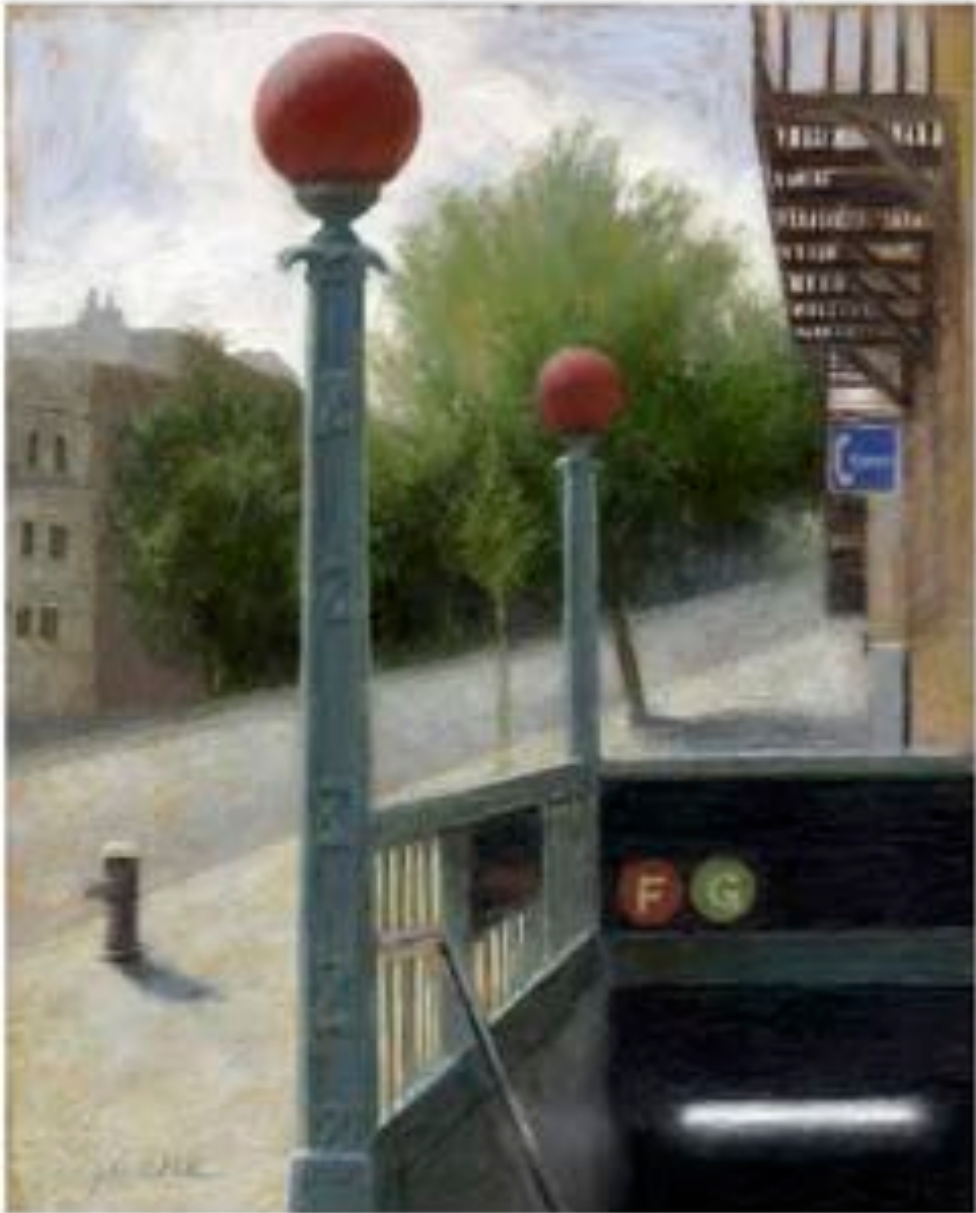
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encaustic arts

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The background of the cover is a painting of a gnarled, leafless tree in a landscape. The tree is the central focus, with its trunk curving to the right and its branches spreading out. The landscape consists of rolling hills and mountains in the distance, with a body of water in the foreground. The sky is a mix of grey and yellow, suggesting a cloudy or overcast day. The overall style is that of a traditional oil painting.

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KEVIN FRANK

The art of painting has fascinated me since childhood. As a kid, I played around with enamel model paint to color in drawings copied from comic books. Soon, experimenting with poster paint, acrylic then oil.

I attempted to render imagery by copying details from various painters' work. Naturally, these experiments yielded lousy results as I was completely uneducated in the craft of painting.

When I was ten years old, my parents took me to see Norman Rockwell's 60 year retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum. I was overwhelmed by Rockwell's ability to render the natural world in paint.

Everything seemed to matter to him. Equal attention was paid to the human form, clothing and objects, as it was to a crushed out cigarette butt on the floor of a diner, which he carefully studied and rendered.

After that day, I knew that I wanted to become a painter. Not just a painter, but an explorer of the craft and history of the painters that informed the works of Rockwell and others. Later, discovering the works of other modern painters opened my eyes to the infinite variety of styles and techniques that could be used to render forms. Further exploration taught me that forms could be painted as abstracted shapes as I studied the works of Franz Kline, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, to name a few. Their work demonstrated how a painter's marks can emote and thrill a viewer with just color and brushwork alone.



Kevin Frank, *Pedestrian*, encaustic, collage, on canvas, 16 x 16 inches, 1997

Immersing myself in the works of Jasper Johns naturally led to experimenting with encaustic paint. Making copies of his work and then painting my own ideas in his style gave me invaluable insight into the handling properties of the medium. Inevitably, this led to experiments using hot beeswax to paint realistic portraits and objects. One attempt was a still life of various objects which included a Fayum mummy portrait. Copying the portrait within the painting gave me an opportunity to study the tools and working process of the original artist. My objective was to



Kevin Frank, *The Lyre*, encaustic, on wood panel, 20 x 24 inches, 2004

determine the size and shape of the brushes that were used and how metal spatulas or "cauteria" were utilized to fuse and blend the paint. After finishing a few more pieces, I had developed a solid working process, and the action of frequently switching between brushes and heated tools became second nature.

Up to this point, my work had been executed over a simple line underdrawing as a guide, but the specter of Norman Rockwell and his method soon fused itself into my practice. As I'd learned from studying his work, as well as some of my favorite Old Masters, the only way to achieve this level of realism is to make use of photographs or projected image. After transferring the lens accurate outlines to the panel, a fully rendered monochrome value study is then made of the subject to be painted.



Kevin Frank, *Subway interior*, encaustic on wood panel, 10 x 12 inches, 2007



Kevin Frank, *Portrait of Four Roses*, underdrawing, 14 x 11 inches, 2023



Kevin Frank, *Portrait of Four Roses*, detail, 2023

For this stage, I use an umber or other earth toned crayon for the shaded areas and white conté crayon for the highlights while using the wood tone of the substrate for the mid-tones. The finished drawing is sprayed lightly with fixative, which is then coated with a layer of clear encaustic medium and fused to a smooth, uniform surface. The panel is now ready to be overpainted with color and, when I invariably paint a bad brushstroke or change my mind about a color, can always be scraped off to reveal the original underdrawing.



Kevin Frank, *Portrait of Four Roses*, encaustic on wood panel, 14 x 11 inches, 2023

An alternate way to retain the visual elements of the underdrawing in the upper color layers is to mix clear encaustic medium into the colors to make transparent glazes.

Another less obvious but crucial element in my picture-making process is the use of geometry. As a student, one of my weaknesses was my inability to compose a competent layout. My concentration was limited to rendering forms while neglecting the picture as a whole. This led to poorly arranged elements which would either be placed dead center or would run off the page. At this time, I had the opportunity to take private drawing lessons from muralist and illustrator Alton Tobey. Through his teaching, I learned to look at my work as a whole and to compose my elements into a unified image. Over time, his invaluable advice took hold as I discovered how to imbed the golden rectangle and other geometric subdivisions into my compositions.



Kevin Frank, *Clark Street*, encaustic on wood panel, 16 x 20 inches, 2001



Kevin Frank, *Theater Entrance*, encaustic on wood panel, 18 x 24 inches, 2008



Kevin Frakk, *Museum Cafe*, encaustic on wood panel, 16 x 20 inches, 2004



Kevin Frank, *Reliquary*, detail, 2022

method or trying out a new color harmony. Ultimately, my work is not about pictorial invention to address social issues, etc., but rather to entertain the eye by recording, through observation and rendering, the play of light on a variety of materials. Maybe its function is to serve as a diversion from social issues - I leave that for the viewer to decide.

For me, combining the techniques of the ancient Greco-Roman painters with those of the old and new masters help to create unique modern images. As with all encaustic work, viewing it in person is the best way to appreciate the immediacy of the medium, brought to life as light travels through the layers of pigmented beeswax. Each new painting is another opportunity for a technical experiment, whether the focus is on a new blending



Kevin Frank, *Reliquary*, encaustic on wood panel, 22 x 30 inches, 2022

BIO



Kevin Frank was born in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 1961. During his high school years he studied drawing and composition with muralist and illustrator Alton Tobey. After graduating from Edgemont High School in New York in 1979, he earned a BFA in drawing and painting from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1983. Since 1984, Frank has worked as a graphic designer for three major television networks, all the while pursuing his painting muse. His work has been shown in solo and group shows New York City in addition to various group shows throughout the U.S. He now lives and works in Kingston, NY.