

# IEA Member Artist Profile

## Emma Ashby

### Autumn 2023 Featured Artist



Artists make art. Now what?

If you are someone who has been intent on establishing yourself as a serious artist, then you probably know that all your good intentions will not guarantee that your art will ever leave your studio. What many of us don't anticipate when we begin our creative journey is that there is a need to dedicate a similar level of energy and creativity to the avocation of selling art. For many of us, this process can feel more challenging than what we create in our studios.

Successful artists *sell* art!

*Above: DANCING FLOWERS II 12X12, Encaustic on panel, Emma Ashby*

It turns out that the not-so-secret sauce of success is usually a blend of commitment and discipline. In other words, we must devote ample time to our practice and as well as dedicate ourselves to exploring our style, establishing a niche, and developing a body of work that we feel proud to promote and sell to others. Establishing a routine and staying on course (wash, rinse, repeat) is how discipline plays its role. The more successful artists among us are proactive and embrace the idea that what they do on a weekly, daily, or even hourly basis will have an impact on their careers. In the case of Emma Ashby, not only did she find and use this recipe for success, she's cookin' with gas!



*THE BOATHOUSE, 18X48, Encaustic and clay on panel, Emma Ashby*

Emma's confidence in her creative skills was honed early on by an extensive education in textiles, fabric, and pattern, plus having an early career in the UK fashion industry. Over the span of her art-making career, Emma has established a routine that provides plenty of studio time as well as numerous opportunities to comb the fields and wetlands of New Hampshire for inspiration. She also establishing her own graceful and recognizable style of searches for various materials that can add more realism to her pieces and has succeeded in her work.



Today, her images of nature are first captured with her lens. "I feel compelled to photograph them so that I might accurately match the mood from being in that spot, in that moment. Most importantly, I try to reproduce the quality of the light, which feels so satisfying when I get it right." Emma's exceptional body of paintings continues to evolve and expand.

Using wax, medium, pigment, clay, fabric and a touch of detritus, Emma's images often capture nature's beauty in all its glorious stages. Early on, her passion was fashioning three dimensional floral portraits painted from macro photographs. Today, she's moved on to more two-dimensional work with translucent, glass-like skies juxtaposed with floral foregrounds loaded with textural interest. These ethereal landscapes are derived from images she's captured in and around coastal New England where she and her family have lived for the last two decades.

*Above: HUES OF SUMMER, 12x12, Encaustic on panel, Emma Ashby*

"I really enjoy living on the coast of New England," Emma says. "I love the wildflowers and the other native plants that thrive near the coastline, marshes and ponds. It feels like the eastern shores of England, where I was raised."



*Above left: COTTAGE GARDEN, 18x48, Encaustic on panel, Emma Ashby*  
*Above right: PATHWAY TO QUIETUDE, 40x40, Encaustic and clay on panel, Emma Ashby*

Impressively, Emma has also invested in developing and nurturing a cadre of professionals who have helped her become a successful working artist who enjoys a multifaceted art business.

Developing relationships locally has been an ongoing process since deciding to become a working artist and educator. Consequently, Emma has established an ongoing relationship with some area galleries who show her work during tourist season. "I work throughout the year to create new pieces so that each year's exhibit feels fresh," Emma reports that she's scheduled for a solo show at the Nahcotta Gallery in Portsmouth, NH in August of next year and will be paired with another artist for a summer show at the Bowersock Gallery in Provincetown, MA. Each exhibition will require more than two dozen new paintings to be created between now and then.

*Above: COLORS OF THE NIGHT AWAKENED, 24x30, Encaustic on panel, Emma Ashby*



Several years ago, just by luck, a local interior designer signed up to take a class with Emma and was so taken with the encaustic process, and most importantly, Emma's talent, that the designer started to recommend her to clients to make commissioned pieces. "The new homes that are being built in this area are often much larger than the typical New England home. Larger homes often means there's a need for larger pieces", Emma shares. Since that time, several interior designers have helped to generate a significant source of income for Emma.

Aside from her gallery exhibits, Emma participates in the Portsmouth Holiday Arts Tour, which is held each November. "It's a really popular event that often generates sales and new business for me and the other participating artists", Emma says. "It's a lot of fun!" Emma's paintings have also been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows around the country and commissioned for both private and public spaces. She is an active member of International Encaustic Artists and was invited to add to the permanent collection at the Museum of Encaustic Art in Santa Fe, NM. "Exhibitions", shares Emma, "plus working with interior designers keeps me pretty busy most of the year".



*Above: AS THE RAIN CLEARS, 18x48, Encaustic and clay on panel, Emma Ashby*

Another facet of her art business is teaching. "My beginning encaustic painting classes are kept small so that I can give each student plenty of personal attention", Emma reports. "And every so often new students become really enamored by the process and want to delve deeper, so I'll offer a master class. Aside from prepping and teaching these classes, I also believe in mentoring. It feels gratifying to see their progress as well as their love of encaustic grow with time and practice." As much as Emma enjoys giving classes, she has to be selective about how her time is spent, so classes will only be scheduled during the first quarter of 2024.

It may be hard for some of us to accept the reality but it is easy to see from Emma's example that building a successful career as an artist relies not just on excellence in our artistic pursuits but also a very practical, committed and disciplined approach to running our business.



*Above left: Emma Ashby in her studio working on The Song of the Sea  
Above right: SONG OF THE SEA, 24x30, Encaustic and clay on panel, Emma Ashby*

About Emma:



Emma Ashby lives in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. You can see her work on Instagram at [@emmaashbyart](https://www.instagram.com/emmaashbyart) or for more information about upcoming shows, her teaching schedule. To contact her directly, you can visit her at <https://emmaashby.com>

*Many thanks to IEA Artist Profile author, **Lin Holzinger**, for this delightful Artist Profile of Emma Ashby!*