



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Helene Farrar of Manchester paints and carves beeswax on wood panels from a variety of inspirations, including straightforward subjects such as owls and fields of poppies as well as more philosophical ideas such as "What We Carry." The art style is called encaustic painting.

Painting with beeswax

Maine woman uses new tools to create an old art form

BY MICKY BEDELL
BDN STAFF

Small curls of beeswax are building up on Helene Farrar's fork as she delicately carves into her artwork, her intent invisible to the untrained eye.

Her hands sweep across the wings of a large owl, brushing aside the bits she leaves behind. Her brow creases as she assesses the impressions she's making in the image in front of her. Soon she'll press oil paint into the shallow carvings, making the invisible come alive.

Then she'll take a blowtorch to the whole thing.

For Farrar, forks and blowtorches are just part of an average workday with encaustic painting — painting with beeswax.

"It's like an X-ray of your work," Farrar says, multi-colored foil containers of beeswax gathered neatly on a hot plate nearby.

The wax is a bit translucent when it dries, the amount depending on the colors, and often shows the details of the layers underneath. Farrar compares painting with the dripping wax to watercolor in that way.

And the blowtorch isn't



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Helene Farrar paints and carves beeswax on wood panels.

an exercise in frustration, as it may be with another medium — the next layer of beeswax will only grip onto the previous if both

the wax on the brush and the wax on the painting are hot. Basically, each layer needs to be melted into the next or it just

slides right off. The blowtorch is standard operating procedure.

"You can control it once you've had a lot of practice. You have to think very quickly and make decisions — because the moment your hand leaves the hot plate with the wax it is starting to cool," she explains.

Encaustic actually means "to burn in" in Greek, and dates to the 5th century B.C., according to Farrar. She said the process originally was used to seal boats and quickly evolved into a way to paint colored details onto a boat's wooden carvings.

When Farrar first witnessed encaustic painting, she was working as an art teacher at a school in Portland, doing her personal work out of a community studio space called Running With Scissors. The artist next to her was using an apricot-scented wax that just "permeated" the studio and drew her right over.

"I wondered, 'What is that?' It was very seductive," Farrar said of the woman's process of slowly dripping wax on the outside of ceramic bowls. Soon after witnessing encaustic, her life became a whirlwind of
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Production of 'The Irish' a stunning collaboration

BY JUDY HARRISON
BDN STAFF

Artistic collaboration can sometimes go awry. Too many cooks, too many ideas, too many visions often turn what could have been a lovely stew into an unrecognizable mess.

But Maine State Music Theatre, based in Brunswick, and Portland Stage have avoided all those pitfalls in presenting a stunning production of Frank McCourt's "The Irish and How They Got That Way." It will be performed through Sept. 11 at Portland Stage, 25A Forest Ave.

THEATER REVIEW

"The Irish," a musical history lesson on the Emerald Isle and its people's experience as immigrants in America, is perfect for Portland's intimate space. Set in Bull Feeney's, a real Irish pub in the city's Old Port, four actors speak more to the audience than to each other to bring Ireland's past to life.

A four-piece band with musical director Edward Reichert on piano, Ernest Saucedo on fiddle, Eric Landau on drums and Jimmy Dority playing the banjo and accordion sits stage as if it were the house band in a real bar. The quartet works well together in accompanying the actors. Saucedo's and Landau's solos are delightful.

McCourt, best known for his memoir "Angela's Ashes," includes traditional Irish tunes and a few Broadway songs to add depth to the history lesson. It was first performed off-Broadway in 1997 and has had success in regional theaters, especially in metropolitan areas with large Irish-American populations.

Much context is added to the story of the Irish people's plight with the projection of old photographs and drawings as well newspaper articles and cartoons projected on a large screen.

The showstopper — every musical must have at least one — is the poignant story in the first act about the Irish potato famine, in which a quarter of the population died or left. It is the most serious segment in an otherwise lighthearted saga.

Actors Curt Dale Clark, Peter Cormican, Charis Leos and Cary Michele Miller are musical theater veterans. All give equally fine performances, but Clark sings "Skibbereen," a traditional folk song, and "Danny Boy," the ultimate Irish ballad, with such soulfulness that some theatergoers will need their handkerchiefs. Cameron Wright and Emily Davis are on stage as bartender and waitress but are also understudies for the actors.

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A boy, a big dog, a lot of lessons in writer's new novel for kids

BY SARAH WALKER CARON
BDN STAFF

Starting middle school isn't easy. Neither is moving to a new town. But getting a sweet puppy? That's fun, and it's part of a new book aimed at readers in fifth grade and up that's a touching tale perfect for reading together.

"Maxi's Secrets (or what you can learn from a dog)," by Maine author Lynn Plourde, is a book about a big, loveable dog that enters the life of a small-for-his-age boy, Timmy, in middle school who's new to town — and to his school. That dog, the aforementioned Maxi, a Great Pyrenees, helps Timmy find friendship, learn more about being a better person and grow up some.

Among the touchstones of this book are the secrets of Maxi shared throughout, including the first: "Secret #1: You can learn a lot from a dog you love."

While Maxi has many secrets, her fate isn't one of them. In fact, in the second line of the book Plourde exposes something big that will
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Schwarzenegger replaces Trump as 'Apprentice' host

BY MARIA CAVASSUTO
REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Getting fired is going to be even more daunting as Arnold Schwarzenegger steps into Donald Trump's shoes as the boss in NBC's "Celebrity Apprentice."

In the first look at the new season, Schwarzenegger semi-reprises his "Terminator" role as the promo pays homage to the iconic science-fiction franchise that made the former

"Governator" a household name. His firing phrase is yet to be determined, however.

"Celebrity Apprentice" will feature Laila Ali — daughter of the late boxing legend Muhammad Ali — Warren Buffett, Tyra Banks, Steve Ballmer, Jessica Alba, Boy George, Brooke Burke-Charvet, Eric Dickerson, Matt Iseman, Carrie Keagan, Carson Kressley, Lisa Leslie, Jon Lovitz, Vince Neil, Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi, Kyle Richards, Chael Sonnen,



KATHY WILLENS | REUTERS

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger speaks during a news conference with billionaire investor Warren Buffett in New York in 2004. Schwarzenegger will host 'Celebrity Apprentice.'

Porsha Williams, Ricky Williams and Carnie Wilson.

Schwarzenegger last reprised his role as The Terminator in 2015's "Terminator: Genysis" starring Emilia

Clarke and Jai Courtney. He has played the T-800 Model 101 in four other Terminator movies — 1984's "The Terminator," 1991's "Terminator 2: Judge-
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