

The logo for R&F Handmade Paints is located in the top left corner. It consists of a black square with the letters 'R&F' in a white, serif font. Below this square is a green rectangle with the words 'HANDMADE PAINTS' in a white, sans-serif font. The background of the entire header is a close-up photograph of several large, rounded paint containers in vibrant colors like red, orange, and yellow.

R&F

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Laura Moriarty and R&F

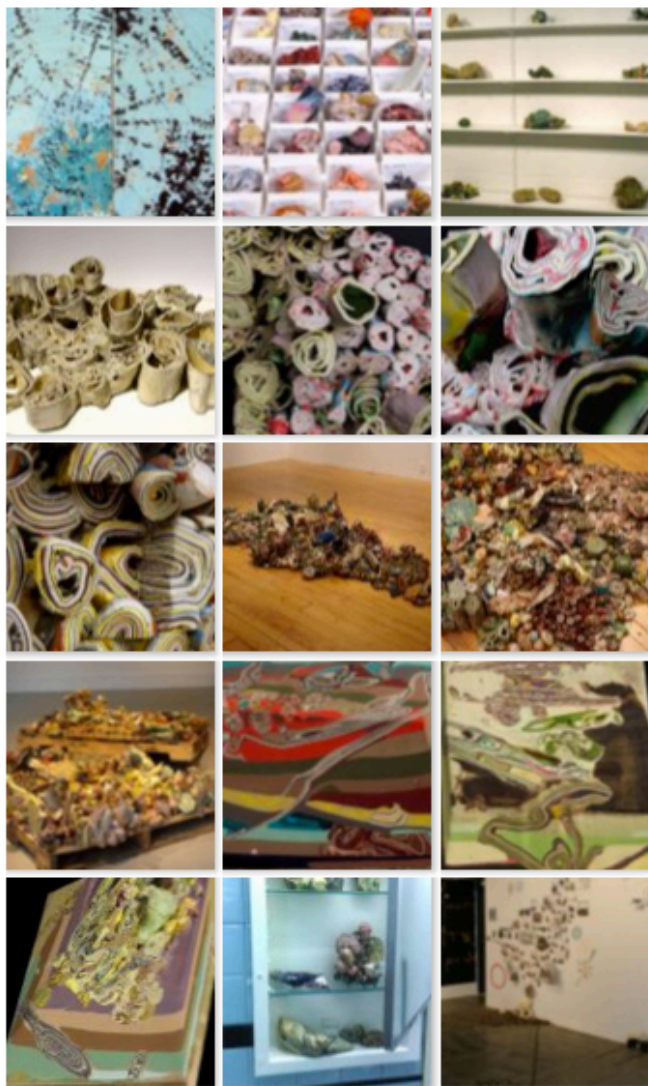


December 30, 2013 - *Written by*

We have always been proud of the fact that the employees at R&F are artists in their own right. No one has represented this more than Laura Moriarty, the director of both the R&F workshop program and The Gallery at R&F, who after many years of dedicated service is leaving us to focus on her own art, beginning with a solo show of her geology-inspired sculptural encaustic paintings at the prestigious New York gallery, OK Harris in January.

Laura leaves with a long string of tremendous accomplishments. As our workshop director, she organized R&F workshops in cities and workshop centers throughout the country and provided materials support for artists teaching independent workshops. She restructured the workshop format in Kingston to constantly highlight new and more sophisticated ways of working with encaustic, Pigment Sticks, and mixed media, while never losing sight of the need to teach the basics to artists who are new to these mediums. Many of the advanced classes were taught by guest artists she sought out, who had developed unique ways of pushing the envelope of technical and visual possibilities.

Laura herself has often pushed that envelope. Drawing from her background as an internationally recognized printmaker and painter, she is fearless in taking risks in her own work, and she has brought that philosophy to the classes that she teaches, urging students to explore, combine materials, break rules if necessary, never fear to fail in the chance that it can lead to a breakthrough or a discovery. Her classes for teachers, which she will continue to teach for us, encourages participants to be innovative and not simply rely on routine exercises as the basis for their class curriculums.



Her tenure at R&F began with running the gallery, which she grew into an international showcase of work in encaustic and oil sticks. Because the purpose of the gallery is to both educate the public about these mediums and to promote the artists who use them, it is important that the gallery feature some of the most significant and adventurous work being done. Historical shows included Rifka Angel, perhaps the first true encaustic artist in the US, and Nancy Graves' encaustic work from the 1970s.

The artists Laura selected for exhibitions were from all over the United States and Canada. Her eyes were on those who did something different or did work that in some way related to the work of other artists. The group shows she put together with great ingenuity, sometimes including 7 or 8 artists from different parts of the country, were often conversations based on different approaches to certain materials, techniques, or processes.

One of her recent and most significant achievements was transforming our Encaustic Biennial into an exhibition in print. The intention of the Biennial, which we began over 15 years ago, has been to keep track of the development of encaustic painting as it continually emerges into the mainstream of contemporary art. But physical exhibits, even with a catalogue are limited in both time and place. Working with juror Joanne Mattera in 2012 and now with Michelle Stuart, the exhibition in print gives greater coverage to the artists and reaches a far wider audience.

There is no doubt, however, that what we have come to prize most about Laura over the years has been the vibrant personality with which she has represented R&F. Her superb work, her command of materials, her willingness to share her knowledge, her forthrightness in discussion about art matters have earned her the love and deep respect of her fellow artists and colleagues.

It is with great pride that we have had her here at R&F and much as we will miss her, we wish her our heartfelt best as she sets off to a shining new stage of her career.