

**LINDA CORDNER: ATMOSPHERIC**

Three Graces Gallery • Portsmouth, NH • [www.threegracesgallery.com](http://www.threegracesgallery.com) • October 1–November 1, 2010

Enveloping and intimate, Linda Cordner’s abstract encaustic landscapes capture the shifts of daily atmosphere, space, and light. Her clear, fine-grained, fluid images in jewel-like tones—the aquamarine and russet of *Deep Blue*, the molten red-gold of *Early Field*—open windows onto the dichotomous ephemeral, eternal quality of physical experience.

Encaustic can be traced back to ancient times, but there’s a considerable gap between the Fayyum portraits of late Roman Egypt (one of encaustic’s aesthetic highpoints), and the numerous mid-twentieth-century, surrealist-tinged works by Jasper Johns. Melted beeswax imbued with pigment is laid in multiple translucent layers, each layer fusing to the next with heat in a delicate maneuver that can put the painting at risk.

Working on wood panels, Cordner applies wide swathes of wax, leaving traces of gesture that she at times accentuates with drawn, incised, or impressed lines and patterns to enhance the effects and ambiguities of light,

space, and scale. Her commercially prepared waxes combine pigment and damar resin for hardening, achieving a durability belying the works’ seeming delicacy.

Although used at various periods to create both realistic and abstract images, encaustic’s non-toxicity and natural associations convey a particular authenticity in depictions of landscape, an association furthered here in Cordner’s work by the depth and translucency of her layering as well as by the accidental traces—drips, blurs, and blooms of moisture and color—left by the works’ making.

In *Clear Day*, penciled lines trail like traces of memory; blots of faded gold and flowing patches of watery green both assert the here-



Linda Cordner, *Teal Dusk*, 2010, encaustic on board, 18 x 12”.

and-now of representation and evoke the weathering of passing time. *Teal Dusk* conveys the rich deep tones of a perfect late summer evening. *Yellow Horizon* conveys the poignant golden hues of autumn, and *Clearing* evokes the cloudy grey-blues and earth tones of early morning’s cool mists. The silken wax surfaces gleam—varying from hardened shine to soft sheen to subtle matte—accentuating the play of light, movement, and time inherent in the subject.

Artists describe the encaustic finish as cooling rather than drying, yet Cordner’s paintings retain warmth in their skin-like surfaces, melding the physical, emotional, and sensual elements within their luminous depths.

—Susan Boulanger