



Pictured Above: House of Rain, one of Faur's pieces done with crayons

Courtesy of christianfaur.com

## Crayons, not just for kids anymore

By BRIAN YOUNG  
Staff Writer

Crayons and art. Free association exercises wouldn't turn up that pairing of words often, but after years of experimenting with encaustic painting (using heated wax), Christian Faur has taken the dimensionality and physical properties of wax a step further by using hand-cast crayons.

Crayon tips act like pixels to form photorealistic images, with about 5,000 per piece.

Depth emerges from what first appears to be a pixelated two-dimensional image, producing a striking effect, particularly as the viewer moves around the work.

His background as Denison's digital media technologist (plus an academic background in math and physics) lends the pieces an impeccable sense of craft and precision, but the processes that he has developed would be less interesting without the conceptual strength on display.

Pattern and variation, expressed through both text and image, figure heavily.

Faur has developed a method for representing text within each frame, with each letter of the alphabet assigned an individual "pixel" of a specific color.

The use of text adds, as Faur himself describes it, a "playful" quality to the work—a number of pieces feature numerous anagrams of each piece's title.

The brief bursts of color that represent text also serve to interrupt and break down the photorealistic quality of the image, already undermined by the pixelation effect the medium creates.

Rather than recreating the formalistic qualities of pointillist work (a superficial parallel), Faur

has created an alternative means of representing the familiar, both pleasant and jarring.

Human faces, placid landscapes, and Hamlet's soliloquy are all fair game—Christian Faur doesn't demand that we share his sense of meaning, but he asks us to share in his exploration of meaning's very meaning.

Christian Faur's *Aggregate States* ran through Feb. 27 at the Sherric Gallerie in Columbus. Samples of Faur's work can be found at his website, [www.christianfaur.com](http://www.christianfaur.com).

The following is a question and answer Brian Young conducted with Chris Faur about his work.

**BY: Let's talk about your current work. Why crayons?**

**CF:** I happened upon the crayons accidentally...

I had been trying to search for a way of working with encaustics, trying to get encaustics to work with my photorealistic style—each stroke in encaustic work hardens instantly on the canvas.

All encaustic artists have a specific style, a very impressionistic style, but that's not my style.

I [started] assembling little pixels of wax—squares in the first piece of work I did—which turned out to look very photorealistic, but also [like a] mosaic.

I went back to the drawing board.

It was Christmastime, I was buying presents—I was buying crayons for my daughter, and I was reminded of childhood memories...

Art is a lot like what a mathematician does, except that mistakes are actually a good thing.

**BY: What first drew you to encaustic (heated wax) painting?**

**CF:** [Former Denison faculty member] Lauren Eisen introduced me to encaustics...it had this skin-like surface.

Everything looked so organic and beautiful, I fell in love with the medium itself.

I wanted to achieve that type of surface.

Your encaustic work, including your latest work, has a dimensionality and physical presence—it has depth, rather than being confined to a flat two-dimensional plane.

How important to you is that property of encaustics?

At first I was using encaustics like a painter would use paint—although I was embedding elements like film strips, the pieces were very flat.

It took a little bit of time to figure it out, but I'm not working with paint anymore, I'm working with a sculptural medium.

All of a sudden, you have that dimensional aspect.

The new work is almost 2.5D. That's the power of encaustics—it's a sculptural medium.

What you can possibly say is dependent upon the medium you say it with.

In art, everyone thinks the medium is tertiary...but if you can control the medium and realize all the beautiful properties the medium has, then you can say more than you thought you could.

To me, the medium is important.

**BY: Despite coming from a math and physics background academically, your work deals extensively with text and linguistic concerns. Is there a specific message in using mathematical**

principles in conjunction with text from canonical works like *Hamlet*?

**CF:** Words are a powerful medium...if I want to layer more meaning in the work, that works with not just words, but metaphors.

They're so subtle and under the table, but they're there.

I've been using text in my work for six to seven years now...when I use the symbolism of text, I get a whole other field of meaning I can get imbue in the work.

I find it to be interesting and fascinating for me; I really enjoy using text in the work.

That richness and the layering process of meaning I try to get across not only aesthetically but also metaphorically.

**BY: On the one hand, a lot of your work seems to draw on a sophisticated understanding and interest in intellectual disciplines, but also seems to draw on the aesthetic principles of popular forms of media like portraiture and television. How do you think of your relationship to popular media and the corresponding impact on your work, if any?**

**CF:** The most powerful thing you can say as an artist is what you know...I think I draw on as many places as I can.

When I reference [societal metaphors], I'm clear about those references.

It's nice to be able to cite or reference things without spelling them out.

The idea of pixelation, interlacing things within a frame, these are all things that draw upon popular conceptions of mass media.

The underlying subconscious influences, I'm sure that they're there...I have a certain affinity to certain aesthetics based on how I grew up.

I'm very much into style and design...my work has a sense of design, it's my background.

I have a feeling everything influences an artist, whether or not they want to admit to it.

**BY: What direction do you see your work moving in over the next few years?**

**CF:** The next project I'm going to be working on is letter-mapping, mapping individual letters with color, and seeing where it takes me.

Working with a whole new font that people have to try really hard to utilize...that's the next area that I think I'll be interested in pursuing.

I have to play with the medium, the medium being language and color. I thought of doing an installation that used only wind.

There are a lot of fun things, it depends on how much time I give it.

If you want to do art, you have to give yourself the ability to fail and play, and to really get to know the medium you're working with.

## Indian Mound

[www.moviefone.com](http://www.moviefone.com)

**Because I Said So**  
2:20, 4:40

**Bridge to Terabithia**  
2:10, 4:35, 7:20

**Reno 911!: Miami**  
2:40, 5:10, 7:40

**Ghost Rider**  
1:30, 2:30, 4:00, 5:00,  
6:30, 7:30

**The Number 23**  
2:00, 4:50, 7:15

**Zodiac**  
12:40, 3:45, 6:50

**The Abandoned**  
7:10

**Music and Lyrics**  
1:10, 4:10, 6:20

**The Astronaut Farmer**  
1:40, 4:20, 7:00

**Norbit**  
1:20, 3:55, 6:25

## Cinemark Movies

16 - Gahanna

[www.moviefone.com](http://www.moviefone.com)

**Because I Said So**  
4:00, 7:05, 9:45

**Bridge to Terabithia**  
2:25, 4:45, 7:10, 9:30

**Ghost Rider**  
2:15, 3:35, 4:55, 6:40,  
7:25, 9:25, 10:00

**Wild Hogs**  
2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10

**The Messengers**  
2:20, 4:40, 6:50, 9:05

**Music and Lyrics**  
12:35, 3:50, 7:15, 9:40

**Night at the Museum**  
3:25, 6:35, 9:10

**Norbit**  
12:50, 2:35, 3:30, 5:00,  
6:30, 7:30, 9:00, 10:05

**The Abandoned**  
12:40, 3:40, 6:45, 9:20

**The Number 23**  
2:30, 4:50, 7:20, 9:55

**Stomp the Yard**  
1:00, 3:55, 6:30, 9:15

**Tyler Perry's  
Daddy's Little Girls**  
12:15, 2:40, 5:05, 7:35

Note: The Gahanna theatre no longer has a student discount

\*not all movies are shown.  
check theatre for more show times