



*Skylarking*, 2014, 23.5" x 10" x 4"  
acrylic, paper, encaustic, glass, egg

poignant combination of media, blend of realism and abstraction, are part of what makes Brauch's work so compelling.

A native of Washington, **Nicole Brauch** received her B.F.A. from Cornish College of the Arts. She also studied at the Simon-Mayr Staatliche Realschule in Riedenburg, Germany. Brauch's recent work has been an attempt to integrate and reconcile autobiographical and historical motifs. She culls personal imagery from a rich archive of family photos, family letters, books and historical images as well as found objects rich with meaning such as honey, silkworm cocoons, and eggs. Oftentimes these precious items are protected in glass bottles. The merging of the historical and the personal, the painted and photographed has become the means by which Brauch processes events and comes to know personal, familial history. <http://www.nicolebrauchart.com/>

In Nicole Brauch's work, portraits of people – often children – are created through combinations of traditional portraiture with a more radical juxtaposition of three-dimensional sculpture. The figures are realistically portrayed (occasionally with their backs to us, as if retreating or fading in memory, as here with *Skylarking*) and likely derive from the artist's archive of family memorabilia. The juxtaposition of found objects (especially bird eggs), often arranged on small shelves that protrude from the surface a few inches, greatly enhances the meaning that the artwork evokes – the overall effect is lyrical, a poetic combination of images that creates a richly ambiguous metaphor: in *Skylarking*, for instance, a young girl retreats from us across a dark field with a bird egg under a bell jar in the foreground. Protected under the glass jar, the bird egg is implicitly related to the girl on some level – both are fragile somehow, both contain a kind of innocence and vulnerability that the black field threatens or contrasts with its dense wash of brushstrokes. Brauch uses encaustic – hot wax applied to the surface – to heighten the translucence and ethereal quality of the subject matter. In a sense, we are viewing a scene from a memory or dream, gazing through a veil almost – time itself, perhaps. The black field doesn't have much detail until we see a few leaves right along the margin of the girl's white dress, at which point the black transitions to a dark green. The