

The Light Stuff: Port photographer Eva Timothy back with two new exhibits  
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Newburyport –

The two photographs could not be more different from each other.

The first, a study of a Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm building, looks more like a painting than a photograph, more old Europe than Newburyport. It's infused with light, saturated with warm, golden tones in a way that makes the snow-edged windows seem misplaced in time. It's vital, passionate, Mediterranean.

The second piece, called "Tomes and Tales," seems prototypically New World, emphatically New England. It's a studied, formal image of a row of old leather-bound books on the top of a desk in an off-limits section of Historic New England's Coffin House — lit, as it has been for more than 300 years, by natural light pouring through small windows. The sepia tone is rich, but, at the same time, diffident and detached, almost self-consciously so.

You can almost taste the grit of dust and history, visually.

What connects the two images — part of Eva Timothy's new exhibit at the Firehouse Gallery — is the celebration of light, the attention to detail and focus of the presentation.

The more you look, the more you see. "Spencer Peirce Little" is a world in itself: The fractured reflections of the property in the lower frames of the second-story window, the frames completely washed out by the setting sun in the upper frames, balanced by a collar of snow on the sill — all set against the so texture of the building, and lit up in a dance of light and shadow.

The detail is so profound in "Tomes" that, if you look closely, you can see half-moons of light in the serifs of the titles of the books. The images are cropped and edited, but not manipulated.

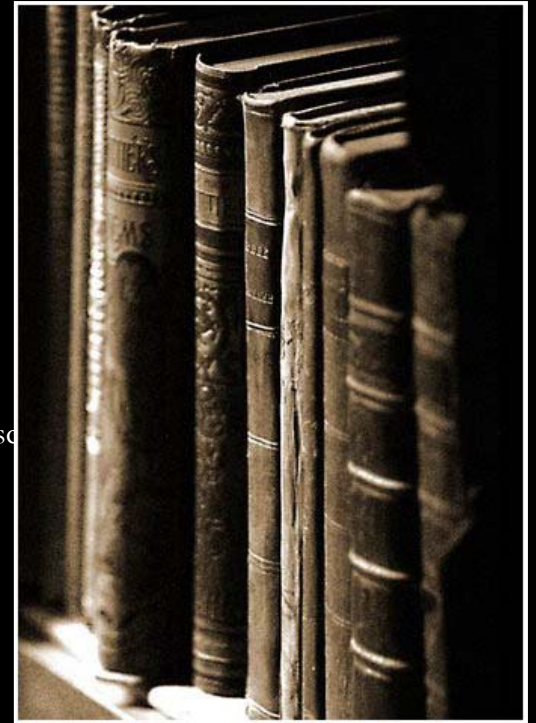
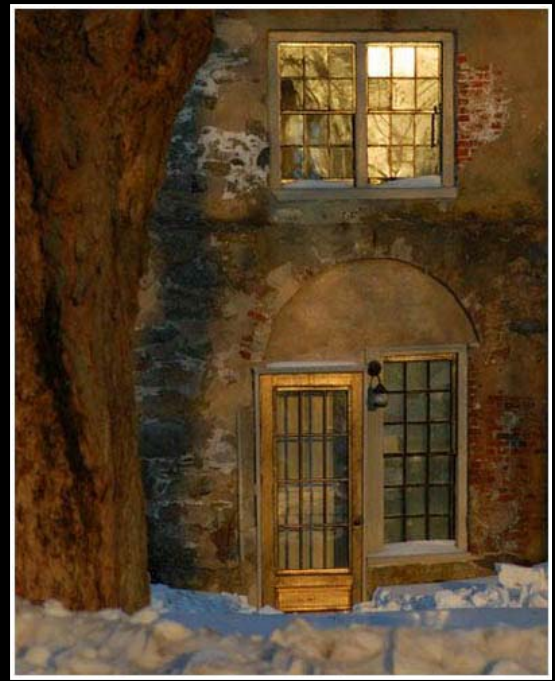
The seeming incongruity of the work extends to the details of their creation: The warm, exterior shot of Spencer- Peirce-Little farm — a late-17th-century structure built as the country seat of wealthy local merchants — came moments before the winter sun set, after hours of watching conditions change.

"I waited and waited and waited," says Timothy, who was born in Bulgaria and came to Newburyport by way of Utah and Oxford, England. "I could feel it. My heart started beating faster. I knew something was going to come, something good."

"Tomes" and its companion piece, "Player Piano," which hangs adjacent, and several other pieces that remain in Timothy's online portfolio, came in a flurry. She and a group of artists from the Newburyport Art Association were invited by Historic New England to tour the older part of the Coffin House last year to create work for a two-day group show at Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. She ditched the tour ("Yeah, pretty much," she says) and found the room. She remembers being drawn to it, but little else.

"I forget where I am," she says. "I don't hear the rest of the world. It just fades away."

She started shooting. She knew she nailed it.



“I didn’t even look at the rest of the house,” she says.

### **Focus on many homes**

Timothy, who grew up in Bulgaria, has a degree in communications, with emphasis on film and photography, from the University of Utah. She studied extensively at the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain. She moved to Newburyport about two years ago, after living in 10 cities on two continents in the past six years.

Her work in the current exhibit, which is called “Constructive Light,” reflects that travelogue. There are prints of the canals of Venice and historic, tweedy Oxford, which, she says, reminds her of Newburyport. Natural light, often infusing city architecture, remains a constant in her work — probably a reaction to “the gray and darkness” of Communist-era Bulgaria, she says.

In the current exhibit, Timothy is teamed with Salem artist Pamela Perkins, whose work falls somewhere between collage and mosaic, using beach glass and found objects to create entirely new work.

This is Timothy’s second exhibit in less than a year at the Firehouse. Last year’s “Finding Focus” was about slowing down, about seeing beyond the immediate, the obvious. It was also about opening yourself up to possibilities, to magic, which is what happened with “Narnia,” one of the new pieces in the current exhibit: Last December Timothy woke up to a snowy day.

“I felt something,” she says. “This snowy day seemed like magic to me. I thought, ‘I know there’s something here and I’m going to find it.’”

She found it in Market Square, although you have to know the city — and have a vivid visual imagination — to know it. The focal point in the image is the lighting element of a street lamp, which, in Timothy’s iconography, symbolizes knowledge and enlightenment. In the deep background are blurred branches of the city’s Christmas tree and brickwork of the Firehouse. Snow is falling, small flakes that look almost like splattered paint. There is nothing immediately identifiable about the scene. Like a white church in New England, it could be anywhere. At the same time, however, it is familiar.

“I saw it and thought, ‘This is just perfect,’” says Timothy. “It says everything.” The Firehouse show is one of two Timothy exhibits in the city. She’s also exhibiting nature photography in “Jewel of the North Shore,” which opens Sunday at the Joppa Flats Educational Center on Plum Island.

### **Interested?**

Limited edition prints by Eva Timothy will be on display through April 6 at the Firehouse Gallery. She will be sharing the space with Salem artist Pamela Perkins, who is showing one-of-a-kind recycled glass collages. There will be a reception for the artists Friday, April 4 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the gallery. For information, call 978-462-7336.

Timothy will also be showing nature photography in a show called “Jewel of the North Shore,” from March 23 to May 4 at the Mass Audubon Joppa Flats Educational Center, 1 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, where there will be a reception Sunday, March 30, from 2 to 4 p.m. For information, call 978-462-9998. Timothy’s Web site is [www.illumina.com](http://www.illumina.com).