

## REVIEWS: *Massachusetts*

### EVA TIMOTHY: LOST IN LEARNING

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Eva Timothy's provocative ensemble of images from her series *Lost in Learning* illuminates a passionate, non-ironic commitment to humanism as an open-minded adventure of discovery. That may sound grandiose, but these nuanced, compelling images justify it. Entwining themes of exploration, discovery, and creativity, these luminous black-and-white photographs deploy light and dark in ways both brave and touching.

In *Galileo's Compass*, a soft sheen illuminates each scratch, dent, and discoloration left by age and use of this instrument with its plumb-bob hanging below in the dark void. Aesthetic and thematic cohesion balance in an economical whole, each element in the simple dichotomy reinforcing and ricocheting off the other.

*Journal*, a minimalist image of a magnifying glass tucked between the pages of a notebook, adds further layers of visual muscle and poignancy. The age-frayed subject, anchored only by its own concreteness in a dark, featureless space, invites the hand, while the photograph's cool, distancing reality thwarts both

substance and touch—a lesson in longing, loss, and time's passage. A long gleam of light gilds the cover's edge, accentuating the book's prized status. Probing deeper into the indecipherable text, the magnifying glass incites a play of distortion and light, revealing the unrecoverable thought, the true treasure.

*Patrons of Learning* provides a more optimistic image: a fanciful, seamless composite only possible with modern photographic techniques, it brings together two of sixteenth-century Italy's great patrons of art and learning, using iconic emblems of the accomplishments they fostered. In Timothy's staged encounter, the lovely, intelligent Isabella d'Este, as captured in a drawing by da Vinci, smiles enigmatically into the dour but inquiring face of the Medici pope, Leo X, as represented in a Raphael portrait—the meeting of minds as Enlightenment romance.

While it cannot be denied that paper, pen, and instruments handmade to human scale—armillary spheres, astrolabes, prisms, globes,



Eva Timothy, *Patrons of Learning*. Courtesy the artist.

cosmological treatises, maps—along with the ideals of rationality and objectivity that generated them, are growing increasingly rare, even obsolete, their persistence here both compels and consoles. Luxuriously conceived and executed, Timothy's vital representations of this commitment to discovery and creativity provide both metaphor and descriptor of humanism, rationality, and what she clearly hopes will be the ongoing quest for understanding.

—Susan Boulanger