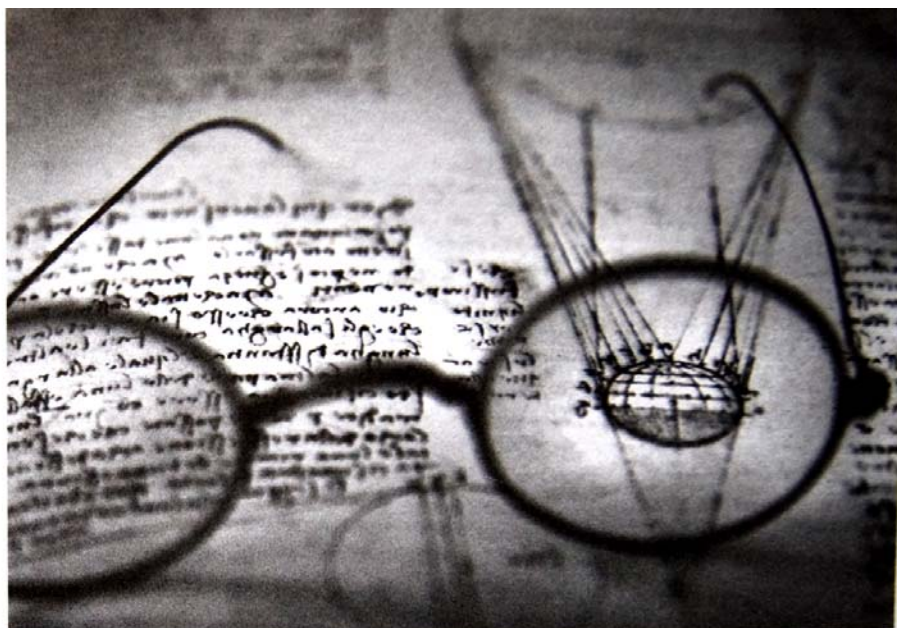


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Note: All interviews conducted by Russell Joslin



Eva Timothy *Sun, Earth & Moon*

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Galileo's Compass

What first inspired the "Lost in Learning" project, and how did it evolve?

I grew up in Europe and developed a fascination with history early on in life. The prospect of revisiting history through the medium of photography first came to me while living in Oxford, England, where I was engaged in a number of photographic projects involving the University. Photographing that city of dreaming spires, the history of it all came to life with vivid detail. It was as though I was peering into the Oxford of half a century ago.

The "Lost in Learning" project was, in a way, a natural extension of that experience. I was living in New England, photographing some old books I had brought from my travels and reading a history by Daniel Boorstin entitled "The Discoverers". At one point he writes about Columbus' preparation for his journey westward and how he wrote copious notes in the margins of one of his geography books. Adoring history as I do, I thought, "Wouldn't it be cool to see the book with his actual handwriting!"

I located a copy of the "Imago Mundi", put it together with an antique compass and started shooting. The result was an image that I felt held a sense of historical significance together with the mystery that inevitably precedes discovery. The next step for me was to take that artistic premise and to create a series of photographs that could suitably portray the Age of Discovery. I visited the Harvard Collection of Scientific Instruments to photograph the Renaissance era artifacts. I acquired copies of facsimile manuscripts by Galileo, Newton, Hooke, Handel, Da Vinci and others and

began to study each of their lives as I sought inspiration for the project.

If there is one main idea, story or common thread that runs through all of your photographs, what would you say it is?

While the Renaissance was a time of tremendous discovery and copious creativity, one of the things that interests me most, as a photographer, were the lenses invented during that period which changed the way people viewed the world. The advent of spectacles and magnifying glasses enabled continued reading and research for those whose eyesight had deteriorated with age. Galileo's telescope revealed the heavens, Hooke's microscope the micro-cosmos and Newton's prism began to unravel the mystery of light. From the records, it appears that Da Vinci was even experimenting with Camera Obscura.

In all these photographs, with the exception of the historical instruments themselves, I've introduced some form of lens in addition to the camera. These lenses serve to focus, frame and, at times, to alter the image in a way that invites deeper consideration from the viewer. Looking upon these now archaic instruments also serves as a reminder of how much was discovered in a time before the letter "e-" had become one of the main prefixes of the English language. These men and women had comparatively little to fall back on for their research. Yet they were able to see the world in ways no one else had before them on account of their extraordinary vision and an unwavering passion to explore the unknown.

What have you learned as a result of making this work that you didn't know or realize when you began?

In putting together a project dealing with the theme of creativity, I've learned a great deal about the creative process myself. There were days when inspiration struck from out of the blue. Then there were others where it was nowhere to be found and believe me I searched. Any artist, writer or other creative type will tell you that the creative spark can be whimsical, difficult to predict and impossible to command. You can do a certain amount though, to put yourself in a ready state for inspiration to find you. During the course of this project, I found myself searching not only for subjects to photograph, but also researching the historical background of each. The more I immersed myself in the history the more various angles, composition and ideas for the photographs just flowed. I developed a personal connection with most of these photographs and it was not long before I realized the profound impact of these connections as the foundation of creative endeavor of any sort.

What brought you into photography versus other art forms, and what do you aspire to say by means of its aesthetics?

It's interesting, I was raised by a great father who happened to also be a great oil painter. I admired his work greatly, but I soon discovered that painting just wasn't me. What my dad did give me though was a perspective on the world and the ability to notice the art in every little thing. Photography quickly became my favorite part of college and a large part of my major in Communications. It was there that I came to view photography as a medium through which I could convey precisely the way I see the world.

I like to think of the camera the way Galileo probably felt about the telescope.

EVA TIMOTHY

LOST IN LEARNING



Reflecting on a Masterpiece



The Patrons of Learning



The Astronomer



Blinking Moon

When you look through it you begin to truly see. For me such seeing has a lot of metaphorical significance as well. I love to take up photographic themes like light in darkness, finding focus in life and freezing time considering their implication in the bigger picture. I'm a very positive person and, at the end of the day, my hope is that people viewing my photography will come away edified and encouraged.

Who has been the most influential or important figure to you as a photographer?

My father has been and continues to be the most influential figure to me as in my development as an artist. In terms of a photographer I look up to, I would have to say Abelardo Morell. I first became acquainted with Abe's work when I moved to New England some five years ago. I remember being deeply moved by the unique combination of artistry, eccentricity and imagination in his still life photographs.

What is your favorite quote at the moment, and what does it mean to you?

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." -Mark Twain

In considering the course navigated by the discoverers represented in the "Lost in Learning" project, I crafted the acronym S.A.I.L. which stands for the four stages of the creative process: Story, Angle, Immersion & Light. This acronym not only outlines the creative process of exploration, but also pays homage to Columbus whose journal inspired this exhibit. I recognize he's one of those historical figures who gets mixed reviews when his holiday rolls around. For me though, he was the embodiment of someone who left the safe harbor of the known world to venture into the unknown. At times the only way to find what we truly seek is to first lose ourselves,

casting away comfort and pressing forward embracing our inner explorer.

What does photography mean to your life?

Photography is my passion in life. It's who I am. There is so much worth noticing in life, much of which we take for granted or miss out on in the daily grind. Photography is my tool for stopping time in its tracks so I can just bask. It gives me space to create, a stage for sharing my perspective and provides an incomparable archive of memories and moments. I grew up in Eastern Europe where freedom of expression was not a given. The collective thoughts of those in power were considered the only permissible perspective. Emerging from that background, photography has become, for me, a symbol of the freedom to see life as I choose, an opportunity for learning, dreaming and seizing each day, camera in hand. □



The Man Behind The Mona Lisa