

A detailed oil painting of a bouquet of pink roses. The roses are in various stages of bloom, with delicate petals and vibrant green leaves. They are arranged in a blue and white ceramic vase. The background is dark and textured, with visible brushstrokes, creating a sense of depth and shadow. The overall mood is intimate and artistic.

# Illuminating Tarbell

*Life And Art On The Piscataqua*

By Rick Russack

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — The most ambitious display of Edmund C. Tarbell's work in a decade runs through June 3, filling the first floor of Discover Portsmouth's Academy Gallery in a beautifully restored 1810-era building. "Illuminating Tarbell: Life and Art on the Piscataqua" is a unique two-part show, with the largest local gathering of Tarbell's original work, plus a companion gallery featuring the work of six contemporary artists painting in the Tarbell style. The dual exhibit also includes a lecture series, a 72-page color catalog and a re-creation of Tarbell's seaside New Castle, N.H., studio.

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"Edmund, Mary and Sergius," 1920, oil on canvas, 50 by 40 inches, signed and inscribed lower right. Tarbell's two youngest children and the family's Russian wolfhound strike strong, confident poses, indicative of the upper middle-class lifestyle their father's success provided. Collection of the Tarbell Charitable Trust.





The show features nearly 60 works from the artist's 30 years of living in New England and along the Piscataqua River. Many works depict Tarbell's family and home, their friends, clients, even horses, as well as the river and the surrounding landscape. The exhibit and accompanying catalog also document Tarbell's life and art with family photographs, personal letters and ephemera. A meticulous reconstruction of his studio includes family furniture and studio props.

The exhibit is based on new research into the holdings of the Tarbell Charitable Trust

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*"Solitaire," 1927, oil on canvas, 30 by 24 inches, signed lower right. This work picturing Tarbell's daughter Mary and his wife Emeline clearly shows Tarbell's later style and treatment of light and shadow, as well as the influence of Dutch artist Jan Vermeer. Private collection.*



“Still Life with Roses and Two Jars,” circa 1918–24, oil on canvas, 25 by 30 inches, unsigned. The flowers used in most of Tarbell’s still lifes were from his own garden. Collection of the Tarbell Charitable Trust.

and other sources. The trust has the largest single collection of Tarbell’s works, several of which it has loaned to various museums. The exhibit includes several of Tarbell’s most important paintings, some of which have never been published, and the exhibit displays four works that were received too late to be included in the catalog. Jeremy Fogg, an art conservator based in York, Maine, is the curator of the exhibit. Both he and artist Christopher Volpe contributed to the catalog of this exhibit.

Alistair Dacey, a painter who had rented an apartment in what had been the Tarbell home in nearby New Castle, prepared the catalog entries for “Legacy in Action,” devoted to the six contemporary

Tarbell’s studio in New Castle was a very basic building with bare, exposed walls. The studio is re-created in the exhibit, complete with bare walls, props, a study for the Prince portrait and works in process.



artists who might be called members of the “modern Tarbell School.” (Dacey lost many of his personal belongings when the home in which Tarbell and his family lived for more than 30 years was destroyed by fire on January 23, 2016.) Fogg’s experience conserving several of Tarbell’s paintings provided him with particular insight into Tarbell’s techniques and the materials he used.

Edmund Tarbell (1862–1938), was an American Impressionist painter and a leader of what came to be known as the “Boston School.” His works hang in Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts, the National Gallery of Art, the

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“Edmund and His Pony Peanut,” 1930, oil on canvas, 62 by 50 inches, signed lower right. Edmund was Tarbell’s grandson and is shown here on his pony, a gift from his grandfather. Edmund was 3 years old when this was done and posed only one hour at a time. Tarbell also used black and white photographs that he took for this painting. Private collection.





Corcoran Gallery, Worcester Art Museum and numerous other public and private collections. He studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, beginning in 1879 and later, in 1883, in Paris. In 1884 and 1885 he made a Grand Tour trip through Europe, including Italy, Belgium and Germany, among other countries...

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“View of the Piscataqua River, New Castle, New Hampshire,” circa 1925, oil on canvas, 30 by 25 inches, signed lower right. Probably done in Tarbell’s studio on the banks of the Piscataqua River, this painting shows the steeple of Portsmouth’s North Church in the distance. Pure landscapes, such as this, were relatively uncommon for Tarbell. Private collection. Courtesy Sotheby’s.

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