



Timothy Crawford Wilson The Joy and the Mystery

By Mara Blackwood

“When civilizations collapse it is the arts that survive,” says Maine artist Timothy Crawford Wilson. As a long-time professional artist and poet, Wilson stands in awe of the impacts art has on the world and on the lives of individuals, including the artists themselves.

Wilson was born in Scarsdale, New York, surrounded by a network of children close to his age. He always had someone—brothers, cousins, and neighborhood friends—willing to do things with him. One of his loves was collecting rocks, and he became a rock hound. His interest grew and led him to tumbling stones and making jewelry. Woodworking and leather craft followed as his artistic nature developed.

He had, from an early age, been taken on hunting and fishing expeditions with his brothers by his father. He was an avid player of paddle tennis, tennis, and some golf. He likewise went on antiquing trips with his mother and collected dog figurines. Wilson’s interest in collecting has been ongoing—with nature’s beauty finding its way into his art and poetry.

In his senior year at high school Wilson’s interest in art came into full bloom. During the summer between his

junior and senior years, Wilson worked as a busboy at a dining hall in Harpswell, Maine. While there he took lessons with his father’s cousin-in-law, well-known Maine artist Stephen Etnier. There he first learned how to oil paint.

Etnier, who had gone to the Art Students League with Andrew Wyeth, became a major artistic influence for Wilson as he began to work in a representational style. By the time he returned to school, he knew he wanted to be an artist. His art teacher George Knauss, at Kent school in Connecticut, gave him a key to the art department, and Wilson happily spent time late into the evenings creating. Even before his senior year at Kent, he had taken lessons in watercolor and spent a couple of years focused on this form of art.

Early on, Wilson took an interest in learning from the work of other artists, and he began doing studies of etchings and drawings by Homer and Hopper along with the works of DaVinci, Michelangelo, William Blake, and Rembrandt. Wilson notes, “I was very much into learning the human anatomy at one point and learned all the bones and muscles and proportions of the European idea of beauty and form.”



Sea and Sky | 35" x 48" | Oil on Canvas

After graduating from high school, Wilson became an art major at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME. During his studies there, a professor, Gerard Haggerty, encouraged him to attend as many art programs as he could to gain exposure to a variety of artists and teachers.

Wilson recalls, "I went to a summer program at the New York Studio School of Painting and Sculpture in 1978, took a semester off from Bowdoin senior year to go to The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, went to the Skowhegan School for Painting and S

culture in the summer of 1980 and the Art Students League in NYC in the summer of 1987."

One art teacher in particular, Leland Bell, at the New York Studio School became the most influential teacher in his art career. Wilson saw art schools not so much as schools but as providing an ongoing apprenticeship program to learn from accomplished artists. He continues, "They were places for me to learn and develop my craft."

Following his graduation from Bowdoin, Wilson attended the MFA program at USC in LA for a year, but the larger school and overwhelming city didn't feel like the right environment. He drifted away from the program and into a spiritual search that would even-

tually lead him and a group of like-minded seekers to the Baha'i Faith, which became most influential in his life. Wilson attributes his becoming an artist and poet and starting on his spiritual path to the death of a younger brother when Wilson was fourteen.

After living abroad in Ireland for two years, Wilson went on to receive his MFA in painting and drawing from Parsons School of Design, where his favorite professor, Leland Bell, was teaching. Wilson says, "When I saw Bell was teaching there, it was the only place I wanted to go."

Following decades of artistic growth and painting in studios across the country as well as Ireland and Canada, Wilson has settled back in Harpswell, Maine, only twelve miles from Bowdoin College.

Wilson's work has shifted significantly since those early years, taking inspiration over time from a variety of artists, styles, and movements, from the Renaissance to Expressionism, Impressionism, Modernism, and Abstraction, while incorporating elements from traditional Korean, North West Native American, and Australian Aboriginal art.

The artist's current technique sprang up from his love of experimenting with quick, gestural motions. Often Wilson begins creating with a few ideas in mind and completes several pastel pieces in a short period of time, laying them next to each other on the floor to see how they work together as a series. He often goes on to translate these pastels into larger oils.

When Wilson isn't in his studio, he's often writing. The artist has produced a large body of poetry and has also written articles for local newspapers. He still enjoys a good game of tennis and has recently picked up golf after decades.

Along with the love of art itself, which has motivated him since he was a teenager, Wilson has also been driven by his personal spiritual path. "I see all walks of life

being from one source, just as everything in this physical world gets its illumination from the same sun. When I went to Parsons from 1988-1990, Leland Bell taught me how to put spirit and sincerity into art. I also strive to create art that is exciting and mysterious and brings a sense of wonder, joy, happiness, and mystery into people's lives."

Wilson's work has been featured in shows in a variety of locations, including New York City, Dublin, Ireland, Seattle, WA, Portland, OR, and Vancouver, Canada. His work has also appeared in Dan's Papers in East Hampton, NY, The New Canaan Advertiser in CT, Portland Downtowner in Portland, OR, and in Artspeak in New York City.



Four Directions | 22" x 30" | Pastel on Paper

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The Artist's Palette | 22" x 30" | Pastel

"Tim Wilson's Artwork expresses a missing piece. His work reaches for the human spirit. This is done through emotional content. Tim's work beckons the feeling side of people, not selling out to machines. As relevant as ever, in an era where people are more lost than ever, Tim's work beckons the spirit back, and finds its place."

Marjorie Roen

"His work is elemental and gripping from the first glance. It pulsates with a love of color and volume, and asks the viewer to enter into the joy of the visual physicalness that is captured there. A monumental simplicity of line and tone elevate the ordinary to the iconic."

Phelps Clark, author and BA in art history



The Unity of Oneness | 22" x 30" | Pastel

Una Kim, muralist and adjunct professor at Portland State University