

Saint Emilion
(watercolor on
paper, 11x15)



Seizing *the Day*

Tim Wilmot uses a direct technique and a speedy brush to explore byways that others ignore.

By John A. Parks

British artist Tim Wilmot paints with an energized directness, using a pure watercolor technique to render scenes as diverse as chilly English seascapes and sun-drenched Spanish streets. Avoiding the spectacular and the traditionally picturesque, he seeks out views that some artists might find mundane—a back alley in Spain, an English harbor at low tide, a shopping street in a small French town. “I’m not one to rave about somewhere like Venice,” he says. “I just like the ordinary. Most of us, if we step out to our front yard, will find that within a hundred yards there will be something there to paint. If the lighting is right and you have a comfortable location, there will be things to paint.”

Practical Matters

Wilmot’s sharp eye and awareness of the atmosphere of a place allow him to find strong and intriguing subjects in many curious corners and backwaters. Once he takes them on, he produces pictures that are remarkable for their efficiency and clarity, presenting richly satisfying accounts of light, space, texture and life—with an economic set of painterly tools. These include well-judged values, simplification of shapes, speedy shorthand brushing for details and considerable compositional know-how.

The artist sticks with convention for the most part, in terms of technique—with no surprise tactics. “I don’t use any of the so-called ‘tricks,’ like masking fluid, or other techniques, like turning the paper upside down or extensively using body paint,” he says. “I rarely do any lifting out, so I have a very traditional approach.”