

December 2007

www.phillyartmatters.com

# art matters

*The Philadelphia Region's Magazine of the Arts*

## Through the Artist's Eyes

Armond Scavo  
brings the city of  
Philadelphia to light

## Inside:

The Return of the Pre-Raphaelites .....	10
Treasure Pages .....	12
Books for People for Whom Art Matters ..	16
Small Wonder .....	18
Trouble at the Barnes .....	22

PRSTD STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LEVITTOWN, PA  
PERMIT NO. 121



# Through the artist's eyes



Armond Scavo brings the city of Philadelphia to light

by Jan Feighner

Photographer Armond Scavo occasionally reads Stephen King novels in his darkroom just for the thrill. He paces a lot and frequently goes for walks. He travels on day trips and spends time outdoors studying the scenery. He admittedly rarely sits still for long, preferring his energy and the energy of place to consume him.

The only thing that calms him is his work: evocative portraits of his environment, especially his home town of Philadelphia.

Scavo pays tribute to the City of Brotherly Love in his current exhibition titled, "Philadelphia: Through an Artist's Eyes," through January 31, at his Earth Light Images Gallery on 8th Street. The mostly color and a few black and white prints highlight 20 years of picture-taking around town at places like the Waterworks, Art Museum area, South Street, Independence Mall, and Rittenhouse Square.

The veteran shutterbug confessed that he prefers shooting at night and on overcast and rainy days, leading one to believe he borders on the macabre. Not so. Scavo stated that these occasions present him with the most mysterious and compositionally predictable settings: shadows that lurk under streetlights, doorways that hide scandalous tales,

and rising mists that titillate the imagination.

His series of winter scenes creates an almost "It's a Wonderful Life" feel about the city that can at times be more brutal than anything experienced in Bedford Falls. "Bicycle In Snow" looks as if it could be the very site where George Bailey ran through town searching for his wife Mary or escaping the law on his way to find his ultimate truth. The street lamps' golden reflection invites those with enough gusto to brave the slushy narrow street while row houses and shops rest silently behind their dark doors and windows. The portrait contains an overall simple beauty for

which people long that perhaps can only be found in vintage holiday movies these days.

"Luminaire In The Square" captures the Christmas essence with its brightly colored orbs hanging from bare tree branches at the entrance to Rittenhouse Square. Snow lays serenely on thick evergreens as two silhouettes walk in the distance. An ethereal glow surrounds the peaceful scene and the viewer can't help but smile at the warmth that exudes from this still moment.

"Umbrellas In Snow" delves into Rittenhouse Square behind the colored orb entrance at Christmas. The spectral lights overhead outline

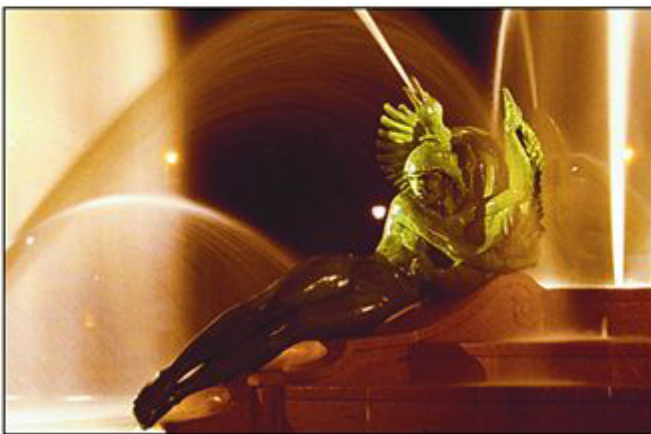
two passersby toting open umbrellas against the cold, wet night.

Footprints on the snowy sidewalk betray those who traversed before them on their journeys to places unknown. The scene reminds city tenants that despite the weather, living in town is where they want to be and that it is exceptionally lovely through the right eyes.

"When I go out at night I shoot black and white, color, and infrared," Scavo said. "You don't know what's going to happen, what the film's going to record, what in the scene is going to be highlighted or deep shadow, [but] I know what the composition's going to be like."

Achieving Scavo's effects takes not only a keen eye, but darkroom talent as well. He explained that at least 50 percent of his expression occurs in the development and printing of his works. He experiments using at least 10 to 20 colored test strips, eventually leading to his desired outcome. Since he severely under- and overexposes film when shooting, taking six that span normal to too light and six that go from normal to too dark, he waits for the exposed contact sheet before adjusting the tonality and color.

"When the print is in the processor, which is lightproof, I would read Stephen King," laughed Scavo. "I would turn the light out to make a print and the tension from [King's]



"Wissahickon Girl, Swann Fountain," new work by Armond Scavo  
**ABOVE:** "Bicycle In Snow," by Armond Scavo



work made the darkroom exciting. Then when you turn the light on, you put light on this white piece of paper, put it in the chemical bath, and it comes out with something on it. It's been magic from the very first moment."

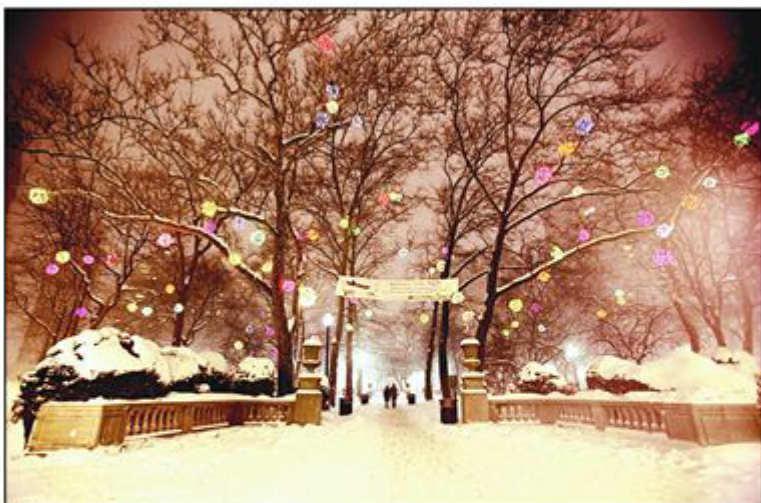
Scavo's first moment came in the late 1960s when he began using a camera to express his love of impressionist paintings and cinematography, especially Westerns. He enjoyed the colors, emotions, action, and structure of these very different media and somehow sought to meld them into his vision of art.

His family back on Tree Street in South Philadelphia supported his desire. Their three professionally successful sons grew up within a block or two radius of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins in an atmosphere Scavo compares to "a small Italian village" that relishes closeness and safety. He loved his close friends and called the city his home.

Scavo attended the Tyler and Philadelphia Schools of Art, Fleisher Memorial, and Community College of Philadelphia. He owned a private nursery school in University City for eight years until he decided to become a full time artist. He purchased a Leica single lens reflex camera then graduated to the Canon EOS series SLR due to the autofocus capability. He bought a tripod and soon found that setting his camera at 160 and 400 consistently obtained his desired results.

Following his leap of faith, Scavo carefully observed those who most influenced him, including Ray K. Metzker, under whom he studied, Georgia O'Keefe, and Ernst Haas, shooting mainly landscapes. He garnered awards and honors from such institutions as the New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts, Mid-Atlantic Arts Council, and Chestnut Hill Art Association.

Scavo sold his works for many years in some galleries and on the craft show circuit. He served on the board of the Philadelphia Crafts Association for 10 years. In 1985 he opened Earth Light Images Gallery at 800 South 8<sup>th</sup>



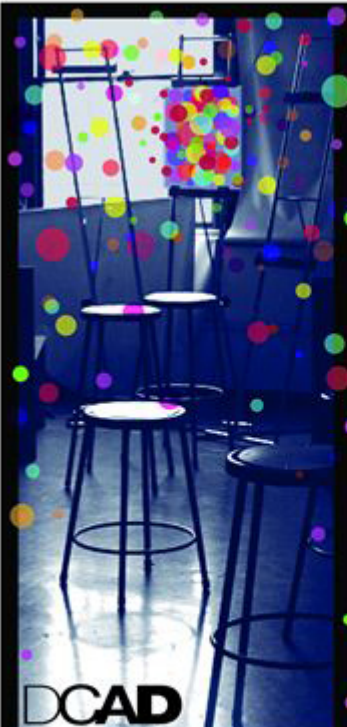
"Umbrellas in Snow," by Armond Scavo

Street to make his photographs more accessible and to have a place to display new pieces. Those new pieces entailed discovering the city's natural and historic beauty and presenting them in dramatic ways.

"I love the city. I find a lot of architectural details I like," stated Scavo. "I'm in the environment that I

love being in. I'm able to conjure memories and experiences."

Scavo participates in about 25 to 30 art shows nationwide per year. He sells online at [www.earthlightimages.com](http://www.earthlightimages.com) and from his gallery on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or by appointment. Call 215-592-8832 for more information.



**Winter/Spring  
2008  
Continuing  
Education**

Registration Begins  
November 12th, 2007

**ANIMATION**

**FASHION DESIGN**

**FINE ARTS**

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

**INTERIOR DESIGN**

**JEWELRY DESIGN**

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

**WEB DESIGN**

**PRE-COLLEGE**

To view the catalog or  
for more information  
visit us online at  
[www.dcad.edu](http://www.dcad.edu)

DELAWARE  
COLLEGE OF ART  
AND DESIGN

A CREATIVE  
PARTNERSHIP OF PRATT  
AND THE CORCORAN

## Philadelphia Museum of Art

26th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway  
215-763-8100 • [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)



### Renoir Landscapes

October 4 - January 6, 2008

Tues-Sun, 10am-5pm.  
Fri evenings until 8:45pm.  
Closed Mondays and  
legal holidays.

**NOW OPEN in East Falls at Sherman Mills!**



**Sherman Mills Art Supply**  
3502 Scotts Lane in East Falls  
215-844-5262

[shermanmillsartsupply.com](http://shermanmillsartsupply.com)