



Cover Artist:
**Jared
Martin '59**

By Alison Frye

Jared Martin '59 lives in a cozy house next to the Philadelphia University campus, with his wife Yu Wei, their pug dog Xiou Pang ("little fat"), and a feral cat. The house, like their lives, is filled with art, and behind art there is usually a good story.

Jared worked for decades as an actor, traveling around the world making films and television shows. Wherever he went, he brought his camera.

Countless rolls of film were taken, countless photos were discarded over the years.

About seven years ago, something changed. Photography became more important, more inspiring. Jared felt a growing passion for the work, and he dove in. We share his art, and some of his story, in this issue:

I always travel with a camera. I'm too shy to take pictures of people.

I like to take pictures of places, of light—morning and evening—the photographer's golden time, when the light is so thick it's like syrup, like you can touch it. I lived in Rome because I did a string of really bad films, but it was a lot of fun, and I didn't know Italian when I got there, so I'd go out on walks with a camera, and the walks were a lot longer because of the camera. They were really long journeys of exploration. I'd get back and look at this stuff, and one out of every 40 or 50 pictures was good, and I was happy with that. It's a feeling of having been there, that I was there in this spot, and this image is what I brought back. It's always made me feel more alive.

As a photographer, China appeals to me because of its difference. Everything is different. It's its mystery, its danger, its timelessness. Sometimes you look at something and you know it was there 5,000 years ago—it turns you to ash. It's also what I liked about Rome—I never felt alone. It was an eternal city. China's much like that, even more so.

I grew up in New York City, and my first night at Putney, at age 13, I went to the Elm, sat beneath it, and cried. I was sure it was the end of my life. But the next day I went down by where the Gerassis lived, and I felt good, and I never looked back. I had the time of my life. To this day, it's the only positive educational experience I've had.

The image on the cover is, literally, a man looking at a house. It's my wife's aunt's house, in nowhereville China, but it's a luxurious house, with a kitchen and some out-buildings (which you see on the right side of the photo). The man just happened to be there, and he really makes the image. Wai's aunt lived there her whole adult life, dying recently at age 94. I do a lot of work in Photoshop, but this image required very little. It was already "right there." Some images you have to trudge up a mountain for and others settle quickly like wind on a pond. The tricky thing is knowing when to stop.

Lately I've been going into museums or neighborhoods and taking pictures of textures, patterns, backgrounds, medieval paintings—marvelous stuff—and bringing them into the mix. I'm working on blending techniques. I put the texture on top, and that waxy sheen comes through, and delivers this weird, eye-popping feel. These compositions deal with narrative and storytelling and different levels of memory and experience compressed into one frame. I'm also learning to work with resin, which is exciting and a bit dangerous, and means each piece it's applied to is different from anything else I can make.

I usually walk around with a camera. I'll take hundreds of pictures, shake it up, throw it on the table, arrange it, layer it, wait for the resonance to cut through, and *be patient*. It's like cooking. You really just have to stop, walk away, let it cool, and it'll start speaking to you. I've never known an artist who did not have that kind of relationship with their artwork, whether it be music, writing, anything. Just let it cool. Little by little it will come. You have to trust yourself that you will find a way into that moment. What you're really trying to find is something in yourself that's special.

I believe everyone has something inside of them—some genius or inspiration—that they need to reach. The sad thing is that most of us die without ever figuring out what it is.