Guide to the Miller Outcalt Photographs

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Guide to the Miller Outcalt Photographs

Collection number: MS 234

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Miller Outcalt photographs,
Date (inclusive): 1987-2004
Collection number: MS 234
Creator: Outcalt, Miller
Extent: 5 boxes
Repository: University of California, Santa Cruz. University Library. Special Collections and Archives
Santa Cruz, California 95064
Abstract: This collection contains color prints of Miller Outcault's experiments in photography and macrophotography.
Physical location: Stored offsite at NRLF: Advance notice is required for access to the papers.
Language: English.
Access
Collection open for research.

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Preferred Citation
Miller Outcalt photographs. MS 234. Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Acquisition Information
Gift in 2004

Biography

I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1914. In high school I failed at everything I did, bad grades, etc. Had darkroom experience but not serious about black and white photography. I could play baseball and was a pitcher. Because of this I received a scholarship for private high school. I graduated from Cincinnati Law School, good school. I had trouble but got through with low grades. After graduation from law school I came out to Los Angeles with a car and a few hundred dollars. Although my Grandfather was law partner with William Howard Taft, also well known judge and prosecutor, I wanted to start over, so I came west and had trouble finding and keeping a job. I had not found what I wanted to do in life. I liked photography and selling so I looked in the yellow section under photography products, distributors to camera shops of photo products. I found one with low pay and commission. I turned down another with more pay but not photography. First day of calling on camera stores I knew I had found work I liked. The company went out of business a few months later, so then I went into business for myself. I used phone answering address as my address. Store was in my car so I delivered as I sold a few accessories; filters, matt boards and darkroom items. I lived in a boarding house in LA. Through invoices away first month as I knew nothing about business. Next I leased a small store, 10x20 on side street of LA and named it M.O.
I hired a salesman and shipping clerk. Then I happened to pick up a copy of the book "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill that changed my life. I did not read many books because I read slowly. I found out where the writer of the book lived in Glendale and went out there to see him with my current financial statement. He said to ask the bank for more money, a loan. I did and they agreed. More importantly, the book gave me ideas for more positive thinking.

I met my wife Bunny (Evelyn) at a wedding party. After dating for two weeks I asked her to marry me and she said "Yes". We moved M.O. Company to a larger space in Hollywood but had to sell it because of thefts. I always wanted to manufacture a product so we went into the plastic business of making bowls. We quit before we lost all of our money from sale of M.O. Company. Then we went back into the photo business which I learned at M.O. Company. This time Bunny came with me from the start. We had little to sell but that didn't bother me. Started with 3,000 sq. ft., used the name KALT in Santa Monica. Neither of us knew bookkeeping so we bought a bookkeeping machine and had our sales manager show her how to use it. A few months later we hired a bookkeeper and shipping clerk. Bunny took care of all the inside operations and I worked in sales and wrote the catalog. We had a policy of selling only to camera stores. The White House once phoned in an order, I took the call and explained that we sold only through camera stores so 'please see your local store'. We worked seven days a week with a positive attitude and "God's Help" and we sold millions and millions. As we grew we added space until we had 33,000 sq. ft. when we sold the business. We had 55 sales reps, calling on camera stores nationally, in addition to the 100 employees working in the office. I did not know about photoproducts so I checked with store to help me tell if they were good! When we had to expand east we did not want branches and there were local distributors in all parts of US so we had to meet competition. I contacted UPS to use "Blue Label so we shipped by air to all parts of the country. Also for phone-in orders, we put in free 1-800 phone line so there was no cost to dealers. We were among the first distributors to use Blue Label shipping and the 1-800 phone number for sales order. We carried large inventories and did not back order to any extent. It took us 20 years to do what we wanted - 1963-1983. We put all our money back into the business and since our prices were not the lowest, profit was good.

We imported products from the Far East, I designed camera bags and other products with KALT name. Because of this we met and made friends of many of the executives in the photography business. After we sold the business in 1983 to large photo distributor Brandess Brothers, we started taking pictures. We sold our work at art shows in Southern California for four years. I took workshops from Galen Rowell, Dave Munich, George Lepp and others. Read everything I could to learn about photography. I now shoot 35mm; macro and abstracts and changed from black and white to color and abstracts.

We moved to Carmel in 1989. Bunny and I had been married for 58 years when she died in 2003.

Miller Outcalt died in Carmel, California, November 2004.

Scope and Content of Collection
This collection contains color photographs of Outcalt's experiments in macrophotography and landscape photography. Miller Outcalt provides a different view of ordinary objects by moving in close with a macro lens - abstracting the subject. The color is natural and special colors are due to the light at the time of exposure. The images were taken with 35mm cameras and Fuji Velvia color slide film, no filters. Prints were processed on special Fuji paper.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects
Outcalt, Miller--Archives
Abstract Photographs
Macrophotography
Photography, Close-up

box 1 Color photographs [#1-54], 1987-2004
Physical Description: 16 x 20

box 2 2 Posters for exhibition of Outcalt's photographs 1987

box-folder 3:1 Correspondence ca. 1987-2004

box-folder 3:2-3 B/W & color photographs, 1987-2004
Physical Description: 5 x 7

box-folder 3:4-6 Color photographs, 1987-2004
Physical Description: 9 x 12
box 4  **Matted/signed exhibition color photographs [#55-65], 1987-2004**  
Physical Description: 22 x 28

box 5  **Matted/signed exhibition color photographs [#66-71], 1987-2004**  
Physical Description: 22 x 28