

Center for Creative Photography

The University of Arizona

1030 N. Olive Rd.

P.O. Box 210103

Tucson, AZ 85721

Phone: 520-621-6273

Fax: 520-621-9444

Email: info@ccp.arizona.edu

URL: <http://creativephotography.org>

Finding aid for the
Creative Eye Photo Gallery Records, 1973-1977

AG 39

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Creator

Creative Eye Photo Gallery

Abstract

Correspondence, clippings, memorabilia, and exhibition files, 1973 - 1977, of the Creative Eye Photo Gallery (Sonoma, Calif.). The gallery was founded and directed by John Douglas Mercer (1945 -) and Patricia Mercer from 1974 to 1977.

Quantity/ Extent

Fraction of a linear foot.

Language of Materials

English

Historical Note

The Creative Eye Photo Gallery (Sonoma, Calif.), was established in June 1974 by John and Patricia Mercer. Their primary intent was "to educate the public about photography as a fine art by presenting monthly exhibits of quality creative photography by relatively unknown photographers from throughout the U.S." They exhibited the work of over thirty photographers in twenty four mostly one and two person shows. Although photographers Ruth Bernhard and Walter Chappell each had shows there, most of the exhibits were by younger artists, including Karen Truax, Jack Staler, and Diana Schoenfeld.

Besides exhibits, the gallery sponsored critique sessions and workshops. Critical Focus, a group of local photographers dedicated to the appreciation and discussion of photography and related issues, gathered occasionally at the gallery. Members of this group included John Mercer, Tom Schloff, Ann Duncan, Fred Jacobs, John LeBaron, Noble Dinse, and others. In July 1976, five members of the group exhibited their photographs at the Santa Rosa Junior College Art Gallery. The gallery also offered to execute, on commission, hand-colored portraits for individuals, and published a monograph, *Island of the Pelicans: A Photographic Essay of the Island of Alcatraz* by John Mercer.

Due to financial difficulties the Creative Eye Photo Gallery closed in March 1977.

Scope and Content Note

The records of the Creative Eye Photo Gallery consist primarily of clippings, correspondence, exhibition announcements, contracts, resumes, statements and gallery memorabilia.

The bulk of the correspondence is between John Mercer and photographers who were interested in exhibiting at the gallery. This collection illustrates the daily operation of a small gallery and its appeal to a wide variety of West Coast photographers. Over fifty photographers are represented through biographies, resumes, and exhibition statements. Monthly critique sessions and the activities of the Critical Focus group are sparsely documented. The commercial work, publishing endeavors, and financial records of the gallery are not represented in this collection.

Memorabilia from the gallery includes a guest register, a shingle bearing the logo of the gallery, a tee shirt, and rubber stamps.

Names and Subject Terms

Mercer, John D. (1945-)

Mercer, Patricia

Galleries

Photography

Restrictions

Conditions Governing Access

Access to this collection requires an appointment with the Volkerding Study Center.

Conditions Governing Use

It is the responsibility of the user to obtain permission from the copyright owner (which could be the institution, the creator of the record, the author or his/her transferees, heirs, legates or literary executors) prior to any copyright-protected uses of the collection.

The user agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, Center of Creative Photography, including its officers, employees, and agents, from and against all claims made relating to copyright or other intellectual property infringement.

Provenance

This collection was given to the Center for Creative Photography by John Mercer in June 1977.

Preferred Citation

Creative Eye Photo Gallery Records, 1973-1977. AG 39. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

Processing Information

Processed summer 1984 by Judith Leckrone.

Fragile newspaper clippings were photocopied for reference use; the originals are located in last folder.

Finding aid updated by Meghan Jordan in May 2016.

Container List

Box	1	Folder	1	Activities of gallery: Director's statements, circa 1976 December
			2	Clippings [photocopies], 1973-1977
			3	Correspondence, general, circa 1974-1977
			4	Correspondence, general, 1975
			5	Correspondence, general, 1976
			6	Correspondence, general, 1976
			7	Correspondence, general, 1977
			8	Commercial work, circa 1974-1977
			9	Critical Focus, 1976-1977
			10	Exhibition announcements and schedule, 1974-1977
			11	Exhibitor's contracts, 1974-1977
			12	Invoices, 1976-1977
			13	"Photo Postcard" mailing lists
			14	Press releases and reviews, 1974-1976
			15	Resumes and statements of photographers, 1974-1977
			16	Workshops and critiques, 1976-1977
			17	Guest register, 1974-1977
			18	Tee shirt and stamps
			19	Clippings (originals), 1973-1977
Box	2	OV		Gallery shingle (1)

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