



NEIL EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

Coll2007-003

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Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary	p. 2
Administrative Information	p. 3
Biography	p. 5
Index of Models	p. 7
Scope and Content Note	p. 8
Series Descriptions and Container List	p. 9



Descriptive Summary

Title

Neil Edwards Photography Collection

Creator

Neil Edwards (1939-2003)

Extent

Number of containers: 12 ring-binder boxes + 12 archive boxes + 1 oversize box
Linear feet: 5.3 linear feet

Date

Circa 1950-circa 1970 (bulk 1964-1969)

Repository

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Abstract

474 photographic prints and 3910 slides created circa 1964-1969 by male physique photographer Neil Edwards, as well as 420 photographs and 906 slides collected by Edwards and created circa 1950-1970 by Athletic Model Guild, Bruce of Los Angeles, Calafra Enterprises, Champion Studios, Jay Mitchell, and Times Square Studio, and others. The collection also includes Edwards' business records, including model releases and notes on models, miscellaneous physique publications, 1958-1968, and erotic drawings and writings.



Administrative Information

Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish material must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as the physical owner and copyright holder.

Preferred Citation

Box #, folder #, Neil Edwards Photography Collection, Coll2007-003, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Indexing Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms:

Names:

Edwards, Neil, 1939-2003
Athletic Model Guild
Bruce of Los Angeles
Calafran Enterprises
Champion Studios
Conrad
Jay Mitchell
Star Fire Studios
Times Square Studio

Subjects:

Photographers—United States

Genres:

Gay erotic literature
Gay erotic photography
Photography of men
Photography of the nude



Neil Edwards Photography Collection, Coll2007-003

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Scott Wachtler.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Robert Graves, September 2005-December 2006. Finding aid edited by Michael Palmer, March 2007.

Biography

Neil Edwards was born George Elliot McNeil on February 11, 1939, to George Elliot McNeil and Elizabeth McKinney, and was raised in Virginia. His parents also had a daughter, whose name is not known. His mother eventually divorced her husband, who was said to have “tormented” her and their children. As an adult, the younger George Elliot McNeil legally changed his name to Neil Edwards to avoid any connection with his father’s name. Neil adored his mother, who went on to marry another man, Wilbur Peck.

Little is known of Neil’s formative years. After leaving Virginia, he moved to New York City and took a few classes in computers and arts at the City College of New York. During this period he also worked as a set designer on Broadway summer stock productions, where he met prominent entertainers such as Marlene Dietrich, Carol Channing, and Barbra Streisand.

Along with contemporaries such as Bob Mizer’s Athletic Model Guild, Walter Kundzicz’s Champion Studios, and more independent photographers such as David of Cleveland, Bruce of Los Angeles, Edwards played a part in creating the mid-twentieth century phenomenon known as physique photography. Intended to skirt and evade censors of the time, physique photography was designed to produce erotic photographs of male and female models for consumers who could not obtain such materials from any other source. Physique photographers utilized any loophole they could find to produce, release, and distribute their product. Early models were photographed with skimpy posing straps, and photographs, catalogs and magazines of nude or near-nude models were released with editorial commentary suggesting that the photos were produced to satisfy the interests of naturists, fans of sport and bodybuilding, or budding human form artists.

Edwards’ work as a physique photographer appears to have fallen between the years of 1964 and 1969, when he lived in Philadelphia: the earliest model release in the collection is dated March 1964, the latest January 1969. Mailings for his studio and model releases from this period also give a studio address in New York City, so it is believed he split his time between the two cities. It is not known how Edwards came to be a physique photographer. His associate, Scott Wachtler, believes that photography was a hobby for Edwards and that he entered the field of physique photography in the belief that he could do a better job than those currently in the field.

At the height of his photographic productivity, Edwards’ work appeared in the pages of and on the covers of several male fitness magazines, including *The Young Physique* and *Muscleboy*, some of which are represented in this collection. Edwards also is known to have produced one periodical showcasing his work exclusively, *The Edwardians*, of which three or four issues were published, and possibly one other magazine, *Blueboy* (long preceding the better-known, gay erotic photography magazine of the same name), which featured a male model posed in the same fashion as John Singer Sargent’s *Blueboy* painting.

Wachtler does not believe that Edwards was a standard portrait photographer during his time as a physique photographer. However, his collection contains several examples of portrait and other

photography, and he may have worked on a commission basis during this time, taking standard photographs for friends or paying clients.

As with other photographers of the day, Edwards' work started out tame, with models wearing posing straps and rarely touching themselves, and progressed to more obviously erotic work in later years, with models fully nude, sometimes shown touching themselves and on some occasions posed with other male models in tame but sexually suggestive situations.

Eventually, Edwards was targeted by the Philadelphia District Attorney, Arlen Specter, for his physique photography work. Edwards' home was raided by police, who confiscated all his photographic equipment, most of his film, and his mail-order lists. Edwards was not arrested, nor was he ever charged for a crime. However, he petitioned for over a year for the return of his equipment. At one point, he was told the equipment had been lost, and eventually he was told that the raid never took place. This loss ruined Edwards financially, forcing him to go on public welfare, and depressed him emotionally, eventually resulting in a nervous breakdown that saw him committed to New York's Bellevue Hospital for a short time. It is unknown precisely when this raid occurred; however, Edwards' photographic output ceased abruptly in 1969.

Edwards never took up professional photography again, and instead took a job with American Airlines, eventually developing the company's SABRE computer reservation system. When American asked Edwards to move to Texas, he refused and was bought out of his contract. Edwards used the money to move to Tampa, Florida, where he opened a restaurant, Neil's, which was popular with locals, but did not make enough money to sustain itself and ended in bankruptcy. Edwards then went to work as an art critic for a local classical music radio station. It was there that he developed a computer software program, Music Director, that automatically scheduled classical music for radio stations all over the country. In 1989, he created the company Broadcast Data Consultants, the firm where he met Wachtler.

Edwards' sister died in the mid 1990s of lung disease, and his mother and stepfather died in the late 1990s. Edwards himself died in Clearwater, Florida, on December 16, 2003, of the hereditary lung condition, pulmonary fibrosis, which may also have been the cause of his sister's death.

Source: Scott Wachtler

Index of Models Photographed or Distributed by Neil Edwards

Adams, Ted	Gelder, Hans	Payne, Bill
Alexander	Hamilton, Steve	Peterson, Alan
Allen, David	Hammel, Chuck	Peterson, Jerry
Anderson, Steve	Harding, Ken	Pettit, Keith
Antoine, Jacques	Harrigan, Tim	Powell, Wayne
Arnold, Hank	Hastings, Bill	Powers, Drake
Baillard, Rupe	Idol, Brian	Price, Ernie
Baker, Bill	Jackson, Brad	Primavera, Dennis
Barnes, Chip	Jefferson, Jim	Primavera, Tony
Basco, Tony	Jensen, Peter	Randall, Ed
Bouchard, Andre	Jordan, Trey	Richardson, Mike
Bucholz, Dirk	Keeler, Ronnie	Roberts, Barry
Byers, John	Kelly, Jack	Rodriguez, Manuel
Carlton, John	Kirby, Don	Rogers, Ian
Carroll, Larry	Koenig, Walt	Rogers, Johnny
Castor, Eric	Larson, Ernie	Sanford, David
Chamberlain, Peter	Little Joe	Scali, Vince
Cokos, Alex	Lloyd, Joseph	Shephard, Phil
Collins, Rick	Lunstead, Tom	Stevens, Ricky
D'Amboise, Gregg	Marshall, Gary	Stewart, Marty
Devereux, Rick	Martin, Peter	Sullivan, Jerry
Dougherty, Rich	Mason, Alan	Swanson, Ted
Douglas, Bill	McCauley, Don	Tallchief, Joe
Estes, Jimmy	McDonald, Bruce	Talley, Mat
Evans, Brett	Miller, Ed	Todd, Charles
Falkenburg, Lance	Mitchell, Jay	Weiss, Kurt
Farrell, Trate	Müller, Franz	Whyte, Lee
Fredericks, Karl	O'Neil, Tony	Williams, Dennis
Gavin, Chuck,	O'Shea, Tim	Williams, Ronnie

Scope and Content

The collection consists of the 474 photographic prints and 3910 slides created by male physique photographer Neil Edwards, as well as materials created by Edwards in the course of his work, and photographs and magazines he collected throughout his life. In addition to physique photographs, the collection contains slide images of vacations and other trips taken by Edwards. The materials pertaining to Edwards' photography business include model and employment releases, notes by Edwards concerning his models, and brochures and catalogs for Edwards' studio. Among the other studios and well-known photographers whose images (420 photographs and 906 slides) Edwards collected are Athletic Model Guild, Bruce of Los Angeles, Champion Studios, Calafra Enterprises, Jay Mitchell, and Times Square Studio; the identifiable nude models include Rudolf Nureyev, Burt Lancaster, Ray Fuller, and Jim Stryker. Printed materials in the collection include bound volumes of *The Young Physique* (1958-1966), *Demi-Gods* (1961-1963), and *Muscleboy* (1963-1966); unbound issues of magazines and other publications; erotic drawings; and gay erotic short stories.

Series Descriptions and Container Lists

Series 1. Photographic Works by Neil Edwards

Dates: circa 1964-circa 1969

Extent: 12 ring-binder boxes + 1 oversize box (1.9 linear feet); 474 photographs, 3910 slides (including 231 stereoscopic slides), and 2 negatives

This series consists of work known or believed to be produced by Neil Edwards. Edwards released his work primarily in photographic prints and slides, which were usually sold in photosets or slidesets of 5 or 6. These photos and slides were usually identified with a rubber stamp by model name and photoset number and sequence number (e.g. on a slide, the stamp "Marty Stewart 4-5" would indicate this was the fifth image in the fourth slideset of model Marty Stewart). Sample images sent to potential buyers would be stamped with the model's name and the letter "S." Edwards also produced a large number of "bonus" slides of his models. In most cases, these would be identified as above, but with the model's name and a letter and digit sequence such as "X-4." These slides often were more sexually explicit, showing a model masturbating or having sex with another model, and were probably either produced solely for Edwards' own benefit or quietly sold to buyers that Edwards felt he could trust. No mention of these "bonus" slides is ever made in Edwards' regular catalogs or advertisements.

At some point during Edwards' period of strongest productivity, he purchased the rights to photographs produced by a studio called Starfire Studios, and began distributing their work with his own "Neil Edwards" stamp. With little identification given between Starfire's work and Edwards', it is unclear if any of Starfire's photographs may be incorrectly credited to Edwards within this collection.

Edwards also produced slide images of vacations and other trips he took. A few notable destinations and other images in his collection include: a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans (date unknown); Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Munich, and Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany; Brussels, Belgium; China and Hong Kong; Luray Caverns, Virginia; Flushing Meadows, New York, and London; as well images of the flags of thirty-five gay motorcycle clubs.

The series comprises 4 ring-binder boxes of photographic prints, ranging in size from 2" x 3" Polaroids to 8" x 10" prints, and 1 oversize box of 11" x 14" prints; 7 ring-binder boxes of 2" x 2" slides; 1 ring-binder box of stereoscopic slides; and several folders of paper materials pertaining to his photography business, including model and employment releases signed by Edwards and/or his models and employees; notes maintained by Edwards on his models, including vital statistics, critical descriptions of models' attributes, impressions Edwards had of their model potential, who may have referred them to Edwards, etc.; a small amount of correspondence to and from Edwards; and brochures and catalogs for Edwards' studio and Starfire Studios.

Box Sheet

1-4, 13	Photographs, circa 1964-circa 1969
1	Models: Alexander – Brett Evans 48 sheets; 90 images
2	Models: Trate Farrell – Garry Marshall 52 sheets; 101 images
3	Models: Peter Martin – Ricky Stevens 63 sheets; 121 images
4	Models: Jerry Sullivan – Dennis Williams 50 sheets; 87 images, plus 44 polaroids of unidentified models (sheets 45-49) and 2 5” x 4” color negatives of Erik Neilson (sheet 50)
13	Oversize (11” x 14”) and mounted prints 31 photographs
5-12	Slides, circa 1964-circa 1969
5	Models: Ted Adams – Alex Cokos 24 sheets; 467 slides
6	Models: Rick Collins – Chuck Hammel 30 sheets; 589 slides
7	Models: Ken Harding – Alan Mason 24 sheets; 471 slides
8	Models: Don McCauley – Tony Primavera 28 sheets; 529 slides
9	Models: Ed Randall – Marty Stewart 27 sheets; 535 slides
10	Models: Marty Stewart – Ronnie Williams 28 sheets; 560 slides
11	Stereoscopic slides. Models: Rupe Baillard – Mat Talley, circa 1964-1969 24 sheets; 231 slides
12 1-4	Models identified by a single name only 4 sheets; 75 slides
12 5-27	Vacation slides 23 sheets; 418 slides
12 28-29	Gay motorcycle club flags 2 sheets; 35 slides

Series 2. Photographic Works by Others

Dates: circa 1950-circa 1970

Extent: 6 ring-binder boxes (1.1 linear feet); 420 photographs, 906 slides, 108 playing cards

This series consists of photographs and slides produced by other photographers and collected by Edwards. Like many other physique photographers, Edwards was also a collector of gay erotic photographs and slides produced by others. Included are: 4 ring-binder boxes of photographic prints, ranging in size from 2” x 3” to 8” x 10”, as well as 2 decks of playing cards featuring nude male models; and 2 ring-binder boxes of 2” x 2” slides and unmounted slide transparencies. Studios and well-known photographers represented in the series include Athletic Model Guild, Bruce of Los Angeles, Champion Studios, Calafra Enterprises, Jay Mitchell, and Times Square

Studio. Identifiable nude models represented include Rudolf Nureyev, Burt Lancaster, Ray Fuller, and Jim Stryker. The series also includes photographic or slide reproductions of drawings by erotic artists such as Conrad, whose work Edwards distributed.

Box Sheet

14-17		Photographs, circa 1950-circa 1970
14		Photographer, studio or model name identified
14	1	Perkins Agency 1 sheet; 1 photograph
14	2-21	Athletic Model Guild (AMG) 20 sheets; 79 photographs
14	22-32	Bruce of Los Angeles 11 sheets; 41 photographs
14	33-34	Jean Ferrero 2 sheets; 5 photographs
14	35	Jim Stryker (model) 1 sheet; 1 photograph
14	36-44	Erotic drawings by Conrad of Neil Edwards Studios 9 sheets; 18 photographic reproductions
14	45-56	Erotic playing cards 12 sheets; 2 decks (108 cards), 1 action, 1 solo
15-17		Unidentified
15		Unidentified photographs 47 sheets; 52 photographs
16		Unidentified photographs 42 sheets; 127 photographs
17		Unidentified photographs 57 sheets; 96 photographs
18-19		Slides, circa 1950-circa 1970
18		Photographer, studio or model name identified 21 sheets; 366 slides
19		Unidentified
19	1-22	Mounted slides 22 sheets; 427 slides
19	23-30	Unmounted slides 7 sheets; 113 slides

Series 3. Printed Matter

Dates: circa 1950-1970

Extent: 6 archive boxes (2.3 linear feet)

This series contains printed materials collected by Edwards. These include 7 bound volumes of magazines, including complete runs of the magazines *The Young Physique* from 1958 to 1966, *Demi-Gods* from 1961 to 1963, and *Muscleboy* from 1963 to 1966 (the first and last of these magazines published Edwards' work, as well as ads for his mail order service, beginning in 1964); 44 issues of magazines and other publications; wall calendars for 1966 and 1967 that

include brief notes from Edwards on appointments during those years; erotic drawings by unidentified artists; numerous gay erotic short stories by unidentified authors; a gay dating service questionnaire; and scrapbook collages of nude men compiled by Edwards.

Box Folder

20-22		Periodicals (bound)
20	1	<i>Young Physique</i> , vol. 1, no. 1 – vol. 2, no. 5 (1958-1960)
20	2	<i>Young Physique</i> , vol. 2, no. 6 – vol. 3, no. 5 / <i>Demi-Gods</i> , vol. 1, nos. 1-5, 1961
20	3	<i>Young Physique / Demi-Gods</i> , 1962
21	1	<i>Young Physique / Muscleboy</i> , 1963
21	2	<i>Young Physique / Muscleboy</i> , 1964
22	1	<i>Young Physique / Muscleboy</i> , 1965
22	2	<i>Young Physique / Muscleboy</i> , 1966
23-24		Unbound magazines and publications
23	1	<i>Basic Approach to Drawing the Male Nudist</i> , no. 6
23	2	<i>Basic Approach to Drawing the Nude</i> , v. 4, Body Builders
23	3	<i>Butch</i> , no. 2 (1965)
23	4	<i>Butch</i> , no. 3 (1965)
23	5	<i>Butch</i> , no. 4 (1966)
23	6	<i>Champ</i> , no. 2 (March 1961) Page 5/6 damaged
23	7	<i>David</i> , vol. 2, no. 10 (August-September 1972)
23	8	<i>Gay</i> , no. 2
23	9	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 1 (1967)
23	10	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 2 (1967)
23	11	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 3 (1967)
23	12	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 4 (1967)
23	13	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 5 (1968)
23	14	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 6 (1968)
23	15	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 7 (1968)
23	16	<i>Golden Boys</i> , no. 8 (1968)
23	17	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 1 (1964)
23	18	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 2 (1964)
23	19	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 3 (1964)
23	20	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 4 (1964)
23	21	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 5 (1964)
23	22	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 6 (1964)
23	23	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 7 (1964)
23	24	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 8 (1964)
23	25	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 9 (1965)
23	26	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 10 (1965)
23	27	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 11 (1965)
23	28	<i>International Nudist Sun</i> , no. 12 (1965)

23	29	<i>Leather Men</i> , no. 1 (1969)
24	1	<i>Like, Young</i> , no. 2 (1967)
24	2	<i>Like, Young</i> , no. 3 (1967)
24	3	<i>Male Classics Annual 1965</i>
24	4	<i>Male Nudist Portfolio</i> , no. 4 (1966)
24	5	<i>Male Nudist Portfolio</i> , no. 5 (1966)
24	6	<i>Male Nudist Portfolio</i> , no. 6 (1966)
24	7	<i>Manpower!</i> no. 1 (1969)
24	8	<i>Physique Pictorial</i> , vol. 11, no. 2 (November 1961)
24	9	<i>Physique Pictorial</i> , vol. 13, no. 4 (May 1964)
24	10	<i>Physique Pictorial</i> , vol. 15, no. 3 (June 1966)
24	11	<i>Stud</i> , no. 2 (1967)
24	12	<i>Stud</i> , no. 3 (1967)
24	13	<i>Tiger</i> , no. 1 (1965)
24	14	<i>Timárcus Studio Drawings</i> , no. 1, Impressions of “Song of the Loon” (1967)
24	15	<i>Tomorrow’s Man</i> , vol. 14, no. 9 (August 1966)
24	16	<i>Wonder Boy</i> , no. 5
25		Papers and other materials
25	1	Brochures, catalogues – Neil Edwards and Starfire Studios, circa 1964-1969
25	2-3	Correspondence, 1965-1968
25	2	Bernard Brandt (a.k.a. Ernie Larson) to Neil Edwards, 1965
25	3	Neil Edwards to Jeff Sammons (model scout), 1968
25	4	Model and employment releases, 1964-1969
25	5	Notes on models, circa 1964-1969
25	6	Calendars, 1966-1967
25	7	Erotic drawing by unknown artist of sailor at glory hole, circa 1950-1970
25	8-30	Erotic fiction (unless otherwise indicated, author unidentified), circa 1950-1970
25	8	“Angelo” 41 pages
25	9	“Bail-out” 11 pages
25	10	“Bobby and the Devil” 17 pages
25	11	“The Confession of a French Stenographer” 8 pages
25	12	“Dear Denny”, by Phil 4 pages
25	13	“Dear Phil”, by Denny 2 pages
25	14	“Dear Steve”, by Donald 3 pages
25	15	“Dear Tom”, by Jack 7 pages
25	16	“Everyone is Jewish When You’re In Love”

25	17	5 pages, text includes erotic drawings “Incest”
25	18	2 pages, text includes erotic drawings “Interlude on an Express”
25	19	3 pages “Intimate Interviews”, by Ralph A. Storm
25	20	23 pages “The Marines and the Situation”
25	21	2 pages “My Eighteenth Summer”
25	22	3 pages; 7 copies “One Autumn Afternoon”, by Jeff (?)
25	23	18 pages “Peaches and Cream”
25	24	9 pages “The Perils of Hitch-hiking”
25	25	5 pages “Saturday Trips”, by Jeff (?)
25	26	23 pages “Telephone Linemen”
25	27	9 pages “Two Lads and a Lake”
25	28	23 pages Untitled [“Barry and Dudley met...”]
25	29	9 pages Untitled [“It had been a rather wild...”]
25	30	4 pages Untitled [“When John came home...”]
25	31	3 pages Greeting cards, circa 1960-1970
25	32	Humor: “Gay Word Descriptions [sic]”, circa 1960 1 page
25	33	Humor, “Songs That Mother Never Taught Us”, circa 1960 1 page
25	34	Man-to-Man dating service questionnaire, circa 1970
25	35	Scrapbook photo collages, circa 1960-1970