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• TRUSTEE PHOTO
• J. Irwin Miller
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Artnet News
7/6/05

ROTHSCHILD COLLECTION OFF MISSION: MAG

The art world cheerfully encouraged Harvey Shipley Miller, the sole trustee of the \$30-million Judith Rothschild Foundation, when he went on a year-long spending spree, buying approximately 2,600 drawings by contemporary artists for a total sum estimated at \$10 million. That's fast work -- almost seven drawings a day. Connoisseurship issues aside, the Museum of Modern Art, where Miller is also a trustee, happily accepted the trove earlier this year, describing it as "the widest possible cross section of contemporary drawing made primarily within the past 20 years" [see Artnet News, June 1, 2005].

But now, Art on Paper magazine notes that Miller's largesse -- dubbed a "special discretionary initiative" -- may well fall outside the boundaries of the foundation's stated mission. In a news story titled "Embarrassment of Riches," the July-August issue of the magazine notes that the Rothschild Foundation was established "to stimulate interest in recently deceased American painters, sculptors and photographers whose work is of the highest quality but lacks wide recognition." No surprise, really -- Rothschild herself, an abstract artist who died in 1993 at age 71, never received much attention for her paintings during her lifetime.

The Rothschild Foundation's ordinary grants, in fact, are considerably more modest -- a mere \$5,000 to \$20,000. In 2005, the foundation awarded over \$260,000 to 22 projects in its special Judith Rothschild grant program, including an exhibition of works by Francesca Woodman at the American Academy in Rome, the purchase of a 1974 work by Douglas Huebler by the Walker Art Center, the Aperture monograph on photojournalist Esther Bubley and the Dia Art Foundation's cataloguing of work by the late sculptor Fred Sandback. According to its 2003 tax record (the most recent on file), the Rothschild Foundation also gave grants totaling more than \$1.3 million to a wide variety of art museums and projects.

Art on Paper reports that in 2003 Miller spent \$140,000 on travel related to assembling the drawing collection alone, and the foundation's tax return lists another \$35,000 in expenses related to the collection. (The foundation also hosted one of the exclusive A-list parties, held at the five-star Hotel Cipriani on the Giudecca Island, during the vernissage for the 51st Venice Biennale.) Public documents show that Miller, who stays rent-free on the third floor of the foundation's four-story Park Avenue townhouse, takes home over \$230,000 a year for the job.

<http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/news/artnetnews2/artnetnews7-6-05.asp>

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<http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/news/artnetnews2/artnetnews7-6-05.asp>

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Trustee Emeritus 1984

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MILLER, J. Irwin

Trustee Emeritus 1984

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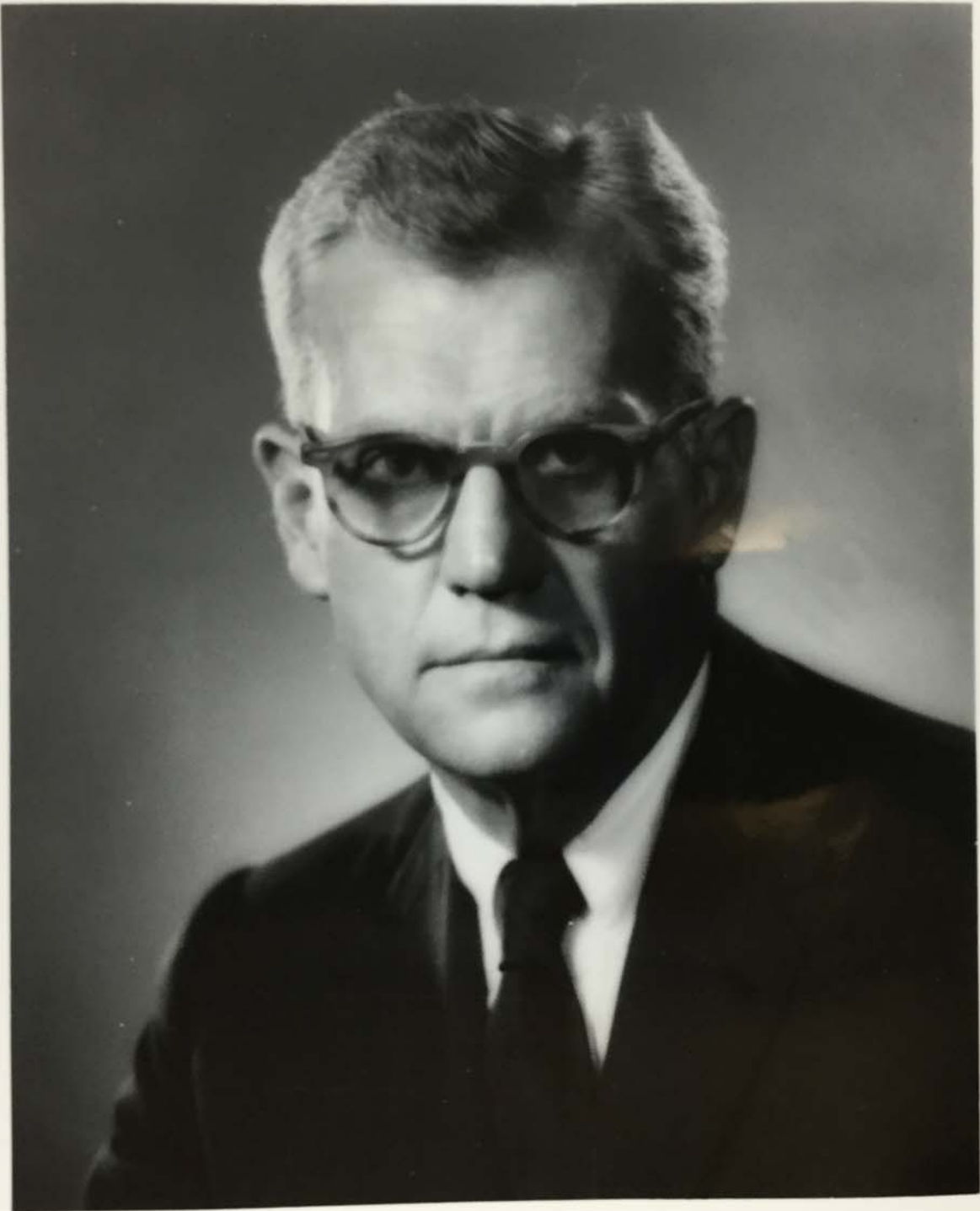
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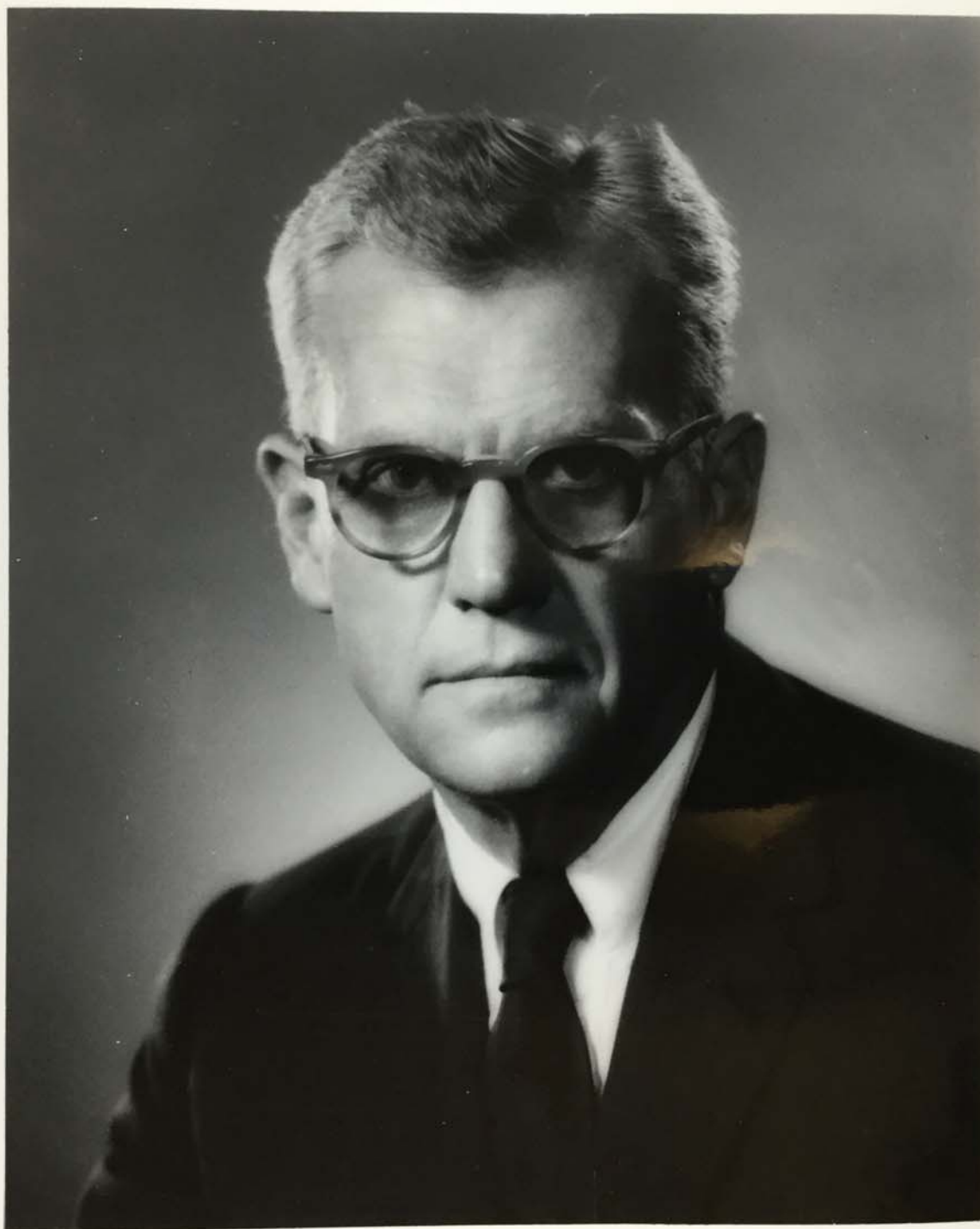
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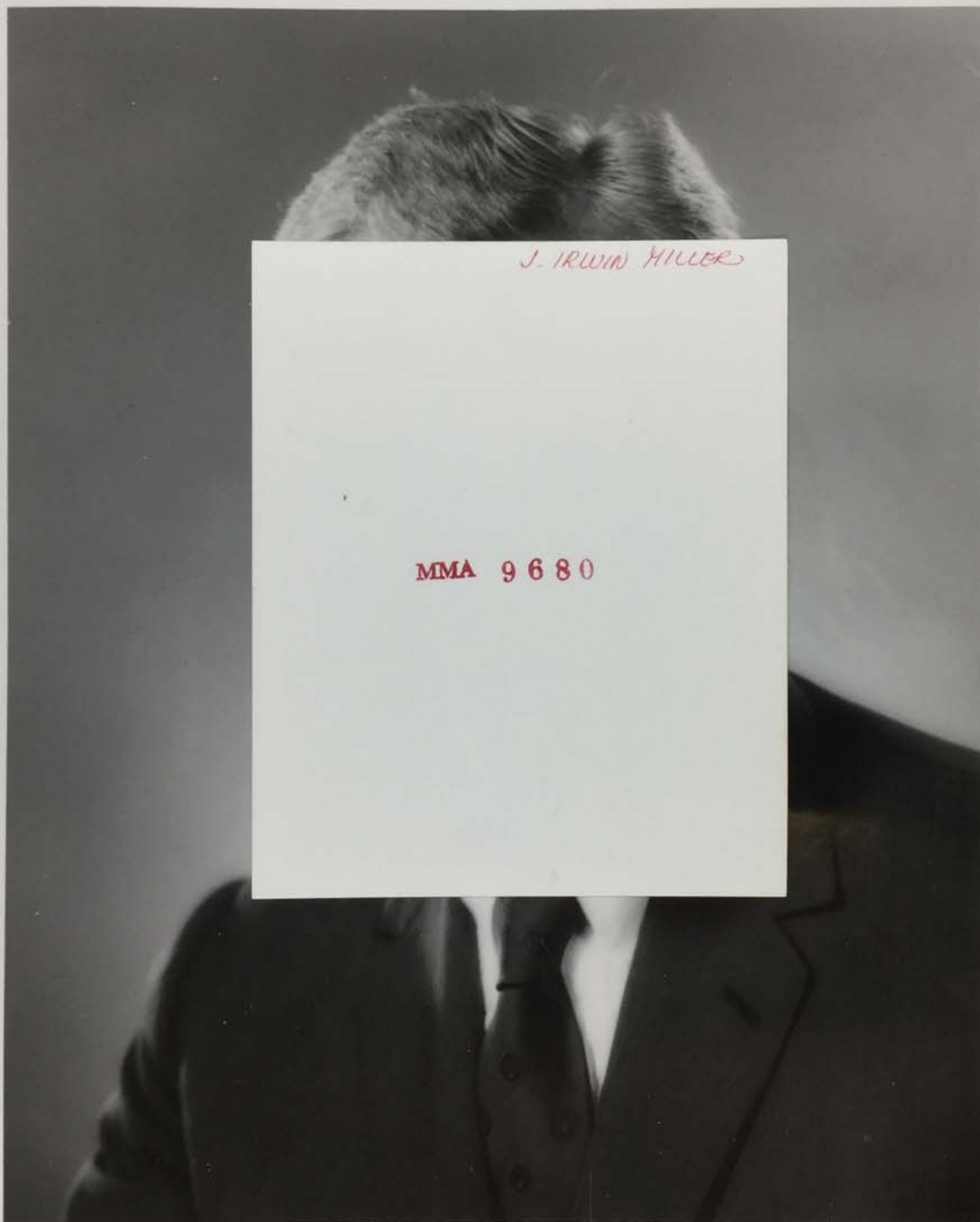
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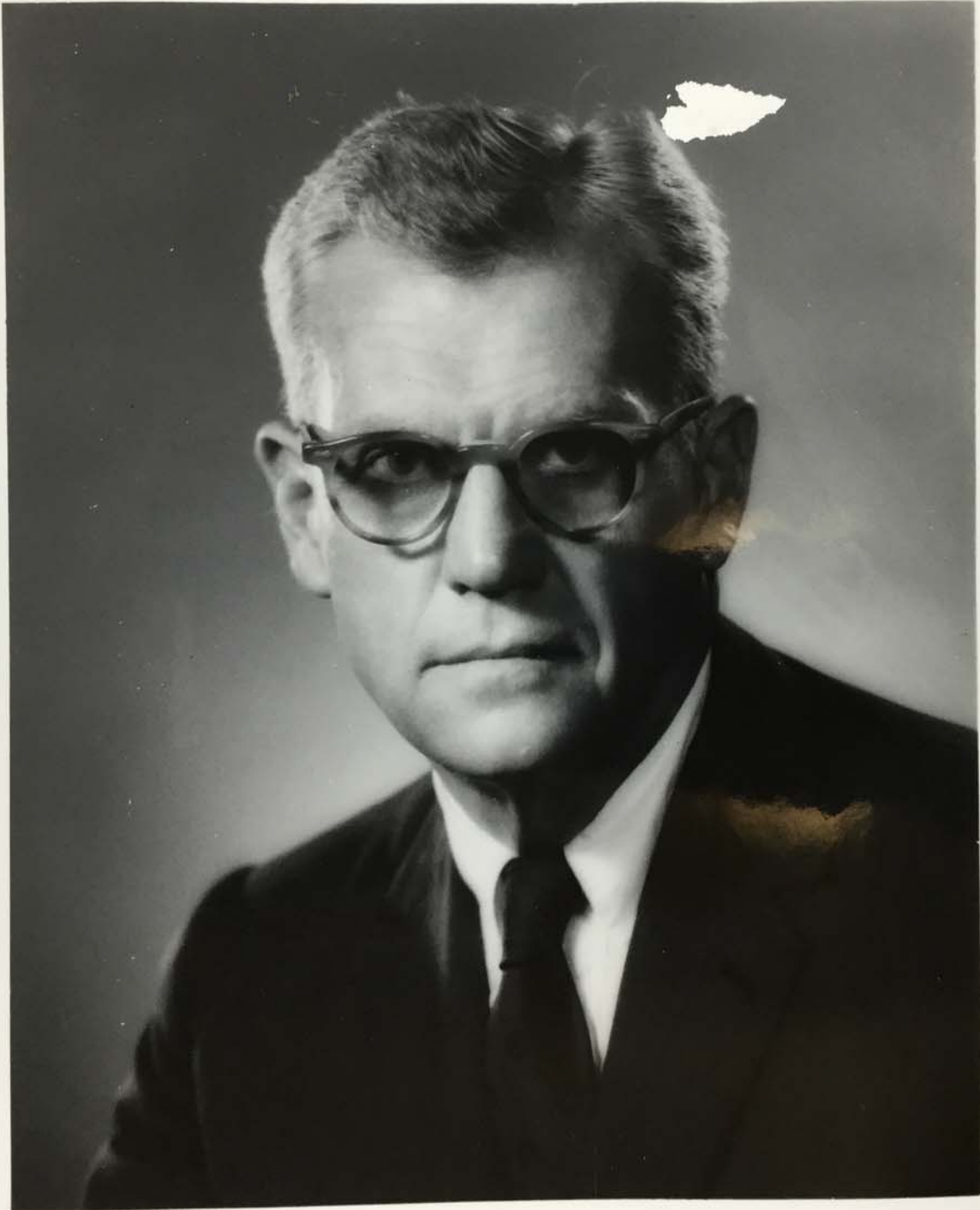
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