The Modern Spirit Exhibition Overview: Amassing an art collection for the intent on sharing it with the public, Edward Gallagher established a lasting memorial for his son through his donation to the UAMA of almost 200 modern works of art. This persistent effort to bring world-class art to the University of campus enabled the conception of the UAMA.

Gallagher’s wish was to create a lasting memorial for his young son, who died in a tragic accident, by establishing a Modern art collection to be enjoyed by future generations.

Gallagher had an eye for the top contemporary artists in the world, stressing that he did not just buy names—rather he sought works that the masses would enjoy. He communicated with dealers, sought advice from his friends, and traveled to artist studios—some of them well-known, and some not. Between 1954 and 1978, almost 200 works of art were delivered periodically to the museum. Gallagher also established collections at the Baltimore Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the MOMA.

LOOK:

Look at the UAMA exterior entrance.

• What do you notice? Describe what you see.
• Imagine you did not know this was an art museum. How does the building invite you inside? How does the building not invite you in?
• What mood would you associate with this building? Why?

DISCUSS:

What is a museum?

• What is a museum? What museums have you visited?
• What things might one see in a museum?
• Why are there museums? What purpose do they have in our community?

What is a collection?

• Why do people collect things? What do you collect, why?
• Would you have purchased this work (look at an example from Gallagher collection at UAMA) for your collection? Why, why not?
• What worth does it have being displayed in a public museum?
• Where would you display this work if you owned it?
• Does its sense of value (cultural or monetary) change depending on where it is displayed? Why?

DO:

Activity 1: Before you enter the museum, draw the exterior entrance to the UAMA. Drawing helps you look closer at the visual elements we might otherwise miss.

Activity 2: Make a list of the works from The Modern Spirit collection that you would purchase if possible. Draw where these works might be displayed. What room would they be in? What furniture, objects, and other artwork would be next to them?