

An Abundant Legacy: Celebrating the UAMA Collections

Celebrating a half-century of change and growth at the University of Arizona Museum of Art, *An Abundant Legacy* highlights the instrumental vision of our directors and the generosity of our patrons who have together made the holdings so extraordinary. The exhibition surveys the story of the collections — one of collaboration and shared vision, private passions and public commitment, gifts of extraordinary largesse in perpetuity, and single irreplaceable gems.

Organized chronologically by directorship, the exhibition highlights major gifts and acquisitions to reveal the myriad relationships — local, national and international; individual; and institutional — that are instrumental in sustaining, enriching and promoting the Museum as a resource for Tucson's communities and the world at large.

In the Pfeiffer Gallery

The presentation in the Pfeiffer Gallery opens with the "Foundational Years" (1940 through 1956), during which the aggregate generosity of individual donors (capped by two remarkable gifts from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1961) provided irrefutable need for a permanent home for the collections. In 1942, when an art museum for the University was first conceived (initially as the "UA Art Gallery"), the total student enrollment numbered only 2,523 with a faculty of 286.



c. 1956, UA collections move from the Old Library to the current Museum of Art.

During this early period, as Director of the Collection and Head of the UA Art Department, Andreas S. "Pete" Anderson (his portrait of his wife, *Susan*, is presented here) supervised the burgeoning UA holdings. With hands-on assistance from the arts faculty, he organized small exhibitions in the Old Library (now the Arizona State Museum) in the reading rooms adjacent to the studio art classrooms.



Robert M. Church

On view are several groupings, selected to represent the many outstanding gifts made to the University during this period. These include a small sample of fine art prints from the WPA/FAP, dispersed by the government after the dissolution of the New Deal programs; selections from the holdings of generous private collectors; and an ambitious collection gift, designed to enhance the culture of Tucson and inspire other like-minded patrons.

The exhibition in the Pfeiffer Gallery continues through the tenure of Robert M. Church (1924 - 1966), who, as Director of the UA Art Gallery from 1957 to 1961, shepherded nearly 150 objects into the collections. Before arriving at the UA, Mr. Church served as the assistant to the president of the California College of Arts and Crafts; as the curator of the San Francisco Museum of Art; and as the director of the Philbrook Art Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma. At the time of his death, Mr. Church was professor of Creative Arts and director of the Art Gallery of the San Francisco State College.