

A close-up photograph of a white marble sculpture by Ivan Meštrović. The sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. Mary's face is serene and slightly downward-looking, with her eyes closed. Her hands are positioned to cradle the child. The child's head is bowed, and his face is also serene. The lighting is soft, highlighting the smooth texture of the marble. The background is a dark, solid color.

IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ
AT NOTRE DAME



IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ AT NOTRE DAME

Selected Campus Sculptures

SNITE MUSEUM OF ART

University of Notre Dame

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Diana C. Matthias

Charles R. Loving






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Visitors to Notre Dame are encouraged to visit campus sites which feature Meštrović sculptures. Numbers one through fifteen below are highly recommended and are located in or outside of buildings that are generally open to the public during the day. True aficionados might seek out sculptures sixteen through twenty-one; however, these buildings are farther from the center of campus, and entrance doors are usually locked.

 = recommended

 = suggested



ECK VISITORS' CENTER

-  1 Swinson Madonna
-  2 Madonna and Child
-  3 Seated Figure/
Meditation
-  4 Self-portrait
-  5 Christ on the Cross



SNITE MUSEUM OF ART

-  6 Self-portrait
-  7 Mother
-  8 Ashbaugh Madonna
-  9 Persephone and
Dionysius
-  10 Last Self-portrait

O'SHAUGHNESSY HALL

-  11 Christ on the Cross
-  12 Shaheen-Meštrović
Memorial



BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART

-  13 Pieta
-  14 Return of the
Prodigal Son



HESBURGH LIBRARY

-  15 Moses


LEWIS HALL

-  16 Madonna and Child
-  17 Christ on the Cross

STANFORD HALL

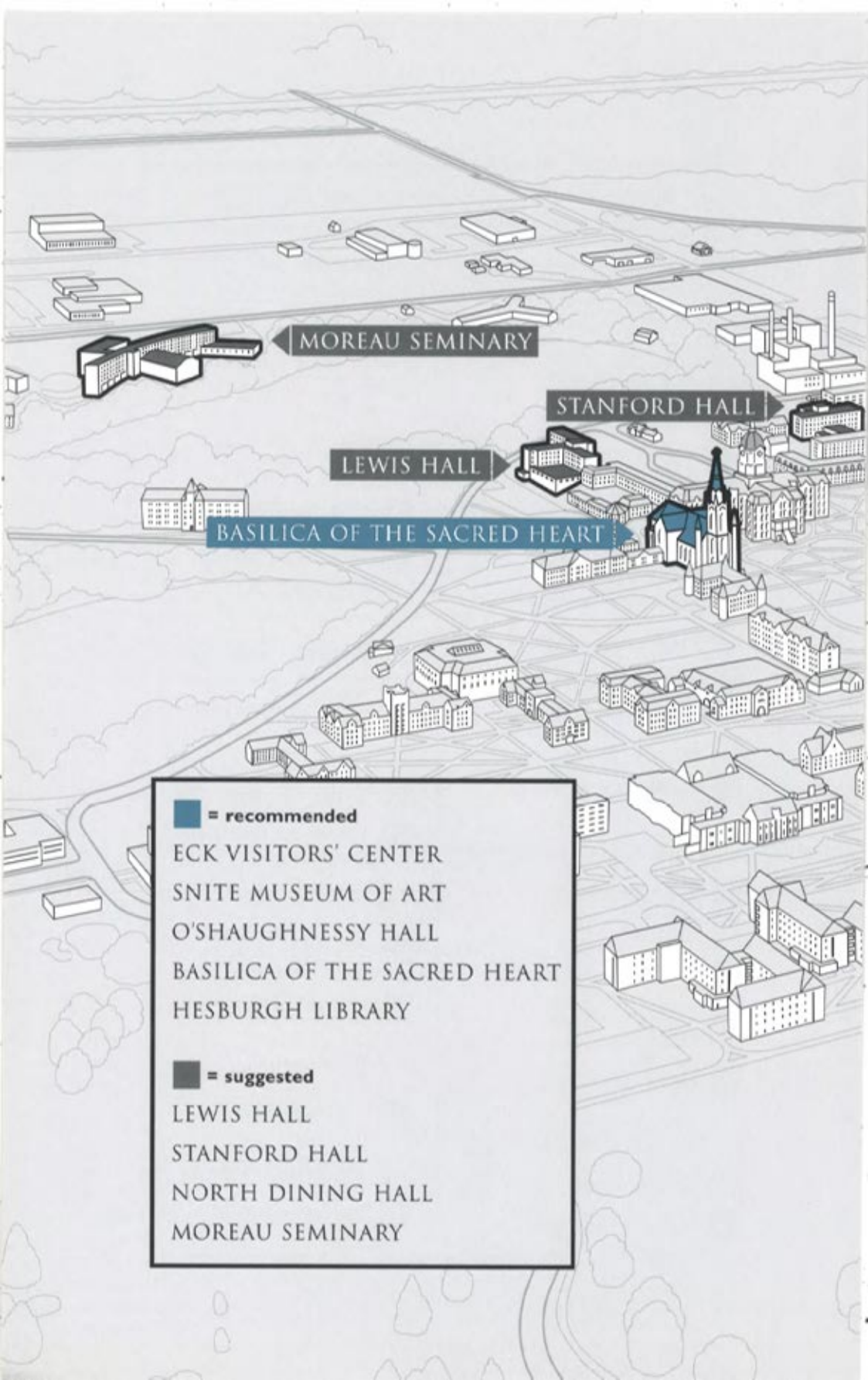
-  18 Young Christ Teaching
in the Temple
-  19 Christ on the Cross

NORTH DINING HALL

-  20 The Last Supper

MOREAU SEMINARY

-  21 Portrait of Basil A. Moreau



MOREAU SEMINARY

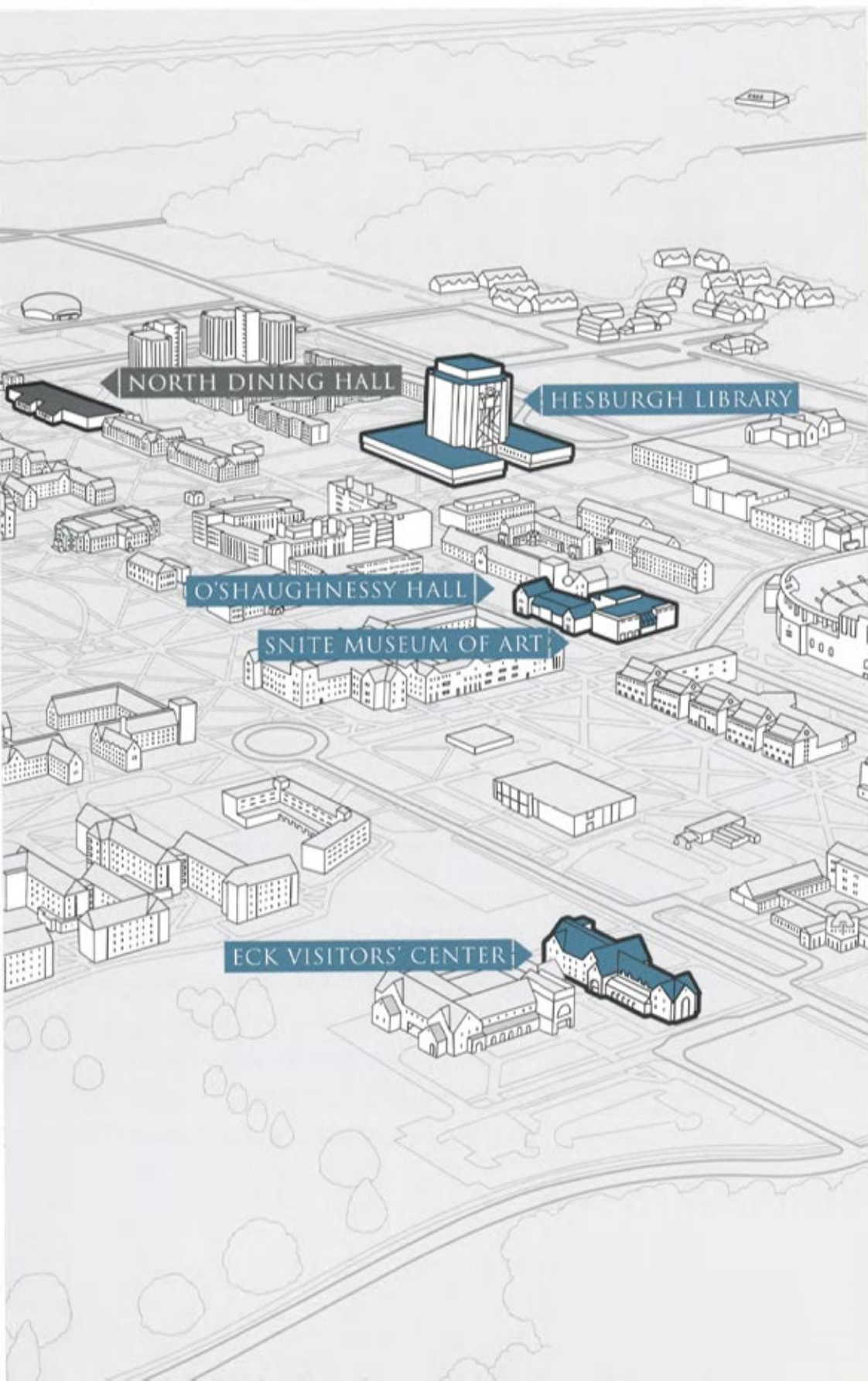
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BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART

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 SNITE MUSEUM OF ART
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 BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART
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 LEWIS HALL
 STANFORD HALL
 NORTH DINING HALL
 MOREAU SEMINARY



NORTH DINING HALL

HESBURGH LIBRARY

O'SHAUGHNESSY HALL

SNITE MUSEUM OF ART

ECK VISITORS' CENTER

Modern interest in public sculpture at Notre Dame began, largely, when Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, invited Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović to campus in 1955. Hesburgh was encouraged in this endeavor by Rev. Anthony J. Lauck, CSC, founding director of the Snite Museum, chair of the art department, and a sculptor. Meštrović sculpted and taught at Notre Dame for seven years, until his death in 1962. His artistic legacy for this brief period can be seen at many campus locations, most of which are represented in this guidebook.

Meštrović's influence at Notre Dame extends beyond his own works on campus. An example is the sculpture *Moses*, created by his student Joseph Turkalj, outside the west entrance of the Hesburgh Library. Indeed, Notre Dame's modern taste for public sculpture is largely rooted in the Meštrović years. Another manifestation of his influence is the Snite Museum's interest in collecting sculpture representing sculptural movements during and after Meštrović's lifetime—20th-century and contemporary sculpture. Sculptors represented in the Museum include William Zorach, George Rickey, Theodore Roszak, Alexander Calder, Peter Voulkos, John Chamberlain, Isamu Noguchi, Reuben Nakian, Richard Hunt, Duane Hansen, George Segal, Kenneth Snelson, and Chakaia Booker.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication is made possible by a generous gift from Pat and Johnna Cashill. As an undergraduate Cashill was, as were and are so many others, "thrilled by the majesty of the works of Ivan Meštrović." Therefore, the Snite Museum and the University of Notre Dame are deeply indebted to the Cashills for making this guidebook possible.

We are also grateful to Robert B. McCormick, Ph.D., and Newman University for graciously allowing us to reprint his excellent article describing Meštrović in the context of his contemporaries. McCormick is an assistant professor of history at the University of South Carolina, Spartanburg. Notre Dame art professor and sculptor Rev. James F. Flanigan, CSC, prepared the introduction; Curator of Education, Academic Programs, Diana Matthias has long admired and studied the Maestro's sculpture, and we thank her for the catalog entries; Stephen Moriarty photographed the sculptures; Anne Taaffe Mills edited the text; and assistant professor of design Robert P. Sedlack very ably brought all of these elements together with his handsome book design. Notre Dame is especially grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh, Jr. for providing funds for key acquisitions, such as the *Ashbaugh Madonna*, *Mother*, and the collection of Olga Meštrović.

Charles R. Loving
Director and Curator of Sculpture



“Throughout life I carried with me an incomparable inheritance: poverty; poverty of my family and my nation. The first helped me to never be afraid of material difficulties, for I could never have less than at the beginning. The second drove me to persevere in my work, so that at least in my own field my nation’s poverty would be diminished.”

—Ivan Meštrović

For 79 years, in every period of his life, Ivan Meštrović lived by these ideals: family, nation, work. He was born in 1883 to peasant farmers in an obscure land caught between East and West, Muslim and Christian, tradition and modernity. As a youth he was tutored by the oral tradition of native *guslari*, a kind of troubadour, and the stories of the Bible. At seventeen he began studying sculpture at the Vienna Academy of Art and became an active member of the Vienna Secessionist movement. At twenty-eight, after a whirlwind round of European exhibitions in London, Rome, Venice, Vienna, and Split, he was hailed by Auguste Rodin as “a phenomenon among sculptors.” He ultimately received acclaim and honors from kings, popes, and other representatives of the art worlds of Europe and America. In his beloved Croatia, he was a national hero and favorite son.

Between 1925 and 1928 he exhibited in eighteen museums in the United States and Canada and installed his heroic Native American equestrian figures at the Michigan Avenue entrance to Grant Park in Chicago. In 1947 he became the first living artist to have an exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In 1955, at the age of 62, Meštrović moved to Notre Dame from Syracuse University, New York, where he had taught since 1947. At the urging of Father Anthony J. Lauck, CSC, one of the sculptor's former students, the president of Notre Dame, Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, offered him the position of distinguished professor and artist in residence. Encouraged by the prospect of working on the campus of a Catholic university, where his religious sculpture might have an appreciative audience, he moved to South Bend, Indiana, where he lived in a modest home with his wife Olga until his death in 1962.

In a studio built for him (now the Milly and Fritz Kaeser Meštrović Studio Gallery in the Snite Museum of Art) with the help of trained assistants, the "Maestro" taught graduate students and continued, even increased, his output of public sculpture, some of which you will see on this tour of the Notre Dame campus.

Reminiscent of his series of European exhibitions as a young artist, in 1987 a major touring retrospective exhibition of Meštrović's work circulated to Berlin, Milan, Zurich, and Vienna.

Some feel that the value of Meštrović's work has been eclipsed by the changing tastes in 20th-century art. Others acknowledge, as Rodin did, that he was a major figure in the art world—not solely in the history and heart of his native land. His burial place in Otavice, Dalmatia, in the family mausoleum, which he designed and decorated and is an imposing symbol of his cultural heritage, has been damaged in the (most) recent Serbian-instigated war.

As much as Meštrović cherished his many honors, including his U.S. citizenship, that which he prized most was the opportunity to make his art; to make sculpture "...as long as the light lasts." His work still lasts. May its light brighten your spirit as you meet him on this tour at Notre Dame.

Rev. James F. Flanigan, CSC

Meštrović Curator

Snite Museum of Art

IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ

BY ROBERT B. MCCORMICK, PH.D.

In 1919, R.W. Seton-Watson, the father of East European and Balkan studies, offered a thoughtful and lasting analysis of Ivan Meštrović's work:

"In Meštrović there is a double current, the national and the religious. In much of his work there is an intensity, a burning conviction, that comes of passionate national consciousness; while in his later moods we find a profound piety worthy of the ages of faith."¹

These words, written while the artist was at the peak of his popularity, beautifully describe the career and life of Ivan Meštrović. Meštrović was a product of place and time. Born under the flag of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he matured in the age of nationalism. His early work demonstrated the importance of national identity and the hopes of creating a new South Slav state independent of both Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. He became an artist of his age, influenced by the Viennese Secessionists and, most notably, Auguste Rodin. As a result of the horrors of the Balkan Wars and World War I and the political disappointments of the inter-war years, the sculptor turned away from his politically driven work feeling a bankruptcy in it. Instead, Meštrović chose to emphasize the ideals of his youth: religion and the folk. He believed

that this was the proper course for finding truth. For the remainder of his career, neither his style nor his themes changed in any dramatic fashion; the bulk of his work remained both classical and modern.

Ivan Meštrović was born in the remote village of Vrpolje on August 15, 1883. Few in that impoverished community would have dreamed that the child would become the key figure in bringing Slavic art, especially Croatian art, to the attention of Western Europe and the United States. Soon after his birth, the family moved to Otavice in the Dalmatian mountains of Croatia, then under Austro-Hungarian domination. In this small village, Meštrović's talent emerged. Perhaps some artistic skill was inherited from his father, Mate, a stonemason, but the struggling family's firm foundation was his mother, Marta Kurabas. It was this true woman of the people who forged within Meštrović a love of religion and his native land. Without formal schooling, Meštrović taught himself to read and write, beginning a life devoted to learning. As a child, he was fond of the heroic tales and epics so prominent in Slavic literature, which were to have a lasting impact upon his life and art.

Meštrović's artistic talent did not go undetected in his Dalmatian hamlet, because, as a boy, he enjoyed carving images from wood and stone, sometimes depicting impor-

tant political and historical figures. Having witnessed such extraordinary skill, his family and several villagers, many amazed by his acumen, were eager to help him cultivate his talents. Ultimately, he abandoned the life of a shepherd and, with funding donated by villagers, was taken to the coastal city of Split by his father. He found a position there in the workshop of Master Mason Pavao Bilinic, where he learned the basic craft of stone cutting.

Quickly surpassing his employer in skill and reputation, Meštrović's life took a dramatic turn. Alexander König of Vienna, an elderly businessman who owned mines in Dalmatia, learned of Meštrović's ability and brought him to the newly-anointed home of avant-garde art. At the age of 16, the dark-haired, shy Ivan Meštrović arrived in Vienna, a great world art capital, eager to begin a serious study of art. However, König's support never fully materialized, and Meštrović found himself in a vast foreign city dependent upon a Czech family who befriended him. Lacking education and proficiency in German, Meštrović could not enter the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, where art professors such as Hans Bitterlich showed limited interest in him. Meštrović's luck was seemingly at an end, but it was suddenly to change. His Czech sponsor obtained for him an introduction to Edmund Hellmer, an artist and professor who verified the young man's talent, restoring his ambition. With Hellmer's backing,

Meštrović successfully completed the entrance examination; he was soon a student at the Academy.

As a student, the young Croatian greatly admired the noted and highly controversial architect Otto Wagner and the equally controversial sculptor Rodin, meeting him in 1902. He loved their fresh style which blended the ancient with the modern, combating the paradigm of realism. He began exhibiting his work with the Vienna Secession which featured artists such as Gustav Klimt. This alliance was a major step forward for the relatively unknown artist, primarily because it placed him in the vanguard of the artistic community. Although he found himself surrounded by artists who were pushing the limits of art, Meštrović always retained a conservative bent, due mostly to the poverty and rural nature of his early life. Although considered as increasingly *passé* and smacking of the *bourgeois*, he found himself drawn to Impressionism. Throughout his career, the sculptor returned to the themes and techniques of the Impressionists.

Gradually, Meštrović's exhibitions gained him a following—not only in Vienna, but all across Europe. His work was shown in Belgrade, Sofia, Zagreb, and Venice in the first decade of the century. By 1910, he was the shining star of Croatian art, well-positioned to make a major impact on the rest of Europe. At this early point in his

career, Meštrović was very concerned with human freedom and especially the political ambitions of Slavic peoples, who for centuries had lived under either Turkish or Austrian rule. This fixation led to his famous, unfinished project *The Temple of Vidovdan*. He hoped this colossal undertaking, which was to feature over 100 sculptures in honor of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, would infuse Slavic history with religious meaning similar to the national poems he read in his youth. The temple would symbolize the South Slav yearning for political independence and freedom. To arouse interest in his project, Meštrović showed sculptures of images, in wood, marble and plaster, which would be part of the temple. However, this romanticized project was never completed, due, in part, to the post-World War I creation of Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, his studies were a resounding success, praised by art critics throughout Europe and North America.

During the years prior to World War I, Meštrović, now working in Paris, hit his stride. His themes, which seemed exotic to most west Europeans, and his style made him a celebrated sculptor of the first rank. His pieces had an almost primitive strength which blended perfectly with his medium, whether it was stone or wood. Chandler Post captured the power of Meštrović's work saying that, "Like Maillol, he aims a glyptic bulk, and like Manship, at decorative composition; yet, the chief intention of his simpli-

fications and conventionalizations often seems to be brute force."² Many of his best works possess just such a rough, almost primitive, quality designed to dominate the viewer. Within this context, Meštrović interjected classical components of Greek art. Even Assyrian traits appear in Mestrovic's numerous bas-reliefs, whether in wood or stone.

During World War I, Meštrović hoped that a strong and united South Slav state would emerge to bring his homeland freedom and progress. As an ally of men such as Franjo Supilo and Ante Trumbic, organizers of the Yugoslav Committee, he championed the formation of a Yugoslavia. Spending the war as an exile in France, Switzerland, and Britain, Meštrović's stature soared. His greatest successes were in Britain, where sympathy for Serbs and Croats ran high. He was the darling of the art community, not only for the power of his work, but because he represented the alleged ideals which formed the foundation for British involvement in the Great War. His exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1915, wildly successful, not only enlivened his career but made a strong statement for the creation of a Yugoslavia.

World War I's toll in human lives transformed Meštrović's art in a profound fashion, as he grew more disenchanted with the failure to create a peaceful Yugoslavia. Though the state was formed in 1919, its early years were fraught

with political turmoil and disunity, especially between Serb and Croat. Meštrović could not reconcile the huge loss of life with political ambitions, which now appeared hollow and senseless. Rarely again would Meštrović sculpt with political and nationalist ideas pouring from his chisel. Instead, he found direction and comfort in religious themes, a response contrary to that of many of his contemporaries who sought solace in nihilism and existentialism.

As the leading light of Balkan artists, he continued to garner accolades, exhibiting extensively in Europe and the United States. In America, he gained a sizable following through shows of his work at the Brooklyn Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of the Arts, as well as in many other venues. Meštrović's American tour was a large affair with slightly over 100 sculptures on display. His success in Chicago led to *Indians* (1926-1927) which captured the determination and noble persona of the American Indian. These bronze, equestrian sculptures, located in Grant Park, are remarkable achievements of form and design, especially since he possessed no significant knowledge of Native Americans. Although Meštrović continued to enjoy popular success, critics grew tired of his style which was far from the avant-garde. Where was DaDa or Expressionism in his work? To some, Meštrović was mired in Impressionism, a style which had lost much of its meaning in the existentialist-driven inter-war years.

In the 1920s, Meštrović moved back home to Croatia, now part of a politically and ethnically divided Yugoslavia. He purchased a home in Zagreb, where he lived with his second wife, Olga Kestercanek, and their four children. As the most prominent Yugoslavian artist alive, he exercised a deep influence on aspiring Yugoslav sculptors, painters, and architects. He worked energetically to foster Croatian art, partly by establishing art galleries for modern artists.

Meštrović's prestige led to numerous commissions, many from cities and states, to sculpt monuments to famous east European figures such as Ion Bratianu, the father of modern Romania, King Ferdinand I of Bulgaria, and King Carol I of Romania. His architectural talents were exhibited in the Yugoslavian *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* at Avala (1935-1936), an imposing granite block structure. Other notable monuments include those of Bishop Josip Strossmayer, the founder of the Illyrian movement, and Bishop Grgur of Nin, a symbol of Croatian independence. These works signified the proud heritage of Balkan peoples, despite the serious ethnic, political, and diplomatic divisions fracturing the region. Each of these pieces conveys massive strength which generates an immediate sense of determination and fortitude. However, they never fully connect with the viewer, because the romantic style always possesses a sense of propaganda.

Not content with public sculptures, which paid handsomely, Meštrović spent much of the inter-war period sculpting the female form and exploring biblical themes. These works separated him from the monumental sculptures and allowed further exploration into humanity. In them, we see Meštrović turning away from politically driven subjects and now grasping the value of religious themes. Some of his finest examples of work in the genre are *Madonna and Child* (1928), *My Mother at Prayer* (1926), and numerous studies of Moses, a figure who always fascinated the sculptor.

In April 1941, Axis troops rolled into Yugoslavia. In Croatia, Ante Pavelic, known as the Poglavnik (leader), and his band of fascist terrorists, the Ustase (rebels), formed the so-called Independent State of Croatia (Nesavisna Drzava Hrvatska, NDH). Seeking legitimacy from the Croatian public, they attempted to woo Meštrović into the government. The sculptor wisely declined these offers, refusing to be part of this regime's brutal massacres of Orthodox Serbs and Jews. Since Pavelic was unable to gain his cooperation, Meštrović was imprisoned in Zagreb for almost five months. The time spent in prison, not knowing whether he would live or die, transformed his vision as nothing had done before in his life. He began a close examination of human suffering, which later manifested itself in several works including *Pieta* (1942-1946),

one of his most dramatic and celebrated sculptures. Located in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, the marble sculpture, of which numerous studies were made prior to completion, is arguably the best work of his later career. Another fine example from this period is the bronze *Job* (1946), housed at Syracuse University. Both of these works, as well as most of his post-World War II undertakings, are linked to the time he spent in jail.

Knowing that Meštrović's execution would permanently damage the NDH's shaky image, they chose to release him, a decision encouraged by steady pressure from the Vatican. After regaining his freedom, Meštrović traveled to the College of San Girolamo in Rome, where he was given safe haven and new opportunities to sculpt and draw. In 1943, Meštrović and his family crossed the Italian border into neutral Switzerland, where he waited for peace to be restored.

At the end of the war, Meštrović chose not to return to the land of his birth. With his homeland under Marshal Tito and the atheism of the Soviet Union spreading westward, Meštrović accepted a professorial position at Syracuse University. He entered the United States in triumphal fashion, with an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1947, the first such exhibition held in

honor of a living artist. But this acclaim was short-lived; time had passed him by. To artists in post-war America, his work was antiquated, void of significance in the modern world. Nonetheless, his biblical sculptures influenced the acceptance of religious themes.

Though ignored by the modern-art community, Meštrović was never more popular with the public. Requests for commissions, many of which he accepted, poured into his studio. These commissions carried his work all over the world—from an Episcopal church in Hawaii to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. His largest project in this period, the *American Memorial to Six Million Jews of Europe*, never reached fruition—much like the Vidovdan Temple. The plan called for a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in New York City's Riverside Park. However, bureaucratic wrangling plus questions over design and place terminated the project which Meštrović had hoped would feature an imposing sculpture of Moses.

Notre Dame offered him a position of sculptor in residence in 1955 and the "Maestro" left Syracuse for South Bend. The quiet and dignified artist enjoyed his time at Notre Dame, where he was considered to be a symbol of humanity and art. Even as his public career waned, he continued to be showered with awards and honorary degrees. Eager to see the land of his birth one last time,

he journeyed to Yugoslavia in 1959. Meeting with Marshal Tito at Brioni and touring the country, Meštrović was happy to see Yugoslavia stable and thriving. Returning to the United States, he completed his last work, appropriately titled *Self-portrait* (1961).

The Maestro, as he was known, died January 20, 1962, working in his studio up to the previous day. A true son of Croatia, he was buried in Otavice in the mausoleum he had designed for his family. Today, examples of Meštrović's art can be seen in many cities and great museums, such as Chicago, the Tate Gallery in London and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Travelers to Italy, Croatia, or Serbia will likely, at some point, come across a Meštrović piece, often in a city square or on a mountaintop. Extensive collections exist at Syracuse University, the University of Notre Dame, the Louisiana Arts and Science Center and the Meštrović Gallery in both Split and Zagreb.

Meštrović's career paralleled some of the most tumultuous times in modern history. Beginning life in remote Eastern Europe, he was early imbued with idealized, nationalist beliefs in a romantic and noble past. As a young man he was captivated by South Slav nationalism and the promise his homeland held; however, the Balkan Wars and World War I jolted him out of his nationalist devotion. Meanwhile, his talent as a sculptor earned him world-

wide recognition and opened the West to East European artists. In the inter-war years, we see a man in full command of his creative skills, whether it be working stone or wood, putting pen to paper, or oil to canvas. The Impressionism of his youth, peppered with Secessionist influences, remained in all of his work, as did a brute force, demanding the viewer's attention. But Meštrović was turning away from the then-contemporary art world. He was irretrievably influenced by the political machinations and suffering during the inter-war years in Yugoslavia. World War II and the time spent in prison ultimately pushed him towards the spiritual sphere which blossomed in his later sculptures. Through them he sought the true meaning of life and the only antidote for human weakness and frailty.

¹R. W. Seton-Watson, "Meštrović and the Yugoslavian Idea," in *Ivan Meštrović: A Monograph* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1919), 59.

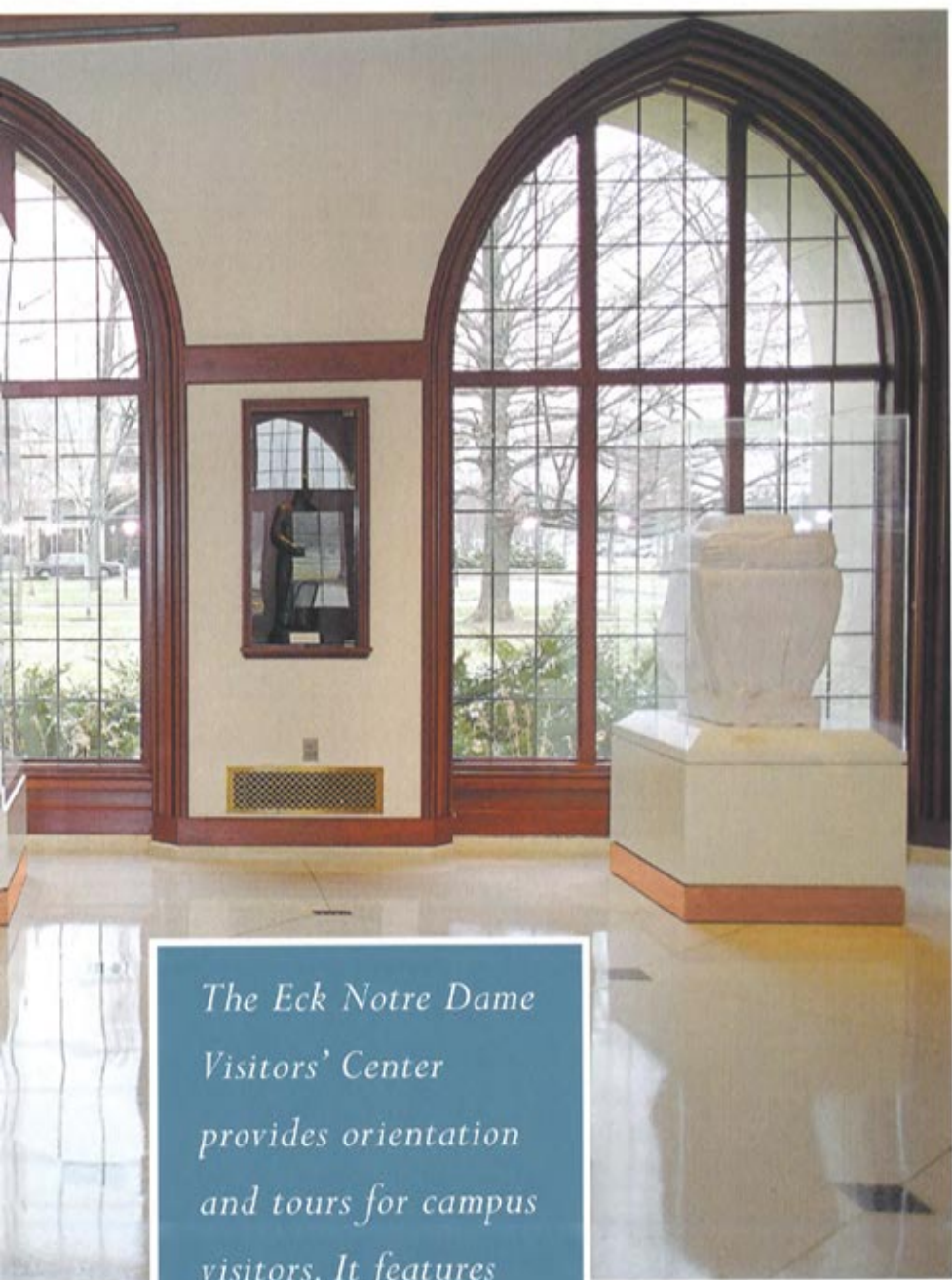
²Chandler Rathfon Post, *A History of European and American Sculpture from the Early Christian Period to the Present Day*, vol. 11, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969), 224.

detail, wall mural, 1955
Jean Charlot (and students)
French, 1898-1979
fresco
lower level, Snite Museum of Art





ECK VISITORS' CENTER



*The Eck Notre Dame
Visitors' Center
provides orientation
and tours for campus
visitors. It features
five of Meštrović's
most engaging works.*

SWINSON MADONNA

As a Christian sculptor who created many works for religious settings, Meštrović returned often to reinterpret the theme of the Madonna and Child in different materials and moods. This bust-length version is one of a series which he worked on in 1917, variations of which can be found on the Notre Dame campus at Lewis Hall (*Madonna and Child*, 1956, bronze), and at the Snite Museum of Art (*Ashbaugh Madonna*, 1917, walnut; *Madonna and Child*, 1917, bronze).

In this set of sculptures Meštrović achieves a mood of almost supernatural peace and grace through stylized features of the Madonna and Child, which are generalized into a type of medieval, Byzantine beauty found in paintings and icons of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. The regularity and symmetry of the shallow folds in the Madonna's robe and the unnatural ovals of the two heads stress the superhuman quality of these figures. They also reflect the stylization and patterns favored by artists of the Viennese Secessionist movement, with whom Meštrović had exhibited in Vienna in 1905.

1917, marble, 24 1/2 x 16 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches

Eck Visitors' Center

Gift of Mr. N. L. Swinson

Collection of the Snite Museum of Art

1995.063





MADONNA AND CHILD

Even though this full-length version of the Madonna and Child presents the figures in an unnatural columnar form, their faces and hands and their loving embrace make this sculpture much more human than the bust-length marble of 1917. Meštrović did not create this figure to be an actual weight-bearing architectural column; but, in making the Madonna into a columnar shape, he referred to the classical caryatid, "supporting column in the shape of a woman," found in Greek, Roman, Renaissance and classical revivalist styles. By combining in a single sculpture the squared-off shape of a stone column at the bottom, with the conjoined Mother and Child at the top, Meštrović makes reference to his classical European heritage of art and architecture. He refers as well to the linear designs used by the Vienna Secessionists around 1900, who made elegant and surprising figures by using new combinations of materials and forms. Amongst the sculptures described in this brochure, this one compares most closely to *Mother*, 1926, in the Snite Museum.

1948-49, marble, 75 1/2 x 15 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches

Eck Visitors' Center

Collection of the Snite Museum of Art

aa 2003.017

SEATED FIGURE/ MEDITATION

Meštrović carved this figure while he was teaching at Syracuse University, having moved to the United States from Rome rather than return to post-war Yugoslavia, then controlled by Josip Tito's socialist regime. Throughout his career he produced a series of powerful-looking female figures, clad in the Croatian national dress of a long, pleated skirt and stiff head covering that expresses a variety of interpretations of Yugoslav and Croatian national ideals. This figure does wear national dress, indicated by shallowly carved lines, but does not stand tall and proud, as do Meštrović's caryatids at the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, 1938 (Avala, near Belgrade). Rather, this woman crouches and buries her face in her arms, perhaps reflecting Meštrović's despair at the plight of his beloved motherland. This style of careful, linear design, with the surface of the marble made rough for clothing and smooth for skin, is also used in the *Pieta* in the Basilica.

1947-50, marble, 35 x 23 x 23 inches
 Eck Visitors' Center
 Collection of the Snite Museum of Art
 Gift of Mrs. Olga Meštrović
 1982.095



SELF-PORTRAIT

ca. 1911, oil on panel, 21 ³/₈ x 18 ³/₈ inches

Purchased with funds provided by
Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh, Jr.

Eck Visitors' Center

Collection of the Snite Museum of Art

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CHRIST ON THE CROSS

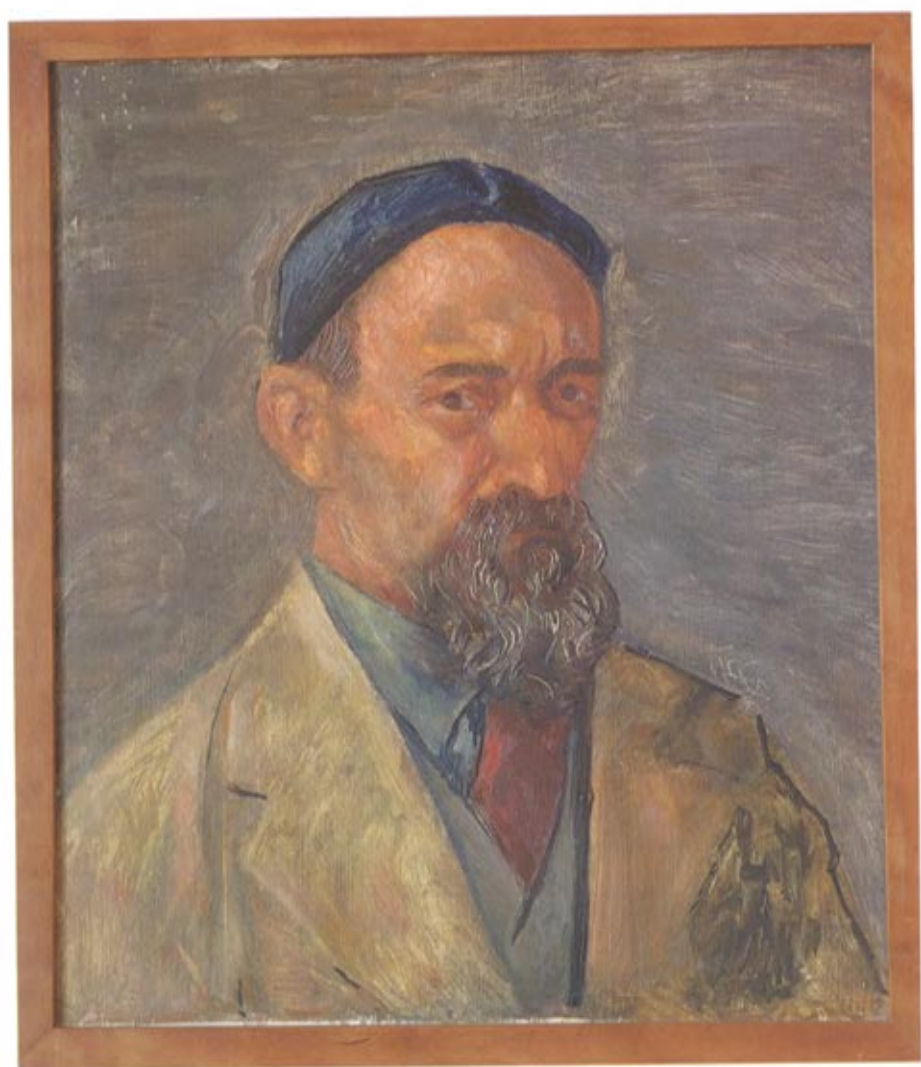
ca. 1948-49, plaster on wood crucifix, 47 x 38 inches (figure)

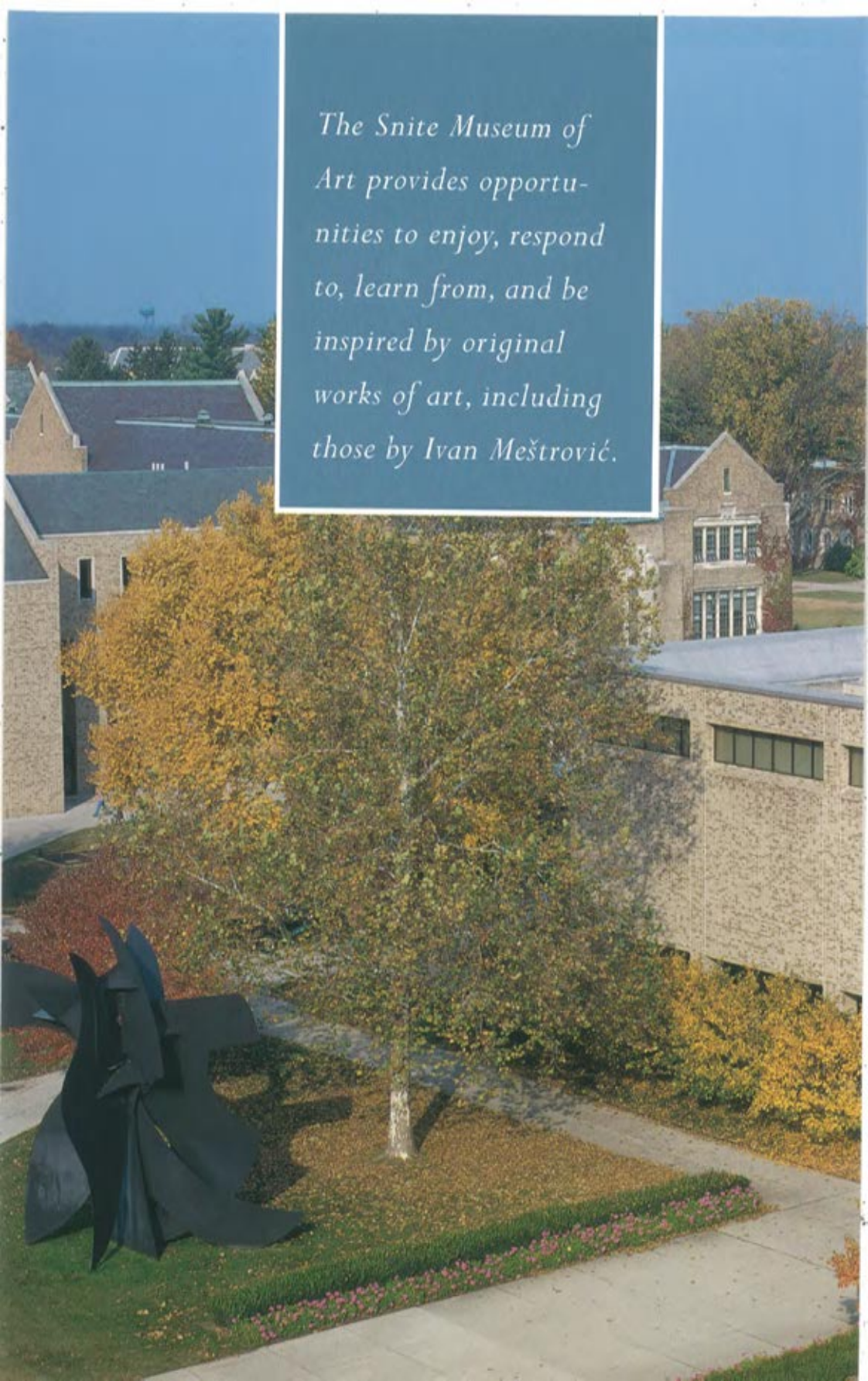
Collection of the Snite Museum of Art

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Laffey, Nancy Barker

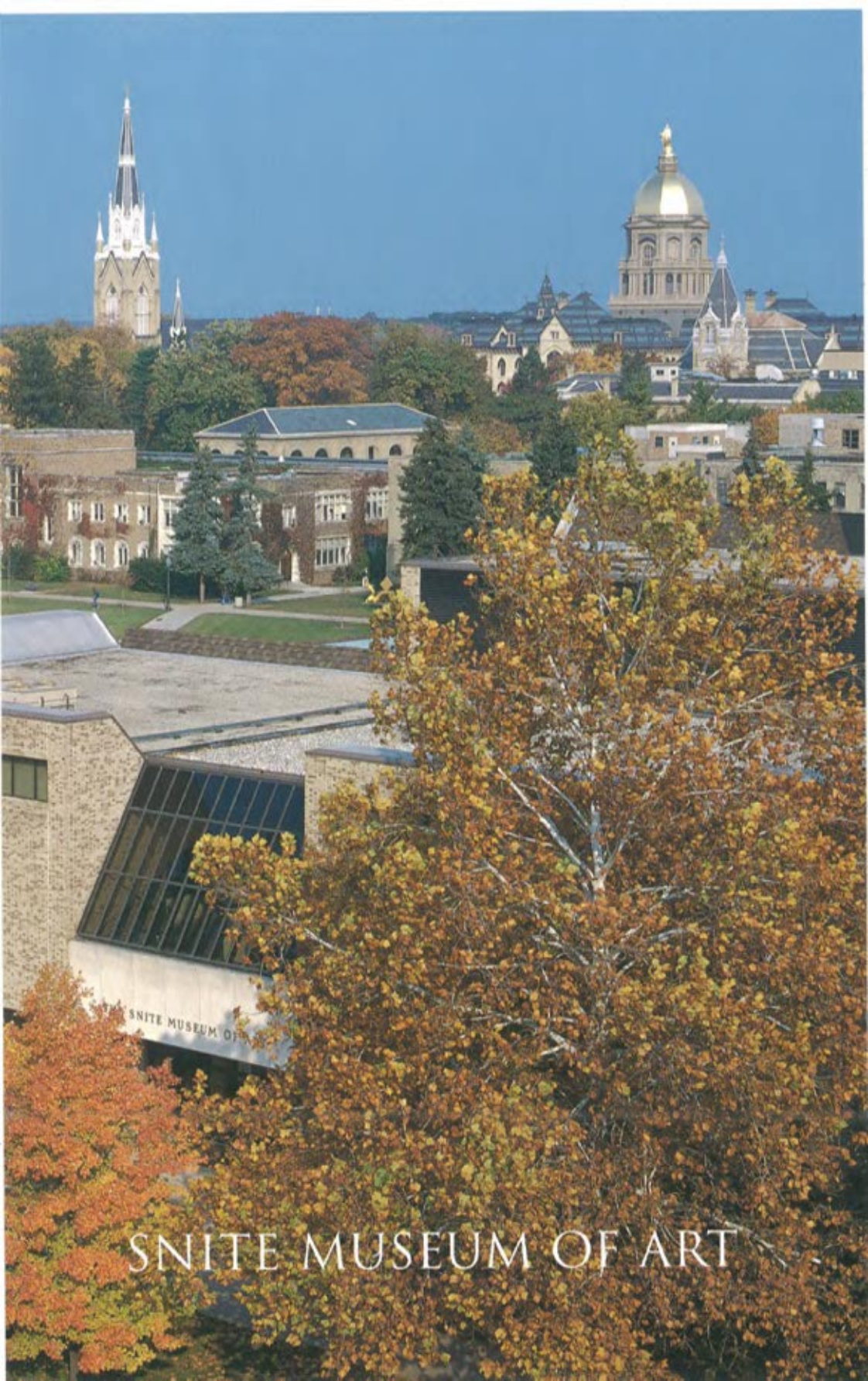
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The Snite Museum of Art provides opportunities to enjoy, respond to, learn from, and be inspired by original works of art, including those by Ivan Meštrović.



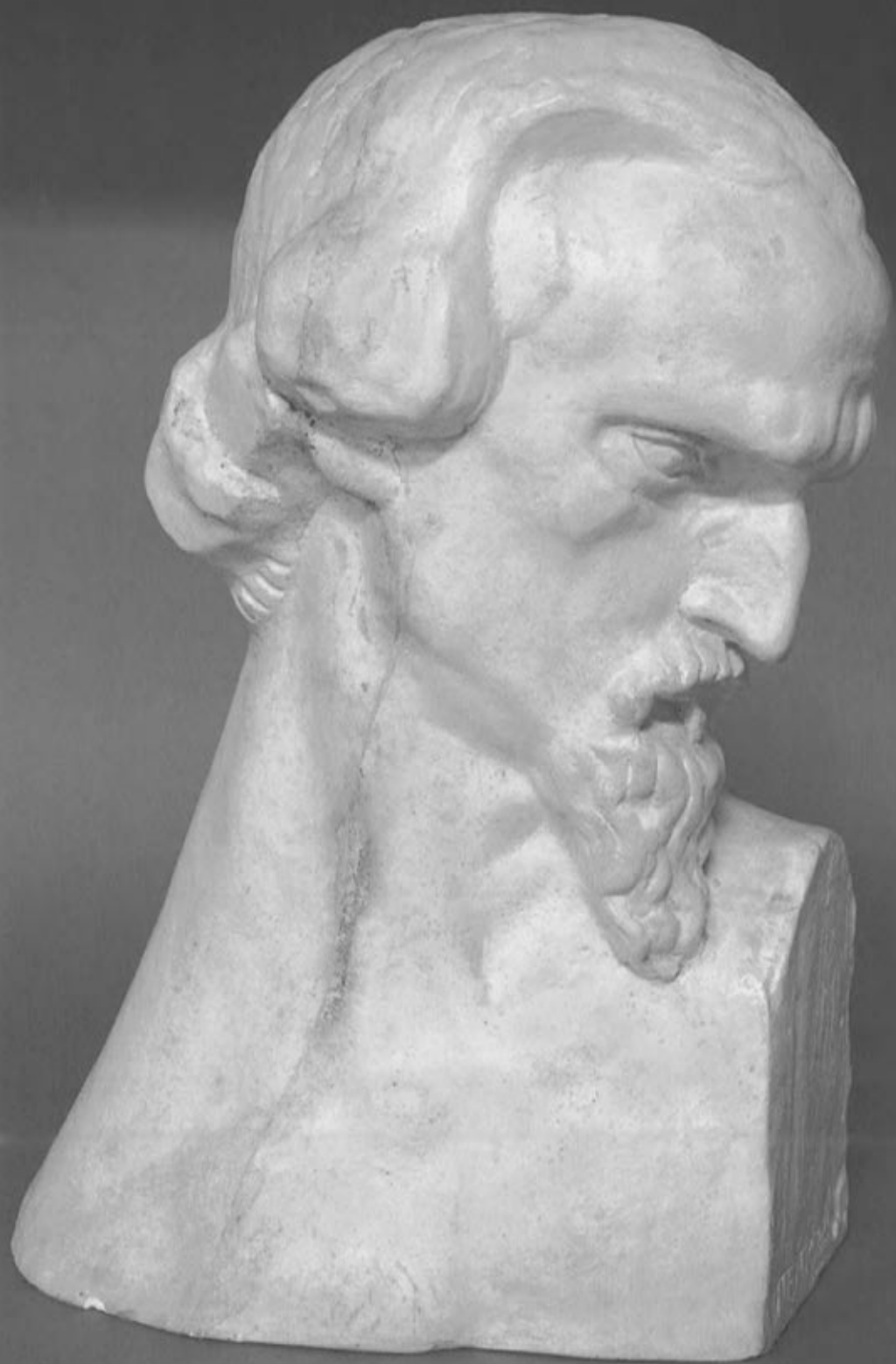
SNITE MUSEUM OF ART

SELF-PORTRAIT

This self-portrait from 1924 is a plaster version of the marble and bronze self-portraits that Meštrović made in 1911, when he was twenty-eight. With the furrowed brow, prominent aquiline nose, intense downward gaze and taut neck muscles, several characteristics typically repeated in his monumental sculptures of religious and historical men are evident. The small object protruding from his mouth is probably the ever-present cigarette, which he habitually smoked as he worked. His assistant related that on one occasion in the studio, the Maestro cried out that something was on fire—only to be told that it was his own beard!

On the Notre Dame campus sculpture tour, one can also see Meštrović's own facial features, reappearing in his figures of *Moses*, *Marko Marulic* (Snite Museum of Art collection), and at the Basilica in the faces of the father of the *Prodigal Son*, and Nicodemus in the *Pieta* group. The practice of European artists using their own facial features for characters in their paintings and sculptures has a long history, as done by such artistic giants as Michelangelo and Picasso.

1924, plaster, 19 1/4 x 13 x 8 1/2 inches
 Collection of the Snite Museum of Art
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Meštrović
 1986.060





MOTHER

Meštrović made this portrait of his mother, Marta Kurabas, in 1926, with previous versions carved in 1908/09 and owned by the State Museum, Belgrade, and the Meštrović Gallery, Split, Croatia. Wearing the traditional dress of a nineteenth-century, Croatian peasant woman, she sits with her hands clasped, perhaps in prayer. The shallow, relief-like carving of drapery on her shoulders and arms is typical of Meštrović's early sculpture, which was heavily influenced by the elegant, linear style of Viennese Secessionist artists such as Gustave Klimt. The naturalism of *Mother's* hands and face contrasts strongly with the balanced patterns of the abstracted folds of her clothes.

People so admired this portrait, that Meštrović received commissions for numerous versions. Its appeal may lie in his successful combination of two different styles, which elicits surprise and pleasure in the viewer—the naturalism of the face and hands compared with the abstracted patterns of her clothing. This combination presents an intriguing union of such opposites as humility and strength, tradition and individuality.

1926, marble, 42 x 37 1/2 inches
Collection of the Snite Museum of Art
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh, Jr.
1999.056.001

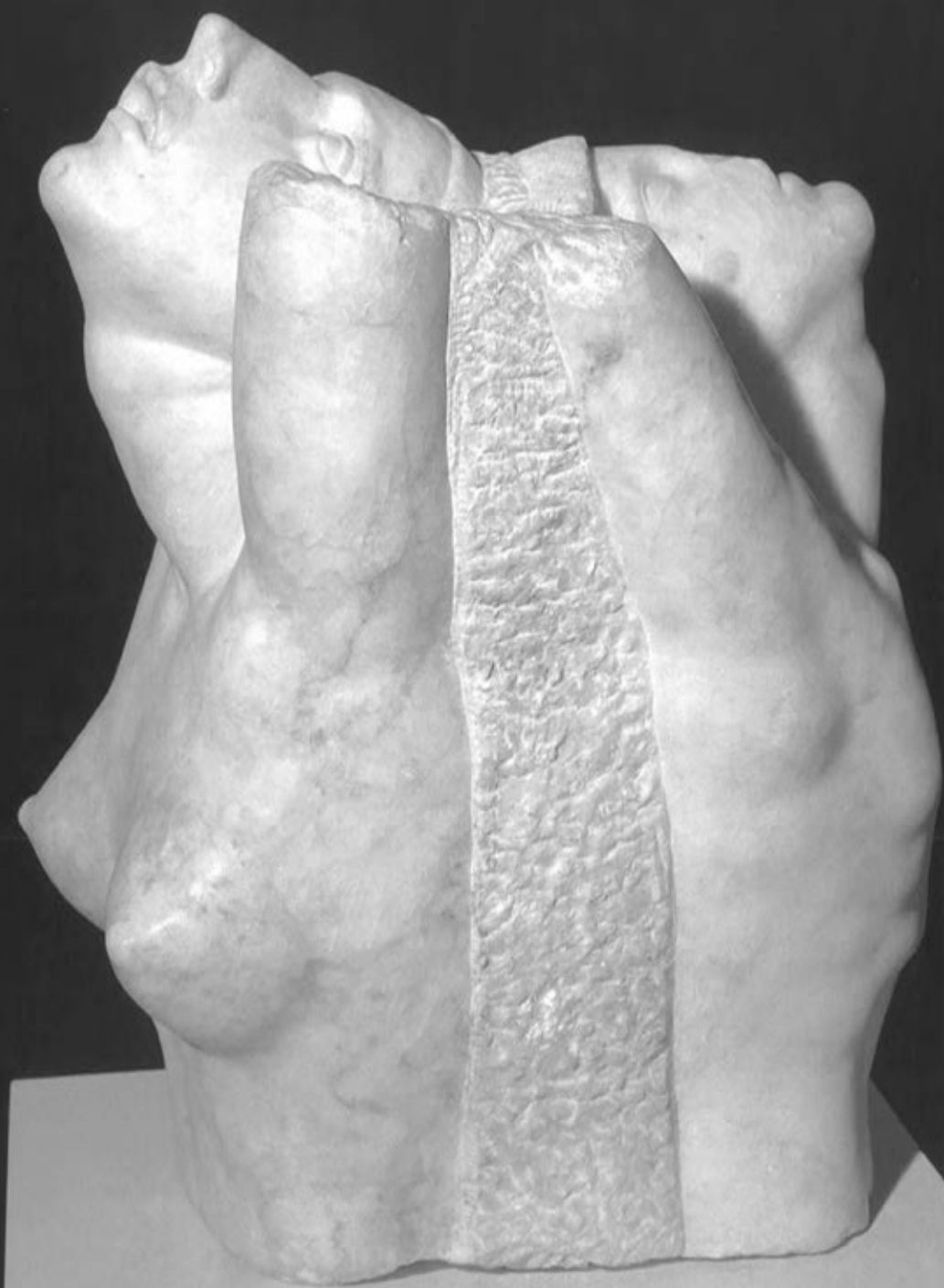
ASHBAUGH MADONNA

In style and chronology the Ashbaugh Madonna is closest to *Mother* amongst the sculptures described in this guide-book. Although here Meštrović uses wood, not marble, the treatment of cloth is similar in both sculptures. In this work, the overlapping folds of soft drapery are arranged in fluent, curvilinear patterns that loop around her chin, elbows and thighs. All sharp angles have been rounded off, with the heads and faces of both figures so abstracted by curves and lines that their serene expressions allow the viewer to focus on the figures' spiritual significance.

In this sculpture Meštrović interprets a figure type which was popular in medieval Europe, when sculptors carved the Mother and Child from a single piece of wood; the Madonna presented her Child frontally to the people; and He appeared as a man-child, blessing the worshippers. Here the Son raises His baby hands in the "orant" position of prayer and wears a halo reminiscent of a king's crown. By these various means Meštrović cleverly combines traditions, gestures and styles to create a masterful sculpture which joins the past to the present.

1917, walnut, 61 1/2 inches high
 Collection of the Snite Museum of Art
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh, Jr.
 1973.074





PERSEPHONE AND DIONYSIUS

Meštrović's pairing of Persephone and Dionysius is likely a reference to their association in the Eleusinian mysteries. These spring and fall rites, named for the city of Eleusis (near Athens) were based on the mythology of Persephone and were performed so that initiates could be reborn into eternal life after death.

Spiritual rebirth was connected, figuratively, to the annual growing season. Pluto, god of Hades, took Persephone, goddess of fertility of the earth, to his lower world, against her will. Her mother negotiated her release, but that arrangement required Persephone to return as Pluto's queen for four months of each year. As the goddess of plant fertility, her annual, autumn descent under ground signals the end of the growing season. When she returns in spring, plant life is renewed: a metaphor for spiritual rebirth.

Dionysius, god of fertility and wine, is associated with Persephone, in various versions of the Eleusinian mythology, as her son, brother, or husband. This may have been done to contrast life (Dionysius) with death (Persephone).

1945-46, marble, 25 3/4 x 17 x 19 1/2 inches
Collection of the Snite Museum of Art
1975 University of Notre Dame Purchase
1975.121

LAST SELF-PORTRAIT

"In the fall of 1961, Ivan Meštrović did his Last Self-Portrait (no.44). The sculpture shows a seventy-eight year old man, his head bent under by a lifetime of struggle, despair and frustration. Yet the deeply set eyes, the strong hands and his black beret, are reflections of the man who made the statement, "I long ago vowed that I would work up to my last day." Ivan Meštrović worked until January 16, 1962. He was stricken in his studio, and died later on the same day."

Rev. Anthony J. Lauck, CSC, Dean A. Porter, Ph.D., S. A. Bennett, and Don Vogl, *Ivan Meštrović, The Notre Dame Years*, Art Gallery, University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame: 1974), 19.

1961, patinated plaster, 13 x 12 x 10 inches
 Collection of the Snite Museum of Art
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh, Jr.
 1987.018.032



CHRIST ON THE CROSS

"World War II and his time in prison pushed him fully towards the spiritual sphere which blossomed in his later sculptures. In them, he sought the true meaning of life and the only antidote for human weakness and frailty."

—Robert B. McCormick, Ph.D.

ca. 1947-1954, bronze on wood, 83 inches high (figure)
Great Hall, O'Shaughnessy Hall
University of Notre Dame



SHAHEEN-MEŠTROVIĆ MEMORIAL

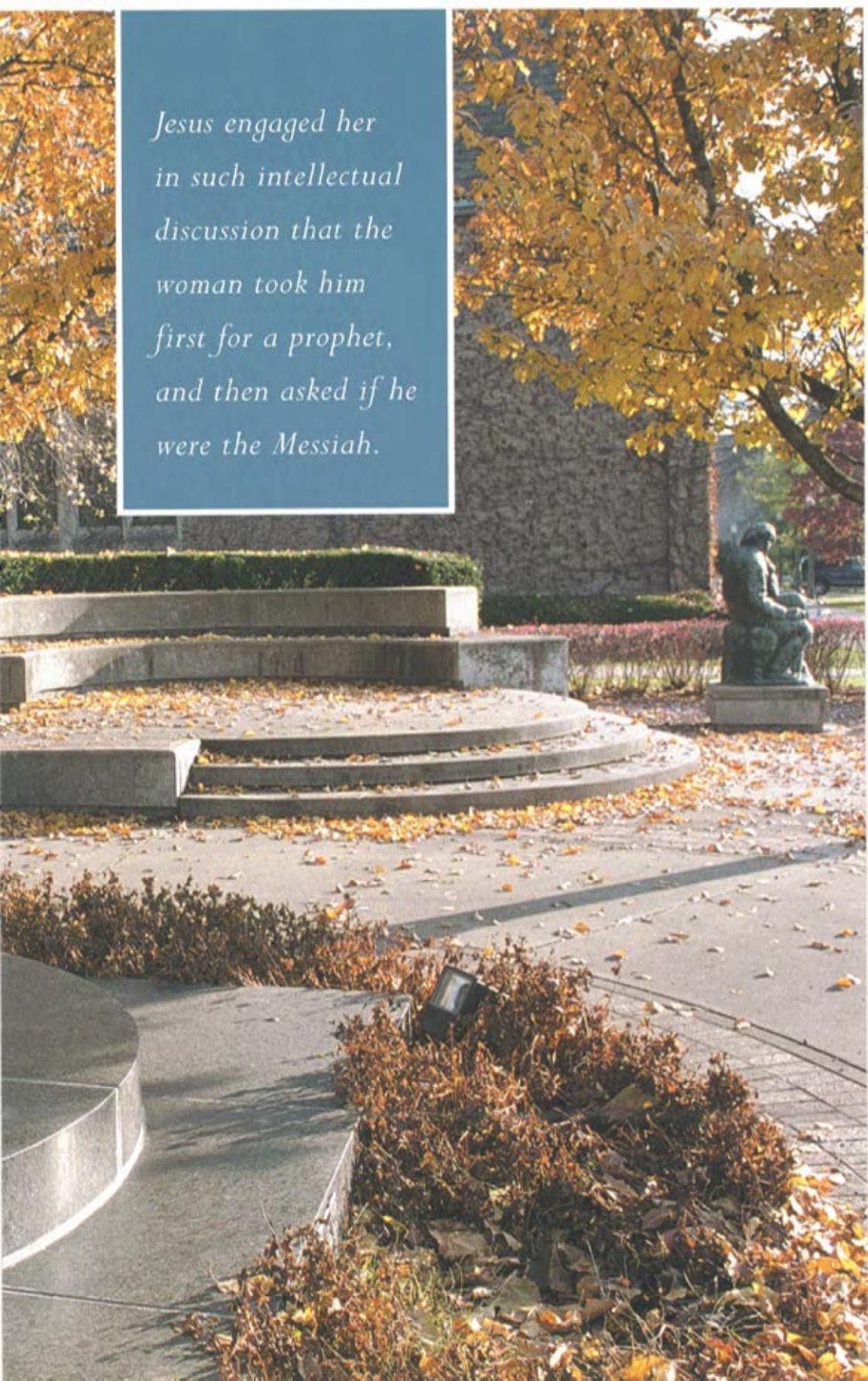
In this sculptural group Meštrović illustrates the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, as told by St. John in his Gospel, chapter 4. One day Jesus was walking to Galilee with His disciples, who continued on into the nearby Samaritan town while Jesus waited for them at Jacob's Well. In the heat of the day, a local woman came to draw water, and she was surprised when Jesus requested a drink from her—a despised non-believer. He revealed such remarkable knowledge, even of her own life, that she asked if He were the Messiah, and He replied that He was. She hurried away, whereupon the disciples rejoined Jesus, dismayed that He had conversed with a woman of the scorned sect.

St. John the Evangelist
1950s, bronze, 65 inches high (figure)

next pages:
Christ and the Samaritan
Woman at Jacob's Well
1957, bronze and marble,
88 inches high (figure)







*Jesus engaged her
in such intellectual
discussion that the
woman took him
first for a prophet,
and then asked if he
were the Messiah.*



In 1985 the Department of Landscape Architecture and Planning in the South Bend office of Cole Associates completed the Shaheen-Meštrović Memorial in the South Quad on the west side of O'Shaughnessy Hall. Frederick Beckman, chair of the Department of Art, Art History and Design, prepared a series of conceptual sketches for a monument which would be both a gathering place for students and a place for relaxation and appreciation of Meštrović's sculpture. The figures of the Evangelists Luke and John flank Jacob's Well and present two types of scholar, the contemplative and the inspired writer. The donor, Eli J. Shaheen, was a graduate of Notre Dame and a life-long benefactor to the University and to Saint Mary's College.

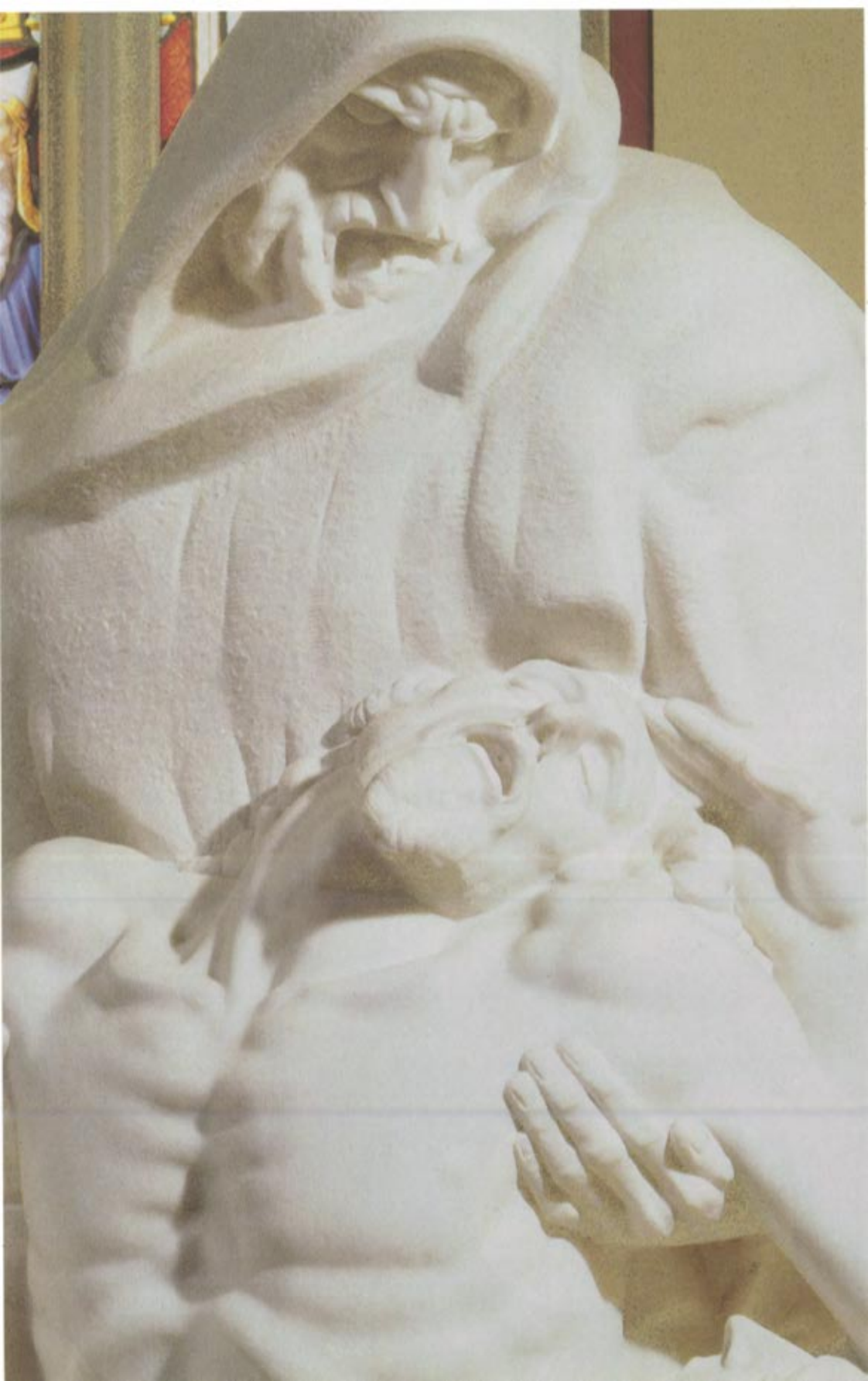
**Christ and the Samaritan
Woman at Jacob's Well**
1957, bronze and marble,
88 inches high (figure)

St. Luke the Evangelist
1950s, bronze,
65 inches high (figure)



Meštrović has conveyed a sense of physical and psychological suffering through the angular placement of figures, whose expressions reflect anguish and grief.





PIETA

This is Meštrović's most dramatic sculpture on the Notre Dame campus. In 1955 it was brought to South Bend from New York City, having been on exhibit since 1947 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's first one-man exhibition ever given to a living artist.

Meštrović had begun the work in 1941 when imprisoned in Zagreb, Croatia, for refusing to cooperate with the fascist Croats, Italians, and Germans who had taken control of his country. Five months later the Vatican negotiated his release and provided sanctuary for him and his family in Rome, where he completed two versions of the *Pieta*—this one in marble, the other in bronze (Vatican Museums).

Taking inspiration from Michelangelo's *Pieta*, 1545 (Cathedral, Florence), the Maestro, too, grouped the figures of Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, and the Blessed Mother in a pyramid of zigzags; but, the mood of the original's quiet sorrow has been changed to one of deep, physical and psychological suffering. He effectively accomplished this by focusing on sharp angles and by contrasting the pathos of the bare, limp Corpus with the fully robed, straining figures whose faces reflect intense anguish.

1942-46, marble
 Basilica of the Sacred Heart
 11 feet (high)
 Gift of the artist
 University of Notre Dame



RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

This sculpture is in memory of John Francis Cardinal O'Hara, CSC, donated by fellow members of the Notre Dame Council of the Knights of Columbus.

1954, bronze, 57 x 36 x 16 1/2 inches

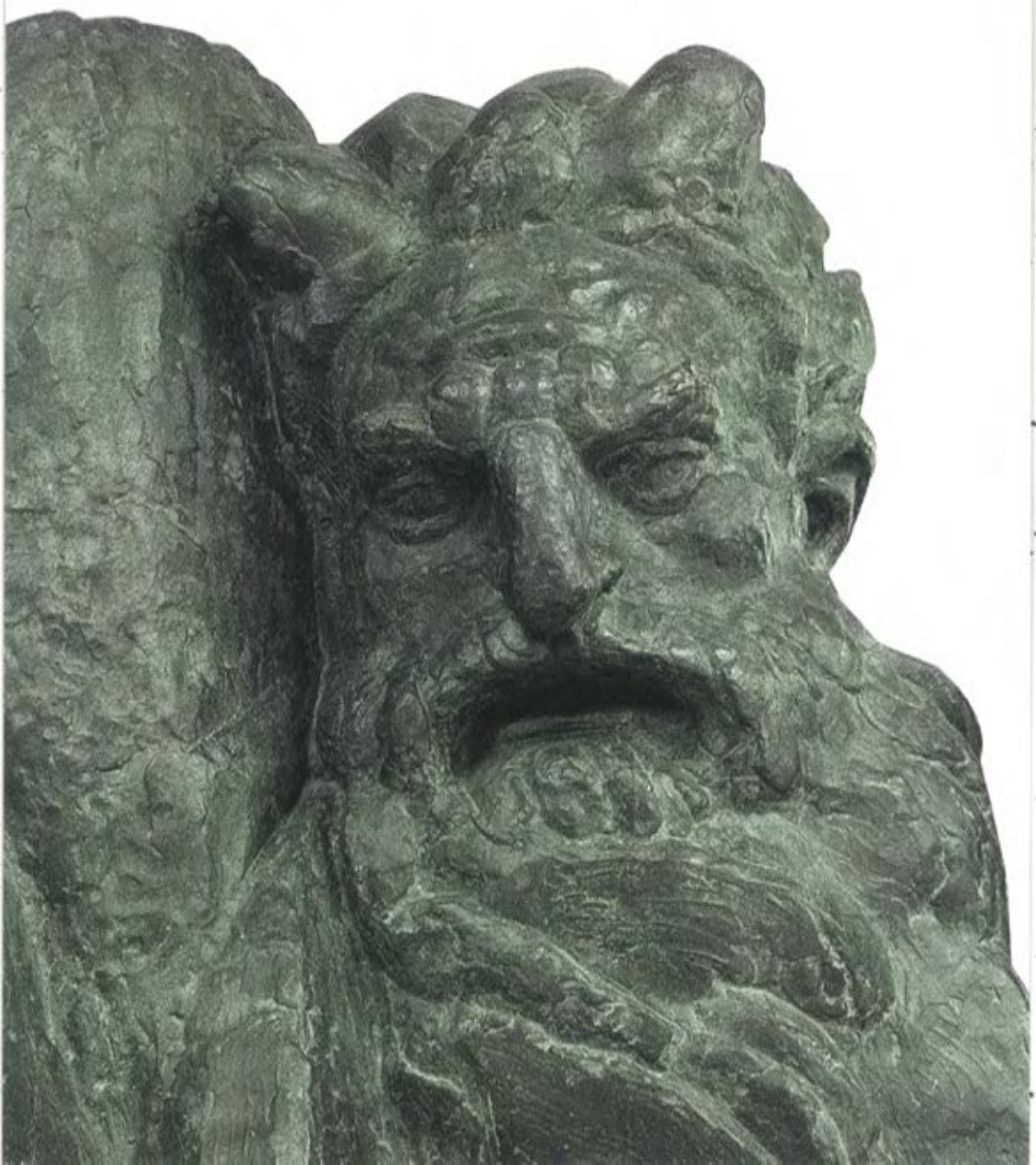
Basilica of the Sacred Heart

University of Notre Dame



Umberto Boccioni
"La donna con il mantello"
1911
Fondazione Boccioni, Milano

MOSES



Contrary to most of the well-known European sculptors of the early twentieth century, the interpretation of the human body was always at the heart of Meštrović's work, and Moses was the figure to which he most often returned. It was probably Michelangelo's *Moses* (1516, St. Peter in Chains, Rome), Meštrović's life-long inspiration, that led to this figure whose eyes have seen God, and whose "horns" refer to the radiance which surrounded his face. This figure is one of several designs for the proposed, but never completed, *American Memorial to Six Million Jews of Europe*, New York City.

The bronze head and left hand of Moses here make up an enlarged section of the small, full-figure plaster in the Eck Visitors' Center. In the complete figure, Moses' right arm and hand point towards the Ten Commandments placed above him, while his gaze is down the mountain towards the awaiting Hebrews.

1950, bronze, 34 x 57 x 27 inches
Collection of the Hesburgh Library



MADONNA AND CHILD

This sculpture is dedicated to the nineteenth-century Sisters of the Holy Cross who played a major role in establishing the mission school in the American wilderness—Notre Dame du Lac, which prospered and became a university of world renown.

ca. 1956, bronze, 51 x 16 x 28 inches
Courtyard, Lewis Hall
University of Notre Dame

CHRIST ON THE CROSS



ca. 1947-54, bronze,
26 x 12 1/2 x 4 inches
Chapel, Lewis Hall
University of Notre Dame



DEDICATED

To her who rose with God from the beginning
shaping all things
playing to His presence at all times
playing even where in the world
doubting to be seen the sons of men
And to those men / Mary of Holy Cross
who through their long years
of humble toil on this / In unity
found God's open secret hidden
in the need of love / and found themselves
and their God long /

YOUNG CHRIST TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

1950s, wood, 72 x 48 1/4 inches

Stanford Hall

University of Notre Dame

19 STANFORD-KEENAN CHAPEL

CHRIST ON THE CROSS

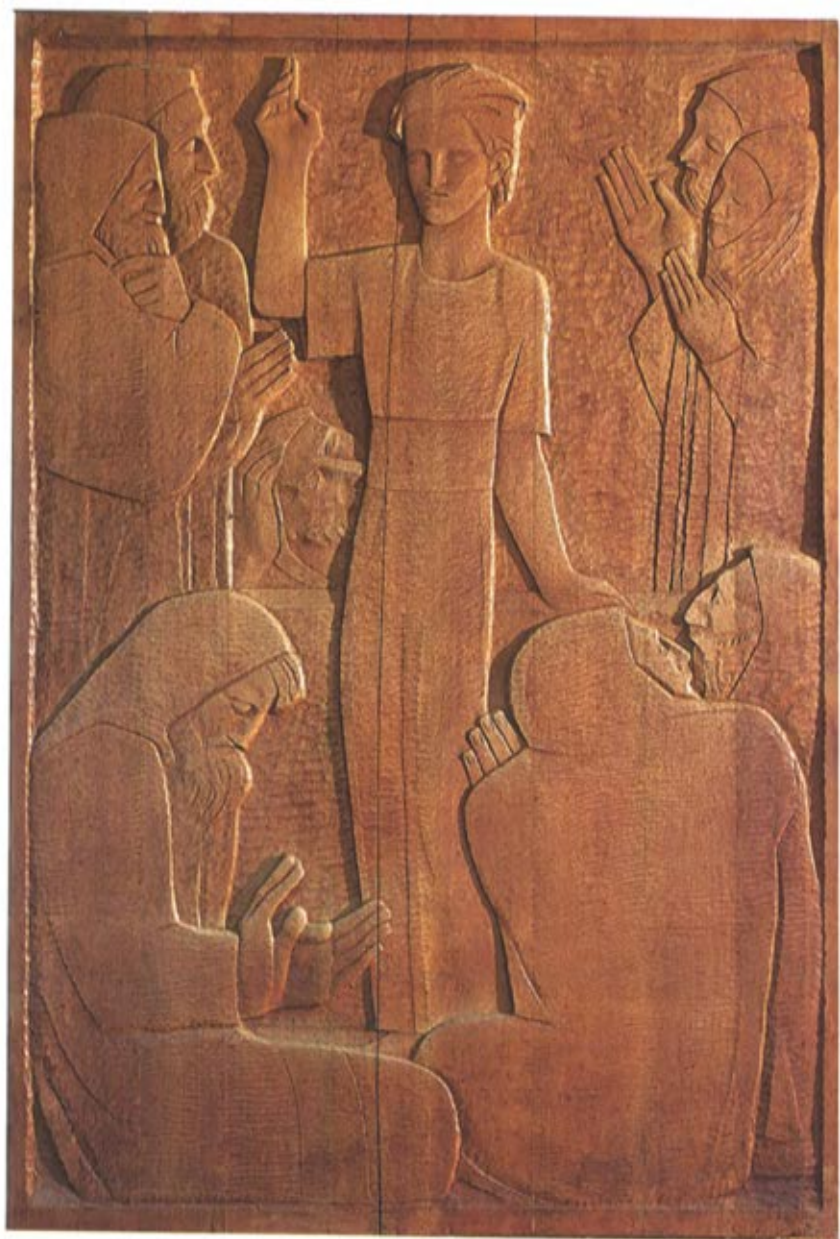


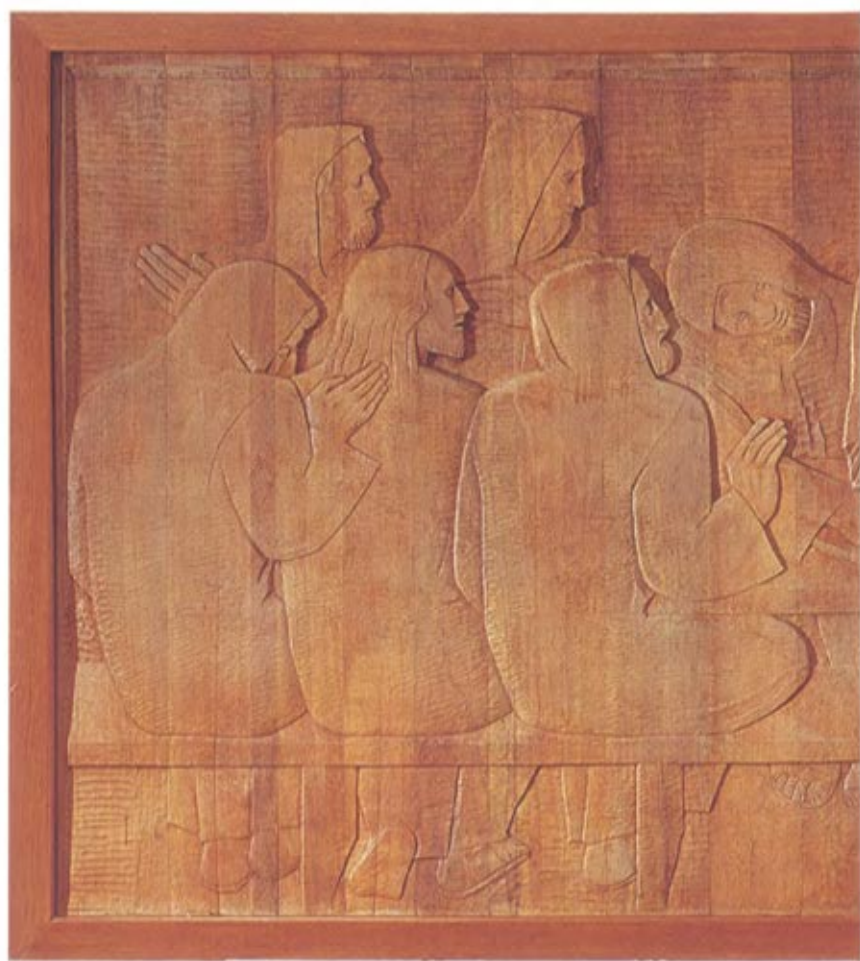
1957, wood,

120 inches high (wood)

Stanford-Keenan Hall Chapel

University of Notre Dame





THE LAST SUPPER



1957, wood, 71 x 148 inches
North Dining Hall
University of Notre Dame

PORTRAIT OF BASIL A. MOREAU

Moreau Seminary is named after Basil Anthony Moreau, CSC (1799-1873). Father Moreau was a founding member of the Congregation of Holy Cross (Congrégation de Saint Croix) in 1837 in a suburb of Le Mans, France.

1950s, bronze, 22 inches high
Moreau Seminary
University of Notre Dame



IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ AT NOTRE DAME
Selected Campus Sculptures

Snite Museum of Art
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-0368
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front cover image:
detail, *Swinson Madonna*, 1917, marble
Gift of Mr. N. L. Swinson

back cover image:
Self-portrait, ca. 1911, oil on panel
Purchased with funds provided by
Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh, Jr.



IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ AT NOTRE DAME
Selected Campus Sculptures

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