

## **“The Mourners: Medieval Tomb Sculptures from the Court of Burgundy” On View at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts**

*Exhibition: January 23–April 17, 2011*



Jean de la Huerta and Antoine Le Moiturier, *Mourner no. 78, mourner with cowl pulled down, right hand raised, left hand holding a book in a flap of his cloak, 1443–56/57, alabaster. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon*

### **MINNEAPOLIS, MN, NOVEMBER 29, 2010**

This winter, a procession of thirty-eight supremely graceful sculpted figures expressing ultimate human grief will be on view at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) in the traveling exhibition, “The Mourners: Medieval Tomb Sculptures from the Court of Burgundy.” This exhibition, organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, under the auspices of FRAME (French Regional and American Museum Exchange), is an unprecedented opportunity to view this magnificent group of alabaster statues and to explore an important period in European cultural history. In conjunction with the exhibition, the acclaimed Rose Ensemble choral group will perform two concerts, February 18 and 19, at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis. The concert will comprise sacred choral music from medieval and Renaissance France. Simultaneously, the visual artist Ali Momeni will project images of the sculptures against the basilica’s walls.

For six centuries, the *Mourners* have adorned the tomb of John the Fearless (1371–1419), onetime Duke of Burgundy, and his wife, Margaret of Bavaria (1363–1423). Originally located at Champmol, a monastery on the outskirts of Dijon, the tomb is now one of the star attractions of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon. Currently undergoing an extensive renovation, the Dijon museum is allowing the sculptures to travel to seven venues in the United States.

Despite their small scale—each figure is just sixteen inches tall—these embodiments of medieval devotion are remarkable in their individuality; they are alternately drying their tears, wringing their hands, engaged in deep contemplation, even hiding their faces in the folds of their robes. With their quiet spirituality and technical sophistication, the *Mourners* open an intimate window on a culture poised between the mysticism of the Middle Ages and the realism of the Renaissance.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Dukes of Burgundy ruled over territories in present-day France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands, with their seat of power located in Dijon. As Florence claimed the Medici family as major patrons of the arts, Burgundy had its Dukes. The city became a major center of artistic patronage, promoting artists such as Jan Van Eyck and Claus Sluter. It was in this environment that the tombs of the first and second Burgundian Dukes, Philip the Bold (1384–1410) and his son, John the Fearless (1342–1404), were created. These tombs were celebrated as among the most sumptuous and important of the late Middle Ages. The lower registers on both tombs are populated by funeral corteges of monks and clerics, who appear to circulate as if in a cloister. The forty figures on the tomb of John the Fearless were carved over a twenty-five-year period by sculptors Jean de la Huerta (1413–62) and Antoine Le Moiturier (c. 1425–94) and their workshop.

“The Mourners: Medieval Tomb Sculptures from the Court of Burgundy” is curated by Sophie Jugie, Director, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, with Heather MacDonald, the Lillian and James H. Clark Associate Curator of European Art at the Dallas Museum of Art. At the MIA, the exhibition is organized by Erika Holmquist-Wall, Assistant Curator of Paintings. A fully illustrated catalogue is available in the Museum Shop (\$29.95).

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND RELATED PROGRAMS**

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The Rose Ensemble

[www.RoseEnsemble.org](http://www.RoseEnsemble.org)

## THE TOUR

MARCH 2–MAY 23, 2010: Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY)

JUNE 20–SEPTEMBER 6, 2010: Saint Louis Art Museum (Saint Louis, MO)

OCTOBER 3, 2010–JANUARY 2, 2011: Dallas Art Museum (Dallas, TX)

JANUARY 23–APRIL 17, 2011: Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Minneapolis, MN)

MAY 8–JULY 31, 2011: Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA)

AUGUST 21, 2011–JANUARY 1, 2012: Legion of Honor (San Francisco, CA)

JANUARY 20–APRIL 15, 2012: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Richmond, VA)

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The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), home to one of the finest encyclopedic art collections in the country, houses more than 80,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history. Highlights of the permanent collection include European masterworks by Rembrandt, Poussin, and van Gogh; modern and contemporary painting and sculpture by Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian, Stella, and Close; as well as internationally significant collections of prints and drawings, decorative arts, Modernist design, photographs, textiles, and Asian, African, and Native American art. General admission is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee. Museum hours: Sunday, 11 A.M.–5 P.M.; Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.; Thursday, 10 A.M.–9 P.M.; Monday closed. For more information, call (612) 870-3000 or visit [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org).