



## Medieval Masterworks from Court of Burgundy To Leave France for First and Only U.S. Tour in 2010

***“The Mourners,” Nearly 40 Individual Sculptures from 15th-Century Ducal Tomb,  
Will Travel to New York, St. Louis, Dallas, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, San Francisco  
and Richmond***

***Co-Organized by the Dallas Museum of Art with the French Regional & American Museum  
Exchange (FRAME), Exhibition on View Beginning March 2010***



A mourner from the tomb of John the Fearless.

Dallas, TX, November 6, 2009 – A group of nearly 40 of the greatest masterpieces of medieval sculpture, which have never before been seen in their entirety outside of France, will be presented in seven cities in the United States for the first and only time starting in 2010. Carved by Jean de La Huerta and Antoine Le Moiturier between 1443 and 1470, the unique devotional figures, known as “mourners,” were commissioned for the elaborate tomb of the second Duke of Burgundy. Crafted with astonishing detail, the alabaster sculptures exemplify some of the most important artistic innovations of the late Middle Ages. *The Mourners: Tomb Sculptures from the Court of Burgundy* represents the first time that these figures will be seen together outside of France and provides an unprecedented opportunity to appreciate each sculpture as an individual work of art.

Co-organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, France, under the auspices of the French Regional & American Museum Exchange (FRAME), *The Mourners* will premiere on March 2, 2010, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York before traveling to six additional museums throughout the United States. The exhibition will be on view at the Dallas Museum of Art from October 3, 2010 through January 2, 2011.

“This singular exhibition exemplifies the DMA’s ongoing programming, which connects Dallas residents and visitors with extraordinary art and cultural treasures from around the globe,” said Bonnie Pitman, The Eugene McDermott Director of the Dallas Museum of Art. “These are incredibly beautiful works that are as powerful and meaningful today as they were the day they were created.”

“The loan and tour of the ‘mourners’ is a shining moment in the history of FRAME, a testament to shared friendship and shared knowledge,” added Richard R. Brettell, Director of FRAME in the United States.

The sculptures—each approximately 16 inches high—depict sorrowful figures expressing their grief or devotion to John the Fearless (1371–1419), the second Duke of Burgundy, who was both a powerful political figure and patron of the arts. The tomb, which is not traveling, comprises life-sized effigies of the duke and his wife, Margaret of Bavaria, resting upon a slab of black marble, with a procession of mourners weaving through an ornate Gothic arcade beneath. Each individual figure has a different

expression—some wring their hands or dry their tears, hide their faces in the folds of their robes, or appear lost in reverent contemplation. The motif echoes that of ancient sarcophagi, but these innovative tombs were the first to represent mourners as thoroughly dimensional, rather than in semi-relief. The presentation of the mourners passing through the arcades of a cloister was also a great innovation for the tombs of the era.

“The renovation of our museum has created the opportunity for these exceptional works to travel together to the United States,” said Sophie Jugie, the Director of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon. “This FRAME project allows the sculptures to be viewed and appreciated as discrete works of art.”

During the 14th and 15th centuries, the Valois dukes of Burgundy were among the most powerful rulers in the Western world, presiding over vast territories in present-day France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands from their capital in Dijon. The significant artistic patronage of the dukes drew artists, musicians and writers to Dijon, which became a major center of creativity and artistic patronage.

This prolific creativity and innovation extended to the ducal court’s sculpture workshop, which produced some of the most significant art of the period. The tombs of the first two Burgundian dukes, John the Fearless and his father Philip the Bold, are among the best examples. Both tombs were originally commissioned for the family’s monastic complex outside of Dijon, the Charterhouse de Champmol, and were moved following the French Revolution to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, France, where they have remained since the early 19th century. The forthcoming exhibition tour will enable the mourners to remain on view during the museum’s renovation.

### **Exhibition Organization and Tour**

*The Mourners: Tomb Sculptures from the Court of Burgundy* was organized by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon and the Dallas Museum of Art, under the auspices of FRAME (the French Regional & American Museum Exchange). FRAME’s Directors are Richard R. Brettell, PhD (U.S.A.) and Jean-Hubert Martin, Conservateur Général du Patrimoine, Directeur de FRAME en France. The exhibition has been curated by Sophie Jugie, Director of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, with Heather MacDonald, The Lillian and James H. Clark Associate Curator of European Art at the Dallas Museum of Art. It is supported by a leadership gift from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Florence Gould Foundation, the Eugene McDermott Foundation, Connie Goodyear Baron and Boucheron. Major corporate support is provided by Bank of the West (Member BNP Paribas Group). This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

The exhibition tour will include:

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (March 2, 2010–May 23, 2010)
- Saint Louis Art Museum (June 20, 2010–September 6, 2010)
- Dallas Museum of Art (October 3, 2010–January 2, 2011)
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts (January 23, 2011–April 17, 2011)
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art (May 8, 2011–July 31, 2011)
- Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (August 21, 2011–January 1, 2012)
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond (January 20, 2012–April 15, 2012)

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

*The Mourners* is accompanied by a richly illustrated 129-page catalogue by Sophie Jugie, Director of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, with prefaces by FRAME Founders Marie-Christine Labourdette and Elizabeth Rohatyn and Dijon Mayor François Rebsamen, and an introduction by Philippe de Montebello, Director Emeritus of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Published by Yale University Press, the catalogue explores the social and political context in which the tombs were created and features detailed photographs and descriptions of each sculpture in the group. An in-depth discussion of the architecture and aesthetics of the period reveals the innovative craftsmanship behind the ducal tombs and the mourners themselves. An examination of the tomb's restoration reveals the museum's efforts to care for the objects and address the unique—and widely varying—needs of each piece.

#### **About FRAME**

The French Regional & American Museum Exchange (FRAME) is a formal collaboration of 12 museums in France and 12 museums in the United States which serves as a catalyst for cultural exchange between France and the United States. Founded in 1998, FRAME is dedicated to promoting French-American cooperation in the cultural arena concerning museums, their collections, and their professional staffs. It fosters partnerships, projects and exchanges of information, personnel, technology and resources. The projects range from a shared website to many joint exhibitions, educational resources and programs, and publications. They serve the cultural needs of each country and educate a constituency of great size, breadth and distribution. The museums of FRAME are all purposely drawn from regions outside the economic and governmental capitals of both countries, in order to draw attention to, and broadly share, the richness of cultural resources that characterize these institutions and regions. FRAME's directors are Richard R. Brettell, PhD, in the United States and Jean-Hubert Martin, Conservateur Général du Patrimoine, in France.

#### **About the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon**

Founded just before the French Revolution, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon is a superb combination of the prestigious architecture of a ducal residence, now the Palais des Etats de Bourgogne (Burgundy State Palace), and one of the richest collections in France. Thanks to the legacy of the dukes of Burgundy, some undisputed masterpieces from the end of the Middle Ages are displayed within its walls. Its exhaustive collections, resulting from both the founding period of the French Revolution and the curiosity of collectors, lead to the most varied of discoveries, from Egyptian art to the 20th century. Welcoming all art forms, the museum regularly organizes exhibitions, tours, conferences, workshops and shows for a dynamic and often unusual exploration of its collections.

#### **About the Dallas Museum of Art**

Located in the vibrant Arts District of downtown Dallas, Texas, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) ranks among the leading art institutions in the country and is distinguished by its innovative exhibitions and groundbreaking educational programs. At the heart of the Museum and its programs are its encyclopedic collections, which encompass more than 23,000 works and span 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Established in 1903, the Museum today welcomes more than 600,000 visitors annually and acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary readings and dramatic and dance presentations.

The Dallas Museum of Art is supported in part by the generosity of Museum members and donors and by the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas/Office of Cultural Affairs and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

###

For more information, please contact:

Dallas Museum of Art:  
Jill Bernstein  
Dallas Museum of Art

214-922-1802  
[JBernstein@DallasMuseumofArt.org](mailto:JBernstein@DallasMuseumofArt.org)

National Media:  
Juliet Sorce / Kira Garcia  
Resnicow Schroeder Associates

212-671-5158 / 5155  
JSorce / KGarcia@ResnicowSchroeder.com