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## Ivan Mestrovic in Syracuse, 1947-1955

David Tatham

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VOLUME XXXII · 1997

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VOLUME XXXII • 1997

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# Ivan Meštrović in Syracuse, 1947–1955

BY DAVID TATHAM

IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ'S eight and a half years as a member of the Syracuse University faculty stand as a period of exceptional historical importance for both the sculptor and the institution. For the University, the arrival in 1947 of this world-renowned artist marked not only the beginning of a full-fledged sculpture program, one which rapidly gained national distinction, but also the beginning of a postwar effort to bring to Syracuse scholars and creative artists already eminent in their fields.

For Meštrović, appointment at age sixty-three to Syracuse's faculty as artist-in-residence and professor of sculpture gave him an opportunity to rebuild a career shattered by World War II. It brought him personal stability and security after wartime experiences that had included imprisonment and near-execution in his native Croatia in 1941, escape to temporary exile in Rome under the protection of the Vatican, and, after reaching safety in Switzerland in 1943, the onset of nearly a year of prolonged and debilitating illness. At the end of the war he had refused Marshall Tito's invitation to return to Yugoslavia, believing fervently that communism was antithetical to individual liberty. He went instead to Rome, a city he knew well, to reside for awhile with his younger daughter Maritza (Maria) and to resume working as a sculptor. The American Academy in Rome provided him with a studio on the Janiculum for a year. These were short-term arrangements, however. In 1946 he was in most respects a man without a country.<sup>1</sup>

1. Biographical information concerning the artist has been drawn from the Meštrović Papers in the Syracuse University Archives, as well as from Laurence Schmeckebier, *Ivan Meštrović, Sculptor and Patriot* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959). While still a student at the Vienna Academy of Art, Meštrović became a member of the Vienna Secession, first exhibiting with the group in 1903. In succeeding years he established himself in Rome and Paris and was a leader of the Serbo-Croatian independence movement. After major exhibitions in London, Paris, and the United States between 1915 and 1925, and the completion of numerous large-scale sculptural and architectural projects, he established his home and studio in Zagreb, with a summer residence in Split. He continued to

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In the autumn of that year it was clear that he would need to travel to New York during the early months of 1947 to oversee the mounting of an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art of his recent sculpture, paintings, and drawings. Scheduled to open in April, and sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the exhibition was to include the major works of sculpture that he had created in 1945–46 in Rome, among them his *Job* and *Suppliant Persephone*, two figures which since the 1950s have been a major presence on the Syracuse University campus.

That the exhibition was held at the Metropolitan Museum was itself notable, for as a matter of policy that institution did not hold exhibitions of the work of living artists. It made an exception in this instance to oblige the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which had no adequate gallery space of its own. It may also have been moved to make the exception in response to the tenor of the times, that is, to pay honor to an artist of major international repute who had openly defied fascism before and during the recently ended war, who now strongly opposed communism, and who had paid dearly for taking both stands. In this respect he had no close counterpart among other European artists displaced to America by the war. Unlike those painters, architects, musicians, and writers who had come to the United States in the 1930s and early 1940s with the rise of Hitler and the outbreak of war—Walter Gropius at Harvard and Arnold Schoenberg in Los Angeles, for example—Meštrović had experienced the brutality of the war in Europe firsthand. And unlike those who had spent the war in safety in America and returned to their homelands when hostilities had ended—W. H. Auden and Benjamin Britten, for example—Meštrović saw no hope of return.<sup>2</sup>

While he had every reason in late 1946 to be confident that the Metropolitan's exhibition would confirm to the public that his creative powers as a sculptor were undiminished, he nevertheless had grave concerns about his future. He had no home for himself and his family, virtually no likelihood of sales or commissions for sculpture in a Europe still in ruins, and no source of steady income. From Rome he communicated with an old friend in New York, the distinguished American sculptor Malvina Hoffman, and asked her to look about for an academy or university

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work prolifically as a sculptor, and served actively as rector of the Art Institute of Zagreb until the onset of World War II. The major museum of the sculptor's work is the Meštrović Foundation of Zagreb and Split.

2. No catalog of the 1947 exhibition was published, but a list of the works exhibited and reviews of the exhibition is in the Meštrović Papers.

teaching position for him. He had, after all, taught steadily in the 1930s when he was rector of the Art Institute in Zagreb, and he had spent a year working in New York on American commissions in the mid-1920s. Her first efforts, concentrated in New York City, brought little hope. Meštrović's limited knowledge of English prevented his consideration for a university lectureship. The few existing academy professorships in sculpture were occupied.<sup>3</sup>

Hoffman's spirits rose after a chance meeting with William Pearson Tolley, Syracuse University's chancellor and president. They met, probably in September or October 1946, while Tolley was a weekend guest at the home of Thomas J. Watson, president of the International Business Machines Corporation, and a benefactor of the University. Tolley later recounted that when Hoffman described the plight of her friend, he immediately saw an opportunity to bring to his faculty a sculptor of immense reputation and accomplishment. He urged her to cable Meštrović: "You have appointment as Professor of Sculpture at Syracuse University effective September [1947]. Will pay all expenses for you and your family to come to the United States."<sup>4</sup>

He then set about creating this new position, persuading the appropriate deans and faculty that Meštrović should fill it (the prospect was welcomed warmly), and finding a facility that could be converted into a sculpture studio. On 28 October 1946, Tolley sent a memo to Norman Rice, the new (as of September) director of the School of Art, confirming that Meštrović would join the faculty.<sup>5</sup> On 1 December, the *Syracuse Herald-Journal* reported the University's "appointment of Ivan Meštrović, world-famous Yugoslav artist, as professor of sculpture."<sup>6</sup> Tolley had earlier indicated to Hoffman that Meštrović would have "opportunity to teach but we should like to leave most of his time free for creative work."<sup>7</sup>

3. Hoffman had met Meštrović in Paris just before World War I and renewed her acquaintance with him during his year's residence in New York in 1924–25. See Hoffman's autobiography, *Heads and Tales* (New York: Scribner, 1936).

4. William Pearson Tolley, *At the Fountain of Youth* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1989), 128–31.

5. Meštrović Faculty File, Syracuse University Archives.

6. Clipping, Meštrović Papers.

7. Telegram, Tolley to Hoffman, 31 January 1946. Meštrović Faculty File. The date is probably a typographical error, and should read "1947," by which time Meštrović was in Syracuse. The purpose of the telegram in that case would have been to provide Hoffman with documentation needed to clarify Meštrović's immigration status. While it is possible that Tolley's initial conversation with Hoffman about Meštrović occurred as early as January 1946, more than a year before he came to the United States, no other evidence in the

The sculptor took his teaching responsibilities very seriously, however, spending much time with his students.

Although his teaching responsibilities were to begin in September 1947, Meštrović in fact joined the Syracuse University faculty effective February 1 of that year.<sup>8</sup> Having sailed from Le Havre on 14 December, he, his wife Olga, and his younger son Matko (Matthew), arrived in New York aboard the *S. S. America* on 11 January 1947.<sup>9</sup> Chancellor Tolley traveled to New York to greet the family. Before the end of the month Meštrović was on his way through the winter landscape to Syracuse, more than two hundred miles to the northwest.

He and his family settled into a cottage at 201 Marshall Street at the northern edge of the University's campus. Across the street stood the late nineteenth-century carriage house (but always called a barn) that Tolley had decreed would be converted into a sculpture studio for teaching, and to which was soon added a single-story, prefabricated, war surplus building. (The Sheraton University Hotel and Conference Center now occupies the site.) A year later, the Meštrović family relocated to a finer cottage east of the campus at 817 Livingston Avenue, a ten-minute walk from the carriage house. On a lot next to his new home, the University erected a single-story prefabricated building to serve as the sculptor's personal studio. Meštrović used both studios for teaching as well as for his own work.<sup>10</sup>

On 20 February 1947, having been in Syracuse for only a few weeks and with work on the carriage house still incomplete, Meštrović already seemed to think that Syracuse would suit him, for on that date he wrote to Tolley (with his English polished by an unknown hand):

It is difficult for me to express my deep appreciation for all that you and your institution have done for me, and for the warm hospitality shown me. I feel particularly overawed by it after spending the last few years in war torn Europe. I assure you that it gives me a ray of hope and reason for not being utterly in despair about the future of humanity.<sup>11</sup>

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Syracuse University Meštrović Papers support such an early date. In recounting the history many years later, Tolley left the impression that his offer of an appointment preceded the sculptor's arrival in the United States by only several weeks.

8. Meštrović Faculty File.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Of these buildings, only 817 Livingston Avenue still stands.

11. Meštrović Faculty File.





Fig. 1. Meštrović with Chancellor William Pearson Tolley in the Chancellor's Office at Syracuse University, probably in the early months of 1947. Photograph by Keith J. Kennedy. All photos in this article are courtesy of Syracuse University Archives.

The funding of this new faculty position and the facilities it required was a major commitment for a private university of very modest financial resources. But it was a commitment never regretted by Chancellor Tolley. Indeed, he took enormous pride in the outcome of his decision to bring Meštrović to Syracuse. From the very start of their association, a bond of friendship developed between the two men (Fig. 1). In time the chancellor took great pleasure in the professional success of the sculptor's graduate students.<sup>12</sup> He relished the enrichment of the University's art collection with works acquired from the sculptor himself and others.

12. Among those students were Peter Abate, William Artis, Martha Milligan Bernat, Marion Brackett, Lee Burnham, Anthony Cipriano, Oswen de Lorgeril, Miguel Sopo Duque, Mary Ella Fletcher, Theodore Golubic, George Hendriks, Karl Karhumaa, Luise Meyers Kaish, Mary Lewis, Elizabeth Sharp MacDonald, Eleanor Milne, Marjorie Moench, Ellen Nims, George Norris, David Packard, Norman Pearl, Dorothy Reister, James Ridlon, Fred Rubens, William Severson, Michael Skop, Alf Svendson, Aldo Tambellini, James Wines.

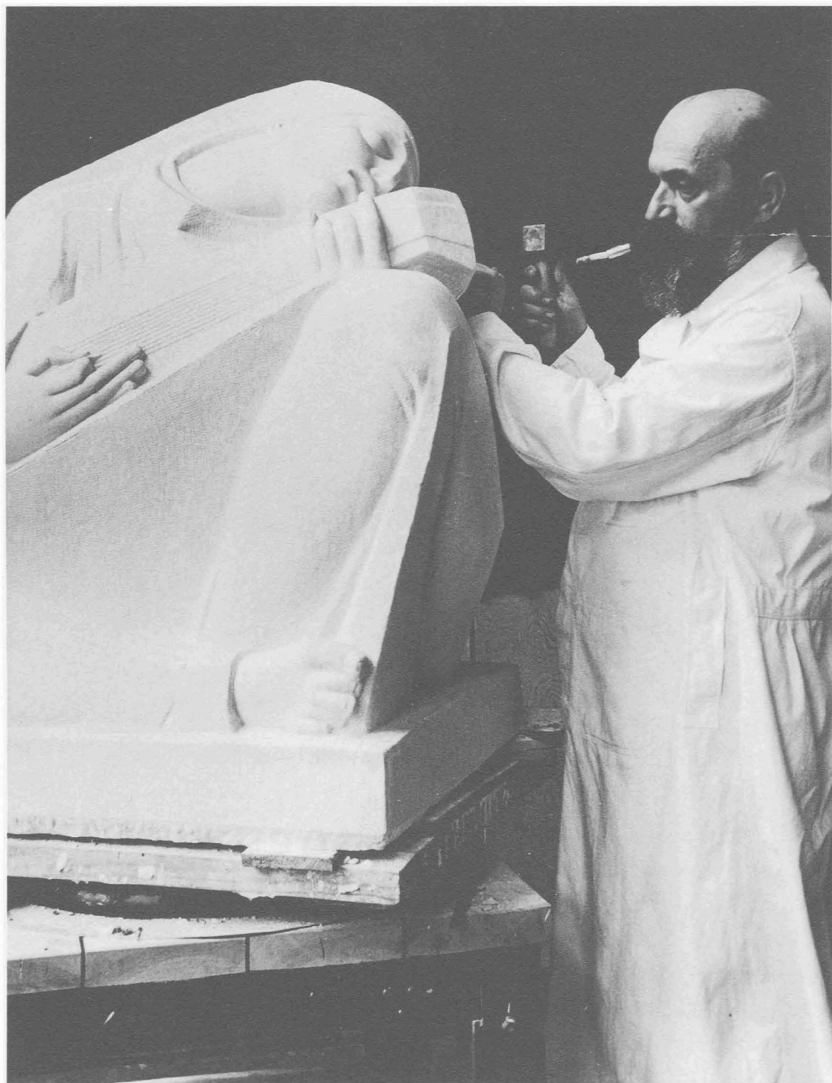


Fig. 2. Meštrović with his *Croatian Rhapsody* in 1947. Photograph by Keith J. Kennedy.

In the spring of 1947, Meštrović rapidly made his studio operative. When he was ready to sculpt, Hoffman shipped him a block of stone. A few weeks later, after a visit to Syracuse, she reported, “You have to see him—stone or wood flying over his shoulder. . . . I send him a piece of marble, thinking that when I get to Syracuse he may just have started

something with it. When I get there, the marble is a woman and a lyre—all finished in a few short weeks. . . . He has no conception of working with synthetic materials or power tools.”<sup>13</sup>

The finished piece, *Croatian Rhapsody* (Fig. 2), was immediately purchased by the University (for \$5,000, with payment to the artist spread over five years).<sup>14</sup> In 1953 it was installed in the newly completed Women’s Building, where it remains. During the construction of that building Dr. Tolley specified that a block of limestone be placed in the northern facade at the second story in the hope that Meštrović might be persuaded to carve it, but he must not have consulted the sculptor about this beforehand. When it was shown to him he had to state that even *he* carved architectural decoration at ground level in a studio and not from a scaffold in the open air. The block remains in place, untouched.

*Croatian Rhapsody* was a variant of a subject that Meštrović returned to from time to time throughout his career—a woman playing a stringed instrument—and it is one of his finest treatments of it. As he moved on to other subjects in the following months, working in stone, wood, and clay, he continued to return to his past, and to freshly reengage old themes. In 1947 he carved from wood the relief *Five Women Playing Stringed Instruments* (now located in the administrative suite of Bird Library). In 1948 he modeled in clay and cast in plaster a major treatment of another subject that he had dealt with before, *Mother and Child*; the plaster cast (now in the Snite Museum, University of Notre Dame) appears in several photographs of the interior of his studio (Fig. 3). In this work the Madonna-like figure wears a diamond-shaped cowl derived from Croatian peasant dress. Its linear geometric form contrasts strongly with the curvatures of the human face within it. He had used this kind of cowl in his work periodically for some forty years, beginning notably with a portrait of his mother in marble in 1908 (Zagreb, Meštrović Foundation; variant of 1926, Art Institute of Chicago), each time with subtle differences, but never more strikingly than in this early Syracuse work. A plaster cast of the cowled head, a study for the 1940 larger-than-life *Mother and Child*, was purchased from Meštrović in the 1940s by the sculptor Robert Baillie. It found its way back to the University nearly half a century later as a gift from Baillie’s niece, Helen Helms. Cast in bronze through the generosity of Michael Novacovic, the bust now graces the interior of the Tolley Administration Building (Fig. 4).

13. Clipping from the *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 25 May 1947. Meštrović Papers.

14. Meštrović Papers.



Fig. 3. Meštrović and his student, and assistant, Michael Skop, in the Marshall Street sculpture studio, photographed in August 1955. Meštrović's works, all in plaster, are, from the left, *Mother and Child* (1947), *Sinfonia* (1948), *Crucifixion* (1948), and *Migrating Peoples* (1952), a relief for the proposed *American Memorial to Six Million Jews of Europe*.

In August 1948, *Time* magazine reported that in the year and a half since Meštrović arrival at Syracuse, he had completed nine major pieces.<sup>15</sup> It added, "When a reporter asked him what he did for relaxation, the sculptor looked puzzled for a moment and then blurted, 'work.'" *Time* took notice of him not only because he was a celebrated artist but also because his opposition to communism reflected firsthand experience with the Tito regime, and it reinforced the intensifying anti-communist fervor of much of the American public.

The magazine's use of Meštrović as a symbolic figure in international affairs culminated in 1949 when Marshall Tito broke with the Soviet Union and proceeded to rule Yugoslavia—a nation which Meštrović had helped bring into being in the years following World War I—as an inde-

15. *Time*, 30 August 1948. In addition to *Croatian Rhapsody*, *Mother and Child*, and *Five Women Playing Instruments*, the nine pieces included *Sinfonia* and *Isis and Horus*.



Fig. 4. Study for *Mother and Child* (1947), cast in bronze and installed in the Tolley Administration Building in 1996.

pendent communist state. The magazine reported that the American sculptor Jo Davidson, returning from overseas, conveyed to Meštrović a personal message from Tito: "Tell Meštrović not to be afraid. Tell him to come back." Meštrović apparently replied, "Too many of my friends are in jail over there." Soon thereafter *Time* claimed that the Yugoslav ambassador to the United States had urged the sculptor to return, if only for a visit, and, if he wished, to return incognito. Meštrović, who had been one of Yugoslavia's most prominent figures in the 1920s and 30s, replied, "I will go to Belgrade incognito when Marshall Tito goes to Moscow incognito."<sup>16</sup>

*Time's* interest in Meštrović's sculpture rested in part in its continuing adherence to figural representation (often with expressionist simplification or exaggeration) in a decade when abstract nonrepresentational sculpture was gaining an ever-stronger place in the mainstream. The abstract work of such artists as Henry Moore, Constantin Brancusi, Barbara Hepworth, Alexander Calder, and the young David Smith seemed increasingly to define sculpture's international postwar direction. Because it was a direction that broke sharply with tradition, it left much of the public discomfited. *Time* reassured this part of its readership by giving attention to work that did not break with the past so dramatically. It found in Meštrović, whose sculpture was always grounded in naturalism, a master of unquestioned greatness who had successfully carried tradition into the modern age.<sup>17</sup>

As a teacher, Meštrović's insufficient English proved no barrier in his studio where gestures, a shared vocabulary of technical and professional terms, the example of the master at work, and some English sufficed to make his studio sessions a success. He was never obliged to lecture to classes. He regularly attended faculty meetings of the School of Art, though his colleagues sometimes wondered how well he could follow discussions. With members of the University faculty who were fluent in French, Italian, German, or Croatian, he engaged in conversations that ranged widely, for despite his pride in his peasant origins, he was a man

16. *Ibid.*, 7 November 1949.

17. Meštrović held grave reservations concerning the rise of nonfigural sculpture, the self-referential preoccupation of modern art with form, and what he saw as the retreat of modern art generally from engagement with major issues of public life. The *Syracuse Post-Standard* of 9 January 1955, quoted him: "Sculpture, and art in general, should contribute to human civilization, to human progress and mankind's spiritual development. In my opinion, 'abstract art' is only another slogan. A great art must not be expressed within the limits of form."

who had acquired much of the substance of a classical education. In his early years at Syracuse the faculty of the School of Art changed with the appointment of a number of younger teachers of art, most of them veterans returned from the war, and all well-versed in the vocabulary of modernism. Like their school's new director, Norman Rice, several of them had studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and knew well Meštrović's pair of Native American equestrians of heroic scale installed in the late 1920s on Michigan Avenue at Grant Park.

Meštrović had executed many portrait busts throughout his career, and by the late 1940s he was active again in this realm. By the mid-1950s he had modeled in the round a strong and vital likeness of Chancellor Tolley (Arents Reading Room, Bird Library) and one of Everett N. Case, president of Colgate University (Colgate University). Farther afield, he portrayed, in relief, Cardinal Spellman of New York. He designed small-scale works, such as the Salzburg Medal for the University's School of Business Administration (now the School of Management). Some of the income derived from his commissions he sent to the Art Institute in Zagreb, to provide needy students with art supplies. He was known to be helpful in this way to his Syracuse students as well.

In mid-1949, after two years of teaching, Meštrović received the most promising commission of his mature years. Not since the twenties had he had an opportunity to work on anything so grand, or of such personal significance. In the end, after nearly three years' effort, for which he received little compensation, the project was canceled. This unhappy ending would have been a blow to any artist in late career who, like Meštrović, saw a chance to make a final, culminating public statement about humanity, but it was doubly disappointing to him since this proposed monument would have allowed him to be represented in the great city of his adopted country with a major work of public art.

The commission came about when he was invited to assume responsibility for the sculptural elements of a large and complex monument planned for a site in Riverside Park in New York, *An American Memorial to Six Million Jews of Europe*, often referred to as "The Jewish Memorial."<sup>18</sup> It would have been one of the earliest, and, as originally envisioned, perhaps the largest of the Holocaust memorials erected in the twentieth century. Although it was sponsored by a committee of distinguished citizens, and its funding was to come from private sources, the memorial itself was

18. James F. Flanigan, C.S.C., *Ivan Meštrović: Moses and the Jewish Memorial*, exhibition catalog (South Bend: Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, 1991).

to stand on public ground made available by the City of New York. This meant that all aspects of the design required the approval of the New York Parks Commission.

The conflicts that arose between the vision of the private sponsors and the requirements of the Parks Commission proved fractious and difficult to resolve. They centered on the municipal policy that public land could not be used for religious monuments. That the *American Memorial* was as much a historical as a religious monument, and one whose subject was of the greatest pertinence to people of all faiths, was an interpretation resisted by the commission. A key member of the memorial's sponsoring committee stated, "From the very beginning, the idea of the memorial was to symbolize the fortitude and physical stamina of the Jewish people in surviving all onslaughts through the centuries. It should not depict or symbolize their sufferings in temporary defeat. . . . The memorial should not be a tombstone for the dead but rather an exhortation to the world at large."<sup>19</sup> A sequence of proposed revised designs broadened the scope of the structure's iconography (and reduced its size), but despite this, it was never built. Several pieces of sculpture by Meštrović destined for one or another of the designs have survived, however, and although they are divided among a number of institutions, they attest to the great strengths of his contributions.

In its original concept, the memorial's design was in the hands of Percival Goodman, the architect of, among other buildings, several important American synagogues. Jacques Lipchitz, a distinguished sculptor of Lithuanian origin who had come to America from Paris in 1941, and whose work was much influenced by Cubism, was to provide the sculptural elements. When Goodman's proposals proved unsatisfactory to the sponsoring committee, it replaced him with the modernist architect Eric Mendelsohn who in turn invited Jo Davidson to serve as sculptor. By mid-1949, Davidson's health was in decline. Because the Parks Commission had by then required an iconographic program for the project that was not specifically Jewish, it made sense to invite Meštrović to succeed the ailing Davidson. Meštrović was a devout Catholic (though somewhat idiosyncratic in his observances) who had a long-established sympathy for Jewish culture. He had been an outspoken enemy of the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Not least, he had in his career created highly successful sculptural monuments of the scale required for *An American Memorial to Six Million Jews of Europe*.

19. James F. Flanigan, C.S.C., *Ivan Meštrović: Moses and the Jewish Memorial*, exhibition catalog (South Bend: Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, 1991), 16–7.



Each of Mendelsohn's revisions to the project's architectural design preserved a pylon-like set of tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. They rose at the end of a long platform backed by a wall. Most of Meštrović's several iconographic programs called for figural sculptural reliefs on the wall and also for a free-standing figure of Moses pointing to the tablets. This program implied that for humanity to avoid disasters of war and genocide, there must be, as a member of the sponsoring committee emphasized, "universal recognition of, and adherence to, the moral law first and finally expressed in Moses' Ten Commandments."<sup>20</sup> As an artist who had taken Moses as a subject several times since 1915, Meštrović saw, perhaps more clearly than the members of the sponsoring committee, the central importance of the great lawgiver to the memorial.<sup>21</sup> Mendelsohn objected to a free-standing figure of Moses on the reasonable grounds that it would act visually as an independent element, that it would amount to, as he said, the addition of "a second monument to the monument proper. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

Meštrović then moved from a free-standing figure to one in deep relief that would become part of the long wall leading to the tablets (Fig. 5). He made a full-scale plaster cast of this boldly dramatic, expressionistic figure. Most of Meštrović's studies and models for the memorial, as well as his extensive correspondence about it, are in the collections of the University of Notre Dame. The great relief of *Moses*, however, remains at Syracuse University. Cast in bronze in 1991, it now stands with *Job* and *Suppliant Persephone* in the sculpture court next to the Shaffer Art Building (Fig. 6).

The sculptor's disappointment with the outcome of the *American Memorial* was assuaged to a degree by a commission from the Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minnesota, for a colossal figure, *Man and Freedom*, to be placed on an exterior wall of its new building. The twenty-four-foot figure of a male nude with upraised arms is one of the great achievements of American figural sculpture in the postwar years. In July 1953, a month before traveling to Minnesota to attend its installation, Meštrović went to New York to receive from the American Academy of Arts and Letters its Medal of Merit for Sculpture. He joined two other awardees at the festivities, the poet Marianne Moore and the architect Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>23</sup>

20. Ibid., 17.

21. Ibid., 7, and illustrations throughout.

22. Ibid., 20.

23. A photograph of the three awardees appears in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 28 July 1953.

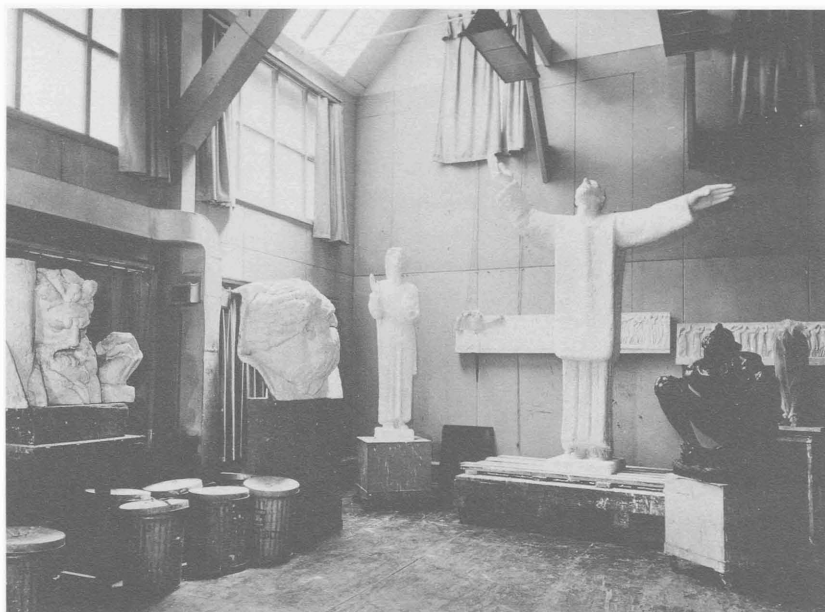


Fig. 5. The Marshall Street sculpture studio in August 1955, showing at right, the bronze *Job* (1945), at left a study in plaster for the head of Moses in the final version of the proposed *American Memorial to Six Million Jews of Europe*. A small-scale model of this version hangs on the wall at center, showing the figure of Moses and, in lower relief, the migrating peoples.

In 1954 Meštrović became an American citizen in a special ceremony conducted by President Eisenhower at the White House.<sup>24</sup>

The difficulties of creating a work of the scale of *Man and Freedom* in the Marshall Street sculpture studio, where lack of space had obliged him to model it in three large parts (the plaster casts of which fit perfectly when he assembled them outside the studio), moved Meštrović to ask, not for the first time, that the studio be enlarged and otherwise improved. But at a time of pressing need for studio space to house other programs of the School of Art, and limited resources to satisfy that need, his request was deferred. At about this time an offer of a wholly new, purpose-built studio, along with a substantial increase in pay, came from the University of Notre Dame. On 27 November 1954, Meštrović, at age seventy-two, wrote to Chancellor Tolley:

24. Meštrović Papers.

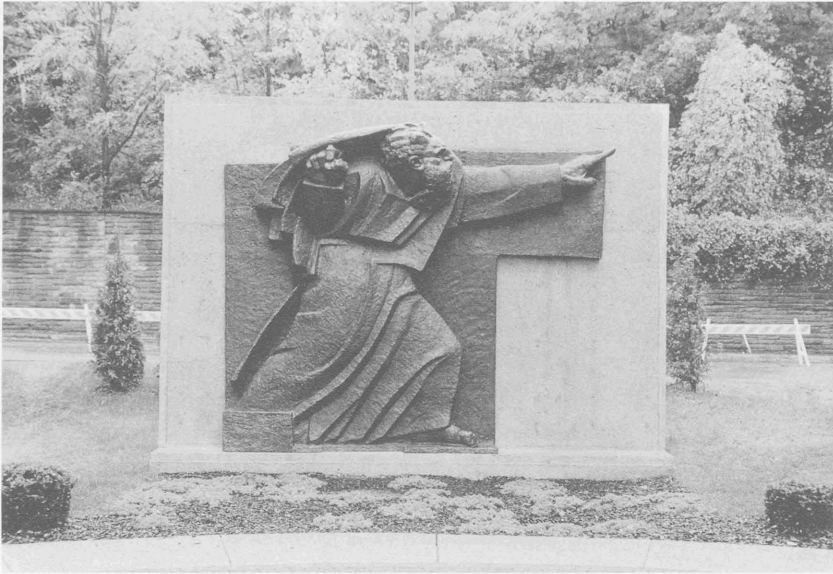


Fig. 6. *Moses* (1952), installed in the Shaffer sculpture court.

Mr. Norman Rice . . . has probably already told you that I am leaving my present position as Professor at Syracuse University for that at the University of Notre Dame at the end of June next year. I feel very sorry that I had to do this, particularly because of my many friends here where I felt at ease and at home. I had to take the step because of offers by the Notre Dame University of twice better conditions of work and salary. They will build for me a private studio as well as an adequate one for official classes. . . . I feel it both my duty and pleasure to express my hearty thanks to Syracuse University and particularly to you personally for your kind invitation to your university which enabled me to contribute in my vocation what I can in the furthering of art in my adopted country. . . . I hope and feel certain that the sculpture department will receive a worthy successor and prosper, with your assistance.<sup>25</sup>

25. Meštrović file, William Pearson Tolley Papers, Syracuse University Archives.

Dean (later Vice Chancellor) Frank Piskor, who had been a good friend of the sculptor and his family, as well as a key supporter of the development of a University Art Collection, also received an expression of gratitude. Nearly a year later, on 14 September 1955, Meštrović wrote to Tolley from Notre Dame: "I am all right, preparing myself for the second page of my stay in this country. The first was a pleasant one at Syracuse University. . . . I will always remember it."<sup>26</sup>

Before Meštrović left Syracuse, the chancellor found funds to purchase a representative group of the sculptor's works. These included, in addition to ten drawings, *Job*, *Suppliant Persephone*, and, to increase the collection's historical range, *Madonna and Child*, carved in 1928 from diorite and once called, from the color of the stone, the "Black Madonna." Purchased separately for the University by a benefactor was *Socrates and his Disciples* (Grant Auditorium, College of Law). The sculptor had created this work in deep relief in 1953 as a maquette at the request of Dr. Tolley, who hoped that he might someday find the funds needed to make from it a bronze of larger scale. He envisioned this fundamental image of teaching and learning as a symbolic centerpiece for the University's outdoor sculpture program.

In 1964 the University purchased from the sculptor's brother Petar nearly twenty further works, including Meštrović's bust portrait of his friend Malvina Hoffman (1959). As an expression of her gratitude to the chancellor for making it possible for Meštrović to build a career in America, she bequeathed to the University a Meštrović bronze of 1917, *Vestal Virgin*, having previously donated her own bronze, *Elemental Man* of 1936, a work shown in 1939–40 at the New York World's Fair.

Hoffman's *Elemental Man*, situated near the southeast corner of the main quadrangle, greets those who walk toward the Shaffer sculpture court from the direction of Hendricks Chapel. Just beyond it, outside the entrance to the Shaffer building, stands *The Saltine Warrior*, a heroic bronze of 1951 by one of Meštrović's students, Luise Meyers Kaish, a work in the style of her master (and a style that she soon set aside to develop one of her own). At the entry to the court are two abstract works, *Jazz Barbieri* and *Windowscape* by Rodger Mack, since the late 1960s Meštrović's successor as professor of sculpture. These constructions epitomize the triumph of abstraction, innovation, and invention over figuration and tradition in sculpture during the second half of the twentieth

26. Meštrović file, William Pearson Tolley Papers, Syracuse University Archives.



Fig. 7. The Shaffer sculpture court with, from the left, *Suppliant Persephone* (1945), *Moses* (1952), and *Job* (1945).

century. They allow the sculpture court to represent the century's two great, and very different, motive styles.

At the far end of the court the bold forms of Meštrović's *Moses* for the unrealized *American Memorial* arrests the viewer's attention, but that attention in time settles on two smaller works facing each other nearby, *Job* and *Suppliant Persephone* (Fig. 7). One, in its depiction of suffering, is in Meštrović's northern, expressionist, mode. The other, portraying more restrained but scarcely less charged emotion, reflects the Mediterranean classicism that informed much of his work. Each figure commands its own space; neither is overwhelmed by the nearby *Moses*. Products of Meštrović's burst of creativity in Rome in 1945–46, both works speak of the despair and hope of his wartime years. Here is Persephone, imprisoned in the underworld, reaching upward beseechingly as she pleads for freedom, not to her captor but to a higher power. Here is Job, suffering profoundly but unwilling to abandon his faith even as his cries to God for help go unanswered. And here is Moses leading his people, and by implication, the world, to the rule of law. In its iconography, autobiography, and power of expression, this installation of three works by a twentieth-century master, adjacent to highly significant sculptures by a colleague

friend, a student, and a successor, brings the art of sculpture alive with rare intensity.

In late summer 1955, Meštrović moved to South Bend, Indiana, and began his appointment as professor of sculpture. Although he was now entering his twilight years, he worked steadily and attracted to Notre Dame able students. Felled by a stroke in his studio, he died on 16 January 1962.

The Syracuse University Archives holds a substantial collection of Meštrović's papers, photographs of his work, and other materials relating to his career. A larger collection of his papers, owned by the University of Notre Dame, has recently been microfilmed and is available at Bird Library. Syracuse's Meštrović Papers have in turn been microfilmed for the Hesburgh Library at Notre Dame. The availability of these research materials coincides with steadily growing interest in the history of European and American sculpture of the first half of the twentieth century and in Meštrović's central place within that history. This now readily accessible documentation of the American years of a great artist richly augments the major collection of his works and papers in the Meštrović Foundation of Zagreb and Split.

#### WORKS BY IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ IN SYRACUSE

##### In the Syracuse University Art Collection

##### *Sculpture*

- Vestal Virgin*, 1917, bronze, 14 x 10.5 x 7"
- Autoportrait*, 1924, bronze, 20 x 14 x 9"
- Archangel Gabriel*, 1926, bronze, 34.5 x 23 x 6"
- Magdalene under the Cross*, 1926, bronze, 41 x 24.5 x 8"
- Madonna and Child*, 1928, diorite stone, 37.5 x 25 x 9"
- Musical Angel*, 1930, mahogany, 64.5 x 16.5 x 2"
- Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1930s, bronze, 34 x 25 x 8.5"
- Mary Magdalene under the Cross*, 1941, mahogany, 43.5 x 23 x 5"
- Job*, 1945, bronze, 49 x 40 x 34"
- Study for Job*, 1945, bronze, 10 x 8.5 x 7"
- Suppliant Persephone*, 1945, bronze, 106 x 26 x 21"
- Woman in Despair*, 1945, bronze, 8 x 9.5 x 8.5"
- Girl with a Harp*, 1945, mahogany, 66 x 17 x 2.5"
- Dancing Peasant Girls*, 1945, mahogany, 66 x 43.5 x 1"
- Croatian Rhapsody*, 1947, marble, 36 x 32.5 x 24"
- Isis and Horus*, 1947, onyx, 18 x 26.5 x 15"
- Petar Mestrovic*, 1947, bronze, 22.5 x 20.5 x 20"

*Study for Cyclops*, 1947, bronze, 16.5 x 11.5 x 9"  
*Bust study for Mother and Child*, 1947, bronze, 25 x 23.5 x 13.5"  
*Bust study for Mother and Child*, 1947, plaster, 24.5 x 23 x 13"  
*Five Women Playing Instruments*, 1947, walnut, 72 x 45.5"  
*Moses*, 1952, bronze, 131.5 x 165 x 32"  
*Moses*, 1952, plaster, 131 x 164.5 x 31.5"  
*Socrates and his Disciples*, bronze, 1953, 18 x 29 x 7.5"  
*Socrates and his Disciples*, plaster, 1953, 17.5 x 28.5 x 7"  
*Virgin and Child with Saint Elizabeth and Saint John*, 1953, mahogany,  
 48.5 x 35.5 x 2"  
*William Pearson Tolley*, 1954, bronze, 23 x 17.5 x 13"  
*The Guslar*, 1954, walnut, 77.5 x 30 x 23"  
*Malvina Hoffman*, 1959, bronze, 18 x 9 x 1"  
*Praying Woman*, undated, 11.5 x 8 x 8"

### Drawings

*Ascension*, 1921, pastel, 35.5 x 24.5"  
*Under the Cross*, 1941, conte chalk, 24.5 x 17.5"  
*Pieta*, 1943, conte chalk, 24.5 x 17.5"  
*Pluto and Persephone*, 1945, red chalk, 24 x 17.5"  
*Study of an Apostle*, 1945, red conte, 24 x 15.5"  
*Study, Saint Jerome*, 1945, pastel, 58.5 x 51.5"  
*Fretful Angel*, 1946, brown conte chalk, 30.5 x 21.5"  
*Study of a Nude*, 1947, red conte, 24 x 17.5"  
*Study of Two Women and Children*, 1947, red conte, 24 x 18"  
*Study of a Woman Praying*, 1947, red conte, 24 x 15"  
*Study of Madonna and Child*, 1950, red conte, 26 x 20.5"  
*Study of an Angel*, 1950, red conte, 26 x 20.5"  
*Study of the Great Spirit*, 1950, charcoal conte, 24 x 17.5"  
*Study of a Prophet*, 1950, brown conte, 17.5 x 25"  
*Study of a Man Reading*, ca. 1950, red conte, 24.5 x 16"  
*Study of Saint Christopher*, 1951, charcoal conte, 26 x 20"  
*Striding Hermit*, undated, red chalk, 24 x 19"  
*Peace*, undated, charcoal, 78 x 71.5"

In the Everson Museum of Art

*Mother and Child*, 1946, marble, 34 x 19.5 x 11.5"

In the Temple Society of Concord

*Moses*, ca., 1950, bronze, 38 x 18 x 14"