Eleven bronze relief studies by the Italian sculptor Giacomo Manzù representing one of the stages in the realization of *The Portal of Death*, now installed at St. Peter's Basilica, The Vatican, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from March 18 - April 13.

Executed in 1961-63, the bronze panels depict scenes of violent and peaceful death. Martyrs and saints of the Church and the humble, anonymous people of everyday life are shown side by side unified in death, the highest moment in human existence and entry into eternal life, according to Catholic faith. The exhibition includes bronze studies of mankind's first murder victim, Abel, beaten to the ground by Cain; the death of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, killed by stones; the figure tumbling through the sky in the panel *Death in Space*; the hanging of a partisan observed by a horrified woman; the slumped body of Christ on the Cross (the body of Christ is in a different position in the final version); and the serene, seated figure of St. Joseph at his death with his head bowed.

GIACOMO MANZU: Studies for "The Portal of Death" was directed and installed by Renée Neu, Assistant Curator of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture. The bronze sketches have been lent by Mr. and Mrs. Lester Francis Avnet.

The steps in the development of the work from the donation of funds by a canon for bronze doors at St. Peter's in 1943 to the inauguration of Manzù's *The Portal of Death* on June 28, 1964 by Pope Paul VI are outlined in the exhibition wall label.

Son of a Bergamo cobbler and church sexton, Manzù submitted designs for the doors in an international competition announced by The Vatican in 1947. In a second competition, he was among twelve artists to be considered for the task by the Vatican jury. The sculptor's alleged left-wing political position and his unorthodox
Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Joan Wiggins, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 212-535-5200.