



Vanderbilt Memorial Church Doors (The Model for the Bronze Doors of St Bartholomew's Church, New York)

Date

1899

Primary Maker

Andrew O'Connor

Medium

Bronze

Dimensions

Framed: 86.5 x 69.5 x 8 cm 86.5 x 69.5 x 8 cm

Description

Through the architect Daniel Chester French, O'Connor was awarded the commission about 1900 or earlier for a

pair of bronze doors for the Church of Saint Bartholomew, New York. Mrs Vanderbilt had restored the church as a memorial to her husband Cornelius and O'Connor's bronze doors were part of his memorial. Subsequently the sculptor was commissioned to execute a relief for the tympanum above the door and two friezes which would link the central portico with subsidiary doors on either side. The tympanum relief represents 'Christ in Glory' (the Christ is reputedly a self-portrait) and the friezes are illustrative of the 'New Testament' (left) and the 'Old Testament' (right). A further frieze (see below no. 20 formed the architrave above the doors, and independent reliefs at either end of this frieze 'Adam and Eve' and 'The Creation of Eve'. O'Connor exhibited a variant of the 'Adam and Eve' relief in marble at the Salon of 1910: it is now in the collection of the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington. This is the extent of O'Connor's work at Saint Bartholomew's as the flanking doorways are by other sculptors (Adam and Martiny). This sculptural work is a maquette for the Vanderbilt Memorial Doors. The two principal panels in the centre of either door are occupied by the Evangelists, reading from left to right, 'Matthew', 'Luke', 'John' and 'Mark'. Flanking these panels are figures of prophets, 'Isaiah', 'Jeremiah', 'Nehemiah' (second from left) and 'Daniel'. Immediately above and below the Evangelists are reclining Sybils while the four reliefs at the top and bottom of each door represent (top left) 'The Annunciation', (top right) 'The Adoration of the Magi', (bottom left) 'The Descent from the Cross' and (bottom right) 'The Road to Calvary'. (Homan Potterton, 'Andrew O'Connor - A complementary catalogue to the exhibition marking the centenary of the sculptor's birth', Trinity College, Dublin, September 1974, p. 25.)