

Broken

The Power of the Fragment

Sep 25, 2026 — Jan 24, 2027 | Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy

Palazzo Strozzi presents 'Broken. The Power of the Fragment', a major exhibition celebrating the evocative power of the fragment in the history of sculpture, from archaeology to contemporary art. Organized with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the exhibition brings together extraordinary and compelling works ranging from Ancient Egypt to Michelangelo, from Classical Greece to Rodin, and including contemporary artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Francesco Vezzoli and Danh Vo.

The exhibition invites visitors on a journey across different places and periods, from the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Etruria and the Greco-Roman world to the premodern cultures of present-day Mexico, Mali, Peru and Cambodia. Works by many of the greatest masters of art history, including Giovanni Pisano, Michelangelo, and Auguste Rodin, are shown alongside sculptures by contemporary artists including Louise Bourgeois, Huma Bhabha, Robert Gober, Francesco Vezzoli, and Danh Vo, who have taken the fragment as a starting point for new expressive possibilities. On the occasion of the exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi also presents a new installation by Dutch-Belgian artist Mark Manders, conceived for the Renaissance Courtyard.

Featuring more than eighty works and artefacts from some of the world's most important museums—including The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Louvre in Paris, the British Museum in London and the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City—the exhibition examines the fragment from a new perspective: not simply as the remnant of a lost whole, but as an autonomous object, capable of preserving traces of memory and transformation.

A fragment may result from a deliberate artistic choice, or it may tell a story whose traces it still bears: ancient and modern iconoclasm, wars, revolutions, acts of vandalism and natural disasters, such as the 1966 Florence flood. The exhibition thus prompts a reflection on the artistic, political and symbolic value that a sculpture acquires following its breakage, and on the ability of the fragment to become an instrument of knowledge and imagination—a living presence that continues to engage with and question the present.

'Broken. The Power of the Fragment' is organised by Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, where it will be presented in a newly conceived version from March 3 to June 27, 2027. The exhibition is curated by C. D. Dickerson III, Dean of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, and Andrew Sears, Assistant Curator of Northern European Paintings, both of the National Gallery of Art, in collaboration with Arturo Galansino, Director General of Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi.