

Fragments

Deconstruction and Reconstruction of
Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

6th Conference of the PhD program in History, Criticism
and Conservation of Cultural Heritage

CALL FOR PAPERS

10-11 December 2026

Padova, Palazzo Bo

Università di Padova

Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali

convegnodottorale2026.dbc@unipd.it



UNIVERSITÀ DI PADOVA

Dipartimento

dei Beni culturali: Archeologia, Storia
dell'Arte, del Cinema e della Musica

ET ouvrage sera composé
paroitre, et les autres se succéderont régulièrement de quatre
décades en quatre décades.

Le nombre de planches déjà gravées que nous avons par-

«Fragment presumes fragmentations [...] And fragmentation is movement. According to one of our best guesses, the universe began with the colossal motion of an immense act of fragmentation - the big bang, a construct to theoretical physics - that nonetheless makes poignant the persistent idea of a return to unity in the arts, religion, and culture»

(W. Tronzo, *Introduction*, in *The Fragment. An Incomplete History*, Los Angeles, 2009, pp. 3-4)

The PhD programme in History, Criticism, and Conservation of Cultural Heritage at the University of Padua is pleased to present the international conference *Fragments*.

Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

(Frammenti. Scomporre e ricomporre il patrimonio culturale materiale e immateriale), organised by the PhD students of the 40th cycle.

This event aims to foster dialogue on the theme of fragments, and on the practices of deconstruction and reconstruction in which it plays a central role. The fragment emerges as a distinctive object of inquiry within the broad spectrum of disciplinary knowledge on which cultural heritage – both material and immaterial – is grounded.

The fragment can first and foremost be understood as a portion with its own intrinsic meaning and *raison d'être*. Due to its derivative nature, the fragment continuously evokes the origin from which it comes. At the same time, it tends toward reintegration into new contexts, enriching and complicating its original sense.

From a methodological standpoint, the fragment should not only be conceived as the static profile of a lost totality, but also as a dynamic entity. Discussing fragments and reconstructions means investigating highly diverse processes, which oscillate between two polarities. On the one hand, there is the received fragment, inherited from the past as a trace and often resignified through the ages it has traversed. On the other hand, there is the fragment as the result of an act of creation, intended as a break with the past. The fragment thus acquires multiple connotations depending on the disciplinary lens through which it is examined, revealing various facets in the fields of archaeology and art history, as well as in music, cinema, and the performing arts.

The fragment, as an object, may bring into play all the spaces dedicated to its preservation, cataloguing, and enhancement (archives, film libraries, libraries, archaeological sites, museums, exhibitions, and concert halls). Nonetheless, the fragment may also be analysed as a formal and stylistic motif within works and narrative universes that originate from the fragmentation, deconstruction, and reconstruction of a structure or original unity.

In the broader attempt to reconstruct the past and study a work of cultural heritage, the aim is often the recomposition of individual fragments, a practice that highlights the relationships between the parts and enhances the whole as an integrated system. In many cases, however, the inverse process of deconstruction into individual fragments takes place, allowing for a better understanding of the specificities of each element and facilitating research, critical interpretation, and possible interventions for conservation, restoration, restitution, or reconstitution. We invite interested scholars to submit contributions aligned with the proposed theme, for which the following research lines are suggested merely as guidelines.

1. Reconstruction: Practices, Hypotheses, Restitutions

Contributions on the reconstruction of lost works or assets (paintings, architectural complexes, grave goods, materials from archaeological excavations, archival, textual, musical, phonographic, and cinematic sources) are welcomed, as well as studies on collections as spaces for the reassembly of fragments. Particular attention will be given to the relationship between material evidence, interpretative hypotheses, and scholarly restitution, interrogating the epistemological status of reconstruction between plausibility, lacuna, and narrative.

2. The Fragment as a Historical Source

Architectural remains, pictorial fragments, incomplete or unfinished sculptures, copies, casts, drawings, and documentary traces of all kinds can serve as privileged instruments for understanding artistic practices, compositional techniques, building sites, and cultural contexts. Similarly, individual assemblages, archaeological fragments, and reports of finds from the territory may offer clues about customs, trade networks, cultural influences, and social dynamics.

3. The Fragment as a Compositional Principle

The fragment can be configured as a generative element in artistic and curatorial practices (collage, atlases, found footage, collective exhibitions) as well as a formal principle of deconstruction and composition, including narrative composition, in cinema, audiovisual media, musicology, and the performing arts. Included here are reflections on fragmentation as an aesthetic and political device and its role in the processes of constructing and reconstructing memory.

4. Deconstructing Works and Contexts: Analysis and Transformations

Proposals addressing deconstruction as a method of investigation are encouraged: stratigraphic and codicological analyses, studies of creative and constructive processes, and transformations over time of buildings, cities, and artifacts. Fragmentation is here understood as a cognitive practice capable of rendering the historical and material complexity of works and their contexts.

5. Fragmentation and Rewriting: Heritage, Power, Canon

Disintegration, displacements, reuses, musealisation, and recontextualisation have deeply influenced the history and meanings of cultural heritage. Contributions reflecting on the processes of dispersion and reassembly of works, as well as the recovery of marginalised heritages, forgotten figures, and peripheral contexts, are invited, as tools for critically revising and redefining the canons of research.

Participation Guidelines

This call for papers is directed at PhD students from national and international institutions and universities. The conference will take place in Padua on 10-11 December 2026 at Palazzo Bo, in Aula Nievo and at the Archivio Antico.

Proposals must include:

- full name and email address;
- academic affiliation and doctoral program cycle;
- provisional title;
- an abstract in Italian or English (no more than 350 words);
- five keywords;
- a brief third-person biographical note (no more than 150 words).

Proposals must be submitted by **14 June 2026**, to the following address:
convegnodottorale2026.dbc@unipd.it

Each presentation may last a maximum of **15 minutes**, in order to ensure sufficient time for discussion at the end of each session. The evaluation of contributions will be conducted by the Scientific Committee of the Conference, composed of doctoral candidates and faculty members of the Department of Cultural Heritage at the University of Padua. Notification of acceptance will be communicated by **31 July 2026**.

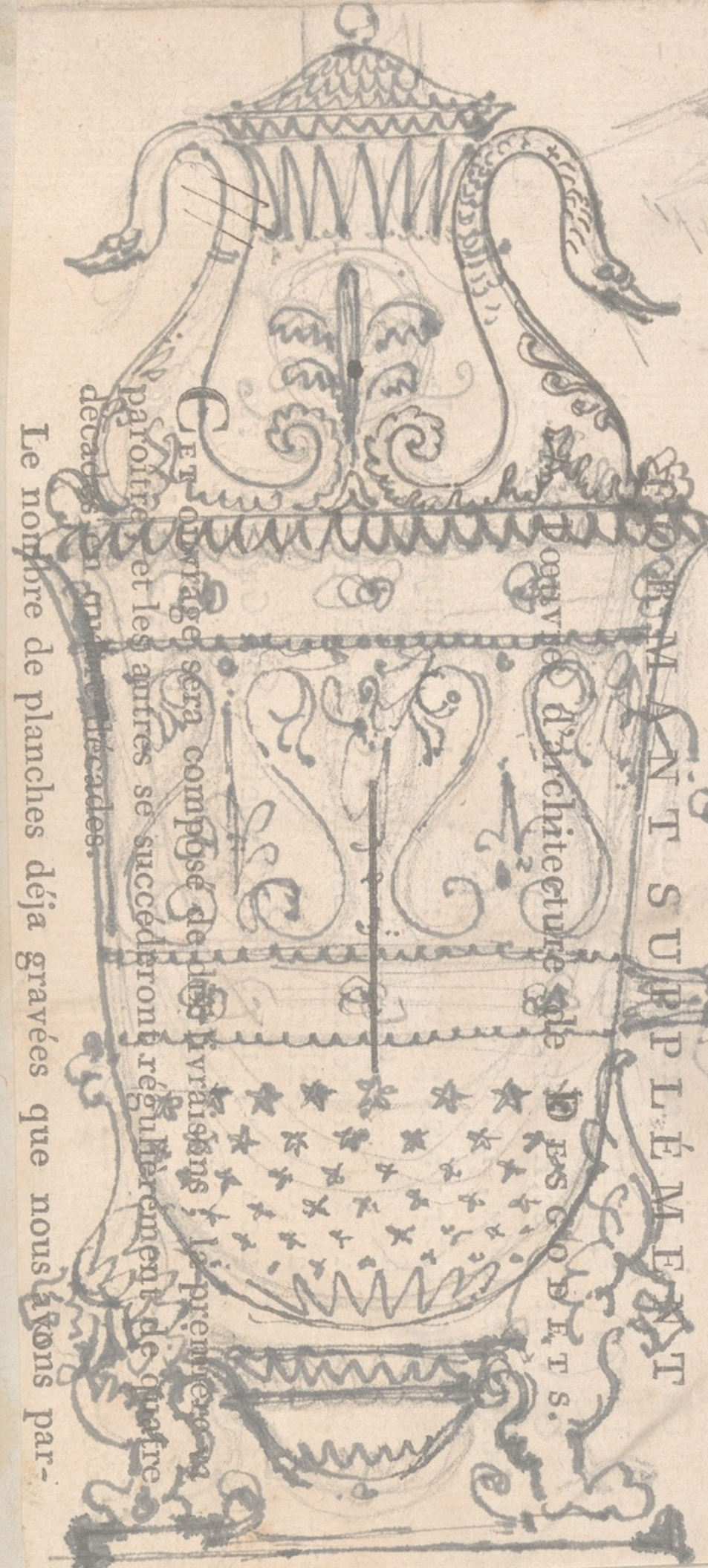
Publication of Contributions

The conference proceedings are expected to be published. All contributions will be subject a peer review process. Deadlines for submission and detailed editorial guidelines will be communicated after the conclusion of the conference.

Contacts: convegnodottorale2026.dbc@unipd.it

Organising Committee

Irene Baldeschi, Anna Paola Caroni, Camilla Chiti, Daria Churkina, Sara Danese, Gabriele Galassi, Giulia Iadicicco, Yuxi Jin, Alessandro Malavasi, Teresa Manetti, Maria Lucia Patanè, Bernadette Piccolo, Costanza Scarpa, Davide Tedesco, Daniele Zumerle.



FRAGMENTA
D'ARCHITECTURAE
J. F. MOREAU, ARCHITECTE
MANT SUPPLEMENT
DES OBJETS
D'ARCHITECTURE
PAR LE CEN
D'APRIL
HARLES

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