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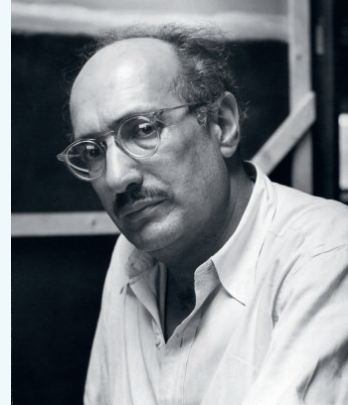
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THE ART



Clockwise from left: *No. 21* (1947) by Mark Rothko; the artist is known for his floating blocks of colour painted in the 1940s and 50s; Florence's central Duomo

Rothko's RENAISSANCE

Curated by the artist's son, *Rothko in Florence* is a huge retrospective devoted to the painter in Italy

Words: MAÏA MORGENSZTERN

major institutions around the world as well as private collections, including the artist's family's own archive. Spread across three historical settings – the Palazzo Strozzi, the Museo di San Marco and the Laurentian Library – *Rothko in Florence* addresses a pivotal moment in the artist's life: the profound influence of Renaissance art and Italy on his practice.

'My father loved how he could walk into a cell inside the Convent of San Marco and look at a few Fra Angelico frescoes, feeling the colours as much as the space around it,' says Christopher.

Echoing the Grand Tour of the 17th and 18th centuries, which saw well-off artists flocking to the cradle of the Renaissance, Rothko first travelled to Tuscany in 1950 to witness how altarpieces and frescoes by Giotto, Masaccio, Piero della Francesca inspired new ideas.

Once there, Rothko was deeply moved by the works' surroundings. Rothko's blocks of colour acted as environments that reconfigure the visitor's sense of space. In the artist's footsteps, this exhibition opens the doors of the locations he once visited, shedding a new light on the wonders of Florence. *Rothko in Florence*, Palazzo Strozzi, Museo di San Marco, Laurentian Library, 14 March – 23 August 2026, palazzostrozzi.org/en/archivio/exhibitions/mark-rothko/

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Revered as one of the most important artists of the 20th century, Mark Rothko (1903–70) helped redefine the meaning of abstract art. This month, his work heads to Italy, showcasing the artist's entire career – from his early works in the 1930s to the large-scale colour-filled canvases of the 50s. 'My father's first love was Italy,' says his son and curator, Christopher Rothko. 'He roamed around Tuscany, spent eight months in Rome and visited Pompeii too.' In total, more than 70 works have been loaned from

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK ROTHKO, NO. 21 (UNTITLED), 1947, OIL ON CANVAS, 97.1 x 97.8 CM, CHRISTOPHER ROTHKO COLLECTION, ESTATE NUMBER: 32424, *EXHIBITED AT MUSEUM OF SAN MARCO, FLORENCE ©1998 BY KATE ROTHKO PRIZEL AND CHRISTOPHER ROTHKO / ARTIST RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK / S&P, ROME, MARK ROTHKO, 1962-1963, OIL ON CANVAS, PHOTO BY HENRY ELKAN ©2026 BY KATE ROTHKO PRIZEL AND CHRISTOPHER ROTHKO / ARTIST RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK / S&P, ROME, GETTY IMAGES