



FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS IN MILAN “PRESERVING THE BRAIN”: AN EXHIBITION (16 SEPTEMBER – 10 OCTOBER 2022) AND A CONFERENCE (6 – 7 OCTOBER 2022) ON NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASES

Milan, 12 July 2022 – “Preserving the Brain,” a forum on neurodegenerative diseases to be held in September and October 2022, is the fourth phase of “Human Brains,” Fondazione Prada’s neuroscience project. Realized in collaboration with thirteen of the most prestigious international neuroscience institutes and universities, “Human Brains: Preserving the Brain – Forum on Neurodegenerative Diseases” will comprise an exhibition (16 September – 10 October 2022; press preview on Thursday 15 September 2022) and a conference (6 and 7 October 2022) at Fondazione Prada’s Milan premises.

The international institutes involved in “Preserving the Brain” are: Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Ann Romney Center for Neurological Diseases, Boston, United States; Hôpital de la Pitié-Salpêtrière, Sorbonne University AP-HP, Neurology department and Paris Brain Institute, Paris, France; UniSR – Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milan, Italy; Juntendo University Hospital, Neurology Department, Tokyo, Japan; Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden; German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE) within the Helmholtz Association, Bonn, Germany; Max Planck Institute of Neurobiology, Munich, Germany; Montreal Neurological Institute-Hospital, McGill Research and Teaching Institute, Canada; Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, Neurology Department, Tianjin, China; UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, United States; University College London, United Kingdom; Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel; Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, United States.

“Human Brains” is the result of an in-depth research process undertaken by Fondazione Prada in 2018 in the field of neuroscience. The project has been driven by a deep interest to understand the human brain, the complexity of its functions, and its centrality to human history. The program has been developed by Fondazione Prada together with a scientific board chaired by neurologist Giancarlo Comi and composed of cognitive neurologist Jubin Abutalebi, philosopher Massimo Cacciari, science journalist Viviana Kasam, curator Udo Kittelmann, neurologist and neurophysiologist Letizia Leocani, neurolinguist Andrea Moro, and cognitive neurologist Daniela Perani.

“Human Brains” employs a multidisciplinary approach that brings together neurobiology, philosophy, psychology, neurochemistry, linguistics, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The human brain is examined in the plural—as expressed by the title—to underline its intrinsic complexity and the irreducible singularity of each individual. The project’s first stage was the online conference “Culture and Consciousness.” Held in November 2020, it focused on the study of consciousness, the brain’s highest and most complex function. The second chapter,



titled “Conversations,” was based on a series of video talks from international scientists, philosophers and researchers between September 2021 and April 2022. The third phase, the exhibition “It Begins with an Idea,” focused on the history of brain studies, is currently on view in Venice until 27 November 2022.

“Preserving the Brain” aims to stimulate an open and critical exchange between international scientists and experts on neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and Multiple sclerosis, which are widely spread and as yet incurable. The forum participants will include researchers, patient associations, and representatives of health care institutions and the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. They will debate the current state of knowledge of these diseases and the tools currently used to fight them, while also seeking to identify lacunae in the search for possible therapies, and jointly defining priorities and strategies to sustain scientific research.

As stated by Miuccia Prada, President of Fondazione Prada, “For us, this phase of the project is particularly significant as it permits a closer understanding of scientific research’s impact on our everyday lives, and in particular on the discovery of possible cures and treatments. ‘Preserving the Brain’ also demonstrates how critical collaboration and sharing of knowledge are within the scientific community. This first international forum could become recurring and allow the organizations we are associated with to communicate with a wider audience, as they would like to, and Fondazione Prada to contribute tangibly to neuroscientific research.”

As underlined by Giancarlo Comi, President of the “Human Brains” scientific board, “The exhibition and conference that comprise the ‘Preserving the Brain’ project have been developed with the goal of finding a common strategy to protect the brain from neurodegenerative diseases. New technological developments have markedly increased knowledge of the biology that underlies these diseases, and potential targets for new treatments are taking shape.”

The pivotal moment of “Preserving the Brain” will be the scientific conference held on 6 and 7 October 2022, at Fondazione Prada’s Cinema in Milan. Giancarlo Comi has conceived this initiative in dialogue with the thirteen research institutes involved in the project.

Each day will be divided into four thematic sessions, each one featuring three lectures and an open discussion between the scientists and researchers. The second day will end with a round table discussion in which scholars, technology experts, representatives from the pharmaceutical industry and patient advocacy associations will discuss future challenges in developing new therapies. The speakers will explore the subject of neurodegenerative diseases from different perspectives, such as genetic implications and molecular mechanisms, clinical trials and possible drug treatments. The conference is addressed to



researchers and universities involved in the project and representatives of prominent institutions in the health sector. The sessions will also be streamed and visible to all on the online platform: humanbrains.fondazioneprada.org.

The exhibition will be held from 16 September to 10 October 2022 in the Podium, the space at the center of Fondazione Prada's Milan venue. Conceived by the New York studio 2x4, the exhibition design will be divided into different sections supervised by the research centers, and a common central area that will encourage dialogue and exchanges between the thirteen institutes. Each section will examine a specific research process on neurodegenerative diseases employing video presentations, technological objects and instruments, scientific documents, and visual materials. The exhibition aims to explore the complexity of scientific research by retracing the stages from identifying therapeutic targets to the different phases in the validation of new therapies to the availability of a drug for the patient. Special attention will be given to personalized medicine, a new approach that recognizes the uniqueness of the individual and treats the person suffering from a disease rather than a disease manifested in a person, thus optimizing the use of drugs and the treatment monitoring.

Throughout the three weeks of the exhibition, institutions participating in the project will give a series of online workshops that will be available to the public via streaming at humanbrains.fondazioneprada.org. Each meeting will enable the assessment of a specific aspect in the search for new treatments for neurodegenerative diseases.

Press contacts

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Information

"Human Brains: Preserving the Brain – Forum on Neurodegenerative Diseases"

Press preview: 15 September 2022
Exhibition open to the public: 16 September – 10 October 2022
Conference upon invitation: 6 – 7 October 2022

Fondazione Prada
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humanbrains.fondazioneprada.org



Exhibition sections and their associated research centers

Technology in the Study of Neurological Diseases: From a Single Cell to a Whole-brain
Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

Single Cell Sequencing in Neurodegenerative Disorders
Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, United States

Role of Glial Cells in Neurodegenerative Disorders
Montreal Neurological Institute-Hospital, McGill Research and Teaching Institute, Canada

Modelling Alzheimer's Diseases Using Human Brain Organoids
Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel

Parkinson's Disease: History and Discovery
Juntendo University Hospital, Neurology Department, Tokyo, Japan

Multiple Sclerosis: The Gut-Brain Connection
Max Planck Institute of Neurobiology, Munich, Germany

Remyelination Basic Studies and Imaging of Remyelination
Hôpital de la Pitié-Salpêtrière, Sorbonne University AP-HP, Neurology department and Paris Brain Institute, Paris, France

Memory Driven Computing in Neurodegenerative Diseases
German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE) within the Helmholtz Association, Bonn, Germany

Neuroimaging of Dementia
Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, Neurology Department, Tianjin, China

PET and Body Fluid Biomarkers in Neurodegenerative Diseases; Neuromodulation to Treat Neurodegeneration
UniSR – Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milan, Italy

Neuroscape: Bridging the Gap Between Neuroscience and Technology
UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, United States



Translation of Scientific Discovery to Patient Care

Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Ann Romney Center for Neurological Diseases, Boston, United States

Translational Clinical Research

University College London, United Kingdom