



## HUMAN BRAINS

*PRESERVING THE BRAIN. FORUM ON NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASES*  
 FONDAZIONE PRADA, MILANO 2022

"Preserving the Brain. Forum on Neurodegenerative Diseases" is a Fondazione Prada project dedicated to neurodegenerative diseases that are currently incurable (Dementia, Parkinson's, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Multiple Sclerosis). The aim is to present, even to a non-technical audience, the complexity of the scientific field - highlighting the existing scientific gaps that currently prevent the identification of an effective therapy - and to define priorities for research.

"Preserving the Brain. Forum on Neurodegenerative Diseases" consists of a 4-week exhibition in the Podium space and a 2-day conference at the end of the exhibition.

The project is organized in dialogue with 13 leading neurodegenerative Research Institutes and Universities from various countries. The Scientific Committee *Preserving the Brain* - consisting of researchers from the various Centers involved, chaired by Prof. Giancarlo Comi, Chairman of the *Human Brains* Scientific Committee - has the scientific responsibility for the project. The Centers will indicate their own contacts for communication and for the administrative and research aspects of the project, which will be coordinated by Fondazione Prada's related departments.

Institutes and Research Centers currently involved:

Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Ann Romney Center for Neurological Diseases, Boston, US; 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, Department of Neurology, 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, MC Gill Research and teaching Institute, Canada; Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, Department of Neurology, Tianjin, China; UCSF Weill Institute for Neuroscience, University of California, San Francisco, US; University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery Faculty of Brain Sciences, Institute of Neurology, Department of Brain Repair and Rehabilitation, UK; Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel; and Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, US.



### Exhibition

duration: approx. 4 weeks

venue: Podium, Fondazione Prada

The aim of the exhibition is to expose the visitors to the complexity of science using as example the journey of a drug, starting with the process of 'discovery' of therapeutic targets through basic research, proceeding to the process of initial validation in in vitro and in vivo models, which precede the clinical phase, through to the various stages of clinical trials, ending with the arrival of the drug in the pharmacy. Namely, it is a "journey" fraught with obstacles, and often characterized by failures, that requires the contribution of many stakeholders including researchers, basic and clinical scientists, patients and their associations, pharmaceutical companies, national, regional and local health authorities, drug agencies etc.

Each of the 13 Centres will be invited to present a contribution to this journey, which will introduce a specific process of research in the area of neurodegenerative diseases with a combination of an interview to a scientist and materials that are instrumental to the specific process. The idea is to feature approx. 10-15 in-depth Sections, giving the Centres the opportunity to have their own space (a sort of "booth") over a surface of 20-30 square meters but also to join forces to present a shared research topic.

The materials (machinery, drugs, information panels, images, videos) and exhibition methods will be defined in dialogue with the Centres' representatives. One aspect to be focused on is the presence of complex technologies and associated documents, as: functional and structural MR (magnetic resonance imaging), PET (positron emission tomography), Magneto EEG (electroencephalography), High density EEG (high density electroencephalography).

In accordance with the general concept of the *Human Brains* project, which considers each human brain with its own individuality in the plural, the theme of "personalized therapy" will be highlighted - both formally and through content - which is crucial to future medical and scientific progress: each patient is unique and contributes to the development of knowledge by providing his/her own data - genetic predisposition, clinical history, lifestyle - while being treated.

During the exhibition period, workshops lasting 2-4 hours will be organized within some of the co-organizing Centres of "Preserving the Brain", as in-depth explorations of a topic on neurodegenerative diseases, area of excellence in the particular Institute. These workshops should be accessed remotely by the public. The workshops should have an organizational support that makes them recognizable as part of the overall project.

A virtual version of the exhibition (video) is also considered to be provided to the 13 research Centres: a small room can be set up in each Centre/University in order to disseminate the content to their students and researchers.

On the basis of the Fondazione Prada's feasibility plan, the hypothesized activities are summarized as following:

*during the exhibition:*

- Creation of a video documentation of the exhibition in Milan, to be given in advance to the research institutes (intended for screening inside the Institutes)
- Widespread workshops organized by the research Centres (video documentation to be incorporated into the exhibition and intended for the online platform)
- TBC on-site workshops in Milan open to the physical public (video documentation intended for the online platform)

*during the conference:*

- Video recording of brief interviews with representatives of research Institutes to be disseminated on the online platform.



Fondazione Prada is responsible for all curatorial and organizational aspects of the project. Among the substantial elements to be considered in giving shape to the exhibition project

- a general layout that guarantees visual homogeneity both in terms of content and display solutions.
- the possibility of articulating the different spaces around a common thematic core, linked to the specific core of the exhibition (Biomedicine).

### Conference

Duration: 2 days (dates **tb**c October 6-7, 2022, preferably weekdays)  
Venue: Fondazione Prada (in-person format is considered essential)

The current draft programme - Annex 1 [shared on Dec.10<sup>th</sup>, 2021] - has been constructed by Prof. Giancarlo Comi in dialogue with the 13 Research Centres and, specifically, with Prof. Pierluigi Nicotera, Scientific Director of the DZNE-Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen (Bonn, Germany).

Each day will feature 4 thematic sessions (2 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon), each consisting of 3 "Lectures" and 1 "Open discussion." A "Working Dinner" will be held at the end of the first day, while the last session of the second day will include a "Round table discussion" (with scientists, but also speakers from areas of substantial importance for the advancement of medical and scientific research: from technology entrepreneurs to the pharmaceutical industry, to associations representing patients affected by the diseases treated).

The conference in person is by invitation only.

In addition to representatives of Institutes/Research Centers/University with an active role in the project, invitations will be targeted at institutions such as Italian Minister for Health and major stakeholders. A dialogue will be established with the representatives of the communications departments of the various research Centers.

The event will be streamed using the existing *Human Brains* online platform, with the possibility of interacting with the speakers and asking questions restricted to members of the 13 Centers involved (students, researchers, medical staff). A facilitated access mode for students and young researchers from those Institutions not directly involved is also envisaged.

Fondazione Prada will propose a format for the diffusion of the event, considering the different degrees of priority: from the 13 Centers involved, to the specialized public, up to the general public. The presence of the speakers in Milan would allow to record heterogeneous contents (short interviews, statements, etc.) to feed the offer available through the online platform also in the long term.