

The Challenge

International Multidisciplinary Conference
Fondazione Prada
Milan
10th and 11th October 2002

The Fondazione Prada, in collaboration with the Casa Circondariale-Milano San Vittore prison, is to hold an international multidisciplinary conference in its space at Via Fogazzaro 36 on Thursday 10th and Friday 11th October. The conference will be on the subject of *The Challenge*, a central theme in the history of civilisation and the individual.

The conference, organised by Angelo Aparo and Emilia Patruno, will be introduced by Luigi Pagano, governor of the Casa Circondariale-Milano San Vittore prison, and Germano Celant, artistic director of the Fondazione Prada.

Its purpose is to compare a wide range of personal and professional experiences that contribute to awareness and greater understanding of *challenge*, in the sense of an impulse rooted in people's need to identify, to lift themselves up, to stand out.

The concept of *challenge* is a complex subject that parallels the history of humankind: for the majority of the world's population the *challenge* is one of survival – yet in every civilisation, even the poorest, we find a drive to go beyond, to follow dreams, to leave a trace, to seek divinity through religion, or utopia through revolution.

People struck by a serious disease or paralysed after an accident *challenge* their limits and call on their inner resources in a fierce struggle to find a new equilibrium; the athlete sets the goal of becoming the record-holder, at least for a day; the scientist studies the unknown to reveal other, still undiscovered worlds; journalists and photographers in danger zones overstep the limits of personal safety to send the wider community a historical record of events. For other individuals, and some social groups, *challenge* offers the only real opportunity for self-affirmation: artists *challenge* themselves and the dominant mores of their times; for those who commit crimes, the goal of the *challenge* is often expressed through a compulsion to break the rules and provoke authority, and the need to experience once again the emotions this provides; adolescents, driven by the tumultuous conflicts of their evolving identity, confront their educators, shaping new patterns of behaviour to define their personality. For many the *challenge* provides an alternative to the mediocrity of everyday life, and they seek the stimulation of dangerous undertakings to put themselves to the test; for the mythical heroes, the *challenge* is to give the oppressed the means and the knowledge to rebel against the arbitrary evils of tyranny.

Representatives from various fields and activities have been invited to the conference – which is open to the public – to make their own contributions to the theme by examining those aspects which are most relevant to their disciplines: philosophy, law, psychology, psychoanalysis, genetics, art, theology, cinema, sexuality, sport, custom, medicine, architecture, mathematics, marketing, ethnology, politics, sociology and photography. Participants can communicate their ideas and experience in an attempt to create a common ground where further reflection on *challenge* can be nurtured, and new projects can take root and grow.

The approximately thirty Italian and foreign speakers slated to participate in the two-day conference include Edoardo Albinati, Natalia Aspesi, Edoardo Boncinelli, Massimo Cacciari, Gustavo Charmet, Gherardo Colombo, Giulio Giorello, Luca Giuliano, Rem Koolhaas, Marc Quinn, Davide Maderna, Toni Negri, Piergiorgio Odifreddi, Mario Perniola, Gianfranco Ravasi, Giancarlo Scoditti and Gianni Vattimo. Famous names, but ordinary people too, whose experience of life has shaped an attitude of *challenge* towards rules, traditions, customs, conventions and the law. From the solo voyager to the prisoner, from the disabled person to the sky surfer, or the *challenge* of being sexually “different”.

Speakers’ contributions will alternate with visual testimonies, including videos and film extracts.

The conference proceedings will be published by the Fondazione Prada.

conference information

<i>Title:</i>	<i>The Challenge</i>
<i>Date:</i>	10th and 11th October 2002
<i>Venue:</i>	Fondazione Prada
<i>Address:</i>	Via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Times:</i>	10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
<i>Admission:</i>	Free
<i>Conference proceedings:</i>	Fondazione Prada
<i>Information:</i>	Fondazione Prada - tel 02 546 70 515, fax 02 546 70 258 www.fondazioneprada.org info@fondazioneprada.org
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Milan, 10th October 2002