

# Fondazione Prada

Tobias Rehberger  
*On Otto*

Fondazione Prada  
Milan  
20 April – 6 June

Fondazione Prada inaugurates on Thursday, 19 April, in its space in Via Fogazzaro 36, Milan, the solo exhibition dedicated to Tobias Rehberger. For the event, the artist will present “On Otto”, a project consisting in the production of a film (with the participation of Kim Basinger, Willem Dafoe, Emmy Rossum, Justin Henry, and Danny DeVito, music by Ennio Morricone), and an architectural installation.

One of Germany’s leading contemporary artists, Tobias Rehberger started working in the early nineties, and attracted international acclaim for various forms of artistic output: sculptures, industrial objects, and handcrafted articles. The concept of transformation is the main theme of Rehberger’s art, which revolves around it and develops from it. The artist has narrowed his experimental focus to processes of perception and of awareness, temporality and the sense of transience, discontinuity and ambiguity, on changes and relationships, as well as on the web of connections between the objects and the reality around them/us.

A work dated 2000 may be considered typical of his mod of operation; for it, he asked some Thai craftsmen to create, on the basis of drawings made from memory, two functioning automobiles, a Porsche 911 and a McLaren F1. The result is a pair of cars that do not match the real models, but are the product of the combined efforts and the transformation wrought by many individuals. Using this strategy, the artist highlights the limits of awareness, of memory, and at the same time, the difficulty of conveying any information in its entirety.

The objects produced and presented by Rehberger are intrinsically caught up in a web of connections, public and private, spatial and temporal, where the artists assumes the guise of the demiurge, the catalyser of events: an art director who, with the contribution of the other players, completes a work that is no longer closed or univocal, but open and accessible to many interpretations: “I think that looking at my work,” says the artists, “there is no linearity to be found, but instead themes around which the work revolves, appearing in different lights. How can the things around us be interpreted? Is it truly possible ‘to see’ a work in its entirety, or does the work, instead, include something more?... much of my work is based on things that cannot be seen...”.\*

In *Deaddies*, an exhibition that Rehberger mounted in Turin in 2001, the main theme is death and loss, but the reference to the subject is never clearly stated: the viewer is never presented with an image of mourning. It suffices to think of the “Japanese Interiors”, made up of simple and apparently ordinary furnishings that take on a powerful emotive charge only when the observer learns they are furnishings the artist purchased and transformed after their owners’ death.

The living spaces that Rehberger reconstructs and modifies, industrial objects, lamps, shelves, vases, curtains, cushions, are part of his expressive languages, and they have recently acquired, by means of a sensual use of colour, a powerful visual force. The furnishings, changed in dimension, as in the work *Cancelled Projects* (1995), or structurally altered, as in *We Don’t Work on Sundays* (1996), or built according to his friends’ specifications, as in *My Fashionable Version* (1999), are at the centre of a constant transformation, changing upon contact with space, time, and light. For the show at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2002, entitled “Night Shift”, the artist gave instructions to open the space to the public from sunset to midnight, so that the exhibition hours changed each day and depended on time in the state of becoming, and the protracting or shortening of daylight hours.

Light again was the key element in the show at Whitechapel Gallery in London in 2004. The work consisted in an enormous container/box, illuminated from within by a single lightbulb, and which could be entered by means of a ladder. The lightbulb was connected to a switch operated from a room in Mannheim, Germany, by a 15-year-old with the same name and surname as the artist's. Thus, the light inside the box went on and off at the will of Tobias Rehberger of Mannheim.

Tobias Rehberger has presented solo exhibitions at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1998), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2000), the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2002), the Fundacio "La Caixa", Barcellona (2002), the Museu Serralves, Porto (2002), the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2003), the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2004), and the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (2005).

At present, Tobias Rehberger lives and works in Frankfurt.

\* From "Deaddies. Una conversazione tra Alessandra Pace e Tobias Rehberger". In Tobias Rehberger, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin, 2002

*Event information*

<i>Title:</i>	<b>Tobias Rehberger</b> <b><i>On Otto</i></b>
<i>Calendar:</i>	20 April (opening 19 April at 6 pm) – 6 June
<i>Venue:</i>	Fondazione Prada, Via Fogazzaro 36, Milan
<i>Hours:</i>	Tuesday – Sunday, 10 am – 8 pm; closed Monday
<i>Admission :</i>	Free
<i>Publication:</i>	Fondazione Prada
<i>Information</i>	Fondazione Prada – tel. 02 54670515, fax 02 54670258 www.fondazioneprada.org ; info@fondazioneprada.org
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