



FONDAZIONE PRADA PRESENTS “HUMAN BRAINS:CONVERSATIONS,” A SERIES OF ONLINE CONVERSATIONS, PART OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM DEDICATED TO BRAIN STUDIES

Milan, 21 September 2021 – Fondazione Prada presents the online project “Human Brains: Conversations,” the second phase of the multidisciplinary program “Human Brains” dedicated to brain studies. “Conversations” will take place from September 2021 to April 2022 and will be available on the humanbrains.fondazioneprada.org website and on Fondazione Prada’s YouTube channel. The online project consists of 7 pairs of video lectures by international scientists, philosophers and researchers followed by 7 live streaming conversations that will include interaction with the remote audience.

“Human Brains” is the result of a complex research conducted by Fondazione Prada in collaboration with a scientific board chaired by Giancarlo Comi, neurologist, and composed of Jubin Abutalebi, cognitive neurologist, Massimo Cacciari, philosopher, Viviana Kasam, scientific journalist, Udo Kittelmann, curator and museum director, Letizia Leocani, neurologist and neurophysiologist, Andrea Moro, neurolinguist, and Daniela Perani, cognitive neurologist. This project on science is a true challenge for a cultural institution like Fondazione Prada. The dialogue embodied by “Human Brains” underlines the importance of cooperation in order to give value and disseminate meaningful studies and practices for our present.

Based on a strictly scientific approach, “Conversations” is an innovative format for in-depth analysis, communication and popularization addressed to a heterogeneous and international public. It is an open platform for experimenting inclusive modes of exchange between scientists and scholars from different fields and a wide community of students, researchers, and people of all ages and backgrounds interested in neurosciences and brain studies in general.

Each conversation will consist of a 40-minute online debate in which two prestigious researchers will dialogue with each other via live streaming on a specific topic, coordinated by a moderator. Ten days before the conversation, speeches by the two experts introducing the topic will be available online. Alice Roberts, anatomist, author and broadcaster, will take up the role of moderator for the first 6 events. University of Birmingham’s first Professor of Public Engagement with Science since 2012, Roberts has received five honorary doctorates from British universities and, in August 2020, she was the first recipient of the Royal Society’s David Attenborough award for Public Engagement.

The first two lectures and the first live talk, scheduled for Thursday, 30 September 2021, will involve Angela D. Friederici (Director at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany) and Robert C. Berwick (Professor of Computational Linguistics and Engineering in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer



Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA). The talk will focus on the specificity of human language and its relation with other animal and artificial languages.

The following two lectures and the live conversation scheduled for Thursday, 21 October 2021 will investigate the distinction between the functions of brain's right and left hemispheres and attention mechanisms. The event will see the participation of Guido Gainotti (Professor Emeritus of Neurology at the Department Neurology of Policlinico Gemelli, Università Cattolica, Rome) and Paolo Bartolomeo (Director at the Inserm, the French state biomedical research institute, and at the PICNIC Lab at the ICM – Paris Brain Institute in the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital).

During their lectures and talk on Thursday, 25 November 2021, Ellen Bialystok (Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology and Walter Gordon Research Chair of Lifespan Cognitive Development at York University of Toronto) and Jason Rothman (Professor of Linguistics at the UiT the Arctic University of Norway and Senior Researcher in Cognitive Science at Universidad Nebrija in Spain) will deal with bilingualism and its advantages and disadvantages for the human brain.

The integration and relationship between language and music through an evolutionary perspective is the core of the lectures by Steven Mithen (Professor of Early Prehistory at the University of Reading, UK) and Stefan Koelsch (professor of Biological Psychology and Music Psychology at the University of Bergen, Norway) and of the conversation that will take place on Thursday, 27 January 2022.

Jeffrey Kleim (Associate Director of the School of Biological and Health Systems Engineering at Arizona State University in Tucson) and Álvaro Pascual-Leone (Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, Senior Scientist at the Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research and Medical Director of the Deanna and Sidney Wolk Center for Memory Health at Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston, MA) will focus their lectures and talk on the relationship between genetics, the possibility to increase brain plasticity through neuromodulation and the related ethical implications. The debate will take place on Thursday, 17 February 2022.

The subject of the two following lectures and conversation scheduled for Thursday, 22 March 2022 will be the analysis of the evolutionary approach to conscience and the relationship between science, biological evolution and philosophy. This topic will be investigated by Simona Ginsburg (Associate Professor of The Open University of Israel, Ra'anana) and Eva Jablonka (member of the Sagol School of Neuroscience, Tel Aviv and Research Associate in the Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science of the London School of Economics, London University).



The program of “Human Brains: Conversations” will end with a philosophical meeting. Massimo Cacciari (Professor Emeritus in Philosophy at the San Raffaele University in Milan and member of the Lincean Academy) and Michele Di Francesco (full professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science of the School for Advanced Studies IUSS Pavia) will investigate the influence of figures such as Plato, Descartes and Spinoza that crucially shaped the birth of the history of Western thinking in relation to science and conscience studies. The last online event of “Human Brains: Conversations” will be held on Thursday, 14 April 2022 and will be coordinated by a moderator who is currently being defined.

The first phase of “Human Brains” was represented by the online conference “Culture and Consciousness” that took place in November 2020. It focused on the studies on conscience in the field of neurosciences. “Human Brains: Conversations” will introduce the audience to some of the themes that will be developed in the last two chapters of the project. From April to November 2022, on the occasion of the Venice Art Biennale, Fondazione Prada’s Venetian venue will host an exhibition that will represent an attempt to translate into a new form the history of studies on human thinking and the current scientific research up until future developments. In Autumn 2022, Fondazione Prada’s Milan venue will host a scientific conference and an exhibition conceived in collaboration with 13 among the most outstanding international institutions. The aim is to stimulate an open and critical dialogue with physicians, experts and scholars from all over the world on the topic of normal and pathological aging of our brain, as well as to promote a strategic and coordinated combination of different stakeholders and the contribution of technological and methodological innovation.

Further information and online platform

humanbrains.fondazioneprada.org

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**HUMAN BRAINS CONVERSATIONS
LIVE STREAMING PROGRAM**

1. Syntax as the Fingerprint of Human Language

30 September 2021, 7 pm (CEST)

Angela D. Friederici (Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig)

Robert C. Berwick (MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA)

2. Hemispheric Lateralization and Attentional Mechanisms

21 October 2021, 7 pm (CEST)

Guido Gainotti (Policlinico Gemelli, Università Cattolica, Rome)

Paolo Bartolomeo (ICM – Paris Brain Institute, Hôpital Pitié-Salpêtrière, Paris)

3. Advantages/Disadvantages of Having a Bilingual Brain

25 November 2021, 7 pm (CET)

Ellen Bialystok (York University of Toronto, CAN)

Jason Rothman (UiT University of Tromsø, Norway)

4. Language, Music and the Brain

27 January 2022, 7 pm (CET)

Steve Mithen (University of Reading, UK)

Stefan Koelsch (University of Bergen, Norway)

5. Enhancing Brain Plasticity with Neuromodulation

17 February 2022, 7 pm (CET)

Jeffrey Kleim (University of Arizona, USA)

Álvaro Pascual-Leone (Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA; Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)

6. Relationship Between Science, Biological Evolution and Philosophy

24 March 2022, 7 pm (CET)

Simona Ginsburg (Open University of Israel)

Eva Jablonka (Tel Aviv University)

7. History of Modern Philosophy

14 April 2022, 7 pm (CEST)

Massimo Cacciari (Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milan)

Michele Di Francesco (IUSS – Scuola Universitaria Superiore di Pavia)