



EDINBURGH
INTERNATIONAL
CULTURE
SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

20 March 2018

ONG KENG SEN, RICHARD SENNETT AND ASSAL HABIBI, ANNOUNCED AS AMONG THOSE TO ADDRESS 4th EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL CULTURE SUMMIT

Summit 2018 - *Culture: Connecting Peoples and Places* runs 22-24 August

www.culturesummit.com

Culture Ministers, policy makers and delegations from around the world are once again to gather at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh during the peak season in the world's leading festival city in a unique collaborative gathering designed to bring about lasting cultural impact

The Edinburgh International Culture Summit has established itself in the global political and cultural calendar as a influential platform where artists, thinkers and arts leaders from around the world can come together with culture ministers to inspire tangible positive change in arts and cultural policy. The Summit is a collaboration between the Scottish Government, UK Government, British Council, Edinburgh International Festival and Scottish Parliament, delivered on behalf of the partners by the Edinburgh International Culture Summit Foundation.

Now in its 4th edition this year the theme of Summit 2018 is ***Culture: Connecting Peoples and Places***. Building on the succinct and successful format of previous editions, Summit 2018 will address three key themes; **Culture in a Networked World**, **Culture and Investment** and **Culture and Wellbeing**. Each theme will be the focus of a plenary session in the Debating Chamber of the Scottish Parliament, supported both by private policy discussions and workshops. The Youth Forum, which was introduced in Summit 2016, has been developed and further integrated into the Summit programme with greater international participation, marking the 2018 Year of Young People in Scotland.

The first speakers have been announced for each of the three strands of the Summit: internationally recognised theatre director Ong Keng Sen on Culture in a Networked World, urban sociologist Richard Sennett on Culture and

Investment and Professor of Psychology Dr Assal Habibi on Culture and Wellbeing.

Theme 1: Culture in a Networked World

How can art and culture help us find common ground in a fractured world? As social networks and online platforms reach across the globe, a new universal understanding emerges as we learn what makes us different. The speed and multiplicity of digital communication transforms human relationships. Unheard voices find a platform and location no longer limits community, but this highly networked world makes demands on society in unprecedented ways. While some feel empowered by the changing global landscape, others are left behind. Reaching peace and prosperity in a radically shifting world will depend on an ethos rooted in the principles of internationalism, respect and mutuality. By exploring facets of our complex and plural identities, artists encourage citizens to understand and respect difference. The first speaker to be announced in the Culture in a Networked World strand is Artistic Director of TheatreWorks Ong Keng Sen whose international work focuses on artistic exchange between Eastern and Western cultures.

Theme 2: Culture and Investment

The provision of expensive and elaborate arts centres throughout the world is certainly politically attractive, but what of the art that brings these places to life? How should government policy balance investment in individual artists, creative communities, and buildings? At a time when difficult decisions need to be made about the allocation of modest resources for culture, the Summit will carefully consider the funding challenges facing policy-makers, artistic entrepreneurs and practicing artists alike. If cultural consumption and practice can happen on a street corner or an online video, what are the benefits of investing in artists, buildings, people and places? The first speaker to be announced in the Culture and Investment strand is Professor of Sociology at the LSE and New York University Richard Sennett who founded the independent urban research centre Theatrum Mundi to develop creative approaches to questions in the relationship between the design and cultures of cities.

Theme 3: Culture and Wellbeing

Can culture make a contribution to the health and wellbeing of human society? The sustainable provision of health care is a vital concern for governments around the world. A growing body of neurological and clinical research indicates that participation in cultural activity offers long-lasting benefits for a range of medical conditions. How can the social and economic benefits of arts in health programmes be understood and implemented by policy makers, commercial medical insurers and clinical practitioners? How can the arts improve health outcomes for traditionally marginalised or neglected communities? How can the arts effectively address issues of an ageing society as they relate to chronic illness, social inclusion and the management of healthcare costs? The Summit offers direct examples of the benefits cultural participation has for social and healthcare systems. The first speaker to be announced in the Culture and Wellbeing strand is Assistant Research Professor of Psychology at the Brain and Creativity Institute at University of Southern California Dr Assal Habibi, an expert on how biological and environmental factors interact and how childhood learning shapes human development.

Further speakers and programme details will be announced over the coming months.

Summit 2018 gives Ministers and senior policy-makers the opportunity to hear about and share global best-practice in these areas of cultural welfare, economics and globalisation, in order to develop relevant, effective policies, designed to achieve lasting impact. Participation in high-level bilateral and multilateral meetings will enable them to identify areas for future collaboration and delivery in their home countries.

Announcing that the Summit would be returning to Holyrood, the **Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament the Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP, said** “There is no doubting the importance of culture in our society and nowhere and in no other place is that as clear to see than in Edinburgh in August. That’s why Holyrood is the perfect place to bring together such a varied number of parliamentarians, artists and world leading thinkers. I am proud that the Scottish Parliament is once again championing this event.”

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, said “The Culture Summit is an exciting opportunity for Government Ministers and policy makers from across the globe to engage with artists and arts leaders and encourage discussions on the value of culture and the arts in building bridges between nations.

“The Scottish Government is very proud to support and host the fourth Edinburgh International Culture Summit in August 2018 and we look forward to welcoming delegates from across the world. We are working with partners across Scotland and beyond to build on the successes of previous editions of the Summit and ensure its enduring value continues to promote Scotland’s role internationally and to benefit Scotland’s thriving cultural sector.”

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said “Arts and culture transcends borders, and we look forward to welcoming ministers, artists and delegates from around the world to the UK to celebrate how it brings us together. As host to world famous festivals, Edinburgh provides the ideal backdrop to discussions about how as nations we can value and share culture, both now and in the future. The Summit will also be a valuable opportunity to show the strength of the UK's cultural and creative industries to the world.”

Jackie Killeen, British Council Acting Director UK Region and Director Scotland, said “The British Council is again delighted to continue as a strategic partner of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit. The 2018 programme promises to be the most powerful yet, as it reaches out and connects people across borders and across generations. Edinburgh’s festivals, which see artists, producers and audiences from across the globe come together on an unrivalled scale, are the perfect setting, and with the Summit taking place during Scotland’s Year of Young People we have a great driver to enhance the youth element of the programme.

Fergus Linehan, Festival Director of Edinburgh International Festival said “Each year since 1947, the International Festival and our colleague festivals have created a stage for artists and audiences to meet in a spirit of understanding and friendship. The addition of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit to this family of events has added an essential platform for leaders from around to world to exchange ideas and experiences, both with each other and with artists. We are delighted to partner in what I’m sure will be an important and inspirational exchange of ideas.”

Sir Jonathan Mills, Director of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit Foundation said “Summit 2018 builds on the Edinburgh International Culture Summit’s reputation as a pre-eminent forum for international exchange on arts and culture at a time when it is most needed. This year’s Summit addresses the impact of globalisation, infrastructure and investment, and wellbeing in a world facing more long-term chronic illness with research, evidence and first hand accounts from artists, scientists and politicians forming the basis of our discussions.”

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For further media information, interviews or to discuss attending the Edinburgh International Culture Summit please contact Susie Gray – Susie@thecornershoppr.com 07834 073 795 or Kate Bouchier-Hayes – kate@thecornershoppr.com 07825 335 489

IMAGES OF EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL CULTURE SUMMIT 2016 [HERE](#)

NOTES

The Edinburgh International Culture Summit is a gathering with a difference, to share ideas and forge collaborations across cultural co-operation. Summit 2018 is as international as the Edinburgh Festivals.

The inaugural Edinburgh International Culture Summit in 2012 was a resounding success and presented an unprecedented opportunity for cultural exchange, both between practitioners and policy-makers and between separate nation states.

Following widespread demand for future editions, the second Edinburgh International Culture Summit in 2014 provided a platform for continued conversations and idea-sharing, out of which emerged much new thinking and activity. Summit 2014 was acknowledged as a stimulating and worthwhile contribution to cultural policy debate.

Summit 2016 saw further significant opportunities for direct and open dialogue between politicians, policy-makers and artists, providing a forum for in-depth discussion on, and compelling accounts of, the power of the arts and culture to enrich individual lives and transform national ambitions with strong contributions from Youssou Ndour and Mammoun Abdoukarim among others. Summit 2016 also introduced a youth programme which has now been consolidated into the main Summit structure.

In addition to its partners, the Edinburgh International Culture Summit acknowledges the significant support of its public, corporate, philanthropic and individual supporters:

Aberdeen Asset Management, Baillie Gifford Investment Managers, Creative Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities.

Dundas Global, Edinburgh Partners, Sir Ewan and Lady Brown, Sir Angus and Lady Grossart, The Morton Charitable Trust, Dunard Fund, Binks Trust.