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Madeleine Albright leads list of award recipients announced for the Culture Summit Abu Dhabi 2017



Idris Khan. Courtesy Suki Dhanda

The Culture Summit Abu Dhabi 2017 has announced the nine people who will be awarded a culture diplomat award at the event that started today (April 9) on Saadiyat Island.

The five-day summit will bring together more than 300 world leaders from the government, arts, media, technology and policy to discuss the role of culture in modern times.

The event lineup includes Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs and Chairwoman of Media Zone Authority - Abu Dhabi and twofour54 - Noura Al Kaabi, and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority and Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak.

The winners of the inaugural awards were selected based on their contributions to cultural diplomacy and promoting positive change.

Among the winners are Madeleine Albright, the former United States Secretary of State and winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, who has been recognised for her active support of the importance of cultural diplomacy throughout her career as a diplomat.

El Sistema, the creators of the El Sistema youth orchestra program, represented by executive director of the Simon Bolivar Music Foundation Eduardo Méndez will also be honoured. Mendez has played with the Simon Bolivar Orchestra on several international tours in American and Europe and was named the executive director of the foundation in 2008.

Khan's latest major commission was unveiled in November 2016, in celebration of the UAE's Martyrs' Day, which now stands in Wahat Al Karama, the memorial park in Abu Dhabi.

Choreographer Liz Lerman will be awarded for her contributions in performing arts. The MacArthur award winner teaches creative research, the intersection of art and science, and the building of narrative within dance at Harvard, Yale School of Drama, and Guildhall School of Music and Drama