

Chairs announced for Edinburgh International Festival's 'Continental Shifts'

✘ Professor Niall Ferguson, Lord Wilson and Sir Vernon Ellis are among the chairs announced for Edinburgh International Festival's geopolitical talks series, Continental Shifts.

In association with The British Council, [The Royal Society of Edinburgh](#) and the Confucius Institute for Scotland, the Edinburgh international Festival is hosting a series of discussions and debates with Festival artists, globally recognised academics, intellectuals and those at the forefront of contemporary thought.

The series of keynote talks and discussions, Continental Shifts centres around the Festival's thematic core this year which examines modern Asia and exploring our shifting perceptions of the global landscape and the relationship between East and West.

Professors Jonathan Spence, Alexander Huang and Wang Hui will be heading to Edinburgh to discuss matters affecting modern China and its relationship with the rest of the world. Indian writers and journalists Dr Shashi Tharoor and Tarun J. Tejpal will bring a Southern Asian perspective to the mix.

Chairing the events are a collection of eminent arts and political figures including Lord Wilson, Professor Helen Cooper, Professor Dina Iordanova, Sir Vernon Ellis, Martin Davidson, Niall Ferguson, Graham Sheffield, Professor Natascha Gentz, Eugene Downes, Roanne Dods and Magnus Linklater.

Jonathan Mills, Festival Director of [The Edinburgh International Festival](#) said: -“Art does not exist in vacuum, but is a reflection of the world in which we live and the changes and challenges that we experience. What better time to explore the intellectual landscape underpinning Festival 2011 and the changing patterns of interaction between East and West.”

Julia Amour, Director of British Council Scotland said: “The British Council is delighted to be supporting Continental Shifts. The programme brings together a diverse range of speakers from politics, academia, media and the arts to explore the most fundamental geopolitical realignment of our times – the dramatic rise in influence of South and East Asia on global affairs.

“The talks are multi-dimensional and will examine topics as varied as the effect of Chinese and Indian economic growth on the world to perceptions of Shakespeare’s plays in East Asia. As such, they will provide a forum for meaningful cross-cultural dialogue at the heart of the world’s largest arts festival, right here in Edinburgh.”

Continental Shifts will be occurring all through August at The Hub. Tickets are now on sale through [Hub Tickets](#).

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Why China isn’t the New West – Saturday 13 August

Chairperson: Lord Wilson

Lord David Clive Wilson, Baron Wilson of Tillyorn will chair the keynote address by author and essayist Professor Jonathan Spence, one of the most eminent historians on Chinese history. Spence was Sterling Professor at Yale from 2003- 2008 and has written several books on China and the west. His speech will examine China’s increasing wealth and power and its effect on global relations.

All the World's a Stage – Monday 15 August

Chairperson: Professor Helen Cooper

Professor Helen Cooper was the first female fellow at University College, Oxford, in 1978. Her latest book is *Shakespeare and the Medieval World*, published in 2010 as part of the Arden Shakespeare series. She will be joined by Korean director Tae-suk Oh, *The Guardian's* chief theatre critic Michael Millington and Prof Alexander C.Y. Huang to discuss the enduring legacy of the Bard.

Transmission – Tuesday 16 August

Chairperson: Professor Dina Iordanova

Dina Iordanova is an educationalist and Professor of Film Studies at the University of St. Andrews. A specialist in world cinema, her special expertise is in the cinema of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Europe in general. She will be chairing a discussion on the popular cultures of China, India, Japan and Korea with choreographer Eun-Me Ahn and authors Jonathan Clements and Anita Nair.

Global Philosophies – Monday 22 August

Chairperson: Sir Vernon Ellis

Chair of the British Council, Sir Vernon Ellis will host a conversation about ancient and modern faith and spiritual thinking with the Dean of the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Peking University Tu Weiming, former Bishop of Edinburgh in the Scottish Episcopal Church Dr Richard Holloway and Scottish crime and politics author Christopher Brookmyre.

How Chinese Money is Changing the World – Wednesday 24 August

Chairperson: Martin Davidson

Martin Davidson took up the role as Chief Executive at the British Council in April 2007, having been Deputy Director General since September 2005. Martin's commitment to international relationships has been a constant feature of his career. Martin will be introducing author and financial Journalist James Kynge for his keynote address on the history and recent developments of the Chinese economy.

India / A Changing India – Saturday 27 August

Chairperson: Professor Niall Ferguson

Niall Ferguson, British historian specialising in finance and colonialism will host two conversations about the changing landscape of India. Indian parliamentarian and author Dr Shashi Tharoor will be delivering a keynote address on the changing position of India in the modern globalised world and controversial journalist and editor of Tehelka, Tarun J. Tejpal and Shoma Chaudhury will discuss the emergence of India as an influential world power.

Here is Professor Ferguson talking after a TedGlobal talk yesterday in Edinburgh:-

Song of the Earth – Sunday 28 August

Chairperson: Graham Sheffield

Graham Sheffield was Artistic Director of the Barbican from 1995-2010 and was recently joined the British Council as Director of Arts. Graham will be joined for a discussion of Kenneth Macmillan's Song of the Earth by historian Dr Kirsteen McCue, Chinese poet Yang Lian and Scottish Ballet's Artistic Director Ashley Page.

Contemporary Chinese Thought – Monday 29 August

Chairperson: Professor Natascha Gentz

Professor Natascha Gentz is Head of Asian Studies in the University of Edinburgh Director of the Confucius Institute. Dr Gentz will be introducing controversial Chinese intellectual Wang Hui, the co-editor of China's leading intellectual journal, Dushu, and the author of a four-volume history of Chinese thought, Contemporary Chinese Thought and the Question of Modernity. In 1989 he was one of the students who protested at Tiananmen Square.

Divided – Wednesday 31 August

Chairperson: Eugene Downes

Eugene Downes is Chief Executive of Culture Ireland, the national agency founded in 2005 to promote Irish arts worldwide. Tim Supple has directed a new, authentic dramatisation of One Thousand and One Nights for EIF 2011, sourcing stories from across the Arab speaking world. Dr Michael Shinn and Dr Rachael are experts in Korean and Indian cultures. Together they will discuss the cultural impact partition on nations.

Heirlooms – Thursday 1 September

Chairperson: Roanne Dods

Chair Roanne Dods, who established the arts funding body the Jerwood Charitable Foundation, will be joined by textile curator Ben Divall, collector Jonathan Hope and artist Shakti Maira to discuss Heirlooms, the exhibition of Asian textile at the Dovecot Gallery.

Ritual and Memory – Friday 2 September

Chairperson: Magnus Linklater

The Scotland Editor of The Times, Magnus Linklater, will host a talk between French-Vietnamese Choreographer Ea Sola, whose family fled the country of her birth during the Vietnam War, Indian writer Swati Chopra and anthropologist Dr Rita Langer

that considers the shared cultural memory and tradition in Asian societies.