

Press Release

Sasha Waltz and Olafur Eliasson receive the Helmut-Schmidt- Zukunftspreis 2025

Hamburg, February 13, 2025: For the first time, two personalities will be honored with the Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis: German choreographer, dancer, and director Sasha Waltz, as well as Danish visual artist, designer, and architect of public spaces Olafur Eliasson. They are honored for their cultural innovations, with which they are committed to the protection of democracy and nature as well as liberal society.

The Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis will be awarded to the two laureates on May 22, 2025, by the weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT, the Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung, and THE NEW INSTITUTE at the Thalia Theater in Hamburg. Since 2022, the award has honored outstanding innovative achievements in the fields of democracy, society, and technology.

“Sasha Waltz weaves the social dimension into her art in a humane way. A red thread runs from ‘Allee der Kosmonauten’, the work about the diverse lives in a prefabricated housing estate, through the extensive series ‘Dialoge’, to ‘In C’ in this decade, where Sasha Waltz counters hostility towards democracy with a search for empathy and humanity,” the jury honors the laureate.

Regarding award winner Olafur Eliasson, the jury states: “With his works around the world, Olafur Eliasson reminds people of their

responsibility for their living conditions and creates, in an almost unique way, collective experiences through art. He counters the trend of retreating into the national or individual sphere with a vision of a caring, dialogical society and even breaks down boundaries between art and the commercial space. This was exemplified in 2003 and 2004 when he brought two million people to linger with a gigantic sun at London's Tate Modern.”

This year, the jury of the Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis consists of: Jury chairman Uwe Jean Heuser (DIE ZEIT), Alexander Birken (CEO of Otto Group), Antje Boetius (Director of the Alfred-Wegener-Institut at the Helmholtz-Zentrum für Polar- und Meeresforschung – Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research), Francesca Bria (President of the Italian National Innovation Fund), Sanna Marin (Former Prime Minister of Finland, advisor for the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change), Vanessa Nakate (climate activist and social entrepreneur), Anna Katsman (Academic Director of THE NEW INSTITUTE), Meredith Whittaker (President of Signal), and Meik Woyke (Chairman and CEO of the Bundeskanzler-Helmut-Schmidt-Stiftung).

On the occasion of the Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftspreis, the Helmut-Schmidt-Zukunftsfestival will be held at Leuphana Universität in Lüneburg from May 20 to 22, 2025. The ideas developed at the festival by young future designers will be presented on the evening of the award ceremony on the stage of the Thalia Theater.

Contact

Alice Gustson, Head of Media and Communication
alice.gustson@thenew.institute