CFP SHAKESPEARE-SEMINAR 2027:
SHAKESPEARE IN AND FOR A DISTRACTED GLOBE

When the Ghost makes his exit in Act 1, Scene 5, having asked Hamlet to remember him, the prince is left alone on stage, contemplating the impossibility of doing otherwise:

> […] Remember thee?
> Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat
> In this distracted globe.

As Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor suggest in their gloss, Hamlet's emphatic answer implies a commitment to the Ghost's appeal on three levels: first, that he will remember the ghost for as long as memory retains its hold over his shattered frame; second, that he will remember him for as long as memory itself remains a force in this disordered world; and third, that he will remember him within the theatrical context of a performance in the then newly built Globe Theatre – where 'distracting' audience behaviours such as booing, throwing fruit, or talking back to the stage were the rule, rather than the exception. While Hamlet is pondering the inevitability of remembering the ghost of his late father in the distracted globe of early modern Denmark, he is at the same time vying for attention in the distracted globe of his own performance.

The different layers of meaning that converge in Hamlet's suggestive metaphor of the "distracted globe" inspire the thematic focus of the 2027 Seminar of the German Shakespeare Society. Taking Hamlet's metaphor both literally and a step further, we aim to explore Shakespeare's place in a distracted globe: in our own contemporary moment of media overload, diminishing attention spans, and immediately accessible information through artificial intelligence, does Shakespeare himself risk becoming a poor ghost? A ghost whose substance seems increasingly difficult to hold on to? Or do – and if so, *how* do – Shakespeare's plays offer forms of resilience against the distractions that beset us? In a world that has become both commercially globalised by the rise of capitalism and politically fractured by local and regional conflicts, what sway does the alleged cultural iconicity of Shakespeare's works still hold to provide focus, depth, and clarity? To explore these questions, we invite papers that engage with, but are in no way restricted to, the following topics:

- Attention and inattention in early modern theatre
- Attention and distraction in contemporary Shakespeare
- Shakespeare and globalisation
- Shakespeare and (cultural) memory
- (Mis)Remembering and forgetting (in) Shakespeare
- Visibility and exclusion
- Shakespeare and political fragmentation
- The values of close-reading Shakespeare in times of social media and AI
- Teaching Shakespeare to Generations Z and Alpha

Our seminar will address these issues with a panel of five papers during the annual conference of the German Shakespeare Association, *Shakespeare-Tage*, which will take place from **23–25 April 2027 in Weimar,** Germany. As critical input for the discussion, we invite papers of no more than 15 minutes that present concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. Please send your proposals (abstracts of 300 words) and short bio notes by **14 December 2026** to the seminar convenors:

Dr. Marlene Dirschauer, University of Hamburg: marlene.dirschauer@uni-hamburg.de
Dr. Jonas Kellermann, University of Konstanz: jonas.kellermann@uni-konstanz.de

The Seminar provides a forum for established as well as young scholars to discuss texts and contexts. Participants of the seminar will subsequently be invited to submit extended versions of their papers for publication in *Shakespeare Seminar Online* (*SSO*). While we cannot offer travel bursaries, the association will arrange for the accommodation of all participants in a hotel close to the main venues. For more information, please contact Marlene Dirschauer and Jonas Kellermann. For more information about the events and publications also see: https://shakespeare-gesellschaft.de/.