

BHSN Conference

Shakespeare and Visuality

Programme

Weimar October 7-9, 2026

Goethe-und Schiller-Archiv

Vortragsraum (Lecture Hall; First Floor)

Jenaer Straße 1

99425 Weimar

Schedule	p. 2
Abstracts	p. 4
Topic and CFP	p 12



Shakespeare monument by Otto Lessing,
1904, Park an der Ilm

Before the official programme

Guests who arrive early are invited to hear Professor Christa Jansohn speak at the Goethe-Schiller Archive (Lecture Hall). The talk will be in German.

Tuesday October 6

17:00-18:00

Genie trifft Genie: Adolph Menzels Shakespeare-Werke
Christa Jansohn (University of Bamberg, Germany)

Adolph Menzel (1815-1905) – bekannt geworden vor allem mit Bildern aus dem Leben Friedrich des Großen – war einer der erfolgreichsten und faszinierendsten Künstler des 19. Jahrhunderts und mit rund 15.000 Gemälden, Druckgraphiken, Zeichnungen und um die 70 Skizzenbücher sowie zirka 2.200 Briefen bei weitem auch einer der produktivsten. Nur äußerst selten wird darauf verwiesen, dass zu seinem Schaffen auch einige Shakespeare-Arbeiten gehören. Der Vortrag möchte versuchen, diese Lücken zu schließen, indem Menzels Shakespeare-Werke genauer vorgestellt und in den kulturellen Kontext der Zeit eingeordnet werden. Zudem wird auf die Wirkungsgeschichte dieser Werke in Deutschland und im englischsprachigen Raum eingegangen.

Official Programme

Wednesday October 7

09:30-09:45

Welcome Addresses

Dr Christian Hain, Director of the Goethe and Schiller Archive
Dr Sverre-Arve Myklebost, Leader of the BHSN

Session 1 Chair: TBA

09:45-10:15 Paper 1

Virtual Visuality in Shakespeare's Plays

Thomas Kullmann (University of Osnabrueck, Germany)

10:15-10:45 Paper 2

"Deficient Sight": Representation in *King Lear*'s Dover Cliff Scene

Perry McPartland (Western Norway University, Norway)

10:45-11:00

Break

Session 2 Chair: Goran Stanivukovic

11:00-11:30 Paper 3

Black/White, Foul/Fair in *The Tragedie of Macbeth*

Sverre-Arve Myklebost (University of Inland Norway, Norway)

11:30-12:00 Paper 4

All the World's a Cartoon: Thomas Nast's Shakespearean political cartoons

Anna Wołosz-Sosnowska (University of Łódź, Poland)

12:00-13:30

Lunch

Session 3 Chair: Perry McPartland

13:30-14:00 Paper 5

"Are you Shakespeare?": Biofictional Shakespeare in Graphic Novels

Delilah Bermudez Brataas (NTNU, Norway)

14:00-14:30 Paper 6

Reproducing the Bard: Shakespeare's Portrait from Print Culture to Platform Economies

Koel Chatterjee (Regent/Cambridge, UK)

14:30-14:45

Break

Session 4 Chair: Sverre-Arve Myklebost

14:45-15:15 Paper 7

Hamlet, Macbeth, and Richard III: The Iconographic Reinterpretation of William Shakespeare's Characters by Ignacy Stanisław Witkiewicz (Witkacy)

Sabina Laskowska-Hinz (The Polish Shakespeare Association, Poland)

15:15-15:45 Paper 8

24 Anonymous Watercolor Illustrations (1828) in the Folger Shakespeare Library

Waltraud Maierhofer (The University of Iowa, USA) on Zoom

15:45-16:15 Paper 9 **Can Visual Images of Ophelia be Feminist?**
Alexa Alice Joubin (George Washington University, USA) on Zoom

Thursday October 8

Session 5 Chair: Svenn-Arve Myklebost

09:00-09:30 Paper 10 **Posters of Shakespeare Productions on the Indian Stage and Screen**
Shormishtha Panja (University of Delhi, India) on Zoom

09:30-10:00 Paper 11 **‘Seeing is believing’? Believing what?**
Charles Moseley (University of Cambridge, UK) on Zoom

10:00-10:30 Paper 12 **I See Thee Still: *Macbeth*’s Visuals in Contemporary Novels**
Gina Lyle (University of York, UK) on Zoom

10:30-12:00 **Tour of the Goethe-Schiller Archive (led by Dr Margrit Glaser, GSA)**

12:00-13:15 *Lunch*

13:35 **Tour of Duchess Anna Amalia library** (details pending)

20:00 *Conference dinner (tba)*

Friday October 9

Session 6 Chair: TBA

09:30-10:00 Paper 13 **Visual disclosures in Daniel Maclise’s painting of Bottom’s dream**
Goran Stanivukovic (St Mary’s University, Canada)

10:00-10:30 Paper 14 **Imaging Shakespeare in Italy: Iconography and Critical Discourse (19th-Early 20th Century)**
Emanuel Stelzer (University of Verona, Italy)

10:30-10:45 *Break*

Session 7 Chair: TBA

10:45-11:15 Paper 15 **The ‘Woman in the Moon’: Emblematic and Theatrical Representations of Fickleness**
Natália Pikli (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)

11:45-12:15 Paper 16 **Framing The Woman – Visual Representation of Female Characters in Silent Shakespeare**
Magdalena Cieślak (University of Łódź, Poland)

12:15-13:30 **Roundtable discussion, followed by lunch**

Summary and discussion of thematic strands; Avenues for publication; Our next meeting

Abstracts

Delilah Bermudez Brataas (NTNU, Norway)

“Are you Shakespeare?”: Biofictional Shakespeare in Graphic Novels

William Shakespeare’s 1623 Folio, with its prominent portrait on the title page, first brought ink to task in connecting the plays to the playwright. Thought to be based on a lost portrait, the Droeshout engraving frontispiece remains the most familiar image. Even Ben Jonson’s less familiar accompanying poem draws attention to “this Figure, that thou here seest,” but cautions that to know Shakespeare we should look “Not on his Picture, but his Booke.” Yet so intricately are image and text linked that *knowing* his wit inevitably means *seeing* his face. The pervasiveness of this image invited iconicity even with endless variation and adaptation.

In this article, I examine the evolution of visual depictions of William Shakespeare, focusing on biofictional representations in graphic novels over the last 30 years. To frame the discussion, I first analyse three illustrated biographies of Shakespeare, including Nick Craine’s graphic biofiction preview *Parchment of Light: The Life and Death of William Shakespeare* (2007). I then focus on several graphic novel depictions of Shakespeare as a character, beginning with Neil Gaiman’s groundbreaking *Sandman* series (1989-1996) through to the most recent series from the *Sandman Universe* (2018-): *The Dreaming: Waking Hours* (2020-). As I will show, these series disrupt the familiar image, challenging and reconfiguring Shakespeare’s visual iconography while preserving enough familiarity to render him knowable and accessible – a transformation shaped by the distinctive interplay of text and image that defines storytelling in comics.

Koel Chatterjee (Regent/Cambridge, UK)

Reproducing the Bard: Shakespeare’s Portrait from Print Culture to Platform Economies

What does Shakespeare look like now? While early modern scholarship has long debated the status and authenticity of images such as the Droeshout Engraving, this paper shifts the focus from likeness to circulation. I argue that Shakespeare’s portrait operates not as a stable representation of a historical subject, but as a reproducible visual technology: one that consolidates authorship in print culture while enabling its continual reconfiguration across media.

Emerging in the First Folio as part of a broader project of authorial construction, the engraved image establishes a visual shorthand for Shakespeare that privileges recognisability over verisimilitude. Building on foundational work by Stephen Orgel and Margreta de Grazia, and extending through Douglas Lanier’s account of Shakespeare as cultural currency, this paper situates the portrait within a longer history of mediation and circulation. Recent work on global and digital Shakespeare further underscores how such images accrue value through repetition, mobility, and adaptation across cultural contexts.

The second half of the paper adopts a practice-as-research methodology, drawing on my Shakespop project as a series of experimental re-mediations of Shakespeare’s image. Through the design of stickers, postcards, and subscription-based artefacts, I test how the Bard’s visual identity can be abstracted, stylised, and recontextualised within

contemporary platform economies. These design experiments function as critical interventions, exploring how Shakespeare's image operates simultaneously as commodity and as a tool for participatory engagement.

In tracing this trajectory from early modern print to digital circulation, the paper argues that Shakespeare's visuality has shifted from representation to circulation to interaction. The portrait no longer stabilises authorship; instead, it enables new forms of cultural production in which audiences are invited not simply to recognise Shakespeare, but to reproduce him.

Magdalena Cieślak (University of Łódź, Poland)

Framing The Woman – Visual Representation of Female Characters in Silent Shakespeare

Film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in the silent era constitute a rich, diverse and exciting resource. While those films are typically cherished for their bravado in using the possibilities of the new medium, they are also indebted to their older relatives – photography and, implicitly, painting. In discussing silent Shakespeare, it is the cinematic potential that is more often explored, which is understandable considering the eagerness with which Shakespearean adaptation explored it. A great example is one of the earliest reels – *Duel d'Hamlet* (1900) directed by Clément Maurice and starring Sarah Bernhardt as Hamlet, which wonderfully captures the dynamics of the beautifully choreographed duel – or films that experiment with cinematic technology to showcase magic, like the 1908 *The Tempest* (dir. Percy Stow) or the Vitagraph 1909 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (dir. Charles Kent).

I would like to propose a different perspective, one celebrating the way in which silent Shakespeare draws from the legacy of painting and photography and endorses still imagery to intensify the visual impact of the films. Against the background of a selection of films, I would like to look closely at fragments of two adaptations of *Hamlet* and discuss how they frame Ophelia: the 1910 *Amleto*, directed by Mario Caserini and starring Fernanda Negri Pouget as Ophelia, and the 1917 *Amleto* directed by Eleuterio Rodolphi, with Helena Makowska. In my presentation, I wish to offer a feminist interpretation of the two films' strategies of framing the female body to argue that their visuality testifies to a nuanced gendered representation of Ophelia's significance.

Alexa Alice Joubin (George Washington University, USA)

Can Visual Images of Ophelia be Feminist?

The image of Ophelia is a paradox with conflicting myths. Ophelia is both an innocent "rose of May" and a sexually aware singer in act 4. Both her lyric sufferings and her suicide-as-resistance of the patriarchy enabled contrasting interpretations. At first glance, visual images of a mad or drowning Ophelia are far removed from our contemporary feminist pursuits. However, multiple performances affirm that the image of Ophelia can indeed be feminist.

In conversation with and moving beyond the Victorian pictorialization of Ophelia, as represented by John Everett Millais's painting, Ophelia has been reimagined in Asian culture as a filial daughter, river goddess, an ideal lover, and a mediator between human and spiritual worlds. As they race to "botch [her] words up" (4.5.10) and tell Ophelia's

stories, Asian artists present an Ophelia figure who is no longer just a “document in madness” (4.5.178). In fact, Ophelia is so central to the anxiety of modernity that she remains a focal point on the Japanese stage even when Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” soliloquy and other soliloquies were cut completely in early adaptations and performances in Tokyo and elsewhere. Even when she appears to depend on others for her thoughts like her Western counterpart, the figure of Ophelia in Asian rewritings signals a strong presence. Asian incarnations of Ophelia occupy a broad spectrum of interpretive range and possess more moral agency.

This paper investigates feminist performances that reinterpret traditional victimhood through the figure of Ophelia, focusing on *The King and the Clown* (South Korea, 2005) and *Prince of the Himalayas* (Tibet, 2006).

Thomas Kullmann (University of Osnabrueck, Germany)
Virtual Visuality in Shakespeare’s Plays

According to many handbooks, Shakespeare supplies the scenery which is missing from the stage by having his characters describe their surroundings. When we look at the most memorable verbal scene-paintings, however, we notice that the places described are not imagined to be present, or ‘real’. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Lysander before his and Hermia’s flight envisages a moonlit wood (1.1.209-211), Titania paints a scenery set on the shore of India (2.1.124-134), Oberon reminds Puck of another seaside scene (2.1.148-164) and describes Titania’s resting-place in another part of the wood (2.1.249-256), and Hermia dreams of her heart being eaten by a serpent (2.2.144-149).

Looking at later plays, we notice that in *Antony and Cleopatra* references to Egypt are mostly found in scenes set in Rome, such as Enobarbus’ famous description of Cleopatra’s barge (2.2.191-213). In *The Tempest*, Prospero even presents a vision of the whole world, “the great globe itself” (4.1.153), only to point out that it will “dissolve” like a dream. The most conspicuous virtual vision may be that of Banquo’s ghost in *Macbeth* – evidently a product of Macbeth’s diseased imagination, visible, however, to the audience.

What we notice is a primacy of the “mind’s eye” (*Hamlet*, 1.2.185) over any notion of objective visual reality. What characters ‘see’ depends on their imagination, their memory and their physical and moral disposition. My thesis is that Shakespeare uses theatrical means to convey ‘modern’ insights into human psychology.

Sabina Laskowska-Hinz (The Polish Shakespeare Association, Poland)
Hamlet, Macbeth, and Richard III: The Iconographic Reinterpretation of William Shakespeare’s Characters by Ignacy Stanisław Witkiewicz (Witkacy)

From his early years, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy) engaged deeply with William Shakespeare’s works, both intellectually and aesthetically. He read Bard’s works illustrated by Henry Courtney Selous. Witkacy’s father admitted: “When you wrote your comedies and dramas (Staś was 8), you were an exceptionally subtle observer of life ... and at the same time you were under the influence of Shakespeare.” Thus, the Polish artist’s dramas are populated with quasi-Shakespearean figures. However, this is his iconographic Shakespearean oeuvre that draws our attention.

Witkacy, like William Blake, did not merely depict the Bard’s lines; instead, he reimagined the Shakespearean universe to serve his artistic aims. By incorporating

Shakespearean archetypes into his visual art, Witkacy used the technique of defamiliarisation (ostranenie) to deconstruct traditional interpretations, urging viewers to encounter these canonical figures through a lens of Pure Form and existential anxiety.

While Witkacy's literary output is often the subject of scholarly study, his visual portfolio contains significant iconographic references to Shakespearean characters. Key works such as *Garden Scene* (1907), *Gravedigger's Monologue* (1916), *Hamlet* (1919), *Satan* (1920), and *Composition – Lady Macbeth* (1933), among others, serve as essential evidence of this lifelong fascination. These pieces showcase the progression from the artist's childhood exposure to 19th-century dramatic illustrations to a more mature, highly personal interpretation of Shakespearean themes.

Despite the extensive scope of Witkacy's work, research specifically focusing on the iconographic link between the Polish artist and Shakespeare remains scarce. Current scholarship typically addresses Shakespearean themes within broader reviews, neglecting the particular visual-textual dialogue evident in his drawings and paintings.

Gina Lyle (University of York, UK)

I See Thee Still: Macbeth's Visuals in Contemporary Novels

Retellings and sustained engagements with William Shakespeare's plays are consistently visible in contemporary novel publishing, from Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* (2016-2019) to Julia Armfield's *Private Rites* (2024). Recent years have seen, in particular, a number of publications taking key inspiration from *Macbeth*, including Sally O'Reilly's *Hagtale* (2025), Ava Reid's *Lady Macbeth* (2024), and Eleanor Catton's *Birnam Wood* (2023).

This paper identifies where contemporary novels are engaging with *Macbeth's* visual elements and referencing recognisable visuals from the play, such as the movement of Birnam Wood, Lady Macbeth's 'damn spot', and a trio of witches. It offers an analysis of how these images are deployed and explores their impact to consider whether recent novels are visually referencing in homage, for comedic purposes, or to strengthen allusion for thematic impact. Discussion considers how these visual elements from the play are reformatted within a new creative format and creates the opportunity to reflect on contemporary perceptions of *Macbeth*.

Considering a wide range of contemporary texts published between 2016-2026 that are actively engaged with *Macbeth*, from authors across the globe and including works intended for adult and young adult readerships, this paper offers a comprehensive view of how writers use notable visuals from the Scottish play within new contexts.

Perry McPartland (Western Norway University, Norway)

"Deficient Sight": Representation in King Lear's Dover Cliff Scene

This paper argues that the Dover Cliff scene in *King Lear* offers not a demonstration of mimetic success, but an exploration of representational deficiency as a specifically theatrical resource. Where classical mimesis privileges identity, resemblance, and the stable realization of image, Shakespeare's theatre foregrounds artifice, absence, and the material conditions of performance. Focusing on Edgar's shifting role, exposition relationship to the stage, and the apparently ekphrastic description of the cliff, the paper shows how familiar mimetic devices are invoked only to be undone. Description repeatedly fails to produce coherence, while the imagined images proves impossible to locate either on

stage or within a stable playworld. Yet these failures generate a powerful effect: a felt sense of vertiginous absence. The scene thus functions as an implicit apology for theatre, demonstrating how representation may operate not through resemblance, but through difference, instability, and the productive undoing of its own forms.

Waltraud Maierhofer (The University of Iowa, USA)

24 Anonymous Watercolor Illustrations (1828) in the Folger Shakespeare Library

The Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, DC) holds a series of 24 small watercolors, an allegorical portrait of the bard and 23 scenes from the plays. In the library's online catalogue, they are attributed to the German artist Johann Heinrich Ramberg, one of the most prolific illustrators in the German empire around 1800 who remained active into the 1830s. The young Ramberg had been awarded a fellowship by King Georg III to study at the Royal Academy of Arts in London and during those years contributed to the illustrated Bell's edition of Shakespeare's works and to Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery. Upon his return to Germany in 1790, he became court painter in Hanover Germany which was ruled by the King of Great Britain and Ireland until 1837. Taking into consideration Stuart Sillars' account of these watercolours, my contribution will provide a first closer examination of these compositions, showing 1) that they closely followed the corresponding text which is typical for Ramberg's style, and 2) that they are quite similar in technique and medium to other designs by Ramberg from the late 1820s.

Charles Moseley (University of Cambridge, UK)

'Seeing is believing'? Believing what?

This short paper's starting point is the Jacobethan habit of talking of hearing, not seeing, a play. It will glance at some issues in that very metatheatrical play, *Henry V*, but will also offer some thoughts about why the adjective 'personate' had to be re-invented as a verb and what that implies about changing styles of acting. Then it will consider some issues surrounding illusion and belief, which will take us into territory which deep-browed Stuart Sillars ruled as his demesne, but will then consider some trends in production, ludicrous and not, and suggest what that might imply about the expectations not of a play but of the audience. Finally, it will ponder the consequence of technological advances, starting with being able to dim the lights. The appearance of real rabbits on stage is relatively a side issue.

Svenn-Arve Myklebost (University of Inland Norway, Norway)

Black/White, Foul/Fair in The Tragedie of Macbeth

Stewart Kenneth Moore's graphic novel *The Tragedie of Macbeth* (2016/2023) emerges from his involvement in the Prague Shakespeare Company's 2016 production of *Macbeth*. Yet, despite its anchoring in theatrical practice and the claim on the back cover that it is "documenting a stage performance", his graphic novel utilises several visual arts and comics affordances which move the adaptation away from the stage into a realm where space and place are put into question. The impetus for the spatial displacement is a wish to "drop the stage and cast the players against the half-remembered and half-imagined light of North East Scotland", the artist's childhood home.

The adaptation is at times meditating on the play's themes as much as it is mediating its plot. Moore's graphic novel thus resonates with works in art history (by e.g. Henry Fuseli) or with films (by e.g. Akira Kurosawa) which speak to an audience already familiar with *Macbeth*. But as I will argue, the range of techniques, iconographic references, and stylistic shifts found in Moore's adaptation distinguishes it from the majority of earlier visual treatments, including most comics adaptations. The article builds its argument on theories of space and memory in Shakespeare (Karreman 2024), as well as recent work on Shakespeare comics (Casey 2024, Myklebost 2025), and navigates concepts such as *memoryscape*, *dramascape* and *mediascape* to analyse Moore's spatio-graphic reconfigurations.

Shormishtha Panja (University of Delhi, India)

Posters of Shakespeare Productions on the Indian Stage and Screen

This paper analyses visuality in the posters of Delhi's National School of Drama Shakespeare productions in multiple Indian languages and in three films by Vishal Bhardwaj based on *Macbeth* (*Maqbool*), *Othello* (*Omkara*) and *Hamlet* (*Haider*) respectively. The National School of Drama is India's premium drama school. The productions fall into two categories, conventional productions that remain faithful to the text and to western proscenium theatre protocols and those belonging to the Theatre of Roots movement which encouraged Indian directors to adopt indigenous folk performance idioms like *nautanki*, *jatra*, *kathakali* and *yakshagana* while staging Shakespeare. The artwork of the posters clearly reflects this demarcation. The same is true of Bhardwaj's trilogy which gives specific local Indian habitations to the stories of *Macbeth* (the Mumbai underworld), *Othello* (the badlands of Uttar Pradesh) and *Hamlet* (insurgency-torn Kashmir), redeploying tropes of popular Hindi cinema in order to suit the gravity of Shakespeare's tragedies and comment on current social and political ills. These are ably reflected in the artwork of the posters that are very different from the orthodox poster of an earlier Hindi *Hamlet* directed by Kishore Sahu which is more influenced by Olivier's *Hamlet* rather than contemporary Indian politics. This paper argues that these variant visual styles are connected to the politics of the postcolonial state trying to shake off the colonial baggage of staging Shakespeare as a form of homage to the west and to classic western theatre practices and instead to engender new ways of visualising Shakespeare that are more closely linked to Indian pre-colonial performative traditions on the one hand and urgent and controversial social and political issues relating to the present Indian state on the other.

Natália Pikli (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)

The 'Woman in the Moon': Emblematic and Theatrical Representations of Fickleness

My wider research project focuses on intersections between emblems and the public theatre of Shakespeare and his contemporaries in late 16th- and early 17th-century England. I attempt to re-visit and re-open scholarly debates about the possibility of an either direct or indirect two-way traffic between these two media genres, both highly popular at the time and both crosscutting societal boundaries. As Stuart Sillars summarised when he discussed emblematic thinking in *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare and his drama was capable of "completely, and with great power, reconfiguring the form of the emblem within the needs of the theatre, reinventing a structure familiar to many of his audience

within the new situation of dramatic tragedy” (*Shakespeare and the Visual Imagination*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 204). My paper focuses on one interrelated cluster of visual and verbal associations: the figure of fickle women and the changing Moon, or Luna, and how these were often associated with Inconstancy, Occasio, or Fortuna in emblematic thinking. My paper intends to re-visit a few Shakespearean plays (eg. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Winter’s Tale*) to highlight instances and variations of this highly visual cluster of ideas, and discuss how contemporary emblem authors (Whitney, Peacham, Wither, etc.) and playwrights related to this, showcasing different forms of either stigmatising or sympathising with (female) Fickleness or Inconstancy in the visual representations of the Moon and/or women associated with Luna.

Goran Stanivukovic (St Mary’s University, Canada)

Visual disclosures in Daniel Maclise’s painting of Bottom’s dream

I will discuss the painting called ‘The Disenchantment of Bottom’ by the late Victorian Anglo-Irish painter, Daniel Maclise (1806-1870). The painting shows ‘Bottom’s Dream’, a visual scene based on the phrase used by Nick Bottom, the Weaver, to describe his ‘most rare vision’ (4.1.200) – his dream – towards the end of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. I will propose that in this picture, Maclise moves away from using the styles and techniques of realistic depiction, characteristic of his other paintings inspired by Shakespeare’s plays, to employing the symbolic disclosure of the erotic. In his two influential books on Shakespeare and the Victorians, *Shakespeare and the Victorians* (2013) and *Shakespeare, Time and the Victorians: A Pictorial Exploration*, (2012), Stuart Sillars analyzes briefly and illuminatingly Maclise’s depictions of individual scenes from several plays by Shakespeare. Sillars locates Maclise’s Shakespearean paintings in the tradition of pre-Raphaelite painters and Romantic sensibilities in art. Yet, one painting that Sillars does not engage with in these two books, is Maclise’s least known picture presenting the scene inspired by Bottom’s account of his dream. In my view, this painting is also Maclise’s most enigmatic work. It is enigmatic because the composition of the bodies and their entanglement in the picture is infused with erotic symbolism created by the visual signifiers inserted in the picture. I will analyze the central compositional arrangement of the bodies flying in topsyturvy manner in Maclise’s visual narrative of Bottom’s dream, pointing out how style and delineation of the bodies rework the art of the nude, disclosing desire and eroticism which circulate in Shakespeare’s comedy and which produce ‘disenchantment’ of the dreamer in Maclise’s picture.

Emanuel Stelzer (University of Verona, Italy)

Imaging Shakespeare in Italy: Iconography and Critical Discourse (19th-Early 20th Century)

This paper will offer a preliminary overview of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italian Shakespearean iconography and its relationship to contemporary critical debates. It wishes to explore how Shakespearean subjects were appropriated in the visual arts of a newly unified Italy to serve both universalising and nationalist purposes. For instance, an 1877 review in *L’Illustrazione italiana*, which identified Francesco Hayez’s *Il Bacio* as “The Kiss of Romeo and Juliet,” reclaims Romeo and Juliet as originally Italian figures; such interpretations reveal the ideological tensions underlying visual culture in the

decades following the Risorgimento. Despite the significant number of paintings, engravings, and sculptures inspired by Shakespeare produced in Italy during this period, no comprehensive catalogue or study currently exists. This paper will address that gap by surveying key examples and examining which plays and scenes were most frequently depicted. Particular attention will be given to the unrealised “Galleria Shakespeariana” commissioned in the 1860s by Romualdo Gentilucci, which testifies to the ambition to position Shakespeare as a global cultural heritage. Adopting an interdisciplinary framework, this paper aims at highlighting the dynamic interplay between text and image in shaping Shakespeare’s reception in Italy.

Anna Wołosz-Sosnowska (University of Łódź, Poland)

All the World’s a Cartoon: Thomas Nast’s Shakespearean political cartoons

Adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays in sequential art, particularly in comics, date back to the early 20th century. Both comic book and manga adaptations of the plays spark cross-disciplinary interest among Shakespeare and comics scholars alike. As these publications have gained recent attention, Shakespeare-themed cartoons published in US magazines and newspapers are relatively neglected in academic discourse. One of the most prolific cartoon creators was Thomas Nast (1840–1902), a German-American cartoonist who is often regarded as the “Father of the American Cartoon”. Operating in the second half of the 19th century, Nast frequently utilised Shakespearean plays as a framework for political and social commentary. Throughout his career, he produced over 100 cartoons that combined Shakespearean motifs with contemporary satire.

This presentation aims to analyse and thematically organise twenty-five cartoons taken from Nast’s digital archive. Nast was known for exploiting the cultural capital of Shakespeare’s works through recognisable quotations and motifs; he strategically selected the plays to comment on the political issues of the time. This study investigates which plays were most commonly referenced and how their themes were recontextualised within nineteenth-century American political discourse. By demonstrating how Nast used Shakespeare’s cultural authority to negotiate the complexities of the American political landscape, this research repositions him not merely as a partisan illustrator, but as an innovator in Shakespearean adaptation within the American visual tradition. Thus, it also proposes a broader methodological framework for analysing cartoons as a significant, yet underexplored, form of sequential storytelling.

**Original Call for Papers:
Shakespeare and Visuality (Weimar: 2026)**

The topic for this year's meeting is *Shakespeare and Visuality*. The topic is chosen to honour Stuart Sillars' work on Shakespeare and visual art in books such as *Painting Shakespeare* (CUP 2006), *Shakespeare and the Visual Imagination* (CUP 2015) and *Shakespeare Seen* (2019).

Sillars's studies are often concerned with painting and book illustration but conceive of 'the visual' in many forms throughout a variety of social, historical, institutional contexts, in Shakespeare's plays as well as in their reception. We invite papers pertaining to Shakespeare and visuality broadly understood.

Topics may include, but are by no means limited to:

- Shakespeare and visual art/Visual art and Shakespeare
- Visuality in Shakespeare's language (imagery, ekphrasis, etc.)
- Visuality on Shakespeare's stage
- Visuality in Shakespeare reception (adaptations, intertexts, early criticism, etc.)
- Visuality in early modern/Renaissance culture
- Visuality in plays by contemporary playwrights (how does Shakespeare's plays resemble or differ from these?)
- The limits of visuality; visuality amid other senses; visuality and imagination
- The visual as a theme in Shakespeare ('ocular proof' etc.)
- Digital art, avant garde, abstraction
- Photography, film
- Fan art
- Theatre posters, film posters, other promotional materials
- Graphic satire, cartoons, picture books
- Monuments, memorials, architecture
- Comics, graphic novels, manga
- Religious, esoteric iconography
- Perspective, proportion, trompe-l'oeil
- Theories of visuality in literature/drama

The purpose of the conference is to lay down some foundations for a potential publication, but it is not necessary to plan with publishing in mind. Please approach the topic in the spirit of collaborative experimentation.