

### **Sudden and More Strange Return: When Arab Shakespeare Comes (Back?) to English**

This talk explores the seeming paradox that, even as Arab theatre makers seem to have turned away from Hamlet adaptation since 2011, a few Arab-themed Hamlet adaptations in English have suddenly found audiences in Europe and the United States. After introducing the “global kaleidoscope” of sources and models through which Arabs received their Shakespeare during the 20th century, including French, Soviet, Eastern European texts and films, I will explore what the Arab Hamlet tradition can teach us about intercultural literary adaptation and the goals and limits of political theatre. I will then ask what it means that the year 2017-18 has seen four entirely separate “Arab” Hamlet adaptations staged in English, with productions in Dubai, San Francisco, Cornell University, and Berlin. Perhaps this is just a product of human mobility, or a hopeful example of academic work bearing artistic fruit. Or is it that we are all Arab intellectuals now?