

2019 Seminar Abstracts: Shakespeare and Visual Cultures, Old and New
Howard Marchitello, Rutgers University-Camden
Stephen Orgel, Stanford University

Katherine Acheson
University of Waterloo

“The Look of Poetry: Shakespeare’s Sonnets, 1599-1640”

The printed sonnet’s visual form was diverse and unstable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the songs and sonnets collected by Richard Tottel, for instance, represent dozens of verse forms indebted in sundry ways to oral, manuscript, and printed poetry with a range of generic signals and patterns of rhyme, metre, and stanzaic formation. The sonnet as a popular song, of the sort printed as ballads or collected in books with titles such as *The Academy of pleasure* (1656 and later) or *Loves school* (1674) by authors known by one epithet or the other persists through the 17th century, as do single author collections of diverse short poems, including those labelled “sonnets.” The sonnet sequence of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is quite a different kind of production: in Samuel Daniel’s *Delia*, Richard Barnfield’s *Cynthia*, or Thomas Lodge’s *Phillis*, the symmetry and balance of the form of the poems themselves, both individually and as part of the whole; the careful typography; the extensive white space; the Roman numerals; and the use of ornamental headers, footers, running heads and catchwords establish what poetry by poets looks like in print in early modern England. In the 1630s and 40s, the sonnet becomes one of several forms of virtuosity mastered by poets, and we see their publication – in collections by John Donne, George Herbert, and John Milton, for example – integrated with examples in other forms, as the idea of the sonneteer moves from being a kind of personality (sensitive and clever, passionate but restrained) to a sort of practitioner who balances insight – moral and emotional – with technical accomplishment and innovation. This paper will consider Shakespeare’s sonnets in relation to ideas of authorship, style, and poetic value expressed through the visual form of printed sonnets prevalent in and around 1609 and 1640.

Anna Riehl Bertolet
Auburn University

“Beward my Sting!”: The Voice of the Critic in *Upstart Crow*”

The BBC series *Upstart Crow* (2016 -) comes in the wake of a biographical fantasizing of *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *The Waste of Shame* (2005), films that imagined Shakespeare’s life experiences as engendering his drama and poetry. These films turned to the “origins” of Shakespeare’s writing, feeding the “real life” into the Shakespeare processor that produced, in real time, the sonnets, the characters, and the stories. *Upstart Crow* is unapologetically built on the similar premise: Shakespeare as mostly a processor rather than an inventor, and the distorted specters of his plays unfold in each episode, alongside them *Upstart Crow* introduces a diverse chorus of critics. The Shakespeare processor is not a magical machine that yields masterpieces; it is a fully human entity, and everyone in his life is ready to chuck more material into it and / or judge the results with a brazen honesty. *Upstart Crow* is at once a sitcom invested in a comedy and language games and an exercise in wish-fulfilling as it settles numerous points of

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puzzlement and contention in the academic and reader response discourses accumulated around Shakespeare's plays.

In the series, Shakespeare's plays are rather satisfyingly exposed to the judgment of the critical voices that come, in part, from the current scholarly and progressive cultural discourses, but also are bombarded by challenges from his less sophisticated audience. Although the show revels in making Shakespeare's texts an easy target to the frequently anachronistic demands of a critical voice, these attacks elicit from the Bard (and occasionally, his few sympathizers) the interpretive responses akin to the explanations reached for by generations of readers and critics of his works. It is the devil's advocate game taken to a hilarious and sobering extreme.

Shakespeare's plays as we now have them are not as much born before our eyes here but are put in a complex relationship with what might have prompted or shaped them, our fantasies of how we ourselves would have guided Shakespeare's creative and ideological choices, the issues that have developed around his plays in the form we do have them, and what each of them could look like in our own post-Brexit, post-me-too, Trumpish era where the voice that calls for inclusivity, equality, and kindness still shapes the future and challenges the past.

Brandon Christopher
University of Winnipeg

“Comic Staging, Comic Movement”

My paper looks at two Italian-language comic book adaptations by Gianni De Luca, *Amleto* (1975) and *Romeo y Giulietta* (1976). My primary interest will be to examine the comics' visual representations of staging and movement, and the tension between the comics' almost overwhelming visual register and the way in which the textual register is made (perhaps necessarily) subordinate to it.

Alice Dailey
Villanova University

“Glitchy Clones: Warhol, Marilyn, and Richard III”

This paper considers body of Richard III in the context of both the cloning fantasy represented by his ordinal number and the myriad cloning failures traced by Shakespeare's history plays. ³ *Henry VI* and *Richard III* describe Richard as at once an error or abomination in hereditary reproduction and a mechanism for fulfilling providential design. Richard's double status as both a failed clone and an essential cog in the machinery of providence resonates with theoretical discourses on programmed forms of reproduction and their inherent glitches, such as Derrida's description in *For What Tomorrow...* of events that are “at once the effect of a machination and something that eludes machinelike calculation.” By considering Richard in relation to glitch theory and glitch art, especially Andy Warhol's paintings of Marilyn Monroe, this paper suggests how the mutually reinforcing ideologies of hereditary monarchy and divine providence rely at once on a fantasy of orderly reproduction and the effects of its unpredictable failure.

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Louise Geddes
Adelphi University

“Remember me’: The Vibrant Materialism of the Shakespeare Text”

Responding to Lyn Gardner’s 2018 question, “What makes an actor great?,” Alastair Coomer, the National Theatre’s head of casting, suggested that “acting is often at its best when it is least noticeable.”¹ A century after Stanislavski introduced the naturalistic style to the MAT, the presumption of performative greatness is still tied to the invisibility of craft, which creates challenges for a Shakespearean theatre in which the inescapable presence of the text makes impossible the suspension of disbelief. A Shakespeare text is a hybrid, vibrant object that absorbs language, history, technology, and image and continuously draws one’s eye as it slips in and out of the human. Unless avowedly avant-garde, Shakespearean theatre continues to be subjected to assumptions of naturalism, even when presented in non-traditional performance spaces (and we might include The Globe in such a category). That such value is placed on on the internal methodological workings of the actor in Shakespearean theatre presents a challenging juxtaposition to performers who are confronted with a textual object that too often transcends the naturalism that characterizes “great” acting and a vibrant text that is already actively engaged in shaping the expectations of actor, director, and audience. This essay uses fan studies, performance theory, and new materialism to challenge the anthropocentrism of liveness and suggest that the autonomous, post-dramatic authority of the Shakespeare text de-centers the emotive human. Instead, it elicits a more complex affective experience that absorbs the absolute visibility of the Shakespeare text and make apparent the processes by which a production confronts this monolith. While the celebrity of the Shakespeare play drives popular actors to inhabit difficult roles, such as Hamlet or King Lear, this fame also confounds any such attempt, working on both actor and audience, and making performance visible in spite of the performer’s efforts.

William Germano
Cooper Union

“Hamlet between Delacroix and Manet: Some Problems in Visual Interpretation”

The most important visual representations of Hamlet in nineteenth-century France are the work of Eugène Delacroix and Edouard Manet. Delacroix’s first such image may be the early (1821) self-portrait either as Scott’s Ravenswood or as Hamlet -- it’s been identified as both -- a painting that suggests an ambiguous line between the maddened Lucy of Lammermoor and Ophelia of Denmark. But it’s Delacroix’s 1839 painting of Hamlet and Horatio with the gravediggers (1839, Louvre), and the series of thirteen drawings that the artist worked on, with interruptions, during the 1830s and 1840s, as well as their subsequent engravings, that not only linked Delacroix to Hamlet, but Hamlet to France.

¹ <https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/2018/what-makes-a-great-actor-lyn-gardner/>

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Delacroix's imagined prince is the young man most theatergoers want. In painting and drawings, Hamlet's two visual companions -- Horatio and the Gravedigger -- both corroborate Hamlet's age, though in different directions. Horatio, the Wittenberg schoolmate, visually reinforces Hamlet's youth; the Gravedigger's memory chronicles the birth of the "old" Hamlet. Delacroix's painting of Hamlet at the grave framed by both figures presents the viewer with a Hamlet in visual tension between the two contradictory witnesses -- two calendars -- marking his age.

A short generation later, between 1865 and 1877, Manet executed three images of Hamlet -- an oil, and then another subject first in chalk and then in oil. Delacroix's Hamlets are figures imagined, not represented. Manet's however, are real, or at least representations of real men in their most famous stage roles: the baritone Jean-Baptiste Faure (in Ambroise Thomas's opera, the best-known operatic setting of Shakespeare's story) and the actor Philbert Rouvière (in the Dumas-Meurice adaptation of the play). My essay will consider these images and what they might help us understand about the unsolvable question of Hamlet's age.

Donald Hedrick
Kansas State University

“Dwarf Foreshortening”

The present state of this paper consists of a series of loose associations rather than a formal abstract. The motivation for this interest arises from two moments: one, a rather lengthy look at one of Velasquez's famous paintings of a dwarf, Don Sebastian de Morra. He is sitting on the floor with the soles of his shoes facing us, dressed in an elaborate gown, and with a serious, almost scowling look at us. I've been earlier interested in perspective as it is often viewed architecturally, in urban design, but it strikes me that this is an innovation of great interest aesthetically and politically. The face is serious; the feet are funny. The other moment is the famous line from Jonson, "Lend me your dwarf." What does it mean in the broadest terms of elevating the minor to a point of honor? I think there may be some transfer to the elevation of the ephemeral, the development of Shakespeare's representations of minor characters inhabiting the stage and given greater attention. What is the relation to the comic, and Renaissance theories of disability as inherently comic, which Velasquez at least pushes against in his dwarves who have full court stature and responsibilities. I'm interested also in the perspective of human figures on the stage, in which the lower strata appears larger than the head, with Bakhtinian overtones. Artists involved in foreshortening notice that it occurs all the time in ordinary vision, not just painting. The abstract treatment of "embodiment" in gender and other theorizing about dramatic texts, seems to call for a non-abstract consideration involving what artists actually do in their choices and techniques for rendering the body.

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Sujata Iyengar
University of Georgia

“Gravediggers in Stone: Picasso’s *Hamlet* Lithographs and the *livre d’artiste*”

Throughout his career, Picasso continued to innovate with new technologies of printing and the processes of what Walter Benjamin famously analyzed as “mechanical reproduction.” At the same time, recounts David Hockney, Picasso regarded the growing dominance of some of these techniques and their political uses – notably photography -- skeptically, as an art that seemed perniciously documentary, fore-closed. Picasso countered this authoritarian tendency in mass-produced art by turning for inspiration to non-Western printing techniques and non-codex “books,” such as Chinese woodblock printing on scrolls. Scrolls, suggested Picasso, could make viewers “see another way,” just as Cubism had done, because they force a reader to wait to unroll the scroll in order for the entire image to appear (quoted in Hockney 1984) thereby incorporating the passage of time into the experience of visual art. Hockney hints that Picasso’s late-life energy and “draftsmanship” likewise foreground the importance of time – the experience and skill of an elder artist, honed over decades – to a viewer’s encounter with visual art. Picasso’s later-life interest in time and mortality dovetails with the artist’s well-documented lithographic “experiment[s]...with crayon, pen, wash, transfer paper and paper cut-outs” (Lieberman 4-5) so that he could use this sensitive form to create, retain, and reproduce “multiple states” of a printing. These many impressions, argues Irving Lavin, “tell a story – an epic narrative that recounts the life history of a work of art” (79). I will suggest that Picasso’s obsession with incremental, subtle, constant changes in state, as enabled by lithography (Benson 256) correspondingly innovates the form of the printed book, through the large sizes enabled by offset or other kinds of lithography and through the creation of *livres d’artiste* in which lithographs require a punctuated, slow, close reading that (like the Chinese scroll) extends the visual encounter beyond a single page or frame. The lithographs act -- almost as a stop-motion animation – to create in Picasso’s drawings from the “gravediggers’ scene” in *Hamlet* a sense of both the urgency of time’s passing and its imperceptibility, even as they wittily and whimsically question Shakespeare’s supposed imperviousness to time.

Frederick Kiefer
University of Arizona

“Ophelia Visualized”

It is not easy to imagine exactly how the character of Ophelia looked onstage in the first performances of *Hamlet*. The second quarto and the First Folio offer almost no information. The first quarto, however, has a more complete description: “*Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing.*” Despite this specificity, modern editions frequently ignore the stage direction or consign it to a note. This practice has arisen because Q1 has long been branded a “bad quarto,” its contents suspect. Terri Bourus, however, has largely rehabilitated Q1 and demolished the theory that the text is the result of memorial reconstruction. I am interested in what Q1 can tell us about the visual Ophelia and what the details of her appearance signify. I

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also want to consider how Ophelia has been treated both on the stage and in painting during the past two centuries.

Jennifer Low
Florida Atlantic University

“Cas’d up like a holy relic’: The Albert Collection of Re-bound Shakespeare”

This essay is concerned with reception and repurposing, and it links miniature books and luxe bindings with portrait miniatures and their cases. My subject is the miniature Shakespeare editions in the collection of Neale and Margaret Albert (collectors of miniature books), who recently had a miniature set of Shakespeare's Works originally published by the Knickerbocker Leather and Novelty Company rebound by designer bookbinders. Neale Albert perceives the role of patron as a creative one not unlike that of the Muse: "When I think about the books in this exhibition, I feel that I have created something wonderful. They would not exist if I had not commissioned them" (email to Yale Center for British Art curator, 4-6-15). The statement seems tacitly to acknowledge the economic position of the patron while noting its complicated relationship to the creative impulse: the commission's power to generate art from the constraints of the patron's specifications.

I will be building on Patricia Fumerton's arguments about the fetishization of the miniature art work and its relation to subjectivity, factoring in the fetishization of the Shakespeare text for commercial purposes. What is the binder's relation to the text, which is left untouched in this collection? Is this project collage, bricolage, or something less interactive? Does the treatment of the paper, as in the hand-colored edges of the *Romeo and Juliet* volume, constitute a response to the materiality of the volume? Is the Shakespeare text at the center of each art work "as secret as maidenhead," or is it an open secret encrusted with nostalgic pretensions? I analyze the semiotics of a few specific volumes and their cases. While creation of the collection did not involve interaction between Shakespeare and the binders or Shakespeare and the patron, both patron and binders seem to be involved in a translation of Shakespearean utterance into a material medium that showcases a creator's reflection upon ekphrasis and the relation between material art and linguistic meaning.

Karla Oeler
Stanford University

“Eisenstein’s Shakespeare”

“Eisenstein’s Shakespeare” will expand on N. M. Lary’s discussion of Eisenstein’s reading of Shakespeare. Like Lary, I will focus on Eisenstein’s late writings, particularly *Method*, and will address some discussions of Shakespeare that Lary mentions, but does not develop. These include Eisenstein’s writing on *Hamlet* and his emphasis on color and movement in Shakespeare’s imagery. In writing on color and movement, Eisenstein has recourse to Caroline Spurgeon’s 1935 *Shakespeare’s Imagery, and What It Tells Us*. As Lary notes, Spurgeon’s

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book, along with T.S. Eliot's *Sacred Wood* and I. A. Aksionov's work on Elizabethan theatre were important critical touchstone's for him, and my talk will describe what Eisenstein took from their writing about Shakespeare as well as from his own reading of the plays. My paper will show how Eisenstein's focus on these various aspects of Shakespeare's art—movement, color, theme are interconnected in relation to Eisenstein's broader concept of sensory-emotional thinking (*чувственное мышление*) and its relation to reason. And it will analyze some scenes from *Ivan the Terrible, Part II* (1946, 1948) that are informed by Eisenstein's reading of Shakespeare.

Goran Stanivukovic
Saint Mary's University

“Close-up Bottom: Daniel Maclise and the Disenchantment of Character”

I will write about the painting called “The Disenchantment of Bottom” which the Irish painter Daniel Maclise painted in 1832. This painting turns the scene of Bottom's dream from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into an close-up image of a scream which Bottom releases. I am interested in discussing the phenomenological, aesthetic, historical and theatrical layers of the close-up of the scream and of Bottom's body. Is this the Bottom that the viewers might have known from stage performance? The close-up of Bottom's scream is not “the problem” of this early image, as an art historian has described this image painting. The open-mouth of donkey-Bottom is an invitation to the viewer, drawn to stare directly into the mouth and consider the darkness painted in the depth of it. Aided by W. J. T. Mitchell, I choose to treat the image of Bottom's scream and his body frozen in flight (or a fall) as “something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status.” I am interested in exploring what this image, this painted “historical stage”, reveals about the intersection of theatre, character psychology, and embodiment. Thinking about this image also as an instance of the Victorian gothic imagination, I will ask what is the connection between Shakespeare's theatre landscape of the unconscious, which is invisible to the audience, and Maclise's painted character disenchantment which is nakedly exposed on canvas? What *is* the disenchantment of Bottom?