

## Seminar

### **The Geopolitics of Shakespeare European Adverts**

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Shakespeare, his works and his characters have been used to promote brands and to sell products since the beginning of modern advertising. This seminar aims to investigate the commercial use of Shakespeare in a European context. Whereas the use of Shakespeare in advertising in a US and UK setting has received critical attention, the appropriation of Shakespeare in Europe, and in non-Anglophone countries especially, is still to be mapped. The seminar invites participants to consider how Shakespeare has variously served as a symbol of the elitism of a suffocating past, which has to be surpassed; as a traditional icon infusing positive brand values; or as a meme like cultural reference, that can be easily cited and spread across platforms. Participants might also address questions of location: critical reflection upon the most common kinds of products advertised through Shakespeare, the type of imagery linked to Shakespeare, and the use of the globally famous playwright's name to boost sectors including tourism, theatre, and the film industry, is both timely and valuable in the light of urgent contemporary debates within Europe about political and cultural boundaries. Participants might locate, describe and interpret the features of 'Shakespearean ads' as they spread across European countries and examine how Shakespeare's cultural capital interacts with the medium of advertising in different contexts; or investigate how this interaction has changed over time, and explore the way it can have an impact on 'Shakespeare' as a cultural field. Or they might consider how, in the context of a globalised advertising industry, European Shakespeare ads produce a cultural homogeneity, or (re)iterate Anglophone cultures and values, or (re)imagine European identities and histories. Focusing on the politics of appropriating Shakespeare, this seminar will expand research into intermedial Shakespeares and its embeddedness in the culture industry.

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