

Theatre in Iraq and the Arab Gulf States: history, governance and the post-oil vision

Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect

Munich, 21-22 May 2026

Conveners: Hadeel Abdelhameed, Christopher Balme and Viviana Iacob

Thursday, 21 May

9:00 **Registration (venue: Maria-Theresia-Straße 21, 81675 Munich)**

9:30 **Welcome, housekeeping and introduction**

10:00 **Session 1 *Theatre institutionalisation in Gulf States: a global perspective***

Christopher Balme *Theatre, globalisation and the Arab Gulf States: institutions and infrastructures*

Yara Alhaj Ali *The role of the Gulf States in forging and sustaining Arab culture and drama scene*

11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:30 **Session 2 *Theatre development as cultural diplomacy***

Viviana Iacob *Cultural diplomacy and oil affluence: the International Theatre Institute and the Emirate of Fujairah*

Leila Tayeb *Renovating the Qatar National Theater*

Hind Sabah Bilal *Staging Iraqi theatre across borders: cultural governance and theatre development after 2003*

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- 13:00-14:00 **Lunch (on-site)**
- 14:00-15:00 Transfer to Deutsches Theatermuseum München
- 15:00-17:00 **Visiting the *making Theatre* exhibition** at the Deutsches Theatermuseum München, Galeriestr. 4a
- 19:00 **Dinner** at Conviva im Blauen Haus, Hildegardstr. 1

Friday, 22 May

9:30 **Session 3 *Theatre development history: politics of development***

Rezan Saleh *Kurdish theatre between statehood and autonomy: institutional transformations across two political eras*

Ziad Adwan *The Kuwaiti periodical from world drama: translation, canonisation and legitimation strategies*

Majid Hameed Al-Hachami *Iraqi popular comedy theatre under a totalitarian regime: emergence, prevalence and dominance*

11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:30 **Final discussion *Cultural governance: subjectivity and citizenship***

Katherine Hennessey *Differing stages of development: investment, innovation and identity in Kuwaiti and Yemeni Theatre*

Hadeel Abdelhameed *The glocal model of Iraqi theatremakers*

Katia Arfara *Soft touch: performing landscapes of emotion in the Gulf*

13:00 **Lunch** at ChuChin (self-paid), Ismaninger Str. 61, 81675 München