

## **Winner**

Emily Sarah Sibley

## **Title**

*Uncivil Tongues: Genealogies of Adab in Arab Culture*

## **Citation**

“Uncivil Tongues” is a richly drawn study of incivility as a form of protest aesthetics in Arab literature and art. Arguing that “incivility echoes practices of civil disobedience,” Sibley shows how “a poetics of incivility” reveals “a disjuncture between civil manners and civic presence that is intrinsic to the practice of Arabic literature, or *adab*.” The dissertation presents a bold and stylish counter-history of the raucous aspects of *adab* that enriches our understanding of the *Nahda* (Arab renaissance). Sibley cogently explores a range of social manners—dissent, sarcasm, satire, invective, obscenity—to show how these scandalous postures are intrinsic to Arab civic formations and challenge the notion that *adab* only reflects docile cultural norms, particularly gendered ones. Variations on incivility are examined in four lively chapters that take us from the mid-nineteenth century to the current moment: Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq’s transgressive poetics and erotics; Muhammad al-Muwaylihi’s reworking of premodern tropes for social and political critique; Yusuf Idris’s satirical plays and his theorization of theatre; the graffiti art of contemporary artist Bahia Shehab, reinforced by extensive interviews. Working across languages, genres and media, Sibley persuasively makes the case for incivility as performative poetics. Hers is an important new voice in comparative literature, postcolonial and gender studies.