The African Critical Inquiry Programme has named Candice Jansen, Nothemba Kate Luckett, and Ajumeze Henry Obi as recipients of the 2016 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards. Jansen and Luckett are both South African students at the University of the Witwatersrand. Jansen is pursuing her PhD in History of Art, while Luckett is studying Sociology. Obi is a Nigerian scholar doing his degree in African Studies and Theatre Studies through the University of Cape Town. Support from ACIP’s Ivan Karp Awards will allow each of them to do significant research for their dissertations. Jansen will work on *BINNEGOED: Coloured and South African Photography*. Luckett will pursue research on *Hope and Utopianism in the Everyday Lives of Metalworkers and their Communities*. Obi’s dissertation project will examine *The ‘Theatre of the Bloody Metaphor’: The Biopolitics of Violence in the Theatre of the Niger Delta*.

Founded in 2012, the African Critical Inquiry Programme (ACIP) is a partnership between the Centre for Humanities Research at University of the Western Cape in Cape Town and the Laney Graduate School of Emory University in Atlanta. Supported by donations to the Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz Fund, the ACIP fosters thinking and working across public cultural institutions, across disciplines and fields, and across generations. It seeks to advance inquiry and debate about the roles and practice of public culture, public cultural institutions and public scholarship in shaping identities and society in Africa through an annual ACIP Workshop and through the Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards, which support African doctoral students in the humanities and humanistic social sciences enrolled at South African universities.

About Candice Jansen’s project: Jansen’s project, *BINNEGOED*, argues that the conceptual and historical parallels between the medium of photography and the identity of ‘coloured’ can open renewed ways of engaging colouredness and theorising visual histories in South Africa. Naming her project with an Afrikaans word for innards or intestines, Jansen considers the racial identity of coloured through the history of South African photography. She takes up W.J.T. Mitchell’s provocation -- ‘what if race was a medium?’ – by using the medium of photography to see into the ways in which word, image and biography mask deeper historical realities of race. What happened to the intellectual project on colouredness and what does any of this have to do with photography? *BINNEGOED* locates and examines coloured moments in the history of photography to analyse the ways in which race and image intersect over time and to propose alternative ways of thinking coloured identity today. Thus, Jansen will use colonial photographs to locate forgotten identities of the 19th century that eventually became assimilated into coloured categorisation. She will read the history of coloured representation in contemporary photography through a particular focus on coloured prison culture. Finally, she will study colouredness as creative practice through the lives of coloured photographers and coloured life writing. Drawing on interviews as well as archives, collections and libraries in South Africa, Sweden and the United States, Jansen will consider the works and lives of photographers Cedric...
Nunn, Ernest Cole, George Hallett, David Lurie, Mikhael Subotkzy, Gordon Clark, Luke Daniel, Pieter Hugo, and Araminta da Clermont, as well as unidentified 19th century photographers whose work was archived. In this way her project will help reimagine the entwined histories of race and visuality in South Africa.

About Nothemba Kate Luckett's project: The National Union of Metalworkers South Africa (NUMSA) resolved to build a political alternative in opposition to the status quo in 2013 in the context of the Marikana Massacre and changing political landscape in South Africa. Workers taking action and refusing to “tolerate a dog’s life” (Bloch, 1986) is not something new in South Africa. The struggles of workers, communities and youth were critical in bringing down the apartheid regime and continue to be at the forefront of pushing against and beyond an oppressive and exploitative society. Processes of hope and utopianism do not only happen during the big moments of struggle or through overtly political practices, but are part of everyday lives, concretely manifesting in multiple ways that in turn shape the social world. Luckett’s dissertation, *Hope and Utopianism in the Everyday Lives of Metalworkers and their Communities*, contends that utopian thinking is part of being human: its ontological basis is that the material world is in process. Hope as a political necessity galvanizes action because it is more than the critique of what is but an imagining beyond the present. Through participant observation, oral histories, and research with documents and local archives, Luckett will explore the everyday lives of metalworkers, and the communities in which they live, through the lens of hope and utopianism and the concrete manifestations thereof. She will further explore the ambiguities and contradictions of utopianism and practices of co-option of hope into the status quo. Her research will focus on Eskom workers and communities in Lephalale, Limpopo, a site that contains many of the contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa. The topic of hope is of particular importance in the current context of alienation and disaffection of millions of working class South Africans, a context that is simultaneously a period of renewed searching, questioning and dreaming.

1 The South African Police Service opened fire on a crowd of striking mineworkers at Marikana in August 2012, resulting in 34 dead, 78 wounded, and hundreds arrested.

About Ajumeze Henry Obi’s project: Since the discovery of huge deposits of crude oil in Nigeria in 1956, the creeks of the Niger Delta have metamorphosed into a volatile space of tripartite conflicts between armed youths of the region and the Nigerian military forces in collaboration with multinational oil corporations. The local agitation against ecological pollution and degradation in the region is not only indicative of the collective struggle for survival of the oil-producing communities, but also of environmental insecurity in the region. *The ‘Theatre of the Bloody Metaphor’: The Biopolitics of Violence in the Theatre of the Niger Delta* will explore the subjectivities of these bio-political conflicts by examining how the insurgency is culturally represented in six Nigerian plays. It
considers how this representation captures the material contribution of non-human nature in the history of the resistance, from pre-oil to oil-modernity in the region. Analysis will focus on works by J. P. Clark-Bekeremo, W. Soyinka, Eni Jologho Umuko, B. Binebai and A. Yerima. The texts selected register the topography of the region in a manner that draws on site-specific and geomorphic forces in the performance of insurgency. They point to ways in which nature and the human subject are collectively embedded within the “pluriverse” of the Delta. Interviews conducted in the Warri area of the Niger Delta region will help interpret aspects of the creeks, mangroves and rivers and the relations between geography and supernatural power that figure in the plays. Obi will examine the texts from the standpoint of what Bruno Latour describes as “relational epistemology”, in which political agency is mapped on both sides of the human/nature dualism. In this way, his research will interrogate the dominance of the anthropocentric character of insurgency in the region, while foregrounding the spatial configuration of the geography of the Delta as co-combatant in the historical contestation against global oil capital. Obi’s work will bring a fresh perspective to Nigerian writing and understandings of the insurgencies by tracing the shifting contours of geopolitics and biopolitics in the cultural and dramatic imaginations of the region.

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Information about the 2017 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards for African Students enrolled in South African Ph.D. Programmes will be available in November 2016. The application deadline is 1 May 2017.

For further information, see http://www.gs.emory.edu/about/special/acip.html and https://www.facebook.com/ivan.karp.corinne.kratz.fund.