

## African Critical Inquiry Programme Announces 2023 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards

The African Critical Inquiry Programme has named Nina Barnett and Tendai Ganduri as recipients of the 2023 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards. Barnett, a South African student in the Department of Visual Arts, is working on her PhD at the University of Johannesburg. Ganduri, a Zimbabwean PhD student in Media Studies, is studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. Support from ACIP's Ivan Karp Awards will allow each of them to do significant research for their dissertations. Barnett will do field trips and research for her project, *The Intra-active Vaal Dam: Tracing Water to Landlocked Johannesburg*. Ganduri will conduct fieldwork in Zimbabwe and South Africa for her project *Communicating and Contesting Climate Change: The Zimbabwean and South African Twitterspheres*.

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 Nina Barnett's project:

*The Intra-active Vaal Dam* examines the political and material implications of Johannesburg's water and uses my art-making practice to centre the role of water within past and present human stories of Johannesburg. The Vaal Dam – the major resource and repository of water for this landlocked city – is my primary site and focal point, connected to the city which drinks from it as well as the sources of water that flow into it. Its connections via a hydrological system are somewhat controlled (via pipes, reservoirs, drains, and waste treatment plants) yet also

operate outside of these human-oriented barriers (via leaks, floods, evaporation, saturation). The water that is brought to and exits from Johannesburg via this system is valued in terms of its quantity and its usefulness in human and industrial consumption. The creative process of this research is intended to encourage alternatives to this narrow mode of understanding. Johannesburg water, collected from sites along the trajectory to the city from the dam, and from the dam itself, will be used in artistic experimentation which feeds back into the creative practice and academic research in an ongoing cycle. This creates a body of written and visual work that mirrors the fluid nature of the watery subject. Through this material engagement, this project will think through the water politics in a city experiencing the impact of the Anthropocene. New ways of imagining water are, and will continue to be, essential as climate change associated with the Anthropocene alters weather patterns on which the water system relies.



About Tendai Ganduri's project:

This study examines how climate change is communicated and contested on Twitter in the Global South with Zimbabwe and South Africa as case countries. The reality of climate change is urgent and the Global South crisis is mounting. Impacts such as the El Niño droughts and cyclones are being experienced with devastating consequences. These experiences have been captured on social media by different stakeholders as climate change conversations unfold with digital platforms acting as a kind of public sphere. This study examines the nature, quality, and characteristics of such exchanges on Twitter by focusing on conversations revolving around two international gatherings – the Conference of Parties (COP) to the UN Conventions on Climate Change 26 and 27 – and two localised disasters that occurred in the last five years – Cyclone Idai of 2019 for Zimbabwe and the KwaZulu Natal floods of 2022 for South Africa. Twitter data was collected through a computational social sciences approach using Python and Academic twitterR. Online data

will be complemented by in-depth and key informant interviews as well as transect walks at disaster sites to gather local stories about the events. Through discourse analysis and drawing on Chantal Mouffe's notion of democracy as agonistic pluralism, I will explore the plurality, permeability, and antagonisms within human communities in relation to how they shape communicative contexts for the climate conversations. The study will also compare how citizens critique and/or support their governments in relation to national and international events and platforms.

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Information about the 2024 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards for African students enrolled in South African Ph.D. programmes will be available in November 2023. The application deadline is 1 May 2024.

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