

Please circulate!

AFRICAN CRITICAL INQUIRY PROGRAMME

“Who defines the needs of the people and the related epistemologies that serve them?” (Karp & Masolo 2000:10)



Thozama April (left), one of the organisers of *We Need New Names*, the 2025 ACIP Workshop, makes a point as co-organisier Sophia Sanan looks on. Photo by Jesse Le Roux.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO ORGANISE A WORKSHOP Closing Date: Friday 1 May 2026

The African Critical Inquiry Programme invites proposals from scholars and/or practitioners in public cultural institutions in South Africa to organise a workshop to take place in 2027. The African Critical Inquiry Programme (ACIP) 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. The ACIP is committed to collaboration between scholars and the makers of culture/history, and to fostering inquiry into the politics of knowledge production, the relationships between the colonial/apartheid and the postcolonial/postapartheid, and the importance of critical pluralism as against nationalist discourse. ACIP is a partnership between the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape and the Laney Graduate School of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia (USA).

ACIP Workshops are intended as annual occasions to identify and address critical themes, fundamental questions, and pressing practical issues concerning public culture. For instance, Workshops might focus on particular questions and issues related to publics, visibility, museums and exhibitions, art, performance, representational forms, or institutional forms from diverse methodological, practical, and theoretical vantage points. They might examine forms and practices of public

scholarship and the theories, histories, and systems of thought that shape and illuminate public culture and public scholarship. Workshops should encourage comparative, interdisciplinary, and cross-institutional interchange and reflection that bring into conversation public scholarship in Africa, creative cultural production, and critical theory. Workshop budgets will vary depending on proposed plans; the maximum award is ZAR 75,000.

Workshop Themes and Formats: Working with a different focus each year, the ACIP Workshop will facilitate and energise conversations among scholars and practitioners drawn from universities, museums, and other cultural organisations, seeking to bridge institutional silos and boundaries. The ACIP Workshop should help place research and public scholarship within broader frames, work against institutional isolation, facilitate collaborative research relations and discussions, and build a cohort of scholars and practitioners who talk across fields, across generations, and across institutions. Proposed Workshops will be selected with an eye to cultivating these goals.

Proposed Workshop themes should focus on issues and questions that foster critical examination and debate about forms, practices, and institutions of public culture. Themes should be addressed from multiple orientations and disciplines, include comparative perspectives, and be clearly situated in relation to concepts and theories from relevant fields. Workshops should be planned to engage participants across different institutions of public culture, including universities, museums, arts and culture organisations, NGOs, or others appropriate to the topic. Abstracts for previously funded ACIP Workshops are available [here](#).

The Workshop might use a range of formats as appropriate. Examples of formats that might be proposed or combined:

- , a standard workshop of 2-3 days, with specific sessions, presentations, discussants, pre-circulated papers or readings, etc. Variations on this format might also be introduced. Preferred timing for such workshops is March 2026.
- , a working group of colleagues and postgraduate students drawn from across institutions that meet regularly over several weeks or months to discuss common readings and work in progress; visitors who work on the group's central theme and issues might be invited to give public lectures, participate in group meetings, mentor students, etc.
- , a collaborative teaching programme with a common postgraduate course, or module of a course, taught in parallel at different universities with various modes of coordination and interaction, with participants coming together for a 1 day workshop at the end.
- , a distinguished scholar or cultural practitioner invited as a short-term Public Scholar in Residence (PSR) to bring fresh, comparative perspectives to particular issues and debates through public lectures, participation in a standard workshop, consultations with colleagues at institutions of public culture, and meetings with students supported by ACIP's Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards. The visitor might also contribute to courses as appropriate.

Workshop organisers will work through the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape for basic financial administration and are responsible for complying with CHR policies. Workshop organisers should submit a letter from the host institution, centre, programme, or department confirming that appropriate administrative and institutional support will be available.

We ask Workshop organisers to incorporate appropriate modes of participation for postgraduate students holding current Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards from ACIP so that they have opportunities to consult with Workshop participants. Prior holders of Ivan Karp awards may also wish to attend and we encourage organisers to include students from a range of higher education institutions.

Who Should Apply: Applications may be submitted by experienced scholars and cultural practitioners based in universities, museums, and other cultural organisations in South Africa who are interested in creating or reinvigorating interdisciplinary, cross-institutional engagement and understanding and who are committed to training the next generations of scholar-practitioners. Applications may be submitted by a single individual or a pair of individuals who have different institutional affiliations and bring different perspectives, approaches, or specialisations to the proposed Workshop theme.

How to Apply: Interested applicants should submit the following as a single file attachment with documents in the order listed:

- , completed cover sheet (form below and as last page of Workshop application information at <http://www.graduateschool.emory.edu/about/special/acip.html>, under ACIP Opportunities)
- , abstract of the proposed Workshop theme, focus, and plan (250 word max.)
- , two to three page statement defining the proposed Workshop theme and focus, its significance, the questions and issues it addresses, and how it relates to the African Critical Inquiry Programme. The statement should also describe the Workshop format and why it will be effective.
- , list of proposed participants with their affiliations, brief bios and descriptions of how their work relates to the Workshop
- , plan of work and schedule for organising the Workshop
- , preliminary Workshop budget that explains and justifies expenses
- , two page curriculum vitae (for each organiser)
- , institutional letter of commitment to host the Workshop. Please describe available administrative-logistical support in this letter and/or your work plan
- , two external reference letters addressing the significance of the proposed Workshop and appropriateness of the format and plan should be submitted directly to the Selection Committee.

The Workshop theme description and plan of work should specify topics or sessions to be included, address the nature and value of the interdisciplinary and cross-institutional exchange to be undertaken, and indicate whether particular outcomes or products are envisioned. It should be written in a way that will be accessible to non-specialist reviewers.

Each Workshop may apply for up to ZAR 75,000. to support Workshop activities and planning. Applicants need not apply for the full amount. Funds may be used to pay honoraria, cover out of town participants' travel costs, purchase materials, establish a website, promote Workshop activities, hire a student assistant to help with organisation, and cover other related expenses. ACIP funds can only be used for direct costs and not overhead. Workshops are strongly encouraged to supplement the ACIP funding with other sources of support.

Selection Criteria: All complete proposals will be reviewed by the ACIP Selection Committee; successful applicants will be notified as soon as possible after the closing date so they may begin planning for the Workshop. An award will be made only if applications of appropriate merit and relevance are received. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Conceptualisation: Does the proposed Workshop identify and address significant themes, questions, and issues concerning the roles and practices of public culture, public cultural institutions, and various forms of public scholarship in shaping identities and society in Africa? Does it combine disciplines and create cross-institutional conversations in new and/or interesting ways? Does it explain how the Workshop relates to research in relevant fields? How does the Workshop incorporate comparative dimensions? How will the proposed Workshop develop cross-generational relations and conversations? Will the Workshop make possible new forms of knowledge, innovative approaches, or new kinds of exchange?

Appropriateness: Does the proposed Workshop theme relate to questions and issues relevant to African Critical Inquiry? Are the Workshop plan and proposed set of participants appropriate, well thought out, and likely to be productive?

Workshop organiser(s): What qualifications and experience do applicants bring to organising the Workshop, including previous administration/organisation and interdisciplinary and cross-institutional engagements? How do the training, backgrounds, and approaches of a pair of applicants complement one another in formulating Workshop plans?

Impact: Will the proposed Workshop and design be effective in addressing the theme and foster interdisciplinary, cross-institutional, and cross-generational debate and engagement? Will envisioned outcomes or products be effective dissemination?

Applicants who organise an African Critical Inquiry Programme Workshop must acknowledge the support in all Workshop materials and in any publications that result and indicate affiliation with ACIP and the Centre for Humanities Research. After completing the workshop, they must submit a final report and a financial report.

Closing date: Applications and referees' letters must be received by Friday 1 May 2026. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Please submit materials as a single file attachment with documents in the order listed above. Applications should be sent by email to acip.uwc@gmail.com with the heading "ACIP 2027 Workshop Proposal."

Supported by funding from the Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz Fund
<http://www.graduateschool.emory.edu/about/special/acip.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/ivan.karp.corinne.kratz.fund>

AFRICAN CRITICAL INQUIRY PROGRAMME PROPOSAL TO ORGANISE A WORKSHOP

To propose organising an ACIP Workshop, complete this cover sheet and submit it with:

- abstract of the proposed Workshop focus and plan (250 word max.)
- 2-3 page description and motivation of the proposed Workshop theme and format
- list of proposed participants with affiliations, bios, and relevance for the Workshop
- plan of work and schedule for organising the Workshop
- Workshop budget listing and justifying expenses to be supported
- 2 page curriculum vitae for each organiser
- institutional letter of commitment and description of available administrative support
- two external referee letters should be submitted directly to the Selection Committee by email to acip.uwc@gmail.com.

Please email your application as a single file with material in the above order to acip.uwc@gmail.com. **The closing date for applications is Friday 1 May 2026.**

NAME(S):

CURRENT AFFILIATION(S) AND POSITION(S):

EMAIL: **PHONE:**

MAILING ADDRESS:

NAME, AFFILIATION, AND POSITION OF 1ST REFEREE:

NAME, AFFILIATION, AND POSITION OF 2ND REFEREE:

TITLE OF PROPOSED WORKSHOP:

LOCATION OF PROPOSED WORKSHOP:

TOTAL WORKSHOP SUPPORT REQUESTED: