

**2025 African Critical Inquiry Workshop:
*We Need New Names: On Cultures of Care and
Difficult Knowledge in African University Museums***



Organisers of *We Need New Names*, the 2025 ACIP Workshop (clockwise from top left): Thozama April, Sinazo Mtshemla, Anell Daries, and Sophia Sanan.

The African Critical Inquiry Programme (ACIP) is pleased to announce that the 2025 ACIP Workshop will be *We Need New Names: On Cultures of Care and Difficult Knowledge in African University Museums*. The project was proposed by organisers Thozama April and Sinazo Mtshemla, both at The National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre at Fort Hare University (NAHECS), and Sophia Olivia Sanan and Anell Stacey Daries, both at the Centre for the Afterlives of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ) at Stellenbosch University. After an initial collaborative planning workshop at University of Fort Hare, *We Need New Names* will take place at Stellenbosch University Museum in Stellenbosch, South Africa in March 2025.

We Need New Names: On Cultures of Care and Difficult Knowledge in African University Museums

In our respective university contexts at Fort Hare and Stellenbosch, we are witnessing a younger generation of students and scholars who are engaging with

museum collections and archives in order to make sense of the past, to grapple with historical trauma, and to envision a different future. There are encouraging trends and methods emerging in work around archives, collections, and museums (strongly influenced by discourses of decoloniality and restitution) that prioritise the relationships between what is held in archives and collections, and the publics to whom these collections may be of value. These are accompanied by an imperative to turn museum spaces into productive zones of public and intellectual inquiry and critical pedagogy. We believe that emergent grammars to deal with 'difficult knowledge' are being experimented with in various university contexts in South Africa and on the continent, and would benefit from greater exposure and opportunity for cross-pollination. While scholarly work in this field often prioritises curatorial thinking and exhibitions, we are interested in extending this to also think about research methodologies and teaching practices. The collaboration that drives this proposal, between two university spaces that have come to symbolise radical (even polarised) differences within a national political spectrum, provides a fertile ground to think about the spectres of an irreparable past that haunts the present in South Africa. It is from this contested ground that we plan to co-host a workshop that draws together thinking around power, histories of domination, and practices of knowledge production within university museums and archives from a range of practitioners from South Africa and Africa.

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.

Information about applying to organize the 2026 ACIP workshop and for the 2025 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards will be available in November 2024. The deadline for both workshop applications and student applications is 1 May 2025.

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