

## **2026 African Critical Inquiry Workshop: *Revisiting and Reimagining “Imvo Zabantsundu”***



Organisers of *Revisiting and Reimagining “Imvo Zabantsundu”*, the 2026 ACIP Workshop (L to R): Athambile Masola, Litheko Modisane, Sanele kaNtshingana, Sisanda Nkoala, and Wanga Gambushe.

The African Critical Inquiry Programme (ACIP) is pleased to announce that the 2026 ACIP Workshop will be *Revisiting and Reimagining “Imvo Zabantsundu”*. The project was proposed by organisers Athambile Masola (Historical Studies), Litheko Modisane (Film and Media Studies), Sanele kaNtshingana (African Languages), and Wanga Gambushe (African Languages) at University of Cape Town and Sisanda Nkoala (Linguistics) of University of the Western Cape. *Revisiting and Reimagining “Imvo Zabantsundu”* will take place in Cape Town, South Africa in March 2026.

### **Revisiting and Reimagining *Imvo Zabantsundu***

*Revisiting and Reimagining “Imvo Zabantsundu”* will be a two day immersion workshop delving into the newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the first Black-owned newspaper in South Africa. Established in 1884 by John Tengo Jabavu (1859–1921), this newspaper not only laid the foundation for Black journalism but also generated a print culture that was challenging the colonial print culture that was emerging in the region. The newspaper has become a cultural artefact many refer to as a pioneering moment but few have engaged

with it as a historical, cultural, and political artefact worth revisiting as a living and breathing archive. This workshop will bring together academics, students, journalists, and creatives to reinvigorate the newspaper towards a longer project which will culminate in a book that will revisit *Imvo* through scholarly and creative responses. This workshop will include collective close reading of the newspaper (those available), analyses of changes in the language used over time, as well as a film screening which situates the newspaper within a broader intellectual tradition of the world of letters in the southern African region. In a context where English dominates public culture, it has become harder to imagine that South Africa once had a rich culture of multilingual newspapers such as *Imvo* as well as other newspapers that came later, such as *Ilanga lase Natali*, *The Bantu World*, and *Koranta ea Becoana*. This workshop aims to challenge this narrowing of public culture by taking seriously the newspaper as a cultural artefact which can reinvigorate contemporary public culture.

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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 2027 ACIP workshop and for the 2026 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards will be available in November 2025. The deadline for both workshop applications and student applications is 1 May 2026.

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