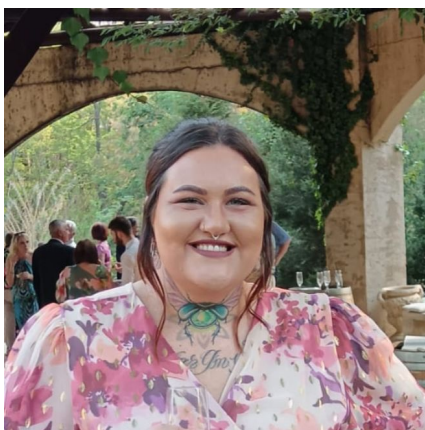


African Critical Inquiry Programme Announces 2026 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards

The African Critical Inquiry Programme has named Lari Chanel Hallows-Welman, Motselisi Edith Khabo, and Jackline Maina as recipients of the 2026 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards. Hallows-Welman, a South African student in the History Department, is working on her PhD at Rhodes University. Khabo is studying History at Stellenbosch University and is from Lesotho. Maina is a Kenyan student pursuing a PhD in Music at University of Cape Town. Support from ACIP's Ivan Karp Awards will allow each of them to do significant research for their dissertations. Hallows-Welman will do archival work in Cape Town to supplement research in other archives for her project, *Writing the Dead: Colonial Representations of Death and Cultural Identity on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1760-1878*. Khabo will do oral histories, interviews, focus groups, and archival work in Lesotho for her project, *Margins of Belonging: Negotiating Memory and Identity among the Baphuthi in Lesotho, c. 1966-2025*. Maina's project, *Reframing Contemporary Rurality through Musical Insights and Practice from Migori County, Kenya*, will include ethnographic research and artistic inquiry in Migori County as well as creating a musical composition based on Migori's diverse musical forms and practice.

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 Lari Chanel Hallows-Welman's project:

Hallows-Welman's project investigates how death, dying, and bereavement were represented in European colonial texts on the Eastern Cape frontier from 1760 to the end of the Frontier Wars in 1878. It asks how colonial representations of death, burial, mourning, violence, and the treatment of the dead contributed to the cultural knowledge about African communities. Using death as an analytical lens, *Writing the Dead* examines colonial texts not as neutral descriptions of African societies, but as sources produced within structures of imperial power. It considers how European travellers, missionaries, military officers, settlers, and colonial officials interpreted death and dying in ways that shaped ideas about cultural identity, morality, and civilisation. In doing so, the project explores how partial observations came to be presented as authoritative knowledge about African communities on the frontier. *Writing the Dead* adopts a historiographical approach drawing on colonial archives to contribute to discussions on knowledge production,

archival power, and the decolonisation of Death Studies. It argues that death and dying were not only historical experiences on the frontier, but also important sites through which colonial observers produced meanings about death and cultural identities.



About Motselisi Khabo's project:

The myth of homogeneity in Lesotho has long dominated historical narratives. *Margins of Belonging: Negotiating Memory and Identity among the Baphuthi in Lesotho, c. 1966 – 2025* argues that in the context of Lesotho, homogeneity was emphasized at the expense of diversity, largely silencing diversity and subjugating minority communities within the state, including Baphuthi living in southern Lesotho and South Africa's northern Eastern Cape. Post-colonial political changes and state-formation perpetuated this emphasis, with foundational laws that granted diversity no room, especially in educational and media spaces. It was also aggravated by colonial borders which became fluid spaces for Baphuthi identity negotiation and places of language erosion due to intermixed languages. Imposed marginality forced minority communities

to constantly negotiate their identity and belonging throughout the colonial and post-colonial period. A plurality of Baphuthi used various languages and degrees of negotiation in an attempt to openly or subtly negotiate their identity in order to preserve their culture and identity, eventually leading to their acknowledgment in Lesotho's constitution in 2025. *Margins of Belonging* aims to reconstruct the historical experiences of belonging and identity within the Baphuthi communities in Lesotho during the key period of 1966 to 2025. It uses negotiation of belonging as an analytical tool to explore whether post-colonial state-formation, political changes, and colonial borders shaped daily trajectories of the Baphuthi. The study draws from oral histories and archival research to decentre the orthodoxy of homogeneity that pervades scholarly accounts and centres on languages of negotiation that a plurality of Baphuthi might have used in their attempt to articulate, preserve, conceal, change, and negotiate their ethnic identity against the backdrop of Lesotho's post-colonial political and cultural landscape. The project also pays attention to Baphuthi women's historical role as frontliners in preserving SiPhuthi language and customs, thus substantiating their Phuthi identity.



About Jackline Maina's project:

Reframing Contemporary Rurality through Musical Insights and Practice from Migori County, Kenya interrogates rurality in contemporary Kenya, focusing on rural music practice as dynamic and hybrid rather than a static repository of "pure" traditions. It responds to prevailing academic and mainstream tropes in Kenya, rooted in colonial ideas about ethnicity and "tribal" fixity, that idealise rurality as genuine and nationalistic, or as the binary opposite of urban. While contemporary scholarship acknowledges rural dynamism, the idealisation of

rural life and culture persists in Kenyan academia and popular discourse. Using Migori, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious county in the former Nyanza province, as a lens, Maina will examine how rural musicians reimagine rurality through their music as they negotiate cultural interactions and mobilities in practice. Additionally, Maina will collect compositional material to represent contemporary rural space and redefine how rural life is perceived locally. Grounding the study in hybridity and translocalism, Maina frames the rural region as a nexus interacting with various localities and transnational flows. This fosters cultural invention by musicians who negotiate face-to-face and mediated intercultural contacts shaping their realities. Consequently, their work contests romanticised notions of the rural. *Reframing Contemporary Rurality* draws on ethnographic methods and artistic inquiry to: a) study cultural flows impacting rural music; b) analyse performance techniques in contemporary Migori; c) describe creative processes involved in composing works reflecting rural practice; and d) create a musical work informed by Migori's practice. Ultimately, *Reframing Contemporary Rurality* contributes to ethnomusicology and rural studies by offering a Kenyan African perspective on how translocal dynamics shape contemporary rural identity, creativity, and cultural expression.

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Information about the 2027 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards for African students enrolled in South African Ph.D. programmes will be available in November 2026. The application deadline is 3 May 2027.

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