African Critical Inquiry Programme Announces 2018 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Award

The African Critical Inquiry Programme has named Mary Mbewe as recipient of the 2018 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Award. Mbewe is a Zambian student pursuing her PhD in the Department of History at the University of the Western Cape. Support from ACIP’s Ivan Karp Award will allow her to do research in London, Lusaka, and Mbala, Zambia for her dissertation project, *From Chisungu to the Museum: a Historical Ethnography of the Images, Objects, and Anthropological Texts of the Chisungu Female Initiation Ceremony in the Moto Moto Museum in Zambia, 1931 to 2016*.

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 Mary Mbewe’s project

Mbewe’s project examines and reconstructs the histories of the photographs and objects of the *chisungu* female initiation ceremony of northern Zambia that were collected between 1931 and 1934 by the British anthropologist Audrey Richards and by the French Canadian missionary ethnographer Jean Jacques Corbeil in the 1950s. It tracks these items through the key moments of collection, circulation, archiving, accession, display and consumption, simultaneously seeing these photographs and things as objects, as records, and as containers of histories. This project is therefore a history of a hitherto unexplored instance of interrelated ethnographic research and a study of ethnography and histories of collection on a particular subject. It involves a renewed look at the work of an anthropologist and a missionary at different periods, each culminating in renowned publications, and whose photographs and objects have become iconic representations of the *chisungu* ceremony at the Moto Moto Museum in Zambia. This research project is conceived not only as a biographic study of these collections and histories, but also as a study of processes of meaning-making in a museum, which had its origins in particular colonial contexts and was formalised as a national museum in the post-colonial period. The research
engages with how the photographs and objects have come to be constituted by the histories, museum and archival processes around them. It will contribute to debates around representing African culture, anthropological photographs, ethnographic objects, and museums in Africa, and more generally to museum studies, visual history, material culture studies, and the history of anthropology.

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Information about the 2019 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards for African students enrolled in South African Ph.D. programmes will be available in November 2018. The application deadline is 1 May 2019.

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