DEPARTMENT OF **HISTORICAL STUDIES** SEMINAR **SAVE THE DATE!**

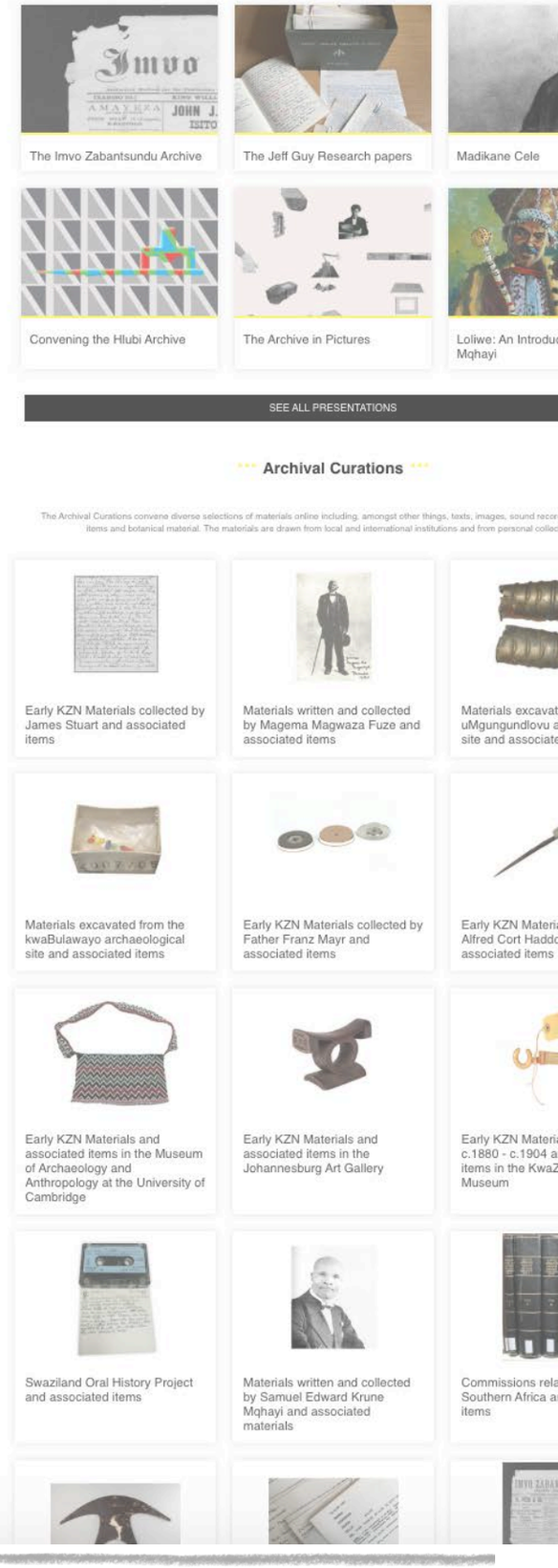
"Shifting the Discursive Spine: Low-Resource Digital Infrastructure and Recentring African Epistemologies"

Five Hundred Year Archive - UCT

Carolyn Hamilton, Steve Kotze, Grant McNulty, Makhosi Mkhize and Debra Pryor

Draft of a paper commissioned for the volume *Digital Humanities and Artificial Intelligence in African Studies,* (eds. Frédérick Madore and Vincent Hiribarren), Digital Humanities Research Series, Bielefeld University Press, (in prep).

Digital technologies offer new possibilities for scholars working on the early history of Africa, a particularly under-researched area in the southern parts of the continent. They allow us to refigure archival materials in new ways that foreground the thinking of African intellectuals and writers. This draft chapter explores how the Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) at the University of Cape Town uses EMANDULO , an exemplar for low-resource environments, to facilitate critical, digitally-enabled research. It demonstrates how the exemplar can embody African epistemologies, from metadata frameworks that expose colonial classifications as historical artefacts to search functionality that moves beyond a normative notion of archive. Working with a range of local and international institutions, FHYA convenes scattered and often misidentified materials in a single searchable exemplar. These include, amongst other things, oral accounts, museum artefacts, research papers and botanical specimens curated alongside a growing collection of early African language texts. Searching across carefully dated African language resources makes it possible to track concepts in motion across time. This supports the application of innovative experimental research and critique. The African-language corpus on EMANDULO constitutes an extended language and conceptual archive that is positioned as the platform's discursive and interpretive spine.



Online & In-person attendance. Link and paper will be circulated in advance.
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Wednesday, 28 October 2026 | **13h00 to 14h00** | **Beattie 240, UCT Upper Campus**