



***Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race and the Search for Human Origins***

There is broad agreement in the scientific world today that all humans share common origins in Africa, but when Charles Darwin first suggested it in 1871, few European scientists took his theory seriously.

When the Taung child skull was found in South Africa in 1924, Raymond Dart supported Darwin's theory, but it did little to shift scientific opinion. In the 1980s, when genetics research concluded that all living humans can trace their maternal ancestry back to Africa 200 000 years ago, many scientists were slow to accept this claim.

Scientists and their research are often shaped by the prevailing social and political context at the time.

In this lecture, Christa Kuljian, the author of *Darwin's Hunch* will explore this trend and review the history of palaeo-anthropology and genetics over the past century. The lecture will provide insight on the search for human origins in South Africa and share stories that shed new light on the past.

Christa Kuljian is a writer, currently based at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) as a Research Associate. Kuljian studied with palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould for her BA in the History of Science at Harvard (1984), which provided inspiration for *Darwin's Hunch*.

She also holds an MA in Public Affairs from Princeton (1989) and an MA in Creative Writing from the University of the Witwatersrand (2007). In 2010, Kuljian gave the Ruth First lecture about the refugee crisis at Central Methodist Church in downtown Johannesburg, which led to her first book *Sanctuary* (2013).

Thursday 23 March

18.00–19.00

LT3 Kramer Building,  
Middle Campus, UCT

R100 (full fee); R50 (staff); Student (R30)

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