

LSU Video Ethnography Lab

Department of Sociology
Louisiana State University
+1-225-578-1645

The Video Ethnography Lab was founded in 2004 by faculty in the Department of Sociology, moving to its current location in the basement of Stubbs Hall in 2011. The graduate seminar in Video Ethnography was first taught in 2005 but the first seminar was cancelled when Hurricane Katrina made landfall. Much of the course was devoted to filming the devastation. This footage became the foundation of the *Hurricane Katrina Archive* for the Louisiana State Museum, located in the Old Mint in New Orleans. This archive consists of some 1200 hours of footage of the recovery of the New Orleans area.

Our lab collaborates with the video lab at Depaul University in Chicago to establish and manage the [Ethnografilm Festival](#) of documentary and ethnographic film in Paris, France, now in its 9th year, and the [Journal of Video Ethnography](#), the first journal devoted entirely to ethnographic films.

Directed by Dr. Wesley Shrum shrum@lsu.edu

Associate Directors: Dr. Mark Schafer and Dr. Frederick Weil

[Happy Valley](#). 2021. Rift Valley, Kenya.

A surprising debate over the most notorious group of colonials in the history of the English colonies. Narrated by a third-generation white settler and a Kenyan Professor of Economics at the University of Nairobi.

[No Page for Dalits](#). 2021. Kerala, India.

A brief account of “untouchables” in contemporary Kerala, a community which has been subject to exploitation and discrimination for several thousand years of recorded history.

[Bayou Cirque](#). 2021. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Who doesn't like a circus? Like all of us, they have to practice!

[Pioneer Pizza](#). 2020. Rift Valley, Kenya.

An evangelical couple, disenchanted with conventional methods of providing aid to Africans, decides to go it alone. They adopt nine teenage Kenyan girls, raising them alongside their five biological children. The many challenges and rewards of this new age orphanage are revealed through Kate's "DIY recipe" for homemade pizza.

Ethnografilm Movies

[How to Make Absinthe](#). 2019. Prague, Czech Republic.

[Kitty Choice](#). 2019. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

[The Black Cat Guide to Absinthe](#). 2019. Hollywood.

[Lelouche Loves Paris](#). 2019. Paris, France.

[Light for Global Understanding](#). 2016. Paris, France.

Produced at the request of the International Steering Committee for the International Year of Global Understanding. It was made in cooperation with the Ethnografilm Festival (Paris, France), the International Social Science Council, and the Society for Social Studies of Science.

[Light Years](#). 2015.

Produced at the request of the International Steering Committee for the International Year of Light. It was made in cooperation with the *Ethnografilm* Festival (Paris, France), the International Social Science Council, and the Society for Social Studies of Science. January, 2015 presentation at UNESCO, Paris and screened at the closing ceremony in Merida, Mexico. Selected for permanent inclusion in the International Year of Light catalogue at Cultural TV Channel from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Museum of Light in Mexico City.

Selected film Festivals: Amarcord Arthouse Television & Video Fest; Baton Rouge Horror Film Festival; Boomtown Film and Music Festival; Comme Il Faut International Film Festival; Cut to the Chase Film Festival; Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival Direct Short Online Film Festival; Fantasmagorical Film Festival; Fargo Film Festival; Geek Out Film Fest; Heritage Film Festival; Los Angeles CineFest; Southeast Online Film Fest; The Strange Film Awards; #TOFF-The Online Film Festival; WorldFest-Houston International Film & Video Festival; WideScreen Film and Music Video Festival.

Remi Award. Worldfest International Film and Video Festival (Houston)

Fantasmagorical Film Festival. Winner, Best Short (Horror) Film.

[Training Day Kenya](#). 2019. Nairobi, Kenya. All about baboons.

[Authenticity: Five Paths of Ayurveda](#). 2019. Trivandrum, Kerala, India.

Five thousand years ago in India, medicines were prepared with green plants, herbs, and minerals; ancient manuscripts were preserved on bark and stone. This was Ayurveda, the “knowledge for long life,” the oldest healing system in the world. Yet throughout its history, practitioners have struggled to achieve “authentic” ayurvedic practice. *Authenticity* (18’41”) presents five institutions representing contemporary forms of treatment and philosophy. From a modern medical school, through tourist

resorts, spiritual centers, and panchakarma treatments, to the oldest center in the world, this film examines the multiplicity of practices in contemporary Kerala, providing audiences an overview of Ayurveda in the modern world. Authenticity may be realized in a multiplicity of ways.

Fossil Finding. Ongoing. Lomekwi and Natodomeri, Kenya.

Series of educational videos produced by the LSU Video Ethnography Laboratory in Lomekwi (northwest Kenya) in association with the *West Turkana Paleo Project* and the National Museums of Kenya to teach fossil pattern recognition in schools (K-12).

Bounce. 2018. Directed by Jahaan Chandler. Edited by Wesley Shrum.

Three bouncers at the Maison club on Frenchmen Street in New Orleans explore the social organization of bouncing and the informal structure of club life.

Chick. 2017. Rift Valley, Kenya.

NGOs for the Disabled in Kenya. An American college graduate travels to Kenya in 2009 and finds it a compelling location for helping others. But some harsh lessons must be learned.

Video Ethnography in Practice. 2017. Wesley Shrum and Greg Scott. Produced by Brella Productions in conjunction with the new textbook on video ethnography.

Women of the Storm. 2015. Edited, directed, and produced. Broadcast premiere on WLAE New Orleans in February. Broadcast on public television, WLAE, WYES New Orleans for the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

Selected Film Festivals: Global Independent Film Awards. Nominated for Best Short Doc, Best Editing, Humanitarian Award, Mother Earth Environmental Award, Just Film Awards. Winner, Best Documentary 2015; "Women in Leadership" Selection, 2015; Gwinnett International Film Festival, 2015; Global Independent Film Awards Best Short Doc: Gold Medal; Best Editing: Gold Medal; Environmental Award: Silver Medal State of the Coast Conference, New Orleans, June 2016; Finalist, DOSHIMA Award (Documentary and Short International Film Awards, Jakarta, Indonesia).

Not Heathers. 2013. Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Re-edited footage.

Norman Hollyn, then President of the *University Film and Video Association*, welcomed to Louisiana State University with a re-edited short version of his cult film *Heathers*, by the LSU Video Ethnography Lab.

Brother Time. 2012. Feature length documentary on ethnic conflict in Kenya.

After the Kenyan elections of December 2007, outsiders were stunned when more than 1100 people were massacred in tribal clashes. *Brother Time* is a story of the relationship between two neighbors, whose friendship turns to conflict as ethnic passions threaten to engulf them. Struggles over land and power going back to colonial

times are crystallized during the voting, when allegations of rigging erupt into widespread violence. We follow Wainaina, an agricultural technician in the Rift Valley, an area traditionally claimed by another tribe. As he journeys home with an elder, he recounts how his neighbor “rose against me, with bow and arrow.” He is counseled to forgive, as a Christian, and treat all men as brothers. Told entirely in the words of the Kenyans who lived it, the film graphically depicts this startling historical episode, when it was “not the brother time” and offers hope that ethnic divisions can be transcended in a new world.

Outer Space of Science. 2007.

This movie examines the problems of reagency in Ghana through sequences featuring the difficulties of an Internet connectivity project in Ghana from 2003 through 2004. It was produced for the “Geographies of Science” workshop in Heidelberg, Germany.

Global Scientific Challenges: Collaboration and Cooperation. 2007.

This 20 minute video summarizes discussions on transdisciplinary collaboration and international cooperation at the Lindau meeting of the International Foundation for Science (ICSU).

Question Everything. 2004.

Teaser for a proposed reality quiz show featuring scientists and professors proposing projects to a live studio audience that selects proposals for funding based on their public interest.

Before the Horse. 2003.

This movie deals with the difficulties of doing development work in the context of India, Kenya, and Ghana. Internet connectivity has been a major initiative of the international aid community since the 1990s. Yet most universities and research institutes still do not have “connectivity” in the ordinary sense. Subtitled “An Essay on Paragraphs Seven, Ten, and Twenty Three of The World Summit Plan of Action,” Internet connectivity is viewed as a potentially useful initiative, but subject to many of the same problems that have plagued past development initiatives in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Filmed in Kerala (India), Kenya, and Ghana.

Before the Horse was screened three times at the World Summit on the Information Society (Phase I, Geneva, December 2003): (1) Role of Science in the Information Society (CERN). (2) Information Society film screening (ICT4D). (3) Engineering the Knowledge Society (International Federation for Information Processing).

After the Fact. 2005.

The sequel to “Before the Horse.” Phase I of the World Summit on the Information Society was intended to set an agenda for action, while Phase II (Tunis, Tunisia 16-18 Nov 2005) was intended to implement and report on that agenda. The time frame was short and the complexity of problems relating to the digital divide was immense. Filmed

in Kenya and Ghana. Screened twice at the World Summit on the Information Society (Phase II, Tunis, November 2005).

After Katrina. 2005. Filmed in the first week after Hurricane Katrina, this film features survivors of New Orleans' Ninth Ward.

Pennukanal for the Perplexed. 2004.

A visual essay of a traditional south-Indian ritual. "Girl-Seeing"—an event when the family of the groom views the prospective bride in person. Filmed at Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, Kerala.

Trilogy on Development Tourism

The following three movies are a series on development tourism, beginning with the Golemari in the summer of 2003 and continuing with two episodes in 2004: Dinner with Domingo and Flip-Flopped. First screened at the annual conference of the Society for Social Studies of Science at the Ecole des Mines, Paris, France, August, 2004.

Golemari. 2003. Adabraka, Accra, Ghana.

When you place your order at a restaurant in the developing world, you don't always get what you want. What happens? Original title: "Expatriate Freakout."

Dinner with Domingo. 2004. Accra, Ghana.

The expat, discouraged and jaded, is stalked by an incompetent con-artist, who attempts a "Nigerian Scam" in person. Not an easy sell.

Flip-Flipped. 2004. Nairobi, Kenya.

Two well-meaning donors arrive in Nairobi with 200 pairs of flip-flops for African children. Will they get there? It all depends on "administrative fees."

Ritual Disrobement at Mardi Gras. 2003.

A look at the three main types of ceremonial exchange.
First screened at Conference on Holidays as a Seedbed of Virtue. Washington, March 2003.

Other Film Credits

Abandonium. 2021. Chicago, Illinois. Associate Producer. Directed by Greg Scott.

Promised Land, Broken Promises. 2014. Produced and shot with Director Antony Palackal.

Computing Cultures. 2016. Associate Producer. Matthew Harsh, Director.