Knowledge & Diversity & Uniquity
# Table of contents

## The lab
- Director of AMLAC&S
- Letter from the Director
- About the lab
- Objectives
- People

## Research projects
- The Promised Land Project
- Conversation series
- Rhizomic practices
- African & diaspora cultural studies series

## Achievements
- Future projects
- Funding sources
Letter from the Director

Dr Boulou Ebanda de B’béri is the Founding Director of the Audiovisual Media Lab for the studies of Cultures and Societies (AMLAC&S), a Professor of Film, Communication, and Cultural Studies at the University of Ottawa’s Department of Communication, and a member of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

It is with much pleasure that I present to you the quinquennial report of the Audiovisual Media Lab for the study of Cultures and Societies (AMLAC&S). The creation and realization of this laboratory are in reality the results of many coincidences all motivated from deep aspirations.

In 2004, while I held the position of Visiting Professor at the Northeastern University of Boston (MA), I dreamt of creating a space for avant-garde research, a space where professors, students and people from the community would become researchers able to produce differentiating knowledge. I foresaw this space as a common space of knowledge production, a space of true trans-disciplinary exchange — if this concept still means something — a place of “encounters” within which multidisciplinary thoughts would interconnect. I conceived it as a space which I thought was missing through my doctoral studies. Solicited to join that same year universities in the United Kingdom, at York (Toronto, ON) and in Ottawa, the Associated Research Dean Professor Antoni Lewkovicz convinced me of the possibilities of research at the University of Ottawa and particularly, in the likelihood of support for the creation of a space like the one that I had dreampt of.

Six years later, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the first quinquennial report of AMLAC&S. It was established thanks to two bursaries of excellence from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the Ontario Research Fund (ORF), and from the support of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa. AMLAC&S became the imagined space of exchange and knowledge production in 2004. It is increasingly becoming a centre where original conversations emerge and where considerable research networks develop on regional, national, international levels.

Our first five years have been rich in experimentation. Like a newborn learning how to walk in an adult world, we have evolved in troubled waters of the academic and institutional world. Even when building upon our primary aspirations, we are already proud of the current realizations. Beyond the architecture of the laboratory, this first five year term was devoted to the three philosophic pillars of AMLAC&S: (1) the research and the development of questions linked to identity...
This first five year term was devoted to the three philosphic pillars of AMLAC&S:  (1) the research and the development of questions linked to identity representations and multicultural societies; (2) a partnership development on the national and international level and (3) training in proximity and providing open minded experiences.

At the research level, we have received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (CRSH) for two of our projects, among which, an ordinary fund for *Rhizomic practices of cultural and racial identity* (2007–2010) and a strategic funding from CURA (Community University Research Alliance) for the *Promised Land Project* (2007–2012). These substantial projects have been granted several research contracts with provincial and federal government services (Treasury Board Communications Office, Health Canada, National Defence, and Citizenship and Immigration).

In the partnership field, we have developed research relationships with the Center for Media and Communication Studies of the Kwazulu Natal University (Durban, South Africa), the Center for Citizenship and Globalization of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia) and the Center for Culture, Identity and Education, of the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada).

Finally, as the founding director of AMLAC&S, I am particularly pleased with the close relationships we have built with students and research assistants during this first five years. We have hired and trained more than a dozen of students from all three university levels, as well as one postdoctoral assistant from France. Many of our recent research assistants occupy important public servant positions today or have continued their studies in a variety of fields.

This first report presents the AMLAC&S team, the realized projects during this five year period as well as projects for the next five years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gilman Long, Nabil Miguel and Maurice L. Bélanger, members of the administrative personnel of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ottawa, who have supported us along this process. I would like to also give my gratitude to the office of the associated vice-dean of research of the University of Ottawa for their continued support.

Dr Boulou Ebanda de B'béri
About the Lab

The AMLAC&S is an audiovisual media laboratory engaged in studying multicultural societies, as well as cultures as a whole. This space is dedicated to the research, documentation, and creation of audiovisual productions that specifically target the cultural practices of communities or marginalized identity groups such as black and aboriginal peoples.

The purpose of the lab is to produce research material that exposes contributions made by cultural, ethnic and racial minorities through their specific cultural practices.

Through the lab, we conceptualize questions of citizenship within multicultural societies in Canada.

The lab was founded in 2005 by Boulou Ebanda de B’béri with financial help from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Research Fund. The space itself, which was endowed by the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Arts houses a variety of filming, sound recording, and web development equipment to facilitate the mandate of the lab.

Resident Postdoctoral Karine Blanchon, writing forthcoming article on the representation of child soldiers in Africa.
Objectives

To establish an audiovisual database targeting specific practices of identity made by racialized and ethnicized identity groups;

To produce audiovisual documents that are artistic and educational, which adequately represent both the complexity of cultural practices and of social and cultural theory;

To cultivate a “voice to see” (to represent) those cultural practices that articulate questions pertaining to the experiences of cultural, racial and ethnic minorities in multicultural societies;

To develop reference documents on cultural practices that would not otherwise be produced or represented other than through the “dispositives” of a research centre having its own infrastructure of production and dissemination, and whose research objects target, in a specific manner, the representations of racial, ethnic and cultural minorities and their experiences; and

To build connections between academia and certain practices of identity produced in the margins of normative frames of reference in society.
## People

### Researchers in Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karine Blanchon</td>
<td>Postdoctoral in Residence 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brendan Burrows</td>
<td>MA Communication Research Assistant 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miia Rantala</td>
<td>PhD Student Guest Academic 2010</td>
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Karine Blanchon is a Doctor of Languages, Literatures and Societies. In 2007, she defended her PhD at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO, Paris), on Malagasy cinemas which is published by l’Harmattan publishing. Her research interests are representations of the culture in the multicultural societies in the media.

Brendan Burrows research interests focuses on hip-hop and identity on the show *Moccasin Flats*. His projects for AMLAC&S include filming and editing the 2010 *Promised Land Project* Video and the Rhizomic Analysis of Canadian, Australian, and South African films.

Miia Rantala is a PhD student at the University of Lapland (Rovaniemi, Finland) and an associate member of the Doctoral School of Communication Studies in Finland 2010-13. The aim of her multidisciplinary doctoral thesis is to analyze the visual representations of ethnicity and ‘race’ in Finnish primetime TV ads on commercial channels.

### Research Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Mahmoud Eid</td>
<td>University of Ottawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Pierre Olivier</td>
<td>Université Antilles-Guyane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Nina Reid-Maroney</td>
<td>University of Windsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Imre Szeman</td>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Alexie Tcheuyap</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Handel K. Wright</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Afua Cooper</td>
<td>Independent Researcer &amp; Historian</td>
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Dr Imre Szeman

Dr Nina Reid-Maroney

Dr Afua Cooper

Dr Handel K. Wright

Dr Afua Cooper

Dr Afua Cooper

Dr Afua Cooper

Dr Afua Cooper
Yasmina Djimani
BA Communication
Research Assistant
2010

Yasmina Djimani is a research assistant in AMLAC&S since May 2010. She conducts bibliographical research for the conference/workshop on memory in cinema.

Steve Jankowski
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2010

Steve Jankowski researches how communities of practice, such as those in Wikipedia, both challenge and concede institutional pressures. He creates the new design of the lab website. He has been responsible for new media development of AMLAC&S.

Tina Kaooya
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2010

Tina Kawooya research interests include Uganda and identity theories. Her work with the lab focuses on black Canadian discourse with the *Promised Land Project* and multicultural discourse in Canada, Australia and South Africa.

Emilie Jabouin
MA Political Science & Women's Studies
Research Assistant
2010

Emilie Jabouin conducts research for the lab on memory and the question of gender for the organization of conferences and projects.

Jessica Lynne Plows
BA Communication
Research Assistant
2010

Jessica Lynne Plows aids in reorganizing and editing the AMLAC&S website. She also aided Professor de B'béri by editing dissertations.

Dana Whitney Sherwood
MA History
Research Assistant
2010

Dana W. Sherwood's work in the lab focuses on the *Promised Land Project* and the multiple trajectories of discriminatory experience across Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
Michael Audette-Longo
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2008–2009

Catherine Fortin
Co-op Student
Summer of 2008
As part of the co-op program, where students apply their classroom knowledge to a series of four-month work experiences, Catherine worked on the initial development of lab's web site.

Antoinette Sofia Okai-Koi
Research Assistant
2009
Antoinette contributed to the lab during her undergraduate degrees in Communication and Journalism.

Margareth Cormier
Research Assistant
2007–2008

Peter Lamb
Co-op Student
BA in Communication
During his internship at the Lab, Peter edited many audiovisual documentaries for to the Conversation Series.

Quline Morris
Research Assistant
2009

“"The lab is a place where a student like me can find the projects and outlets to really push me to that next level of academia. Theories become practice and practice becomes theory."”

Brendan Burrows

Yvette Lubrun
BA Communication and Sociology
Yvette Lubrun was instrumental in the design and maintenance of the first iteration of the lab’s website.
Julia Bresee
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2007–2008

Involved in the set up of the lab, Julia contributed to the coordination and management of research projects and funding proposals. She also conducted research on *Rhizomic Practices of Identity in Indy Cinemas*, and in-field research on the *Promised Land Project*.

The first four research assistants

Zaida Marquez
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2007–2008

Zaida Marquez was chief videographer (2008) in the production of a series of documentaries about the development of the *Promise Land Project*. She also conducted research on independent cinemas in Canada, as part of the project *Rhizomic Practices of Identity in Indy Cinemas*.

Virginie Mesana
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2007–2008

Virginie Mesana helped administrative coordination, research and analysis of indy Australian films (*Rhizomic Practices of Identity in Indy Cinemas: A Comparative Analysis*) as well as engaging in research and production in the *Promised Land Project*.

Peter Hogarth
MA Communication
Research Assistant
2007–2008

In 2008, Peter was active in the *Rhizomic Practices of Identity in Indy Cinemas: A Comparative Analysis* project. He was also one of the camera operator for the *Promised Land Project* during that time.
Research project
THE PROMISED LAND PROJECT

The Promised Land Project (PLP) is a one million dollar five year (2007–12) Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) focusing on the historical amnesia regarding the contribution of multicultural nineteenth-century groups of pioneers and Natives in ending slavery and fighting for Civil Rights in Canada, the United States, and abroad. Specifically, PLP is studying how these groups did so in the city of Chatham, Chatham Townships, and Dawn settlements. To do so, the project adheres to the following objectives:

To protect primary historical materials;
To make these materials publicly accessible;
To support new academic research and teaching;
To promote community development in this historic region of Canada; and
To use the new knowledge generated by the project to frame current discussions of ethnoracial identity, social justice, migration and Canadian multiculturalism.

Watch videos of the Promised Land Project at:
http://www.youtube.com/user/LamacsAmlacs/
The Promised Land Project began by working to preserve the historical materials documenting the experience of blacks in the Chatham-Kent area. The research team and community partners created a comprehensive database of letters, tax records, journals, photographs, oral histories, family narratives, newspapers, and other important primary sources. The overall aim is to highlight the historical importance of the Promised Land communities as an unrecognized yet pivotal story in Canada's past, and draw attention to its current relevance as a model of multiculturalism predating the current discourse of multiculturalism in the global age.

Left: Uncle Tom, Uncle Tom’s Cabin in Chatham, Ontario, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, and frames from filming the first Promised Land Project symposium.

PLP Productions

The frames pictured to the left come from the First Annual General Symposium, Chatham-Kent, Ontario, 2007. This symposium highlighted the progress and discoveries made by Promised Land researchers as well as offer speakers, interactive workshops, and panels discussing the overall state of Black history and multiculturalism in Canada. Each symposium held since has been filmed as a audiovisual record of the experience.

First Symposium
December 7–9 2007
Chatham-Kent
Black Historical Society
Chatham, Ontario

Second Symposium
March 13-15 2009
Saint Clair College
Chatham, Ontario

Third Symposium
March 5–6 2010
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario

Fourth Symposium
May 8–8 2011
Black Cultural Centre
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Research project
CONVERSATION SERIES

The Conversation Series is a project that focuses on creating a dialogue with filmmakers, researchers, and teachers who examine the world through a cultural perspective. More specifically, the project brings to the surface voices and perspectives that are normally held to the margins of national and cultural grand narratives.

List of conversations

- **Cultural Pedagogy, 2008**
  Dialogue on Cultural Pedagogy

- **With Arturo Escobar, 2008**
  at the University of North Carolina.

- **With Nilesh Patel, 2008**
  Director of Brocket 99:
  Rockin’ the Country

- **With Olivette Otele, 2008**
  Promised Land Project

- **With Larry Grossberg, 2008**
  Articulation & modernity

A conversation with six Australian filmmakers, 2008
- Nick Parsons (*Dead Heart*, 1997);
- Jo Dyer and Michael James Rowland; (*Lucky Miles*, 2007);
- Ray Lawrence (*Jindabyne*, 2006);
- Don Featherstone (*Babakiueria*, 1986);
- Peter Castaldi (Film Reviewer).

The frames pictured to the left come from a section of the conversation with filmmakers Jo Dyer and Michael James Rowland. Watch the conversations on youtube at: http://www.youtube.com/user/LamacsAmlacs/
The purpose of this project is to create a comparative study aiming to understand how racial and cultural identities are articulated in the independent cinemas of Canada, South Africa, and Australia. Given our global contemporary context of new identity practices that are fertile with crisis, we are exploring what can be learned from a study of these specific representations. The three main objectives of this research are:

**To establish a corpus** of thirty films from independent cinemas of the multiracial and multicultural countries of Canada, South Africa, and Australia;

**To gain an understanding** of the significant factors representing identity practices of center and peripheral groups within the three target countries. This will be achieved by analyzing the epistemological markers of the films as well as interviewing ten filmmakers; and

**To compare** historical and ideological foundations represented in these films through their articulations of identity and racial identity practices.

This project was financed by SSHRC from 2007–2010.

"The multiple must be made, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest of ways, by dint of sobriety, with the number of dimensions one already has available — always n–1 (the only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted). Subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at n–1 dimensions. A system of this kind could be called a rhizome."

Research project
AFRICAN AND DIASPORA CULTURAL STUDIES SERIES

Memory is a slippery concept. When one considers how culture, history, and society overlap and intertwine, memory becomes a complex of the relations between these elements. If we consider the effects of global, transnational, and trans-disciplinary landscapes, add in the various forms of production, distribution, exhibition and consumption, the movement of memory becomes incredibly dynamic and at times, overwhelming.

We can see how this occurs within the redefinition and re-articulation of macro/micro cultural identities and citizenships within, across, and beyond the traditional, canonist conceptions of continent, nation, geopolitical space, and sociocultural identity (ethnicity, race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, etc.).

With these considerations in mind, the main field of study for this book series is the irresistible shifting landscapes of the traditional fields of studies in the humanities and social sciences. Specifically, the African and diaspora cultural studies series centers around the paradigms and geopolitical locations that are producing, contesting, and reproducing knowledge relevant to African issues.
Sonjah Stalnley Niaah relates how dancehall emerged from the marginalized youth culture of Kingston’s ghettos and how it remains inextricably linked to the ghetto, giving its performance culture and spaces a distinct identity. She reveals how dancehall’s migratory networks, embodied practice, institutional frameworks, and ritual practices link it to other musical styles, such as American blues, South African kwaito, and Latin American reggaeton. She shows that dancehall is part of a legacy that reaches from the dance shrubs of West Indian plantations and the early negro churches, to the taxi-dance halls of Chicago and the ballrooms of Manhattan. Indeed, Dancehall stretches across the whole of the Black Atlantic’s geography and history to produce its detailed portrait of dancehall in its local, regional, and transnational performances spaces.

For more than three decades, the anglophone world has seriously considered Cultural Studies as a perspective of analysis of everyday practices and of their relationship to the production of meaning. However, in the francophone world, productions of analysis from this field have been absent even though francophone realities may have interested and benefited from cultural studies in the twentieth century; such as social protests in France, African migratory movements towards Europe and the debate on reasonable accommodations in Quebec, among others. This book presents some of the approaches and perspectives of Cultural Studies in order to better understand cultural practices and to propose new forms of analysis.
Achievements

To date, the lab has not only been successful in making connections between academia and communities, but has adhered to its mandate by creating numerous documents, both film and print, that explore the issues of identity, representation, and diversity.

Symposiums

AMLAC&S has been involved with establishing and maintaining yearly symposiums that center around the Promise Land Project.

- First symposium: December 7–9 2007
  Chatham-Kent
  Black Historical Society
  Chatham, Ontario

- Second Symposium: March 13-15 2009
  Saint Clair College
  Chatham, Ontario

- Third Symposium: March 5–6 2010
  University of Windsor
  Windsor, Ontario

- Fourth Symposium: May 6–8 2011
  Black Cultural Centre
  Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Master's Theses


Publications


Future projects

Comparative Multiculturalism from Transnational & Global Perspectives

Reframing multiculturalism for the 21st century’s realities: An International Symposium
In partnership with Deakin University’s Centre for Citizenship and Globalization (Melbourne, Australia) and AMLAC&S, the symposium will focus on the “challenges” for and “reframing” of multiculturalisms in this century’s global knowledge-economy.

Forthcoming book
Multiculturalism in Indy Cinemas uses the rhizomic research tool to articulate identity as it is represented in independent cinema.

HIV/AIDS Cultural Related Behavioural Change Messages Study
This project will study cellular communication technologies to produce effective-contextualized HIV/AIDS messages in multicultural societies. This pilot project combines cellular communication technologies and virtual sexual and cultural profile in Madagascar to study, produce, implement, and test the most effective means of creating effective and contextualized HIV/AIDS Cultural Related Behavioural Change Messages (HIV/AIDS-CRBCM) in the context of Africa’s multicultural, multidimensional, and intergenerational reality.

Conference/Workshop: Articulations of memory in cinema
This conference/workshop will focus on an interdisciplinary approach. It is dedicated to the questions of memory in African, diasporic, national, and black cinemas. Representations of memory are linked with the questions of the representations and structures of identity, because they not only shed light on the past but also reflect on actual constructions of the past.

China in Africa today: Archaeology of the articulations and the communicational strategies
This project, conducted by a team of Canadian and African researchers, aims to study the strategies and the communicational articulations used by the Chinese to establish themselves in the everyday life of the African people today. The objective is to understand how people occupy the cultural spaces (political, economical, social, mental, human and geographical) in order to win the affection of African people, but also to understand what the Africans think about it and which part they play in the production of knowledge. This project will produce a new gaze on Chinese-African relationships, their successes, their failures and their understandings.
Funding sources

The funding for the research projects of AMLAC&S has been funded by the following institutions and programs.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) is the federal agency that promotes and supports university-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences.

http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/

Community-University Research Alliances (CURA)

The purpose of the program is to support the creation of alliances between community organizations and postsecondary institutions which, through a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning, will foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge in areas of importance for the social, cultural or economic development of Canadian communities.


Standard Research Grant

The broad purpose of the Standard Research Grants program is to support research and develop excellence in research activities in the social sciences and humanities.
University of Ottawa Faculty of Arts
http://www.arts.uottawa.ca/

Canadian Foundation of Innovation (CFI)
The CFI’s mandate is to strengthen the capacity of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and non-profit research institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that benefits Canadians.
http://www.innovation.ca/

Government of Ontario
Ontario Research Fund (ORF)
The Ontario Research Fund (ORF) is a key part of the government’s plan to support scientific excellence by supporting research that can be developed into innovative goods and services that will boost Ontario’s economy.