Playing with Scales of Visibility: The Politics of Recognition of a Grassroots Collective in China

Dr. Eric Florence
University of Liège

Room 711, 7th Floor, Building 19 (Nishi-Waseda Bldg.)
Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
(Directions: http://www.waseda.jp/gsaps/en/access/)

December 5 (Monday), 2022
4:30-6:00 p.m.

Lecture in English
Open to Public / No Registration Required / Contact: seio@waseda.jp

In this research, by studying a grassroots collective of rural workers in the far suburbs of Beijing, we aim at exploring how the politics of recognition and identity of a collective category – i.e. rural workers – is shaped through specific arrangements of scales of mediation. Drawing on Bleil (2005), I document how the grassroots collective built hybrid arrangements of mediation in order to produce different "spatial scales of visibility" of their actions, their claims and identities, thereby showing how the collective combines local face to face interactions and actions with more global online and offline practices. What I am interested in are not subjectivities per se but rather a whole range of organizational practices and mediation processes through which spaces of interactions, of participation and of shared emotions are shaped. This talk is based on a combination of ethnographic observations carried out in China (mainly Beijing and Shenzhen) between 2012 and 2019, of online exchanges and observation, of popular cultural products (songs, poems, popular literature, exhibitions, etc.) and of popular archives gathered over the years.

Eric Florence is associate Professor at the University of Liege. His research focuses on the cultural politics of labor in contemporary China. For the last twenty years he has taken part to research on labor migration in South China and research projects on international migration at the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies. His writings include "The Links between Academic Research and Public Policies in the Field of Migration and Ethnic Relations: Selected National Case Studies", *IJMS: International Journal on Multicultural Societies*. 2005, vol. 7, no.1 (with Marco Martiniello, eds.), *Towards a New Development Paradigm in Twenty-First Century China : Economy, Society and Politics*. With Pierre Defraigne, eds. (Routledge 2012) ; "How to Be a Shenzhener: Representations of Migrant Labor in Shenzhen's Second Decade," in Mary Ann O'Donnell, Winnie Wong, and Jonathan Bach (eds), *Learning from Shenzhen: China's Post-Mao Experiment from Special Zone to Model City*, Chicago, The Chicago University Press, 2017, pp. 86- 103; "Migrant worker museums in China: public cultures of migrant labour in state and grassroots initiatives", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. (with Junxi Qian, 2020) https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2020.1739373; "The Cultural Politics of Labour in Postsocialist China. The case of rural migrant workers", *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Chinese Culture and Society*. K. Latham, Ed. (Routledge, 2020), pp. 212-230; "Precarity, Platforms, and Agency: The Multiplication of Chinese Labour", in Agency Beyond Precarity: Platforms and the multiplication of labor regimes in China (with Chris King-chi Chan and Jack Linchuan Qiu, 2021), *China Perspectives*, 2021/1. https://www.cefc.com.hk/issue/china-perspectives-2021-1/ ; '"Make Contributions and Offer Your Youth for Tomorrow's Dream": The Establishment of the Shenzhen Migrant Workers Museum.' In *Proletarian China: One Century of Chinese Labour*, edited by Ivan Franceschini and Christian Sorace, 598-607. London and New York: Verso Books, https://www.versobooks.com/books/4039-proletarian-china

Organizer: Research Group on Contemporary Chinese Independent Film, Waseda University
Co-Organizer: Waseda Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (WIAPS), Waseda University