

## **The Perfect Fit? Infrastructural Everyday Work and Globalization in the Shoe Industry**

### **Abstract**

Based on four years of ethnography in the shoe industry across New York City, Dongguan, and Novo Hamburgo (Brazil) pre-COVID, this talk reveals the everyday work, tacit knowledge, and embodied techniques that sustain the design and development of commodities at a global scale. Centering on the production of female shoe sizing standards, the research shows how lasts, prototypes, and samples travel to generate infrastructural stability across dispersed production sites. By analyzing the complementary relationship between embodied and formalized knowledge, and between face-to-face and mediated interaction, the talk provides insights into how expert work sustains exploitation in global value chains and presents a theory of how the disjuncture between work and labor helps us better understand the geography of outsourcing.