

Performing Activism:

**Feminists, Lawyers, and
Online Mobilization
in China**

**Friday
Feb. 1, 2019
12:30 - 2:00pm**

**Dr. Sida Liu,
Assistant Professor of Sociology
and Law at UofT and Faculty
Fellow at the American
Bar Foundation**

A light lunch will be served at 12:00pm in the Lounge
The talk will begin at 12:30pm in the Ericson Seminar
Room (room 265)

In authoritarian contexts where the state is the primary performer in the public sphere and political mobilization is constrained and repressed, activists often seek to carve out a public space to confront the frontstage and backstage of the state's performance in order to pursue collective action. Comparing the online mobilization of feminists and lawyers in China, this project investigates how performance arts are used by activists to challenge the authoritarian state in the age of social media. Performing "activism" is to create conspicuous spectacles in the public eye for the purposes of exposing the state's illegal or repressive backstage actions or promoting alternative values and social norms different from the official ideology. By subversively disrupting the evidential boundaries set by the state, Chinese activists were able to gain momentum and public support for their collective action. However, it was precisely the success of their "activism" that contributed to the government crackdowns on both feminists and lawyers in 2015.

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