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# Capturing Labor in the Kenyan Plantations : a Researcher and a FilmMaker's Field Experience

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## Abstract

Dr. Chloé Josse-Durand is a permanent researcher at the French Institute for Research in Africa in Nairobi (IFRA-Nairobi) since February 2017. She has carried out numerous research missions in Ethiopia and Kenya at the intersection of political science and anthropology.

Tom Durand is a French filmmaker and Assistant Cameraman. Passionate by documentaries and ethnographic movies and the social and political implication of images, he studied at the Institut National Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle et des Techniques de Diffusion (INSAS) in Brussels, at Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA) and École des Chartes in Paris.

Together with Chloé Josse-Durand, they took part in 2020 to an IFRA-Nairobi research programme entitled "Working East-Africa". During one month of a shared fieldwork, they focused on documenting the working and living conditions of agricultural workers of the tea and flower plantations of Kenya through photography and documentary. This presentation aims to allow them to confront their views in illustrating the realities of a rural working class and labor in Kenya.

How to describe social realities and routines when you disrupt them by your mere presence and questions, and with an imposing camera ? How to document living conditions of a lower (African) social class when you represent a (white) privileged, educated, richer individual ? In a broader sense, has a filmmaker always has a " bourgeois " bias ? Is the

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\*Speaker

researcher always neutral ? Do images speak for themselves, speak as academic sources, or speak to a certain visual activism ? These are a few of the challenges the contributors would like to share and discuss during this academic forum online.

**Video presentation : <https://vimeo.com/549617718/78c9579e72>**

**or**

**<https://ifra.exposure.co/african-workplaces>**