

# FIGS FIGS FIGS

## Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group

FIGS Exec: Nasya Razavi, Alkim Karaagaç, Leah Copella,  
Mantha Katsikana, Rosemary Collard and Zoë Meletis

### Newsletter

In this Issue...

Chair's Column

On Love: A bell  
hooks Tribute

What we've been  
up to...

Awards & Events

Resources

Oh and one more  
thing...

### Chair's Column

By Zoë Meletis



I was going to write this early. I was going to write this carefully. \*\* all errors, typos, and omissions are my own- I'm sorry! \*\*

I read my caveat at the start of our Winter 2021 newsletter, and I realized how little has changed since this current COVID-19 era started in 2019/2020....

But- I also know that even a hastily written digital letter from a group like this can mean a lot in a time when many of us are not seeing family, friends, much daylight, etc. So- I meet you again here, in whichever difficult place you are, to say hello, to tell you that I see you/hear you, and to share some FIGS news. I stand behind my starting comments in last year's Winter 2021 newsletter (not much has changed/improved since then), and I acknowledge that many members, particularly early career scholars and students are

facing a bleak job market, a hostile academic climate, and a worrying and violent world (eco-apocalypse?). For this I am sorry and empathetic. I am also bolstered by many FIGS members fighting for positive changes. We must keep up these contributions, especially now.

Whatever you are facing in academia, your household, your workplaces, and more—I truly hope this holiday “break” (ahahahahahaha!) brings you some peace, joy, rest, and energy, however it maybe to claw and claim some more space for those important states to occur.

We are tired. We are burned out. We are fed up. We want things to go “back to normal” but are realizing that might not happen anytime soon or ever. But, we must not give up hope as we have lots of work to do, and there are bright spots out there.

I will leave a bell hooks quote here (*she is gone but will not be forgotten any time soon*), and then move into a summary of the year for FIGS, hoping to update you and connect you. More than anything, I also want to thank you for being members and friends, for staying connected with us, and for giving us space and support for trying new things.

**“the moment we choose to be love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love, we begin to move toward freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others”.**

**bell hooks**

\* note—my bell hooks books are up a snow-covered hill, in my semi-abandoned university office, so I used this Internet-sourced quote and cannot tell you exactly where it comes from. I can tell you that it reads like it could be from many hooks references including **Teaching**

**Community: A Pedagogy of Hope** (original edition is from 2003), one of my favourite hooks texts, and an excellent companion to Paulo Freire’s **Pedagogy of The Oppressed** (original edition is from 1970).

And now for a brief summary of key FIGS happenings in 2021/22 thanks to generous contributions from members, to support from the CAG (particularly from Katie L.), and to work from the exec.

### **A much appreciated (although online) gathering**

Whatever it wasn’t (good times milling around between sessions chatting with friends; sharing food and drink with old colleagues and new friends at the end of long conference days; a trip sneaking in some exploration of a new/old destination and its charms), it was nice to gather with dozens of feminist geographers and hundreds of geographers at the virtual CAG Annual Meeting this past summer, “at” UNBC. My home department did an excellent job of welcoming folks from around the country and beyond, to join us on a pretty smooth virtual platform, for all kinds of events. The good and enriching times had by many at the CAG are proof positive that not all online meetings are created equal.

Thanks to a strong Study Group special event proposal, led by Rosemary Collard, **funded by the CAG, and hosted in collaboration with the Political Geography Study Group, the**

**Economic Geography Study Group and the Diversity, Migration, Ethnicity and Race Study Group.** We invited an amazing array of speakers and panelists to join us in back-to-back FIGS sessions at this year's CAG Annual Meeting. These included talks, panels, and conversations with Caroline Faria, Gerry Pratt, Norma Rantisi, and Minelle Mahtani. Many contemplative and fruitful talks and discussions were enjoyed by many. These included special sessions organized by Brittany Davey, Isma Yusuf, Rosalind Ragetlie, Nancy Worth, Esra Alkim Karaagaç, Nasya Razavi, and others. We also gathered for the 2021 rendition of the **Suzanne Mackenzie Memorial Lecture**, thoughtfully introduced by Kate Parizeau, and delivered by **Beverley Mullings**, on *"Beyond the dark side of resilience: Thinking through racial capitalism, dispossession, and Caribbean radical traditions"*. Those who attended know what a personal, skillfully-woven, and inspirational talk it was— on origins, family histories, landscapes, the everyday, politics, power, colonialism, and identity.

We also tried out new inclusions like a trivia event (thank you to Brittany Davey and Bryndis Ogmundsdottir for assistance!), a draw for FIGS session participating graduate students to win book prizes (I learned about so many cool bookstores across the country while awarding them), and inviting student correspondents to report back on CAG happenings and experiences (thank you!). We heard a lot of positive chatter, and it was nice to insert some fun and funds into people's lives. **We are currently putting in our proposal for events at the CAG (due Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>), so please email us if you have**

**suggested inclusions or feedback about last year's events.**

*Note—I realize that we shared much of this in our Summer 2021 newsletter but I thought it was a good idea to focus/ remind us all of how we gathered last*



### Ongoing Exec meetings, and FemGeog

The FIGS Exec has been working hard, meeting semi-regularly (1-2 times every 2-3 months) throughout the year, and building on earlier efforts to diversify our Exec and membership, to centralize our accounts and media, to maintain communication with our members, and to produce a second zine (by popular demand!). **We thank former Exec member Ileana Diaz for her contributions to FIGS leadership, her work on the 2020 zine, and more. We also welcome new Exec Members Alkim Karaagaç, Leah Copella, and Mantha Katsikana.**

We hope that you feel like we have been active in ways that are meaningful to you as

members. If you have feedback, suggestions, or would like to get more involved, please send us an email at [figscag@gmail.com](mailto:figscag@gmail.com).

I am also lucky to be part of the FemGeog conference organizing committee. It's coming up this June, so we'll try to keep you all updated about it. The CFP should be out in January 2022, and the website is: <https://www.femgeographyconference.org>

### Second Dose delivery: zine mailed & online

I will soon be mailing out a second batch of zine requests (still a few copies left! Email us if you'd like one). The first batch was sent out earlier this fall. You can also find it here (thank you CAG & Katie): <https://www.cag-acg.ca/figs-zine>. Thank you to all of the contributors who helped to create another fun and thoughtful zine. It has been a pleasure to work on these in such difficult times. Special thanks to zine editors Maria Luiza Belo, Leah I. Coppella, Alkim Karaagaç, Nasya Razavi, and Lisa Sandlos. I truly enjoyed working with this group, as well as the 2020 editors. I hope the zine continues on...

**I wish you ALL the best for the break, the term ahead, and 2022. I miss you. I am grateful for you, and honoured to be a part of FIGS.** I also look forward to passing this fun post on to the next Chair at our 2022 AGM (pencil it in now please! We'll add it during/near the virtual CAG at University X). You are a force. I am so glad to know that many of you are chipping away at the cruel aspects of academia and geography, and creating brighter inclusive spaces.

## On Love: A bell hooks Tribute by Leah Coppella

bell hooks, born September 25, 1952 in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, was a Black feminist activist, author, cultural critic and scholar, whose work looked at race, gender, class and community. hooks died on December 15, 2021, but her legacy remains one of community-building, of connection, and of love. Her impact cannot be adequately described in a few short paragraphs, but I will write here about her influence on my perspective as a young scholar, in order to honour her in some small way.



bell hooks, photograph by Jeri Coppola

My first encounter with bell hooks work was in the seventh grade. A time where I felt confused about what love was and where to find it. I often thought about how I was going to fall in love, or who would fall for me. **All About Love: New Visions** opened me to a world of radical, political action that focused on the most intimate thing people can be and do: love. But it wasn't what I was expecting (that passionate, head over heels, romantic love characterized by fireworks and flowers in rom-coms and YA novels). By combining

love with self and with community, hooks showed me that love existed everywhere, in ways far more powerful than that soulmate myth I had been gobbling up.

hooks wrote about love as powerful and transformative, but also incredibly simple. Love was in the sharing of grief with friends. Love was in the way you work with colleagues. Love was all caught up in inclusion, in peace, in justice. This understanding of love as a guiding principle was both radical and comforting to me. hooks' writing revealed to me that the public, the private, the intimate and the remote, are all interconnected and woven by this powerful thing of love. Even the idea of theorizing love felt outrageous to me beforehand, but hooks' writings on a 'love ethic' as an active, everyday practice that puts care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect and knowledge first, showed me that love is tangible and real, not fairytale and fantasy.

Reading this work as a young woman, especially one who was constantly being told that romantic love was supreme, I remember feeling I'd unlocked a secret door. A door that led to warmth, to resilience, to solidarity. A door that represented love as an active practice, a door that could be painted in a shameless pink whenever I wanted or knocked on when I needed support. It was almost as though reading hooks' work allowed me to create and hold many pockets of hooks' own love within my own relationships (with friends, family, my partner, my community and myself). My hope is that in her death, this door remains open, that when someone else picks up hooks' work for the first time, they too get a peak at that crack of light emanating from within.

## What we've been up to...

We released our second zine, 'Second Dose'! Thank you to all contributors and editors who helped turn our jumbled worlds into a creative piece of political solidarity and art.

We have stepped up our social media game! You can find us on Facebook and Twitter ( and soon Insta!). Be sure to engage with us there, so that we can retweet, reply and 'like' all the amazing work and organizing that you've been doing.

We have also been gathering as an Exec over the last few months to make FIGS goals a reality. Planning and communications has been a particular priority for us as we continue to champion



## Awards & Events

The IGU Commission on Gender and Geography completes 30 years in 2022. Special tricenary sessions will mark the occasion at IGU Paris 2022:

<https://igugender.wixsite.com/igugender/copy-of-events>

Gender, Place & Culture has a new award announcement: <https://genderplaceandculture.wordpress.com/2021/10/25/call-for-award-applications-gender-place-and-culture-conference-award-for-new-and-emerging-scholars-2022/>

The third international Feminist Geography Conference will be held virtually and in-person at the University of Colorado at Boulder, June 15-17, 2022. The theme is 'Pushing Boundaries'. More information here: <https://www.femgeographyconference.org>

The third international Feminist Geography Conference will be held virtually and in-person at the University of Colorado at Boulder, June 15-17, 2022. The theme is 'Pushing Boundaries'. More information here: <https://www.femgeographyconference.org>

## Resources

A great indigenous resource for learning about territories, languages and treaties related to native land: <https://native-land.ca/>

Feminist Economics 101 is a new video series, produced by IAFFE's Young Scholars, in which senior scholars are interviewed by young or early career scholars on their work and how it relates to feminist economics. Check out the YouTube channel here: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOYbpe\\_B\\_cEHugohM6a7egapdYohPgtR\\_](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOYbpe_B_cEHugohM6a7egapdYohPgtR_) and the association webpage here: <http://www.iaffe.org/pages/resources/feminist-economics-101/>

The Academic Aunties Podcast (<https://www.academicaunties.com/>) This podcast looks at academia as a site of exclusion, especially for those who are first-generation, who are racialized, who are women. Academic Aunties discusses how to navigate the academic realm and how to start creating small transformations wherever you are. Auntie Ethel and her friends drop new episodes monthly: For more on bell hooks, check out

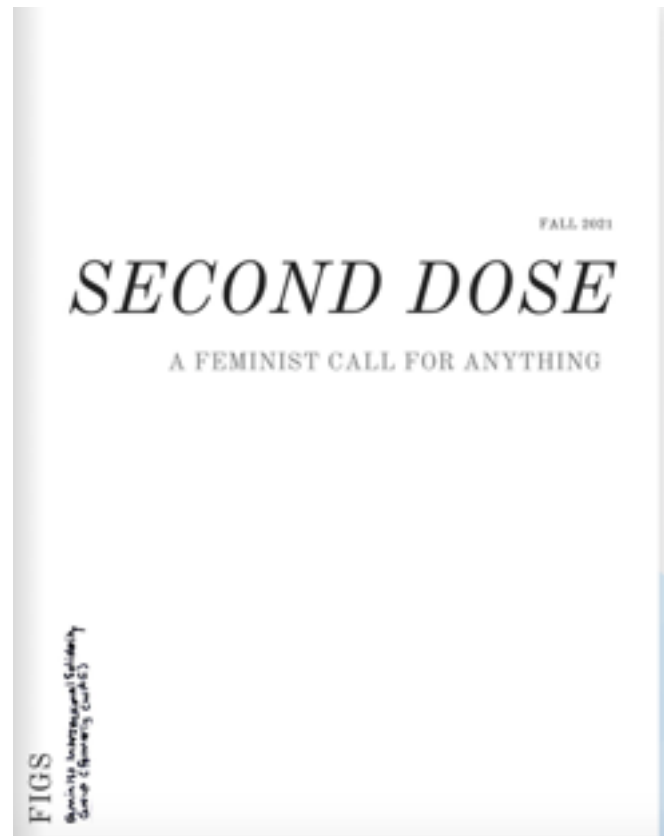
**FIGS Newsletter**

Ms. Magazine's tag: <https://msmagazine.com/tag/bell-hooks/>  
Building Anti-Colonial Feminist Coalitions Against Climate Change by Jaskiran Dhillon:

<https://roarmag.org/magazine/anti-colonial-feminist-coalitions/>

And a Symposium in Honor of bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-gender/virtual-special-issues/symposium-in-honor-of-bell-hooks-feminist-theory-from-margin-to-center>



## One more thing..

Missed our zine?

You can download the [PDF version](#) or enjoy the [flip book version here](#).

## RENEW YOUR FIGS MEMBERSHIP!

Visit <https://www.cag-acg.ca/join-renew>. When you renew your CAG membership, select Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group from the Study Group dropdown menu. FIGS student membership is free!

## STAY CONNECTED

Join the Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group on Facebook. Follow @FIGSgeo on Twitter for all the latest FIGS events & activities!



Socialize outside they said...