FIGS NEWSLETTER

Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group



INTHIS ISSUE...

Chair's Column

Outgoing Chair Zoë Meletis reflects on the past year and provides an update on FIGS activities.

FIGS Executive

On-going positions & Open positions on the Exec.

FIGS at the CAG

Our student correspondents cover FIGS events at the CAG Annual Meeting 2021.

Updates & Events

Other relevant news, events, updates, and feminist work.

Layout by N. Razavi Flower photography by I. I. Diaz

CHAIR'S COLUMN

How can we sleep while our beds are burning?

Midnight Oil

My dear dear FIGS members and friends,

I hope that you are ok out there—I know that many of us are suffering in different ways, and I just wanted to say that I see you, I empathize, and I write this hoping that we will all get some relief soon (Spring 2022?)....

To those who have been on the frontlines of #BlackLivesMatter movement, Indigenous organizing, the service industry, public health and medicine, the COVID-19 relief efforts, care work, social reproduction, and/or other crisis and disaster management out there (e.g. the opioid crisis; the housing crisis; victim services), you have my utmost respect and thanks, and I hope that we have done a bit to brighten your days as you have fought racism and colonialism, inadequate services, misinformation, entitlement, floods, forest fires, and more....

What strange times we are in, and how odd it is that for many reasons, we press on doing things like attending conferences and releasing newsletters...

Recently, I laughed really hard about something—I don't even remember what—and then I immediately got quite sad because I realized how little I had laughed since March 2020...I'm finding this Chair's

update very hard to write because we are facing such difficult times, but in such different ways—with diverse experiences of stress, grief, sickness, and sadness. I like to hope that you are all at least somewhat ok out there, but I know that many of you are not. I wish I could do something to lift you up or lighten your loads but I know that's an impossibility in most cases. So, instead I will remind you about the power we have as students, instructors, and voices in academic institutions—let's keep working to centre kindness, empathy, generosity and understanding in our hallways, classes, meetings, and emails. Little things can make big differences when folks are under ongoing stress, strain, and anxiety.

Out of respect for the work that FIGS members and the Exec have done over the past year or so, I'll focus on FIGS efforts to try and bring us together, hopefully even with some laughter, during these difficult times. BIG THANK YOU to outgoing Exec members Kate Parizeau and Brittany Davey, as well as to ongoing members Rosemary Collard, Ileana I. Diaz, and Nasya Razavi!



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

- We have tried to keep in touch through social media postings (find us on Facebook as a year-round presence, and on Twitter and Insta around conferences, etc.) and newsletters so that even when we cannot gather in conventional ways, you know we're out here thinking of you and appreciating the work and organizing that you do
- We have gathered as an Exec with some frequency over the past year to move FIGS goals, plans, and communications forward, but also for our own health and wellbeing as we have found community in each other. Please note the FIGS POSITIONS AVAILABLE section, and consider joining. We had an online AGM after the CAG, and are following up here to encourage members to step forward for open positions. We hope to return to a regular/larger AGM in person with an election at the CAG 2022. Please look for notice of a FIGS AGM next spring.
- We have continued to move FIGS admin over to CAG and other shared resources, to make it easier to communicate with all of you, to collect your fabulous submissions (new zine in progress! Thanks to all contributors and editors!), and to pass FIGS operations on to new Execs and other members
- We successfully applied for special CAG funding (thank you Rosemary Collard!) to host some of the fabulous feminist sessions you will read about in this newsletter (thank you student correspondents!), to bring us all together in thought and strategizing re:

feminist research, equity, and action.

Thank you to all speakers and panelists who accepted our invitations and came together for enriching discussions.

- We hosted a generous and thoughtprovoking Suzanne Mackenzie Memorial Lecture by Dr. Beverley Mullings "Beyond the dark side of resilience: Thinking through racial capitalism, dispossession, and Caribbean radical traditions" at the CAG 2021 (thank you to Dr. Mullings and UNBC for a memorable CAG!)
- I had the pleasure of organizing a feminist trivia event at CAG 2021, assisted by Brittany Davey and the amazing Bryndis O. (she taught me how to use polleverywhere.com). We did this to bring some social time, fun, and levity to the CAG since we'd all be missing the coffees, chats with friends, etc. CONGRATS to trivia champs Illy, Brandon, and Christina and to all who competed.
- I also had the delight of purchasing book store certificates of choice for our FIGS/
 CAG student prize winners. CONGRATS to Melina Sorensen, Jude Keefe, Ileana I.
 Diaz, Madu Galappaththi, Martina
 Paloheimo, Brittany Davey, Kim HillTrout, Sara Maani, and Brandon
 Pludwinski. It was great to be able to bring some small joy into people's lives with CAG funding, while supporting authors as well—
 many shared the feminist books they planned to purchase and I got to learn about some cool Canadian bookstores in various provinces.
- I am happy to announce the winners of the Student Paper Awards Shruti Raji

Kalyanarama and Lila Mansour. Thank you to Rosemary Collard & Ileana I. Diaz for adjudicating.

Graduate Student Paper Award Shruti Raji Kalyanaraman



Congratulations to Shruti Raji Kalyanaraman! Her paper entitled "Foucauldian approaches in relation to mothering in a pandemic: Understanding privileges and precarity of racialized mothering in a multiple colonialisms' framework" received the FIGS Graduate Student Paper Award. It was originally written for GFWS 6009-Advanced Feminist Theory with Professor Enakshi Dua at York University. Shruti is attached to York University's PhD program in the Gender, Feminist and Women's studies department. Her research highlights lived experiences of racialized immigrant mothers in a pandemic. She adopts Foucault's biopolitics to place immigrant mothers' experiences within historical issues of race, gender, colonialism within Canada.

Undergraduate Student Paper Award Lila Mansour



Congratulations to Lila Mansour! Her paper entitled "Working and Parenting in a Pandemic: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Working Parents in Canada" received the FIGS Undergraduate Student paper Award. Originally written for ECON 499: Independent Study – Women and the Economy with Dr. Liam Kelly at the University of Northern British Columbia. Lila is a young Canadian Muslim of Syrian origin. In 2021, she graduated as valedictorian with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Northern British Columbia. She is passionate about social justice and building equitable communities. This fall Lila will begin her next degree in law at the Lincoln Alexander School of Law at Ryerson University.

 We are also planning to order some FIGS merchandise soon, to keep us all connected with FIGS and each other, while also fundraising for future FIGS events (FIGS general account). We received a large donation from one of our members, and several of our CAG panelists and speakers donated their honoraria to FIGS. Thank you for your feminist support!

I have had the amazing task of moving the FIGS ship forward since the fall of 2018, and I have truly loved this role. Preparing for a much-needed sabbatical in 2022, however, I am also looking forward to seeing where the ship is steered next, and by whom. I know the Exec are well equipped to keep FIGS moving in the new directions that we keep determining, while also recognizing our roots and key contributions in our history.

Thank you for staying connected with FIGS in whichever way you have chosen to do so over these last 2 difficult years. We appreciate you, we value you, and we know you have not had a lot of time at all for undervalued (by academic convention) investments in feminist community. For those of you who have largely had to step away, we look forward to welcoming you back. For those of you who joined during difficult times, we are so glad you did.

If you are reading this newsletter and have not joined or renewed your membership via the CAG, PLEASE DO SO. We love growing this community and funding feminist events, activities, and prizes. Reminder—we are now FIGS: The Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group—a clear message that we welcome FEMINISTS OF ALL GENDERS, and that we are emphasizing attention to intersectional solidarity. Please spread the word and encourage others to join—FIGS IS WHAT WE MAKE IT.

Lastly, I want to issue a **GIANT FIGS THANK YOU to Kathryn Laferrière at the CAG** for maintaining excellent lines of communication and support with our Study Group in all of our efforts over the last few years.

Katie, you are an invaluable asset to the CAG as well as a very friendly, welcoming, and patient administrator/communicator/organizer.

Yours in feminist solidarity,

Zoë Meletis (OUTGOING FIGS CHAIR)

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 drown down 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!

FIGS HIGHLIGHTS AT THE CAG

by Leah I. Coppella

In recognition that, as geographers, we are and can be continuously working to decolonize the relationships between people and place, to indigenize and to decolonize the academy, the 2021 Annual Meeting & Conference of the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) commenced with a Smudge Ceremony. Lheidli T'enneh Elder, Darlene McIntosh, and VP Indigenous Initiatives, Henry Harder, welcomed attendees to Lheidli T'enneh territory, where UNBC hosted the 71st Annual Meeting & Conference. Thirteen FIGS and FIGSsponsored sessions continued this theme of building relationships by welcoming feminist researchers to share their research, while disrupting the pressure to remain productive during a pandemic with workshops and panels that encouraged resilience and solidarity. Below is a highlight of some of the FIGS sessions.

In the FIGS Panel and Strategy Session, panelists discussed how to advance equity within the political economy of universities, featuring Caroline Faria (University of Texas) and Minelle Mahtani (University of British Columbia). The panel explored antiracist work and alternative futures, followed by a collaborative brainstorm on strategies to advance equity at the university-level. Faria noted that within the racist, ablest, and heteronormative academic life, we are constantly negotiating and finding new ways to build the world that we want to see, but that often, real antiracist work "fades into cozy calls for diversity." Mahtani examined 'process', as institutionalized in the university, as an impediment to antiracist work, calling it

OPEN FIGS POSITIONS

fun! feminist! & CV-building if you need it!

Student Representative(s)—These students can take on various roles or projects of interest with FIGS, in addition to connecting FIGS with students across the country, and vice-versa. In the past, student members have connected with FIGS about special student events on their home campuses, at conferences, and more. As with the members-at-large, these representatives are meant to connect FIGS with members and potential members—you can do as much or as little as you like over and above that main role. FIGS is very interested in student voices, concerns, and activities so we encourage you to use this freedom to try out new ideas! If you expressed interest in this role at the 2021 AGM or at/after the CAG, please contact us again and re-affirm that interest. Thank you!

Chair—Coordinates the Exec and represents the leadership/member-directed paths of FIGS. Communicates with the CAG.
Generates annual reports to the CAG.
Represents FIGS in dealing with other organizations. Writes Chair's updates for newsletters. Has signing authority on FIGS funds. The Chair sometimes gets called upon for ad hoc committee participation or document review linked to position. This time commitment is the most significant but is also flexible. FIGS Exec members try to work in collaborative and mutually-supportive ways.

Treasurer—Keeps track of FIGS financials (spending; costs; membership fees as revenue; student awards; honoraria; special event budgets), and reporting. Not very time intensive but an important position and one good for gaining/building budgeting and reporting skills.

ONGOING POSITIONS

Secretary—Records and archives FIGS communications and documentation in addition to regularly attending FIGS Exec meetings. Organizes Exec meeting times, meeting agendas. Helps with general organization and communications within FIGS.

Nasya Razavi 🄰 @NasyaRazavi

Members-at-large—Attend FIGS Exec. meetings and contributes to various projects of choice (e.g. writing a piece for the newsletter; co-editing the zine; planning for special events). Connect FIGS with various departments, entities, and groups. This position can be quite involved or not very demanding—it depends on the holder's wishes and levels of comfort. There is no limit as to how many of these FIGS can welcome (3-5 might be a good number, with members being expected to attend 80%+ of FIGS meetings).

Rosemary Collard

Communications—This person is responsible for sharing FIGS news, events, calls, and programming with greater audiences. This includes social media promotion. They are the primary person in charge of our FIGS Facebook page and other social media accounts during regular times and co-editor of our newsletter. Ileana I. Diaz @diaz_illy

Outgoing Chair (and de facto Treasurer)

Continues to attend and inform FIGS meetings for 1-2 years to ensure good transfer of institutional knowledge and logistical knowledge. Zoë Meletis 2 @zedtweetz

Interested in joining the FIGS Exec? Email us at figscag@gmail.com with 'Exec Open Position' in the subject

Cont'd from p. 5

'death by consultation,' as it incorporates the same voices into its revision, often working to further marginalize people. Mahtani also considered how 'we' as a collective are navigating the work of disrupting settler-colonial and white supremacist institutions. Faria argued that we have left the real work of antiracism behind and encouraged us to turn to our students for imaginations.

The theme of alternative futures continued into the FIGS Feminist Futures Panel. Panelists were inspired by 'A feminist coven in the university' (Smyth, Linz and Hudson, 2020). The panel was called to cultivate a virtual feminist coven and panelists talked about finding comfort in the uncomfortable, the cultivation of spaces of vulnerability, and how to teach students to think critically without encouraging a criticality that tears down other scholars. A digital zine session afterwards was a digital "catch all" of creativity and support, as participants were encouraged to include their own reflections.

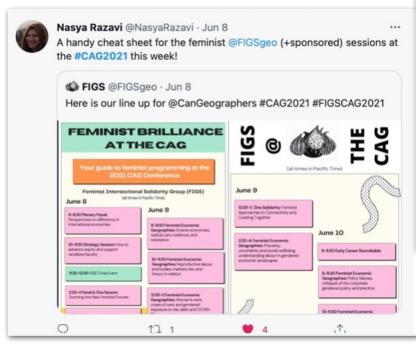


As part of the FIGS-sponsored Feminist Economic Geographies series co-organized by Nancy Worth and Alkim Karaagac, (University of Waterloo), a paper session featured Juliane Collard (University of Bern), and her paper on the Assisted Human Reproduction Act, and how its legal commitment to altruism reproduces the devaluation of reproductive labour under capitalism. Dalia Bhattacharjee (UNC-Chapel Hill), presented a paper on the marketization of reproductive labor in India, highlighting the life stories of surrogate mothers. She discussed how the private is transformed into public meanings and blurs the boundaries between production and reproduction. Claudia Hirtenfelder and Carolyn Prouse (Queen's University) presented their project on the more-than-human geographies of reproductive policy and milk demand in China, and Canada's cow and goat dairy industries. Christina Lin (University of Kiel), presented her literature review on economic geography and how to overcome the hegemony of andro- and anglocentrism.

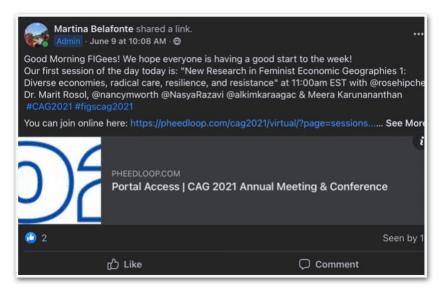
FIGS also hosted an Early Career Roundtable, where Master's students benefitted from advice about the path to PhD, as well as opportunities outside of academia that put graduate skills to use. Panelists gave advice on shifting between teaching and research roles, the highs and lows of publishing, and what it means to brand yourself.

A paper session featured Shannon Black (University of Toronto), presenting her paper on the invisibility of labour and the new geographies of work in the Canada-US hand knitting industry. Black argued that social media is a highly visual platform, where craft

FIGS TAKE OVER @ #CAG2021



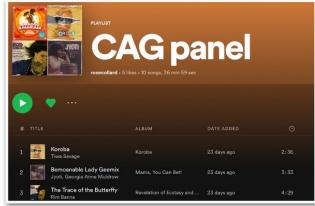
Don't forget to follow us on Twitter @FIGSgeo and join the Facebook Group @Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group (formerly CWAG) to stay up to date



Congrats to us for trending at #CAG2021 Can't stop won't stop tweeting about #FIGS!



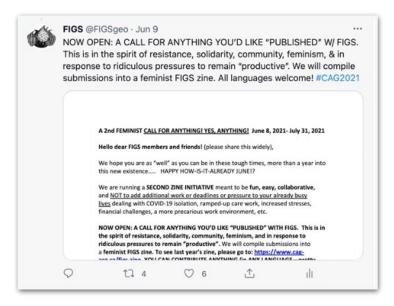
Thank you for the beautiful opening ceremony on traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh, part of the Dakelh (Carrier) First Nations. 'En Cha Huná" respecting all forms of life," encapsulates the spirit of academic freedom, respect for others, & willingness to recognize



This <u>amazing playlist</u> was the soundtrack to FIGS panels and the FIGS Feminist Trivia event! Music suggestions by Caroline Faria, Gerry Pratt and Norma Rantisi and trivia participants. It's still accessible on <u>Spotify!</u> Thank you to Zoe Meletis @zedtweetz for organizing FIGS Feminist Trivia! Congrats to our 3 trivia WINNERS Ileana, Brandon, & Christina!



Dr. Beverley Mullings, renowned scholar in the fields of political economy and feminist geographies, delivered an inspirational and insightful Suzanne Mackenzie Memorial Lecture in which she unsettles the discourse on 'resilience' to shift and include more of the notions of resistance and refusal—which ultimately work to arrest disruptions rather than adapt to them.



Part of this year's FIGS sponsored sessions:

New Research in Feminist Economic

Geographies was a huge success. A big
thank you to the organizers @alkimkaraagac

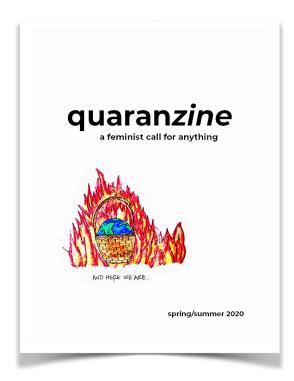
& @nancymworth What an amazing group of
Feminist scholars for #CAG2021



"Social Media Highlights" were compiled by Martina Paloheimo, FIGS social media correspondent for the CAG. Martina is a PhD Candidate at Queens University in Human Geography whose work involves community-based participatory research with families of the Indigenous Shuar Community in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Cont'd from p. 7

workers are affirmed and negated, meaning their labour is easier to see for production and consumption, yet the work itself remains largely hidden, making the messiness and politics of craft work invisible. Nancy Worth, discussant, sparked dialogue on feminist geography's place in economic work, specifically Gillian Rose's idea of asking who counts, in order to engage with a more critical economic geography.



In Spring 2020, FIGS created *quaranzine*, a zine that reflected the all too familiar feelings of being overwhelmed and overburdened during COVID-19 (editorial team: Asmita Bhutani, Ileana I. Diaz, Zoë Meletis, Nasya Razavi, Laurence Simard-Gagnon). A panel on approaches to connectivity and zine solidarity took place, with editors reflecting on their experience with the zine as a

collective effort to disrupt the academic pressures that continue, and even thrive, during global crises. The zine has since become a catalyst for new ways of building feminist solidarity. Followed by a dynamic and intimate zine-making session, participants took part in a hands-on "artivism" experience virtually by creating a page for the follow-up 2021 zine.

This year's conference asked us to confront discomfort. But it also dared us to be hopeful even in the face of tragedy, fear, pain, and death. The FIGS sessions reminded us that despite a global pandemic, virtual Zoom calls, and messy work, there will always be space, somewhere, for connection, for hope, for solidarity.

Leah I. Coppella is a writer and MA student at York University, interested in feminist and health geography.

CAG ANNUAL MEETING FIGS HIGHLIGHTS: REFUSAL AND RESISTANCE

by Kimberly Hill-Tout

More than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual attendances are seemingly no longer 'unique'. However, there was a turn noted at this year's CAG Annual Conference—a stronger endorsement through action and acknowledgement of the Indigenous lands upon which we have the privilege to live, work and play. CAG was held virtually at UNBC, which sits on the traditional territory of the *Lheidli T'enneh*, part of the Dakelh (Carrier) First Nations; and the conference reflected the keynote lecture themes by Dr. Beverley Mullings: refusal and resistance.



Across the 14 FIGS (and FIGS-sponsored) sessions, feminist intersectional research and researchers continued to show us how the field is being advanced and how the current world "as we know it" is being critiqued, challenged, and yes—refused and resisted. Dr. Mullings (Queen's University), in her Suzanne Mackenzie Memorial Lecture, unsettled the discourse on 'resilience' to shift and include more of the notions of refusal and resistance—which ultimately work to arrest disruptions rather than adapt to them. She practiced storytelling to both discuss and highlight the importance of everyday acts of refusal and resistance—indeed, the "archives of ordinariness"—which collectively rises to community action, and leads us to question who we are and how we can imagine better futures. Research imagining better futures in this conference alone spans the international scale and adds depth to topics such as: labour, care, artisan work, social enterprise and entrepreneurship, mining, youth, and the housing crisis.

A central exposure from this research are the externalities of neoliberalism. Dr. Caroline Faria (University of Texas) notes that paradoxes exist between the 'essential' and 'non-essential' labour spheres—with many people, particularly women, who are disproportionately exposed to health risks. Many presentations highlighted the additional burden taken on and experienced by women. Dr. Gerry Pratt (University of British Columbia) specifically explored the case of sending loved ones away to the Global South for (elderly) care due to its inaccessibility in the Global North.

There were also neoliberal development initiative accounts of artisanal cooperatives in Palestine by Dr. Norma Rantisi (Concordia

University), as well as mining operations in Zambia by Lesley Johnston et al. (University of Waterloo) that both ultimately do not offer many benefits for community members despite corporate claims. Likewise, Vivian Rodrígues-Rocha (Pennsylvania State University) examined social enterprises offering entrepreneurial opportunities to women in Mexico showcases the debt load and perpetuation of individual negotiation between health, finance, food, and care (see negotiating care research also by: Taneesha Mohan, Amity University; Sarah-Jane Phelan, University of Sussex; and Ceyda Sungur, Université de Paris).

The housing crisis was brought up in multiple presentations this year. From Vancouver (Cheryl-Lee Madden & G. Alexi Rodrigíquez-Arelis, University of British Columbia) to Istanbul (Esra Alkim Karaagac, University of Waterloo), there is a pattern of reno-victions and concerns about the profit-over-people turn in the rental market. Hilal Kara (Queen's University) notes that youth are increasingly the resisting force against current: housing crises, inflation, and unemployment rates. Alongside housing reno-victions, Katie Gravestock (Simon Fraser University) examines malls being constructed to display romanticized art labour and 'slow' fashionwhich obscures labour that exist within fashion commodity chains.

On the corporate side, feminist research by Alison Braithwaite (University of Waterloo) exposes the emotional ceiling that fields people out of the corporate world and into more people-friendly lines of work. There are also translating opportunities being offered to immigrant women as examined by Dr. Deborah Leslie (University of Toronto), who are otherwise an overlooked community for

hire; however, these service spheres are critiqued for the neoliberal structure they have taken. There is a larger call, therefore, for intersectional Black and Indigenous feminist analyses with relational approaches for initiatives that claim to 'help' or 'develop'.

We are reminded at this conference, "what is scholarship without action?"; certainly, research within FIGS gives us hope for further unveiling events, corporations, and realities that we must, as a community, refuse in order to imagine better futures. Next year's conference will not be one to miss as we move and look forward to seeing what we confront next.

Kimberly Hill-Tout is a second year Ph.D. student at Queen's University (which is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples). She is studying the political ecologies of meal kit delivery programs as an everyday culinary practice in Canada (e.g. HelloFresh or Goodfood), and their potential impacts on food justice movements.

EVENTS, UPDATES, WORK

FEMINIST GEOGRAPHY: PUSHING BOUNDARIES CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE: 15-17 JUNE 2022

Feminist Geography: Pushing Boundaries will be a multi-site, hybridvirtual, and flipped conference that will facilitate tons of thought-provoking conversation, dialogue and interaction across real and virtual space. The organisers are planning a North American in-person site at the University of Colorado and a collaborative effort with an in-person site in Europe (TBD). All conference presentations will be available to every participant and will include two keynote panels composed of scholars, activists, and artists. Conference themes include (but are not limited to!) community engagement, pedagogy, mentoring, and visualization.

figszine 2021

Following the warm reception of quaranzine in 2020, this Summer we launched another round of the FIGS Call for Anything. Watch FIGS spaces to enjoy the wonderful contributions in the 2nd zine dose coming this Fall.

Feeling nostalgic? Take a trip down feminist memory lane via the FIGS (CWAG) newsletters archives.



The <u>Cochabamba City Research Team</u> of the <u>GenUrb network</u> teamed up with local graphic artist Phuyu (fb: @phuyudibujando; Insta: @phuyu.no) to produce coronavirus resources in Quechua. Few resources in the Indigenous language exist in online spaces the 1.5 million+ Quechua-speakers in Bolivia. Find more at relatosenvozalta.com.



@FIGSgeo is our new
Twitter handle!

Get in touch with FIGS easily via our new general inbox <u>figscag@gmail.com</u>. This includes news, events, CfP, publications, or contributions you'd like to submit to the newsletter.