

Call for Papers

Liminal: The Second Annual Interdisciplinary, Open Access Critical Femininities Conference

The Centre for Feminist Research at York University invites abstracts for the second annual York University Critical Femininities Conference on the theme of “Liminal,” which will take place virtually from August 25-28, 2022.

To be liminal is to be in between or in transition; on the threshold of the sensory, the liminal may produce both hauntings and longings. We present the concept of “femininity” as liminal or palimpsestic itself (Alexander, 2005), inseparable from the ongoing echos of cisheteropatriarchy, colonization, white supremacy, capitalism, ableism, and fatphobia that interpellated it (Brownmiller, 1984; Bordo, 1993; Davis, 1983; Deliovsky, 2008), as well as animated by the simultaneous reverberations of feminist, Black, Indigenous, racialized, trans, and queer interventions which create more capacious futures for femininity (Lorde, 1984; McCann, 2018; Muñoz 1999; Nash, 2011; Rice, 2009; Shraya, 2018). Julia Serano’s (2008) foundational work on transfemininity reveals femininity’s impermanence and malleability, both socially and scientifically (re)constructed. These critical undertakings permit an understanding of femininity as an embodied site of many assemblages and temporalities, transforming it (as well as gender writ large) from a modality of imperial domination into a place of past-present-future becoming and a practice of transgenerational kinship. How might we understand femininity as nonlinear, transitory, and transformative? How might patriarchal phases of femininity be contested or reclaimed?

The field of critical femininities, too, is liminal; still an emergent discipline, critical femininities draws from multiple sites of knowledge and knowledge-production. Femme theory springs not from academia but from the lineage of femme and queer feminist life-writing, often in memoir or edited anthologies that include a range of forms—essays, poetry, art, and photographs (Brightwell & Taylor, 2021; Hollibaugh, 2000; Lorde, 1984; Nestle, 1987, 1992; Pratt, 2005; Schwartz, 2018). The year 2022 presents an opportunity to reflect on the lineage of critical femininity studies; it marks 20 years since the publication of *Brazen Femme: Queering Femininity* (2002), edited by Chloë Brushwood Rose and Anna Camilleri, and follows the passing of prolific Black feminist bell hooks, whose writing on feminism, belonging, and love gets to the heart of what motivates the generation of critical femininities. The present is an eternally liminal space, caught between past and future; between settler colonialist-white supremacist-cisheteropatriarchal-capitalist histories and the worldings of radical love and transformation still possible.

We invite critical, exploratory, reproachful, and celebratory explorations of the liminalities of femme, femininity, and fields of critical femininities and femme theory. Submissions can be conference presentations, or more experimental, including spoken word and poetic expressions, dance and other visual performances, auditory engagements, such as music, song, and storytelling, or any other creative format that expands the boundaries of knowledge production. We welcome submissions from graduate students, junior scholars, and anyone working beyond the university.

We invite submissions on the liminalities of femininity. Possible themes may include (but are not limited to):

- Intersectional critiques and perspectives on femininity and critical femininities, including feminist/trans/nonbinary/queer engagements with the various legacies of “femininity”
- Developing/critiquing the ‘canon’ in critical femininities and/or femme theory
- Femininity and ecological futurities, pasts, and presents
- Feminization of labour and the future of (care) work
- Slow fashion, slow food, and slow scholarship
- Feminine transitions & transformations
- Experiences of/between/beyond girlhood, motherhood, and aging
- Femininity and sexualities
- Queer, crip, and trauma time
- Femininity, disability, and neurodivergence
- Personal and collective archives of femininities
- The feminine and the status of femininity in specific cultures, communities, histories, political movements, or texts (academic, creative, or media)
- Traditions, practices, or rituals of femininity and femme
- Monstrous Femininities: Anti-racist and anti-colonial innovations on femininity, past and present
- Otherworldly femininities, including the sacred, spiritual and digital realms
- Collective reimaginings of femininity beyond the colonial divide
- And more

Please submit a 250 word abstract and 100 word bio to criticalfemininities@yorku.ca by June 15, 2022.

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