LIISBETH DISPATCH #63

Sample Newsletter ¤ by Meral Mohammad Jamal

The power of two Black women documentary filmmakers, growing through a pandemic and helping create the next generation of environmental protectors…

JUNE 16, 2020

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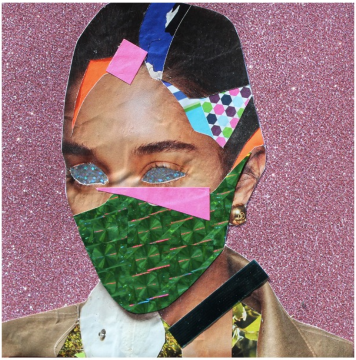

Illustration by Ilene Sova

WHAT WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

We've reached a tipping point.

As artist Irene Sova, who made the collage above as part of a fundraising campaign for Toronto food bank, The Stop, says in her artist's statement: *Our former eyes have been replaced, and the curtain pulled back on the inequities that we didn't quite fully see before; rampant ableism, deep racisim, vitriolic sexism and complex classism.*

Making deep systemic change requires seeing with new eyes. The process can be painful and uncomfortable and not even fully understood before we embark on it. And in the amidst of a global pandemic, in the wake of racial atrocities in the US and Canada, we question whether our efforts are even working? Activism fatigue is a real thing, but as changemakers, we have a responsibility to keep challenging the status quo, making our voices heard, and insisting on justice. Maybe for real systems change, the culture shift must start with our kids? COVID-19 has exposed inequalities and vulnerabilities in our healthcare, education, and food systems. And while a balcony garden isn't going to solve the issues of disrupted global food supply chains, it may well teach us a better way forward.

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, you are invited to join us in the Feminist Enterprise Commons (FEC) to Work It Out Together (WIOT—rhymes with RIOT). Every Friday, we host an online discussion in an un-surveilled, safe space where you can test ideas, ask questions, listen, and look at things with different eyes.

Moving through this tipping point in history, LiisBeth is committed to supporting Black Lives Matter. Read our full statement on our site.

NEW FEATURES ON LIISBETH

FUEL THE MOVEMENT

Creating informed and inspirational content to support feminist changemaking takes hundreds of hours each month. If you find value and nourishment here, please consider becoming a donor subscriber or patron at a level of your choosing. Priced between a cup of coffee or one take out salad per month.

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You can also contribute to our "Sustainability Fund" "or an open donation in any amount.

SUSTAIN FUND

OPEN DONATION

(Left to right): Ngardy Conteh George and Alison Duke
Photo provided by Oya Media Group

THE POWER OF TWO

With the ongoing protests against police brutality and anti-Black racism, documentary filmmakers Ngardy Conteh George and Alison Duke of Oya Media Group feel the world is finally ready for the Black Canadian stories they've spent most of their careers sharing.

Sam, Maxim, and Lisa tending a victory garden
Photo by Britt Gill

GROWING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

Vancouver-based urban gardening company Victory Gardens is helping meet the needs of COVID-19 by finding strength in its co-op roots.

Still from the Planet Protector Academy series, featuring Lashyla Louis as the Red Apprentice
Cinematographer: Nathan Frost

THIS SHOW MUST GO ON

One theatre company's big idea to save the world: foster conversations on conservation through theatre, and teach kids how to be environmental superheroes.

Photo provided by Dhara Patel

THE LANGUAGE OF CHANGE

While North America reels from recent racist killings, Patel reminds us that there remain other forms of violence. In this personal essay, she boldly shares a true story of an arranged marriage gone wrong.

PK'S VIEWPOINT

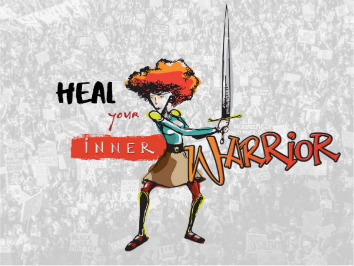
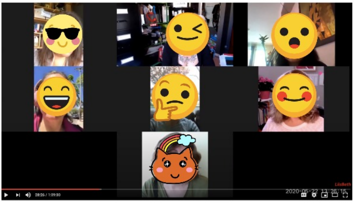


Illustration by John Mutch

COPING WITH ACTIVIST BURNOUT IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

Each week, I am privileged to host "check in" calls for several communities of feminist enterprise activists—people who create and leverage their enterprises to support feminism plus other social and eco-justice movements they believe in. These calls have me wondering, are we risking serious burnout?

J.K. Mütch



WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FEC, STAYS IN THE FEC

The Feminist Enterprise Commons was launched to support diverse founders of innovative projects and enterprises interested in personal transformation and deepening their work related to changing business culture and building oppression-free, anti-racist enterprises.

We share, collaborate and yes, have some amazing discussions! Sadly, we can't share them with you here. What happens in the FEC, stays in the FEC.

However, if you are interested in learning in community with us, you can check out the FEC here. As a newsletter subscriber, we offer you not only two months–but THREE months free!

LIISBETH FIELD NOTES

Photo by Jasmine Foong

MEET MERAL, INTERN EXTRAORDINAIRE!

We are thrilled to announce that Meral Mohammad Jamal will be joining LiisBeth as our summer intern starting June 8, 2020 through to August 28, 2020.

Meral is an undergraduate journalism student at Carleton University who is entering her final year in September. Her background includes serving as an intern at Canadian Geographic and National Editor, and News Editor for The Charlatan (Carleton's University student newspaper). Her writing experience includes writing features about the Ottawa Women's March and the university's sexual violence policy.

Meral has also received several awards and acknowledgements for her work including the Northern Writing Prize (Briarpatch Magazine) in 2019, and the winner of the 2020 Emerge Media Awards in the feature story category and has worked with a variety of publishing technologies including InDesign, WordPress, Mailchimp, plus video and audio editing tools.

We asked Meral what she does for fun and she replied "I enjoy reading and have just finished reading Well-Read Black Girl by Glory Edim, a collection of essays by Black women writers who found themselves in literature, and the role books play in helping us recognize and understand our own stories. I am also currently watching History 101 on Netflix."

Below, you will see the outcome of Meral's great idea–to make our downloadable list of book recommendations more meaningful–have every advisory board member commit to reading one book on the list that we have not read before.

Please welcome Meral to the LiisBeth team and community!

Photo by Road Trip with Raj on Unsplash

FREE DOWNLOADABLE!

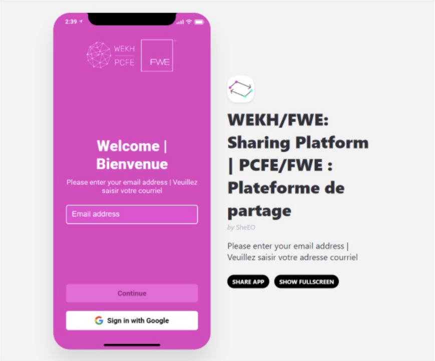
LIISBETH'S ANTI-BLACK RACISM READING LIST

Many organizations are recommending anti-Black racism books that everyone should read, at LiisBeth we're taking the opportunity to ask ourselves, what should *we* be reading—to better understand and address anti-Black racism—and have the knowledge we gain inform and improve the work we do as feminists?

As surprise feminist Spider-Man's uncle, Ben, says in the movie: with great power, comes great responsibility. While we don't have all the power in the world, we do have the power to educate ourselves on anti-Black racism, and to foster honest conversations about it in our societies, communities, and workplaces.

LiisBeth's reading list consists of 40 (20 Canadian) books on anti-Black racism in North America by **womxn writers**. A compilation of both timely and timeless reads, the list is a beginner's guide to important anti-Black racism literature from and by members of the Black community.

As just one part of our commitment to help end anti-Black racism, every member of our advisory board and staff has committed to reading at least one book from the list before the end of this year. If you're interested in following along on our journey, join us in our book club on the Feminist Enterprise Commons (FEC).



Welcome | Bienvenue

Please enter your email address | Veuillez saisir votre courriel

WEKH/FWE: Sharing Platform | PCFE/FWE : Plateforme de partage

by SheEO

Please enter your email address | Veuillez saisir votre adresse courriel

JOIN THE GIFT ECONOMY!

Hello help! Hello resources! And hell yes to strengthening our enterprises!

The Women Enterprise Knowledge Hub new app is now live! The **WEKH/FWE Sharing Platform** is funded by Ryerson University's Diversity Institute's Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub in collaboration with the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE). Sign up (for free) to the sharing platform here https://wekhfwe.glideapp.io/

Based on gift economy principles, the app enables you to **ask** what your business needs and **give** what you have to support others.

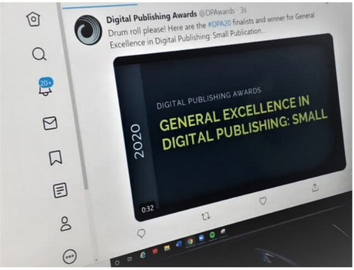
marvin's room
with Amanda Parris
The home of R&B on CBC
From Marvin Gaye to Drake

Photo credit: Twitter @CBCMarvinsRoom

A PLAYLIST TO MEDITATE, MOBILIZE AND MAINTAIN THIS MOMENT

Millions of people around the world have taken to the streets to protest police brutality and anti-Black racism. This episode of Marvin's Room with Amanda Parris on CBC Radio is in solidarity with that movement. From Beyonce and Kendrick Lamar…to Michael Kiwanuka and Haviah Mighty.

(Source: CBC.ca)



Digital Publishing Awards @DPAwards · 3s
Drum roll please! Here are the #DPA20 finalists and winner for General Excellence in Digital Publishing: Small Publication...

LIISBETH WAS NOMINATED!

Last month, LiisBeth was nominated as a finalist for General Excellence in Digital Publishing by the Canadian Digital Publishing Awards organization!

The Tyee won, but we were thrilled to have been nominated along with The Local!

We could not be more proud of our amazing core editorial team of Margaret Webb, Lana Pesch, Mai Nyugen, and Champagne Thomson, plus our over 40 contributors, supporters and our amazing volunteer advisory board.

NEXT YEAR!

On Being Extras | EP277

Race and Healing: A Body Practice

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OnBeing.org

RACE AND HEALING: A BODY PRACTICE

Find a quiet place and experience this short, simple body practice offered in Resmaa's conversation with Krista on the *On Being* episode, 'Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence.'

Therapist and trauma specialist Resmaa Menakem is working with old wisdom and very new science about our bodies and nervous systems, and all we condense into the word "race." "Your body — all of our bodies — are where changing the status quo must begin."

Resmaa's book, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, includes many more practices designed for black bodies, for white bodies, and even for blue (police) bodies. He also offers a free online course on healing racialized trauma on his website.

(Source: OnBeing.org)

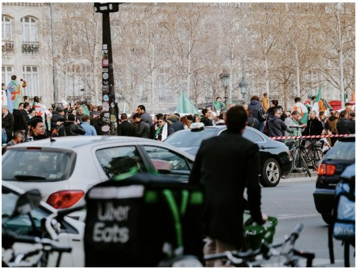


Photo by Matt Seymour on Unsplash

DO RIOTS WORK?

Author and advocate for nonviolence Rivera Sun shares her thoughts and recommends **three articles** on recent events that have occurred in the US.

"When systems fail, people rise up, using mass protests, boycotts, strikes, and more to demand justice. They refuse to go along with "life-as-usual" or "business-as-usual" until substantial changes occur. The uprising in the United States and beyond has brought hundreds of thousands into the streets (despite a pandemic) and is an outgrowth of years of concerted organizing for racial justice. The mass protests and other actions have secured dozens of small and large changes for racial justice, including defunding of police units and funding of social services and crisis teams, removal of police from public schools, removal of numerous statues of racist/colonialist historic figures, banning of confederate flags, reversals of stances from organizations like the National Football League (NFL) on #TakeAKnee protests, pledges of hundreds of millions of dollars to racial justice work, policy changes connected to Black Lives Matter demands, and much more.

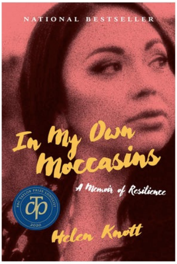
Of the many articles you could read on what's happening, I recommend these three for starters. Two are Black women organizers, the last is from the world's pre-eminent scholar on civil resistance, Erica Chenoweth, on why this uprising signals a sea change in US politics."

Being Black In The US Is Living In A War; An Uprising Was Inevitable: by Zenobia Jeffries Warfield.

Black Lives Matter Inspires Us To Imagine A World Without Police: An Interview w/ BLM Organizer Nicole Carty.

Black Lives Matter Protests Are The Broadest In Decades & Spreading To Small Towns; This Signals A Sea Change For the United States by Lara Putnam, Erica Chenoweth, and Jeremy Pressman

WHAT WE'RE READING



A nationally bestselling book on the struggle of addiction and the power of Indigenous resilience.

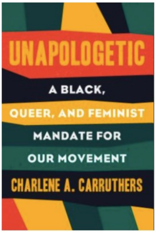
Helen Knott, a highly accomplished Indigenous woman, seems to have it all. But in her memoir, she offers a different perspective. *In My Own Moccasins* is an unflinching account of addiction, intergenerational trauma, and the wounds brought on by sexual violence. It is also the story of sisterhood, the power of ceremony, the love of family, and the possibility of redemption.

With gripping moments of withdrawal, times of spiritual awareness, and historical insights going back to the signing of Treaty 8 by her great-great grandfather, Chief Bigfoot, her journey exposes the legacy of colonialism, while reclaiming her spirit.

“*In My Own Moccasins* never flinches. The story goes dark, and then darker. We live in an era where Indigenous women routinely go missing, our youth are killed and disposed of like trash, and the road to justice doesn't seem to run through the rez. Knott's journey is familiar, filled with the fallout of residential school, racial injustice, alcoholism, drugs, and despair. But she skillfully draws us along and opens up her life, her family, and her communities to show us a way forward. It's the best kind of memoir: clear-eyed, generous, and glorious.... Bear witness to the emergence of one of the most powerful voices of her generation.” —Eden Robinson, author of *Son of a Trickster* and *Monkey Beach* (from the foreword)

“Helen writes beautifully and painfully, about her own life and the lives of many of our sisters. A strong, gentle voice removing the colonial blanket and exposing truth.” —Maria Campbell, author of *Halfbreed*

(Source: University of Regina Press)



This 21st-century activist's guide to upending mainstream ideas about race, class, and gender carves out a path to collective liberation.

Drawing on Black intellectual and grassroots organizing traditions, including the Haitian Revolution, the US civil rights movement, and LGBTQ rights and feminist movements, *Unapologetic* challenges all of us engaged in the social justice struggle to make the movement for Black liberation more radical, more queer, and more feminist. This book provides a vision for how social justice movements can become sharper and more effective through principled struggle, healing justice, and leadership development. It also offers a flexible model of what deeply effective organizing can be, anchored in the Chicago model of activism, which features long-term commitment, cultural sensitivity, creative strategizing, and multiple cross-group alliances. And *Unapologetic* provides a clear framework for activists committed to building transformative power, encouraging young people to see themselves as visionaries and leaders.

One of America's most influential activists, Charlene A. Carruthers has spent over a decade developing leaders as an effective strategist, community organizer, and educator.

"Charlene Carruthers is a powerful organizer, radical thinker, paradigm-shifter, and one of the most influential political voices of her generation. Anyone seriously interested in the struggle for Black liberation in this country needs to listen carefully to what she has to say."
—Barbara Ransby, author of *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* and *Making All Black Lives Matter*

(Sources: Charlene Carruthers and Indiebound)

AND FINALLY . . . IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

- Big shout out to Feminist Enterprise Commons member (a.k.a. FEC'er) Danielle Brewin Graham who had enough of gender washing in the venture capital space and set out to co-create Sandpiper Ventures, a new fund for women entrepreneurs. Want to know more? Just ask Danielle or check out this story in CanadianBusinessSME
- Kudos to Sandpiper Venture but there is a long way to go. This Betakit.com article reveals the horrifying truth of about being a Black woman founder in Canada. "The past few weeks have shown us that systemic anti-Black racism and discriminatory practices are alive and well across Canada and the US." and "Of the thousands of Canadian venture deals produced from 2014 to 2019, so few Black women founders raised money that these figures are very close to nothing." You can contribute to FoundHers, a nationwide research study examining the investment and financing options for Black women founders by a team of women researchers. FoundHers is mentored by Sandpiper Ventures.
- **What does a feminist economic recovery plan for Canada post-COVID-19 look like?** Following Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women's April 14 announcement of a feminist economic recovery plan for COVID-19, The Massey Dialogues at the University of Toronto asked the question the rest of us have been thinking: what might and should a post-COVID-19 feminist economic recovery plan for Canada look like? In this June 9 conversation with Maya Roy, CEO of YWCA Canada and a member of Canada's expert panel on Early Learning and Child Care, and Anjum Sultana, the Director of Public Policy & Strategic Communications at YWCA Canada, Massey principal Nathalie Des Rosiers explores **the benefits of more housing and shelters, a gender-balanced economic recovery task force and developing a national childcare strategy,** among others. Watch the livestream here. If you're interested in notes from the event, join us in the Feminist Enterprise Commons (FEC).
- **Wondering about women entrepreneurship policy and COVID-19?** While traditional recessions tend to affect male-dominated sectors more acutely—manufacturing, construction etc., the pandemic and associated policy responses (social distancing) have had a major impact on the hospitality and retail—industries where women entrepreneurs are over-represented. COVID-19 has also drastically reduced access to out-of-home childcare which has the potential to affect many women entrepreneurs' ability to ensure business continuity. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) organized a webinar on June 9 to talk about current women's entrepreneurship policy as an untapped area of potential growth: **how women entrepreneurs have been impacted differently by the pandemic and policy responses to it, and what policymakers should be doing more of or doing differently to better support women entrepreneurs.** For notes from the webinar, join us in the Feminist Enterprise Commons (FEC).

That's a wrap for Dispatch #63!

The protests, pandemic, and alarming political rhetoric signals loudly that the world is in much need of change. Eloquent and brilliantly written articles, op-eds and statements of solidarity suggest that maybe, things are changing materially–this time for real.

Yet, the other day, my partner engaged in a conversation with a 30-something stranger while standing in a social distanced line at a highway stop Tim Hortons about an hour outside of Toronto.
"Nice day eh?" he said.
The stranger replied, "It would be much better if we got rid of Trudeau and Ford."
My partner kicks the ball back. "Would you rather we have Trump?"
Stranger replies emphatically and with conviction, "Hell yes."

A few days later, I learned that my neighbour, a young precariously employed Millennial quit his job at a small bike store after hearing his boss loudly make a outrageous racist statement to an Arabic customer's face. My neighbour needs the work. It was a selfless, bold step in the middle of the pandemic.

We live in a complex world. But let the caring and the drive for change continue. We need to fight for the world we know we are collectively capable of building…eventually.

Hugs. Peace out. See you again at the end of July!

Petra Kassun-Mutch

Meral Jamal

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← The Language of Change

Remembering our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls →

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