

## **LaConference 2025: October 17th and 18th, Vancouver, Canada**

### **Feminine Desire: Honoring the Life and Work of Anne Dufourmantelle and Mari Ruti**

---

#### **Keynote Speakers:**

Carol Owens, Noëlle McAfee and Ana Houine

Biography at the end of the page

---

The LaConference 2025 will explore and honor the work of two remarkable and prolific psychoanalytic thinkers who left us too early: Anne Dufourmantelle (1964 - 2017) and Mari Ruti (1964 - 2023). Dufourmantelle and Ruti marked our zeitgeist with intellectual and emotional rigor, courageously posing questions that over-spilled the rigid, phallic order. Both shared an intimate relationship with the Lacan Salon as keynote speakers in the [LaConference 2016, On Love](#). Ruti and Dufourmantelle thematized secrecy, vulnerability, and sympathy. They explored the subjective experience of the Real as a limit of the self. In particular, Ruti reflected on the transformative potential of vulnerability while Dufourmantelle celebrated risk and tenderness as necessary conditions for the possibility of subjectivation. Dufourmantelle and Ruti embraced risk and shattered the narcissistic fantasies that constrain subjective renewal.

Does their work speak to a novel approach to feminine desire? Traditionally, psychoanalysis addressed femininity from the perspective of jouissance rather than desire. For example, Freud approached femininity from the perspective of the hysteric patient while post-Freudians such as Lacan circumscribed it within a structural binary, such as in the theory of “sexuation,” to elucidate two main forms of desire and enjoyment, devoid of anatomical base. Famously, Lacan identifies “woman” as the “not-all” (pas toute), situating her beyond the phallic fantasy of the “one” who is not-castrated. Feminine desire intimates an ontological enigma that defies our theories of sex and gender as irreducibly social or biological.

The LaConference 2025 will stake a claim on feminine desire beyond jouissance. Our question is: How can feminine desire manifest its constructive—and destructive—potentiality beyond the death drive, that is, beyond that 'dark continent' neither Freud nor Lacan dared tread? We will explore this crucial question through Ruti and Dufourmantelle’s insightful works. Questions we invite participants to address include but are not limited to:

How can we rethink the necessity of risk, tenderness, and vulnerability? Can we understand vulnerability without risk, and is that even desirable?

How does psychoanalysis instruct us to live our lives and what does this behoove in terms of one's drive and desire?

According to Dufourmantelle, "To become a psychoanalyst is to cross over to the secret's side. It is to choose the shadows, the clandestine voyage, a certain silence—to be a migrant forever." How might we understand secrecy in today's exhibitionistic and 'post-truth' social discourse?

What is to become of a culture that can no longer think about risk except as a heroic act, pure madness, or deviant conduct?

Dufourmantelle proposes that "gentleness shares with childhood a kind of natural community but also a power." Must we recover childhood levity to overcome the profound anxiety of our time?

How do Ruti and Dufourmantelle problematize Freudian and post-Freudian understandings of the feminine, her jouissance and desire?

Why has feminine desire proven to be such an enigma for psychoanalysis and does *écriture féminine* mark a threshold in its social, political and clinical figuration?

---

### **Keynote Speakers Biographies**

Noëlle McAfee is a critical theorist working in the tradition of the Frankfurt School, drawing on feminist philosophy, psychoanalysis, and political theory. She holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Texas (1998), an MA in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1990), and an MA in public policy from Duke University (1987). Previously she has taught at UMass Lowell, Brandeis University, and George Mason University. In addition to being Professor and Chair of Philosophy at Emory, she holds a secondary appointment as Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. She is also a faculty member of the Emory University Psychoanalytic Institute; the director of Emory's Psychoanalytic Studies Program; affiliated

faculty in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and chair of the Faculty of Psychoanalysis at Emory University. McAfee is the author of over 80 articles and essays and five books, including *Fear of Breakdown: Politics and Psychoanalysis* (Columbia, 2019), which won the American Psychoanalytic Association's 2020 Courage to Dream Book award. Her other books include *Feminism: A Quick Immersion* (Tibidabo Publishing 2021), *Democracy and the Political Unconscious* (Columbia 2008), *Julia Kristeva* (Routledge 2004), and *Habermas, Kristeva, and Citizenship* (Cornell 2000). She is also on the board of officers of the feminist section of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, where she oversees dozens of entries in feminist theory, and co-editor of the *Kettering Review*. Her current research interests are in critical theory, psychoanalysis, feminist philosophy, and political theory.

Carol Owens is a psychoanalyst and clinical supervisor in private practice in Dublin, Ireland. She is a registered practitioner member of the APPI, co-chair of the APCS, and an affiliate member of the CP-UK. She is series editor for [Studying Lacan's Seminars at Routledge](#) and the coordinating editor at PCS Review a section of Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society. Recent publications include: *Precarities of 21st Century Childhoods* (with Michael O'Loughlin and Louis Rothschild), Lexington 2024; *Studying Lacan's seminar VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, 2024; and *Psychoanalysis and the small screen; the year the cinemas closed*, (with Sarah Meehan O'Callaghan), Routledge, 2024.

Ana Hounie is a psychoanalyst and professor with extensive experience at the Faculty of Psychology of the University of the Republic of Uruguay. Head of the research group "The clinical, the aesthetic and the political in the processes of subjectivation", she holds a PhD from the Complutense University of Madrid, in the Research Program in Psychoanalysis of the Faculty of Philosophy. She has published numerous articles and book chapters and participated in multiple academic activities internationally as a lecturer and guest professor in Italy, Spain, France, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, working on the relationships between psychoanalysis, art, philosophy and literature. Her research can be found [here](#).

# LaConference: Feminine Desire

## Day 1 – Friday, October 17

**8:30 – 9:00 AM**

Registration & Morning Coffee

**9:00 – 9:10 AM**

Welcome: Hilda Fernandez

**9:10 – 9:30 AM**

Land Acknowledgement, Opening Remarks: Wayne Wapeemukwa

**9:30 – 11:00 AM Panel 1: Feminine Threats**

- Alois Sieben
- Susanna Zhang (online)
- Juan Luis de la Mora and Manuel Outón

Moderator: Clint Burnham

**11:00 – 11:15 AM Coffee Break**

**11:15 – 12:45 PM Panel 2: Risk**

- Kenna Borland
- Jake Cowan
- Kamla Persaud

Moderator: Rachel Moxham

**12:45 – 2:00 PM Lunch Break**

**2:00 – 3:30 PM Panel 3: Écriture Féminine**

- Cindy Zeiher
- Mara Gonzalez
- Suhrida Yadavalli
- Désirée Jung (online)

Moderator: Mandana Mansouri

**3:30 – 3:45 PM Coffee Break**

**3:45 – 5:15 PM Panel 4: Personal Encounters**

- Erin Soros
- Nicolette Noble
- Eddy Wang
- Hilda Fernandez

Moderator: Am Johal

**5:15 – 5:30 PM Coffee Break / Transition to Keynote**

**5:30 – 7:00 PM Keynote Address followed by Q&A: Noëlle McAfee.**

**7:00 – 8:00 PM Dinner Break / Transit to Gallery Gachet**

**8:00 – 10:00 PM Gallery Gachet / Curated by Dan Starling**

**Keynote by Carol Owens at 8:30 PM**

## **Day 2 – Saturday, October 18**

**9:00 – 9:15 AM**

Morning Announcements

**9:15 – 10:45 AM Panel 5: The Political**

- Clint Burnham
- Fiona Fisher
- Calum Matheson

Moderator: Cindy Zeiher

**10:45 – 11:00 AM Coffee Break**

**11:00 – 12:30 PM Panel 6: Theology**

- Ethan Yu
- Rayan Magon and Jaelyn Guardado
- Paria Rahimi

Moderator: Juan Luis de la Mora

**12:30 – 1:45 PM Lunch Break**

**1:45 – 3:15 PM Panel 7: Clinical**

- Ana Minozzo
- Colt Hutchinson
- Angie Voela (online)

Moderator: Hilda Fernandez

**3:15 – 3:30 PM Coffee Break**

**3:30 – 5:00 PM Panel 8: Queering Analysis**

- Simone Atenea Medina Polo
- Rachel Moxham
- Nicole Monaco

Moderator: Nicolette Noble

**5:00 – 5:15 PM Coffee Break / Transition to Keynote**

**5:15 – 6:45 PM Keynote Address followed by Q&A – Ana Hounie**

**6:45 – 7:00 PM Closing Remarks & Farewell**