

The Hidden Face of Suicide

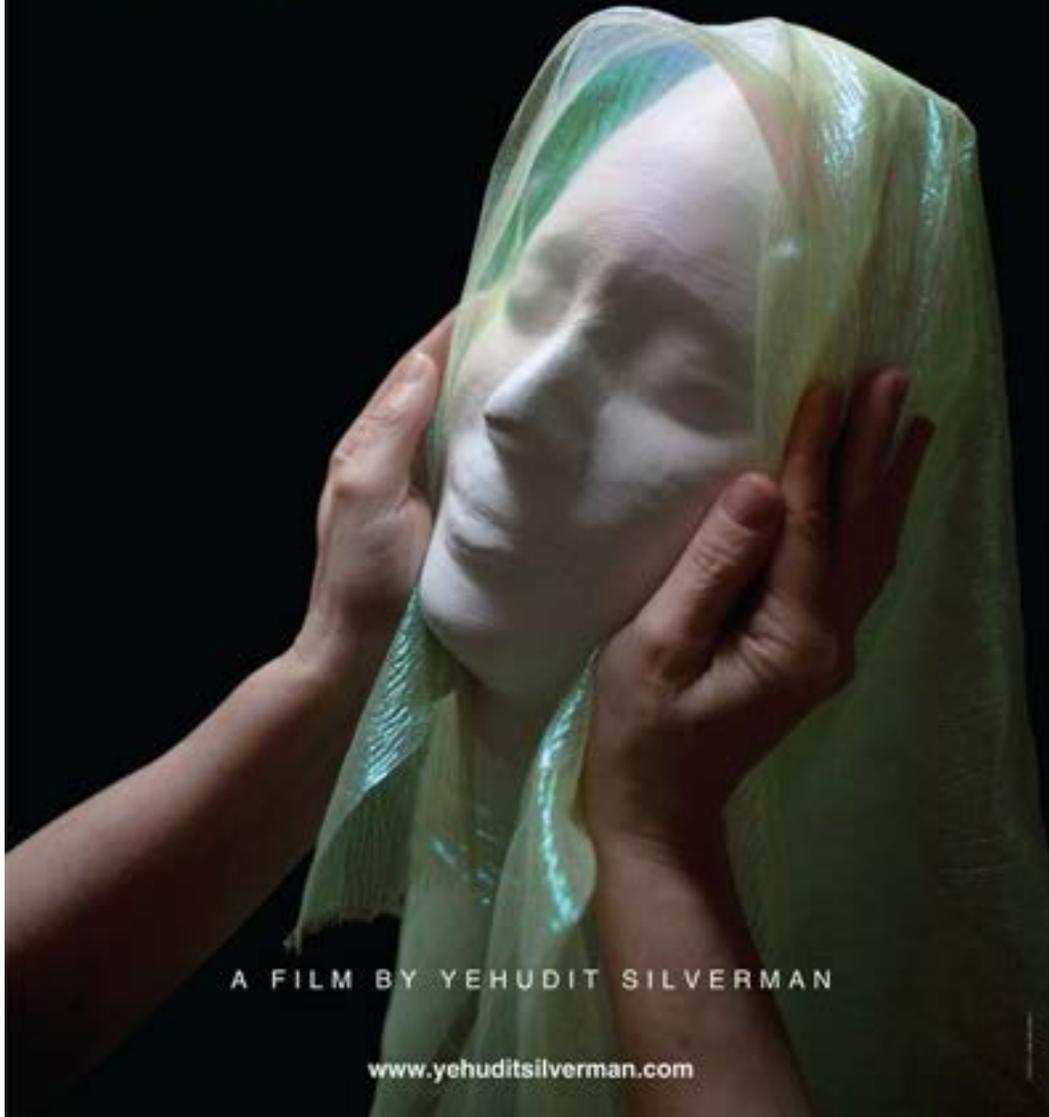
Written, produced and directed by Yehudit Silverman

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THE HIDDEN FACE of SUICIDE



A FILM BY YEHUDIT SILVERMAN

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The Hidden Face of Suicide

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The Hidden Face of Suicide enters the world of survivors, those who have lost loved ones to suicide, and reveals their remarkable stories. Looking for the story behind the silence in her own family, Silverman sets out on a journey of understanding and transformation. Using masks, the survivors find a unique and creative way to express the unspeakable. Their journey brings to light the danger of secrets and the terrible cost of silence.

To view the film trailer, please visit <https://www.reelhouse.org/yehuditsilverman/the-hidden-face-of-suicide/hfos-trailer>

<https://www.kanopy.com/product/hidden-face-suicide>

To view interview on Mountain Lake Public Television, New York, September 2015, please visit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFAOnut9B-I>



“... a stark, deeply moving, honestly heartfelt documentary...”

Toula Foscolos, *The Monitor* August, 2010^[1]_[SEP]

“...goes behind the veil of silence... and concludes that healing demands an end to silence...”

John Griffin, *The Montreal Gazette* August 27, 2010

“In trying to understand that silence, Silverman created a touching film that raises awareness...”

Anthony Bonaparte, *The Suburban*

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WINNER BEST DOCUMENTARY NORTH AMERICA UNDER 60 MINUTES

Heart of England International Film Festival, 2010

WINNER - AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN FILMMAKING

Canada International Film Festival, 2011



OFFICIAL SELECTION AT:

International Film Festival of Thailand, Kanachanaburi, 2011

International Film Festival of Australia, Barossa Valley, 2011^[1]_[SEP]

International Film Festival of Mind, Body, Spirit & Ecology, South Wales, 2011

International Film Festival South Africa Howick, KZN, South Africa, 2010

Montreal World Film Festival, Montreal, Quebec, 2010^[1]_[SEP]

International Film Festival Ireland, Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland, 2010

Chagrin Falls International Documentary Film Festival USA, Cleveland, Ohio, 2010



FEATURED THEATRICAL SCREENINGS

Cinema du Parc, Montreal (2012), Curzon Soho Cinema, as part of their DOCDAYS series (2011), De Seve Cinema, Montreal (2011)

TELEVISION

MAtv CITYLIFE (December 9th, 2015), Mountain Lake Public Television, New York (September 18th & 20th, 2015)

COMMUNITY, UNIVERSITY, CONFERENCE SCREENINGS

Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto, Japan 2013), Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference (Niagara Falls, Ontario, 2012), Drama Therapy, Expressive Arts Therapies Conferences (New Haven CT, New York, NY, 2012), The Montreal Children's Hospital Department of Adolescent Medicine (2011), Centre de recherche et d'intervention sur le suicide et l'euthanasie (CRISE) at UQAM (2011), Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, (Montreal, Quebec, 2011)

AVAILABLE AT LIBRARIES, RESEARCH CENTRES,

ORGANIZATIONS Centre to recherche et d'intervention sur le suicide et

l'euthanasie (CRISE) at UQAM, McGill University Counselling Service, 25 Montreal public libraries, 20 universities internationally including University of Leeds, UK, Suicide Information Centre, Calgary, Alberta, American Information for Suicide Prevention, New York, New York, American Association of Suicidology,



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Writer, Director, Producer, Composer, Narrator

Yehudit Silverman



Featuring



Caroline Smart

Gilda Teoli

Hugh Ball

Arthur Silverman

Rita Silverman



Camera **Martin Duckworth** Cinematographer/DP

Editor **André Elias**

Post Production

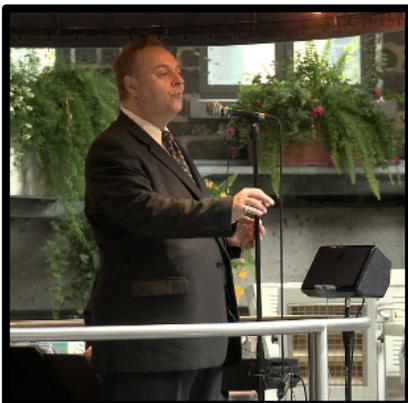
Running time: 00:58:30^[11]_[SEP]

Aspect Ratio: 1.78 (16x9 Video)^[11]_[SEP]

File Format: HD Color^[11]_[SEP]

Production end date: March, 2010

English with optional French subtitles



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Biographies

Yehudit Silverman, M.A., R-DMT, RDT, Former Chair of the Creative Arts Therapies Department at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, is a registered Dance/Movement Therapist and a registered Drama Therapist. Her first film, *The Story Within: myth and fairytale in therapy* (2004), which is available with French and Turkish subtitles, has been aired on A&E's television show "Breakfast with the Arts" and has been screened internationally at various conferences and universities. Her second film, *The Hidden Face of Suicide* (2010), has been translated into French subtitles and dubbed into Polish for Polish television.. Yehudit has presented her work and films internationally. At many screenings, Yehudit has offered a Response Book - a place where audience members could write or draw their own personal responses see www.yehuditsilverman.com . She directed the ground- breaking Seeds of Hope project in collaboration with The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts working with diverse communities affected by suicide. The project culminated in a featured exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts of masks made by community

participants. <https://seedsofhopemontreal.wixsite.com/seedsofhope>

<https://seedsofhopemontreal.wixsite.com/grainesdespoir>

An author of many book chapters and articles, her new book, *The Story Within – myth and fairy tale in therapy*, was recently published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. This book is for therapists, artists, seekers, of all mediums and offers a unique and creative process for transformation and a step-by- step guide through a creative arts therapies approach.

Martin Duckworth has directed over 30 documentary films and has been the director of photography on 84 films. He was recently awarded the prestigious [Prix du Québec](#) and has recorded numerous stories and won several awards since his film career began in 1963 including The Quebec Critics' Best Film of the Year for "A Wives' Tale" (1980), a Genie Award for "No More Hiroshima!" (1985), Best Film at Hot Docs, a Géméaux for "Referendum, Take Two" (1987), co-directed with Stéphane Drolet, and a Special Jury Prize from UNESCO for "Brush With Life" (1994), co- directed with Glen Salzman. He worked at the National Film Board from 1963-1970 and has continued to make films for the National Film Board as a freelancer. His films are archived at the National Film Board. Martin is committed to working on films about social justice and important social issues. He currently teaches part time in the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema at Concordia University.

André Elias has been a cinematographer on six films "Pastoral", "Traces of the Rock of Elsewhere", "Undertow", "Last and First Seconds of a Century", "Reconstructing", and "Souls Included" and has been the producer/director on "Last and First Seconds of a Century" and "Souls Included". He has been the editor on many films since 1990 and his films have won awards in Europe and North America.

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Synopsis

“There is something so damaging, so profoundly hurtful, when we silence those who are suffering, when we turn away from their pain.”



In *The Hidden Face of Suicide*, filmmaker Yehudit Silverman enters the world of the survivors - those who have lost loved ones to suicide - and reveals their remarkable stories. At seventeen, Silverman learned by accident that her uncle, who died before she was born, had taken his own life, yet no one had ever spoken about it. Looking for the story behind her parents' silence, Silverman sets out on a journey of understanding and transformation.

Meeting with members from the group "Family Survivors of Suicide", Silverman, a trained creative arts therapist, helps them find a unique way of expressing the unspeakable. They each make their own mask, which serves as a therapeutic metaphor. With respect and compassion, the film explores the meaning they find in their masks. For Silverman herself, as well as for the others, it is an essential key to healing.

Evoking the myth of Persephone, Silverman looks to these survivors as her guides, as she is called to the Underworld to confront the darkness in her own past. “The survivors helped me understand the danger of secrets. Through them I found the courage to break the silence in my own family”.

The film culminates in a moving sequence with Silverman speaking to her parents for the first time about what happened fifty years ago. In this meditative and heartfelt film, Silverman explores the question of suicide with fresh eyes, originality, and intelligence. Her journey reveals the complex shape of an issue hidden for far too long, and the terrible cost of silence.

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Director's Statement

As a filmmaker and therapist I wanted to find a way to express what often feels unspeakable, to honestly and respectfully take on a subject often hidden in darkness and shame, or conversely forced into the light in a sensational and tabloid manner. The journey began as a personal exploration with different mediums, movement, masks, music, writing, to try and capture my own understanding and experience with the subject of suicide. When I was seventeen, I found out by accident that my uncle had committed suicide. I never knew — no one had spoken about it. So there was this silence, and I wanted to understand this silence. What was so terrifying or shameful about suicide that people couldn't even talk about it? This film was, in many ways, my journey of going beneath the silence. In searching for those who could guide me, I found a wonderful self-help support group called "Family Survivors of Suicide". All participants had lost family to suicide and considered themselves to be "survivors". My own loss of an uncle to suicide allowed me entrance and acceptance into the group. I attended the group for several months and listened to the stories. What emerged, beyond the heartbreak, was this sense of stigma and blame, of having to hide behind a mask because society didn't want or didn't know how to deal with suicide. Inspired by my therapy practice, I asked the group to participate in a series of mask making sessions. The masks, once made and put on, proved to be a poignant metaphor for the trauma of the suicide itself, as well as for the need to hide that trauma from the outside world. Three participants from the group agreed to be interviewed. As I began the editing process, I realized the film was about breaking the silence and that I needed to break the silence in my own family. I asked my parents if they would agree to be filmed and that we would, for the first time, discuss my uncle's suicide. They agreed, and not only did we openly discuss what had been hidden for over fifty years, but we also went to the grave to say Kaddish (a Jewish prayer of mourning) for my uncle.

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The silence was broken, the filming complete, and the final version of the film artistically expresses the darkness and the rawness of this journey. Integrating self-created masks, interviews, and my own original music and narration, I hope the film will raise awareness, break the silence, and perhaps in a small way make a difference in the world.

To mark Canadian Mental Health Week 2013, Yehudit Silverman encouraged Montreal Gazette readers to talk more about the issue of suicide in the Op-Ed piece:

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/Opinion+need+talk+more+less+about+suicide/8344517/story.html>

For Yehudit's writings and media coverage about suicide please see www.yehuditsilverman.com



Reviews and Responses

"... a stark, deeply moving, honestly heartfelt documentary..." ^[L]_[SEP] Toulou Foscolos, The Monitor

"...goes behind the veil of silence... ... and concludes that healing demands an end to silence.. "

John Griffin, The Gazette

"In trying to understand that silence, Silverman created a touching film that raises awareness..."

Anthony Bonaparte, The Suburban

"It is an important message... that the community itself needs to embrace another way of thinking about the shame, stigma, and pain of suicide on those left behind..." ^[L]_[SEP] Dr. Jaswant Guzder, Director, Centre for Child Development and Mental Health, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Quebec

"Suicide is a serious problem for adolescents and society. This sensitive and in-depth film is a perfect educational tool to raise awareness and stimulate productive audience discussion." ^[L]_[SEP]

Dr. Franziska Baltzer, Director, Adolescent Medicine, Montreal Children's Hospital, Montreal, Quebec

"Heavy, like a loaded gun. Because physically a bullet doesn't weigh that much, it's the power that's so heavy. I've grown up in a neighborhood where I'm one of the lucky ones, I have lost a friend to suicide, have had a friend who attempted several times, and I once tried as well. It is nice to finally see the taboo broken. It is so important not to treat suicide as a disease and you have succeeded. Thank you and congrats." Dan Klein, age 21

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“An innovative and brilliant exploration of how the interaction between film, personal narrative and creativity can enable silence to be opened into a moving encounter with taboo subjects....a propelling justification of the potency of the arts as research.”

Phil Jones, Professor, University College London, author, *Drama as Therapy*

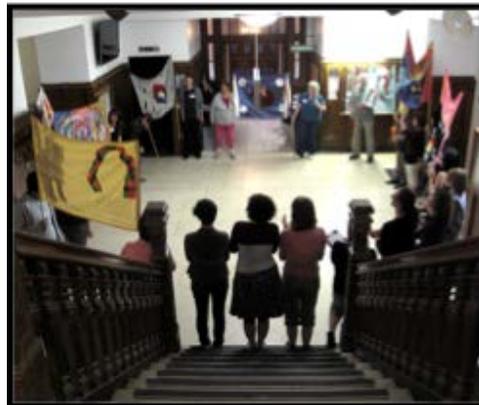
“An outstanding example of how the arts have the power to transform, illuminate, and make connections otherwise not possible”

Patricia Leavy, Author, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*

For more responses to the film, and images of the powerful entries audience members logged in the Response Books, please visit <https://www.yehuditsilverman.com/working-with-trauma-and-suicide/>

Community Initiatives and Open Access

Silverman originated and organized two multi-cultural arts based symposiums to promote suicide awareness. These symposiums brought together members of the Inuit, Mohawk, Adolescent, Seniors, East Asian, LGBTQ, Jewish, Christian, and Baha’i communities to dialogue and work together creatively around the issue of suicide.



This film can be used as an educational tool to spread awareness and spark conversation about suicide and suicide prevention. Get involved:

- To purchase or rent the film, please visit <https://www.reelhouse.org/yehuditsilverman/the-hidden-face-of-suicide>.
- <https://www.kanopy.com/product/hidden-face-suicide>

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- For updates about the film and to join the conversation, please like our Facebook page at

To book a screening, presentation or interview with Director/Producer Yehudit Silverman, please send an email at <https://www.yehuditsilverman.com/contact/>

If you are suffering or know of someone who is please reach out to organizations that can be of help <https://www.yehuditsilverman.com/working-with-trauma-and-suicide/>