

The Hidden Face of Suicide

Written, produced and directed by: Yehudit Silverman

contact yehuditsilverman.com/contact

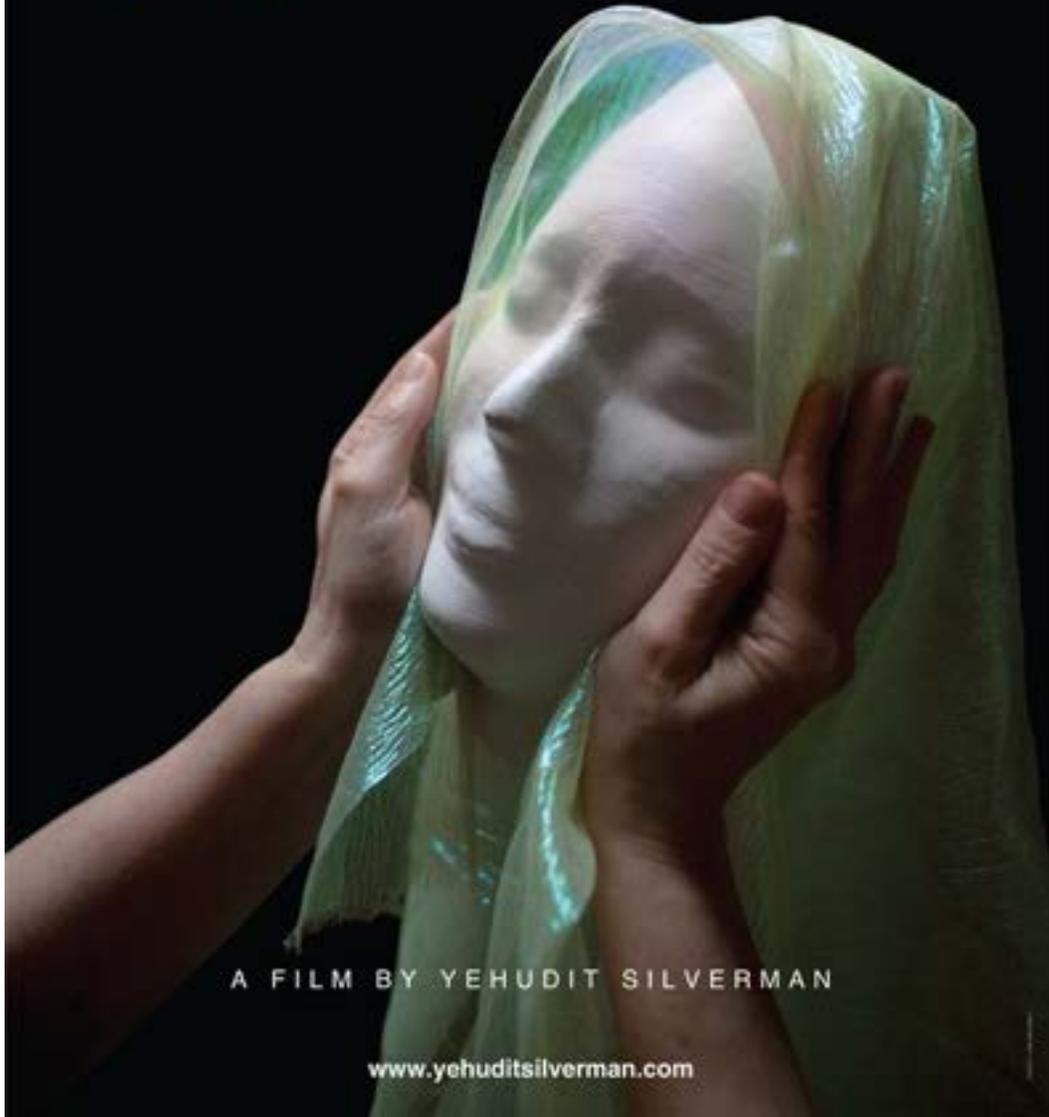
(514) 848-2424 ext 4231 or (514) 880-3855



THE HIDDEN FACE of SUICIDE



of SUICIDE



A FILM BY YEHUDIT SILVERMAN

www.yehuditsilverman.com

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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 <http://vimeo.com/10239156>



“... a stark, deeply moving, honestly heartfelt documentary...”
Toula Foscolos, The Monitor August, 2010
[The Monitor Review.](#)

“...goes behind the veil of silence... and concludes that healing demands an end to silence...”
John Griffin, The Gazette August 27, 2010 [The Montreal Gazette](#)

“In trying to understand that silence, Silverman created a touching film that raises awareness...”
Anthony Bonaparte, The Suburban [The Suburban Review](#)

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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
International Film Festival of Mind, Body, Spirit and Ecology, South Wales, 2011,
International Film Festival South Africa Howick, KZN, South Africa, 2010
Montreal World Film Festival, Montreal, Quebec, 2010
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, one of the most popular attractions in London, as part of their DOCDAYS series, 2011
De Seve Cinema, Montreal, 2011

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), Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, (Montreal, Quebec, 2011), Poland TV Cable Network, dubbed into Polish (2011-2013)



AVAILABLE AT LIBRARIES, RESEARCH CENTRES, ORGANIZATIONS

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, Washington, D.C.

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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
Aspect Ratio: 1.78 (16x9 Video)
File Format :HD Color
Production end date : March, 2010
English with optional French subtitles

For more production stills from *The Hidden Face of Suicide*, please visit
<http://www.yehuditsilverman.com/Gallery>



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Biographies

Yehudit Silverman, M.A., R-DMT, RDT, Associate Professor, Creative Arts Therapies Department, Concordia University, 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) <http://vimeo.com/16196157> ,

follows six people as they embark on journeys of profound self-discovery by immersing themselves as characters in self-selected and personally meaningful myths or fairy tales. Segments of the film were aired on A&E television show “Breakfast with the Arts”, it has been translated into French and Turkish subtitles, and has screened internationally at conferences and Universities. Her second film *The Hidden Face of Suicide* (2010) <http://vimeo.com/10239156> enters the world of survivors, those who have lost loved ones to suicide, and reveals their remarkable stories. It has won several awards, screened at over eight international film festivals, and was featured in the Curzon Cinema of London Docdays series, and Cinema du Parc, Montreal. The film has garnered very positive media reviews and has been translated into French subtitles and dubbed into Polish to be screened on Polish Public Television. Yehudit has recently presented her work and films in Japan, and Istanbul, and was featured in [the Turkish Press](#). The audience response has been heartfelt, and heartbreaking, with members of the audience sharing their own stories of loss and survival. Yet the film has also offered hope, by breaking the taboo and silence that still surrounds the issue of suicide. At many screenings Yehudit has offered a “Response Book” a place where audience members could write or draw their own personal responses. To view some of these responses, for film trailers, additional information see www.yehuditsilverman.com. To view an interview with Yehudit Silverman, please visit <http://vimeo.com/10239626>.

Martin Duckworth Cinematographer Martin Duckworth has directed over 30 documentary films and has been the director of photography on 84 films. He 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 G meaux for “Referendum, Take Two” (1987), co-directed with St phane 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.

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André Elias Editor 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 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.



Longer Synopses

“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 "There is something so damaging so profoundly hurtful when we silence those who are suffering, when we turn away from their pain, their wounds, their darkness..." (written by Yehudit Silverman for the film *The hidden face of Suicide*.) I was inspired to make this film because of the silence which still surrounds suicide. 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 17 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 and what was so terrifying or shameful about suicide that people couldn't even talk about it. So I think this film was really my journey in a way 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 have lost family to suicide and consider 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 heartbreaking stories. But what also emerged was the sense of stigma, and blame and having to hide behind a mask because society didn't want or didn't know how to deal with suicide. Out of this theme of masks 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, extremely emotional metaphor for the trauma of the suicide itself, and as well 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 50 years, but eventually went to the grave to say Kaddish (a Jewish prayer of mourning) for my uncle. The silence was broken, the filming complete, and the final version of the film attempted to express the darkness and the rawness of this journey in an aesthetically artistic way. I wanted the film to provide a gentle, yet honest portrayal of the subject. Integrating self created masks, interviews, my own original music and narration, I hoped the film would 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: [the Op-Ed piece](#)

For the most recent press release about Yehudit's research and article, *Coming together in pain and joy: A multicultural and arts-based suicide awareness project*, please visit <http://finearts.concordia.ca/newsandevents/news/breaking-the-silence-of-suicide.php>

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Reviews and Responses



"... a stark, deeply moving, honestly heartfelt documentary..."

Toula 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..."

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."

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

"Your film was so powerful and so beautiful. It was difficult to watch because it brought up some sad events from the past, but it was important to give voice to suicide. I really can't find words to tell you what a contribution you have made. Thank you."

Lorrie Blair, Associate Dean Academic and Student Affairs Concordia University

"... the video is miraculous both in the process it shows and in how it manages to show it. ... This video's healing power reaches beyond people who have direct experience with suicide..."

Guy Ewing, poet

"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 neighbourhood 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

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

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COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND OPEN ACCESS

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.



The Hidden Face of Suicide Donation Fund (HFOS)

All profits from the sales of the film go to the HFOS donation fund. This donation fund supports outreach and educational activities of the Montreal group *Family Survivors of Suicide*, as well as offering the film free of charge and with appropriate subtitles to suicide organizations all over the world. Serving on the board of the HFOS donation fund are the participants in the film who are members of the Montreal *Family Survivors of Suicide* group.

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

- To purchase film or to make a donation, please visit www.yehuditsilverman.com
- For updates about the film and to join the conversation, please join our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TheHiddenFaceOfSuicide>
- To book a screening, presentation or interview with Director/Producer Yehudit Silverman, please send an email at www.yehuditsilverman.com/contact