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# Death

## A LOVE STORY

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PROGRAMME FRESH

FILM ET RECHERCHE EN SCIENCES HUMAINES ET SOCIALES

# SEMIOTICS OF DEATH: REVEALING DEATH IN A CULTURE OF DENIAL

**LUNDI 9 AVRIL 2018 - AMPHI MRSH 9.30 - 12.30**

Dans le cadre du Laboratoire Documentaire FRESH / Normandie Image et de l'Institut des Amériques

**INTERVENTION DE MICHELLE LEBRUN**, professeure invitée à Rennes 2, réalisatrice et enseignante à Providence (États-Unis) présentera son film «**Death: a Love Story**» (63 minutes) ainsi que des ateliers réalisés avec des jeunes.

*Le film a été sélectionné dans de nombreux festivals dont le festival de Sundance.*

## Semiotics of Death: Revealing Death in a Culture of Denial

### ABSTRACT:

What makes it difficult to talk about death? What images are used to portray death in the media? What meaning does it have for us?

In this presentation and discussion we will look at some of the ways that death is represented in American culture and also offer an alternative view.

Looking at some of the recent research on the semiotics of death we will unpack the sources of our fear and loathing. We will also view the 1 hour documentary, *Death: A Love Story* and see an alternative view in representing death.

### PRESENTER:

Michelle LeBrun is a filmmaker and educator from Rhode Island in the U.S. As a producer/director and educator, her interests include media literacy, civic engagement, and empowering young and old alike to analyze media and the world around them to produce inspiring films that have an impact on social issue conversations.

*Death: A Love Story*, was her first film having directed, produced, written and photographed the film. It was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival and aired on national public television (PBS) in the U.S. and CBC Canada. An analysis of the film was featured in *Sundancing* (2000), by John Anderson, *History in Documentaries* (2005), by Alan Rosenthal (China edition), and *Documentary Media* (2009), by Broderick Fox. *Death: A Love Story* is currently used in classrooms in over 500 universities and colleges in the US and Canada and is also available in the educational market as well as streaming from *Kanopy* in San Francisco, CA.

Contacts FRESH : [benoit.raoux@unicaen.fr](mailto:benoit.raoux@unicaen.fr) (Caen)  
[florian.hemont@univ-rennes2.fr](mailto:florian.hemont@univ-rennes2.fr) (Rennes)

## Youth Media as Participatory Video

### ABSTRACT:

How can video production techniques be used to give disenfranchised teens a sense of empowerment and agency? What are the media skill sets involved and how do they foster agency?

Through the lens of Participatory Video we will look at the work of *Harken! Youth Media* and its power to give disenfranchised youth agency in their world. *Harken! Youth Media* began in 2002 in a locked-down facility in East Los Angeles for incarcerated and gang affiliated youth. These are youth who are heavily marketed to yet have little say in the decision-making processes of their world. Disenfranchised due to poverty and lack of access to afterschool programming, many youth turn to gang life for protection and money.

The purpose of the *Harken! Youth Media* program is to foster critical thinking, creativity, and leadership skills through video production. In addition, the program strives to teach students to decode, analyze and evaluate media messages. In this way, we give students a voice in a medium where they are commonly heavily targeted to as consumers but where they are seldom given the opportunity to deconstruct, understand, and have agency in designing media.

