



## Nothing Happened: Charlotte Salomon and an Archive of Suicide (Michigan Studies in Comparative Jewish Cultures)

By Darcy Buerkle

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**Nothing Happened: Charlotte Salomon and an Archive of Suicide (Michigan Studies in Comparative Jewish Cultures)** By Darcy Buerkle

Charlotte Salomon's (1917-43) fantastical autobiography, *Life? or Theater?*, consists of 769 sequenced gouache paintings, through which the artist imagined the circumstances of the eight suicides in her family, all but one of them women. But Salomon's focus on suicide was not merely a familial idiosyncrasy. *Nothing Happened* argues that the social history of early-twentieth-century Germany has elided an important cultural and social phenomenon by not including the story of German Jewish women and suicide. This absence in social history mirrors an even larger gap in the intellectual history of deeply gendered suicide studies that have reproduced the notion of women's suicide as a rarity in history. *Nothing Happened* is a historiographic intervention that operates in conversation and in tension with contemporary theory about trauma and the reconstruction of emotion in history.

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About the Author

**Darcy C. Buerkle** is Associate Professor of History at Smith College. In 2011–12 she held the Walter Benjamin Chair in German Jewish History and Culture at Humboldt University–Berlin.

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