

OUT FROM THE MIST

Representations of Mental Illness

Our Judges



Julie Eckersley



Laura Waters



Socratis Otto

What they're looking for

- ✓ **Authenticity and Emotional Truth**
- ✓ **Narrative Shape and Variation**
- ✓ **Insight and Revelation**
- ✓ **Originality and Creative Voice**
- ✓ **Intentionality and Cohesion**

Criteria

Authenticity & Emotional Truth

Judges are drawn to personal stories told with honesty and vulnerability. Films don't need to be polished—raw, emotionally truthful storytelling often has the most impact. We want to feel the heart behind the work. What's it really like to be you?

Narrative Shape & Variation

Great short films take the audience on a journey. They have shape—shifts in tone, pace, or emotion. Use the tools of storytelling (drama, humour, rhythm, mood) to create depth and movement. Avoid being one-note—films that start and end on the same emotional level often feel flat.

Insight & Revelation

Films should offer a deeper understanding of a personal or mental health experience. They might not have a traditional story arc, but they should still reveal something meaningful. Surprise us. Leave us with a thought, feeling, or insight we didn't have before.

Originality & Creative Voice

We look for films that express ideas in unexpected or innovative ways. Style, structure, or concept should feel true to the filmmaker's voice—not just made to impress. Don't be afraid to experiment—trust your instincts

Intentionality & Cohesion

Every element—visuals, sound, pacing, structure—should serve the story or emotional purpose. Even if it's abstract or mood-driven, we want to understand what you're trying to say. Strong films know where they're going and make deliberate choices to get there.

“Show us what it feels like to be you — reveal something we didn't expect, something we didn't understand — until now.”