

## GLOBAL ART AND MUSIC COMPETITION BREAKING DOWN MENTAL ILLNESS STIGMA

In its fourth consecutive year, world-wide film, photography, and now music competition, [Out From The Mist](#) is helping to break down the stigma associated with mental illness by sharing the stories and experiences of those with lived experience.

Founder and Creative Director, Michael Lockwood has lived experience with mental illness and says the competition helps people with mental illness feel seen, heard, and valued.

“Ten years ago, I had a nervous breakdown and stopped being able to work. Even to this day, I have regular hospital visits for ECTs to keep it under control.”

“For better or worse, this illness is an integral part of who I am, and I’m proud of who I am, depression and all,” Michael says.

“Often people with a mental illness feel alone and isolated. You go through life without having your thoughts and opinions valued. To be accepted into a competition and have your work shown is a way of validating that yes, you’ve got a powerful story to share with the world.”

“It helps people understand that they’re not alone and helps them feel heard and valued.”

“Art is healing, and the competition shines a light on the varied experiences people face with their mental illness, from experiences of pain and suffering, caring and empathy for loved ones, through to elation of conquering obstacles.”

“While the focus is on mental illness, Out From The Mist is about so much more. Harnessing the power of storytelling, it looks at mental illness through the lens of art.”

This year marks the introduction of the new music category.

“For many, music is a source of strength and hope. When my mind is a mess, music is one of the few spaces where I can find peace. Music is full of emotion and expression. It’s visceral, and it can both talk to the pain in one’s mind, and it can offer strength,” Michael says.

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2021 competition winner Hannah Brooke says the competition showcases and celebrates the real and raw emotions and challenges people face with their mental wellbeing.

“Very often, photography and photography competitions can represent the most wonderful things in life. There are even editing tools to remove imperfections and make everything look brighter and shinier. Whilst these photos are always beautiful to look at, they often don’t represent what we see in everyday life.”

“Out From The Mist is an opportunity to visually represent the less-shiny side of life that is often not spoken about enough. No more pretending that life is bright and beautiful all the time. For some people, life can feel quite dark or cracked and there aren’t many opportunities to express this in a visual format.”

“This competition allows people to express life as they experience it, or as someone they know experiences it. Not only is that a valuable opportunity for the person creating the photo or vide, but it’s also an insight for the viewer to see the things they may not experience themselves, or to realize they are not alone in what they are going through.”

“My image shows that what many people see on the outside isn’t what everyone feels on the inside, but I also wanted to give a sense of hope.”

“Sometimes it can be in the darkest of places, it can feel alone and scary, and we may not know which direction to take. Whilst the world may feel very dark, there is always a light there somewhere, no matter how small and no matter how far you must go to look for it, there is always light.”

Entries are now open for artists, creatives, and musicians across the world to submit their work. Whether you’ve been directly impacted by mental illness, or indirectly impacted through a friend or relative, this is your chance to share your experience in the form of art, film, music, and photography.

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## MEDIA RELEASE



Entries close 19 August and winners will be notified by 10 October 2021. To enter the competition, see last year's entries, or view the incredible prizes up for grabs, visit [outfromthemist.com](http://outfromthemist.com).

Winners across 20 categories will win a share in \$20,000 worth of prizes, and selected entries from artists will be featured in exhibitions throughout Australia including Perth, Brisbane, Gold Coast, NSW, Townsville, and Rockhampton.

The awards night will be held at [19Karen Contemporary Artspace](#) on the Gold Coast on 10 October 2022 during Mental Health Week where the first exhibition will run until 17 October.

Out From The mist is run in partnership with the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA). The competition is supported by the [Australia Asia Film Group](#) in 2022. If you would like to support the competition by becoming a sponsor, contact Tony Stevenson at MIFA at [tony.stevenson@mifa.org.au](mailto:tony.stevenson@mifa.org.au), Michael Lockwood at [michael@outfromthemist.com](mailto:michael@outfromthemist.com) or visit [outfromthemist.com](http://outfromthemist.com).

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