

Title: **Crooked Beauty and the Embodiment of Madness**

For psychiatric Grand Rounds

Abstract:

Filmmaker and mental health activist Ken Paul Rosenthal will screen *Crooked Beauty*, his poetic documentary that chronicles artist-activist Jacks McNamara's journey from psych ward patient to pioneering mental health advocate. Rosenthal will talk about his challenge to embody the film's character with compassion and authenticity. Discussion will focus on how nurturing wellness through our relationship to the natural world and drawing new maps for madness as a tool of insight are radical acts of social justice.

More than a story, *Crooked Beauty* is a documentary experience that will reshape how viewers perceive mental illness. An estimated 5.7 million adult Americans are affected with bipolar disorder. The accepted treatment – indeed, the only treatment many people know about – is to take potent medication under the supervision of a psychiatrist. *Crooked Beauty* explores a very different treatment approach, which to this point has been underexposed in mainstream media. The film presents a new political model for living with madness as a tool for creativity, inspiration, and hope.

Crooked Beauty's ultimate goal is to encourage a fresh perspective on mental illness among a broad target audience of mental health professionals, their clients, teachers and students of traditional and alternative psychiatry, social workers, and any individuals who seek a new perspective on conventional healthcare. The film does not seek to exploit or romanticize Jacks' journey, but to compassionately present her struggles and her triumphs as an authentic model for living with madness. A provocative, transformative, and beautiful piece visual medicine, *Crooked Beauty* establishes a common ground from outside the mainstream through a story of personal transformation, courage, and commitment.

Teaching Points:

- To help restore a measure of authenticity to experiences that are generally marginalized and stigmatized in our society.
- To reach beyond the stereotypes of mental health problems to suggest that extreme sadness and sensitivity is not entirely an illness, but a part of human experience to be explored with creativity and compassion.
- To reframe the diagnosis and treatment of madness as a tool of insight, integration, and hope for individuals who openly struggle with their mental health, *and anyone who might feel crazy in today's chaotic world.*
- To provide patient's view of treatment along with a deeper understanding of "compliance".

Bio:

Ken Paul Rosenthal is an independent filmmaker, teacher, and a regional coordinator for the Bay Area Icarus Project. His films weave personal and political narratives into natural and urban landscapes. Ken holds an MA in Creative & Interdisciplinary Arts, an MFA in Cinema Production, and has taught film as a means of cultivating personal vision in workshops and universities nationally and internationally. He is a recipient of a Kodak Award for Cinematography.