

## From Horror Films to Mental Health Docs

[Maddie Scarlett](#) looks at what the third year film students are currently working on

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Image: TFTV University of York

The University of York's third year Film and TV Production students are currently in pre-production stages for a brilliant range of fiction and non-fiction films which will showcase their talents and abilities. From a science fiction exploring relationships, consumerism and artificial intelligence, to a documentary shining a light on the current increase of acid attacks – students are producing something for everyone.

The course, which is Skillset Accredited and has been running for 7 years, offers students the ability to specialize in their third and final year. Students pitched their ideas which were then voted on by their peers and lectures. Story, passion and viability were the main factors considered. This year 5 fictional films and 4 documentaries were green-lit, with lecturers describing the pitch session to be the “strongest” they’ve witnessed.

Students have a maximum budget of £3000 which is considerably small compared to industry standard shorts. In order to prepare for graduate life in the film industry, students are expected to raise £2500 through crowdfunding. This has involved producing a promotional video as well as developing successful social media campaigns.

At the moment, locations are being recce-ed, subjects are being interviewed, and fundraising campaigns are in full swing. Students are putting their heart and soul into making sure their project is the best they can achieve, with a few hoping to complete festival runs after submitting it for the course.

I've been speaking to the winning pitchers about their idea and how they plan on pulling it off:



Image: Maxine Sibanda

### Maxine - The Porcelain Cradle, Fiction

Maxine's film is a "psychological horror which aims to explore the idea of 'loneliness in suburbia' through the perspective of a psychoneurotic spinster, who becomes obsessed with a family in her neighbourhood". Maxine is really looking forward to filming, she says: "I love creating a world for a character like ours to exist in an anti-realist setting where the story can be driven by the main characters' internal conflict - the rules of reality don't apply but it still makes sense".



Image: Kaloyan Deyanov

### Kal - The Dark Side of the Meme, Documentary

"Memes have become such a fundamental aspect of contemporary times that it is important to try and gauge the impact, both negative and positive, they could have." Kal states that that is the main aim of their documentary. Like any documentary should strive for, Kal hopes they "end up with a film, which doesn't preach to people, but raises even more questions about its subject matter and gets the audience to talk about it".



Image: Paul Wace

### Paul – The Eviction, Fiction

Paul and his crew are taking influences from Charlie Brooker’s Black Mirror, the films of David Fincher and the photographs of Gregory Crewdson. Their film is “a dark, unsettling drama about the arrival of a mysterious man at the home of a couple celebrating their anniversary, fracturing their marriage and their world”. The crew “hope to bring to life an important story about secrets and lies in relationships and what happens when an obsession goes too far”. Intriguing.



Image: Amy Cornforth

### Amy – The Widow, Fiction

The film Amy and her team are making is “about a woman named Maria who makes a pact with a demon to bring her late husband back. But, when he returns, it’s not how she hoped it would be”. The film will use a German Expressionist style to “explore the grief, pain and desperation Maria feels”. Amy says: “I’m really looking forward to starting production and working with the actors to capture the relationship between Maria and her returned husband”.



Image: Roland Spencer

### Roland – The Illusion of Choice, Documentary

Roland explains that the documentary “will aim to look at a life many parents did not choose, but were given by chance – caring for a severely disabled child. The film is about sacrifice, and a love that gives parent-carers the strength to overcome any challenge”. So far Roland has “really enjoyed talking to various families, and learning about their experiences – it’s really inspiring to see how ordinary people overcome extraordinary situations”.



Image: Mia Shaw

### Mia - The Situation, Fiction

Funny girl Mia describes their film as “a comedy about a slacker who wakes up one day to find that his life has become a sitcom! Suddenly he hears canned laughter, his house has been transformed into a studio set, and his housemates are constantly cracking jokes”. She’s super excited about this project as her team have a great shared vision: “we’re all really passionate about making a really entertaining comedy and giving people a good laugh!”.



Image: Rebecca Robinson

### Becky - Stride, Documentary

Stride is a documentary about a young woman called Michelle and her journey through Anorexia recovery. She uses running to help with her mental health and Becky and her crew will be documenting her training for her first marathon. Becky says: “I’m really excited to get speaking to her and find out more about how running helps her and how she feels now, compared to when I first met her”. A personal and hopefully enlightening story.



Image: Finbar Somers

### Finbar – The Veil, Fiction

Finbar describes his film as a “psychological horror following a woman tortured by guilt, as she is driven to the brink by glimpses of dark figures that slowly encircle her”. The crew’s aim is to “make something slow-burning and deeply unsettling, that really delves into what it’s like to experience a fracturing mental state. Creating the atmosphere, visuals and tension is going to be an exciting challenge!”.



Image: Jai Rodgers

### Jai – Corrosive, Documentary

A timely and powerful documentary, Corrosive will focus on “the impact of acid violence following the recent rise in acid attacks across the U.K”. Jai states that “the film looks beyond the scarring to gain an understanding of the emotional trauma victims grapple with everyday”. The crew aim to “humanize the statistics and the news stories so that we might be able to instil hope and inspire action”.

Overall it sounds like a great mix of subjects and themes. Filming will take place in February and then be completed by late March. If you’d like to find out more about any of the above films, or would like to follow their journeys then click this link:

<https://yustart.hubbub.net/projects/>



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