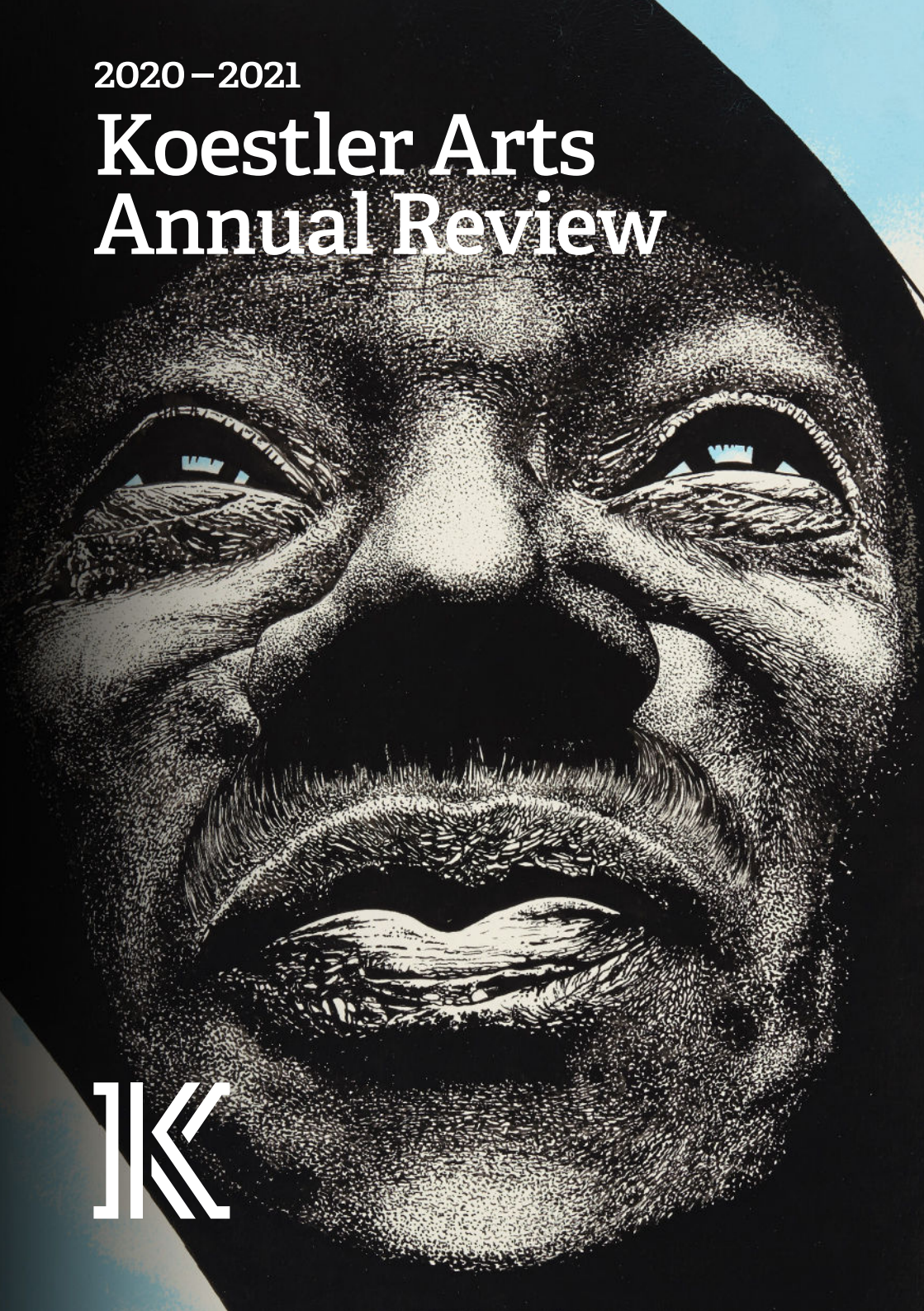


2020 – 2021

Koestler Arts Annual Review



IK



CHANGING

CARE SELF-LOVE

WOMAN STANDS UP FOR HERSELF, WITHOUT KNOWING POSSIBLY, WITHOUT CLAIMING IT, SHE STANDS UP FOR ALL WOMEN.

ESCAPE

The shock of your life?

HOPE



Women in Prisons

silence

will

NOT

protect

WOMEN PATHWAYS AWAY FROM CRIMINAL JUSTICE INTERVENTIONS

Helping Hand

LOVE

big difference

ARENTS

Make the Future

Women in Prison

Love



balance

children

Kaleidoscope

PROBATION

Authentic

Discover a new perspective

citycruises

caribbean

READY FOR A

A brief history of Spice
Drugs and Alcohol

NEVER WORRY ABOUT NUMBERS. HELP ONE PERSON AT A TIME, AND ALWAYS START WITH THE PERSON NEAREST YOU.

Have a heart
The shock of your life?
This idea showed a glimpse of what it's like to live with a chronic condition...
...the world is not what it seems...
...the night the stars...
...families...
...children...
...balance...
...Kaleidoscope...
...Authentic...
...citycruises...
...caribbean...
...READY FOR A...

Introduction

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My journey with Koestler Arts began in 2019, when my probation officer dropped the charity's name into conversation. We filled in the mentoring application form and before I knew it, I had been swept up in this mad world of art. My mentor encouraged me to enter the Koestler Awards and it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life to hear that my work had not only been chosen for their exhibition at Southbank Centre, but was also to receive an Award and a scholarship.

With my new-found confidence, I have done some pretty spectacular things. My work has been exhibited across the country, was long-listed for the Ruth Borchard Self-Portrait Prize and I led an event in The Big Draw Festival.

Being within the criminal justice system can make you feel isolated but my experiences with Koestler Arts gave me a sense of belonging. It has also changed my perception of myself as a person and an artist. The greatest part of all is that the journey has just begun.

Sarah, Artist

In this extraordinary year, our core programme has become even more critical to the wellbeing of prisoners, detainees and those under probation supervision. In spite of the lockdown, the Koestler Awards 2020 continued, and over 3,500 people entered. This positive approach, and the benefits it brings, has governed all our actions this year.

Our ability to adapt our working practices and to learn from these adaptations has been greatly valued by our entrants, as well as our colleagues in the arts and criminal justice sectors. I am very grateful indeed to the staff team, who in such difficult circumstances have risen to the considerable challenges and led the work forward.

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank everyone who has helped us continue the vital work of Koestler Arts in these unprecedented times. The pandemic has been challenging for us all, but even more so for so many of our beneficiaries, some of them locked in a small cell for around 23 hours a day. However, it has also underlined the importance of creativity, both for wellbeing and for personal development, and the important role that Koestler Arts plays as a platform for that creativity.

Dame Anne Owers, Chair of Trustees

On the cover

Picture Window, HM Prison Oakwood, Artists' Collecting Society Silver Award for Themed Category: Window, 2020

Opposite

Window Into Jail Life, HM Prison Send, David Wentworth Platinum Award for Mixed Media, 2020

Designed by

Carolina Magro

*Koestler Arts' is the working name of the 'Koestler Trust'

The Koestler Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales n°. 1105759

Company limited by guarantee n°. 4961363

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Koestler Arts Centre
168A Du Cane Road
London W12 0TX



Koestler Arts in the Pandemic

Each year since 1962, Koestler Arts has supported thousands of men, women and young people in the criminal justice system to transform their lives through art. We were determined that 2020 would be no exception.

With prisons in lockdown, prisoners have been even more isolated than normal, so we made sure we could continue to offer positivity and focus during these uncertain times.

Despite the pandemic, we adapted and delivered our annual programme of Awards, exhibitions and events. This was only possible thanks to the perseverance and unfailing commitment of our staff team, supporters and partners across the arts and criminal justice sectors.



Portrait of a Flower, HM Prison Long Lartin, Hope Commended Award for Mixed Media, 2020

*Thank you, thank you, thank you
for all your effort.
Prisoners receive so little praise
or reward in their lives.
What you do is really valued especially
during Covid. The little we had
before Covid has been taken away.
You really do make a difference!*

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020

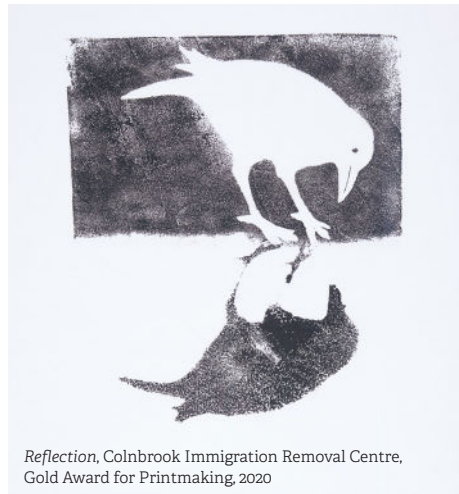
*Although this year
has been difficult in a lot of ways,
having art as a way of coping
and destressing has helped
a lot of people get through
this pandemic.*

*Thank you to everyone
who has helped make sure
Koestler happened this year.*

*It's been a light in
a dark year.*

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020

Thousands of Koestler Awards entrants, including nearly 1,500 people who entered the Awards for the first time in 2020, received feedback, awards and certificates to celebrate their creative achievements. Hundreds were given opportunities to share their work with wider audiences through exhibitions, and mentees were given the spotlight to showcase their skills through events and displays.



Reflection, Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre, Gold Award for Printmaking, 2020

One of our greatest strengths as an organisation lies in the dedication, care and compassion of our tight-knit staff team.

Knowing that the next few years will see continuing changes and challenges to the ways we have traditionally worked, we are united in doing all we can to ensure the benefits of art and creativity in secure settings can be felt throughout the recovery from this crisis and for decades to come.

Together with our supporters, we have helped mentees stay creative during this difficult time, when other support networks have been suspended. We have provided diversions and inspired positivity for thousands of people in prisons and secure settings across the UK. Most importantly, we have offered a hand to those who have felt most alone. We are incredibly proud of our organisational resilience and the support we have continued to offer throughout 2020.



Lockdown Cezanne, HM Prison Grendon,
Painting, 2020

Koestler Awards 2020

This year, in some of the most challenging circumstances our communities and criminal justice system have ever faced, the Koestler Awards has reached thousands of isolated men, women and young people in secure settings, to offer positivity, focus and opportunities to build wellbeing.

With an extended deadline, the 2020 Koestler Awards received 6,550 entries, only 14% fewer than 2019. 3,055 people entered the Awards from 275 establishments, including prisons, young offender institutions, secure mental health units, immigration removal centres and probation services, and 1,460 people entered the Awards for the first time in 2020 despite the pandemic.

Over 50 volunteer judges, including Alison Lapper, George the Poet, Jeremy Deller and Hot Chip, joined us physically and remotely to safely offer awards and encouragement and share their expertise with our entrants. Thanks to their support, 75% of entrants received personalised, written feedback on their work, and every entrant was sent a creative advice pack with tips from the judges. 2,596 Koestler Awards were granted, and £29,685 prize money was sent to award-winners.

In line with our commitment to champion artists, and in recognition of the hardships that the creative sector continues to face, we introduced a new stipend for all volunteer judges for the value of their time.



Sewing With Different Textures, HM Prison Send, Edmund Paton Walsh
European Unity Commended Award for Mixed Media, 2020

Entrants to the 2020 Koestler Awards



92%

reported increased self-confidence



91%

reported improved achievement in art



65%

reported improved relationships with officers & staff



65%

reported improved relationships with friends & family



64%

reported improved achievement in education



51%

reported improved ability to keep free from crime

2020 Awards Steps

- Jan – Jul**
Artwork received
- Apr – Sept**
Feedback writing
- May – Aug**
Entries logged onto our database
- Aug – Sept**
Judging
- End of Oct**
Awards announced
- Nov**
Certificates and prize money sent to the artists
- Nov – Dec**
UK exhibition
- Jan**
Artwork sales money sent to the artists
- Mar – May**
Artwork returned to the artists
- May – June**
Regional exhibitions

When you win a Koestler Award, it is like a bright light of hope. I had lost confidence. The Koestler Awards gave me enough light to steer me in the right direction.

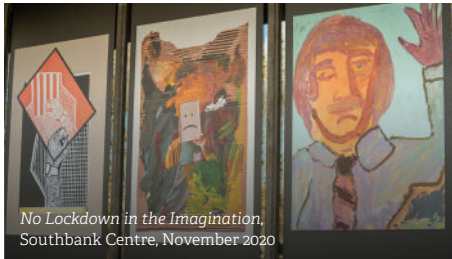
Koestler Awards entrant, 2020

Exhibitions

Koestler Arts fulfils its second charitable aim – to increase public awareness and understanding of arts by prisoners, secure patients and detainees – through an innovative national programme of events, exhibitions, displays and partnerships, showcasing the excellence of our entrants' work to an expanding audience.

We know the importance of publicly celebrating our entrants' creative achievements, and we made sure our 2020 national exhibition at London's Southbank Centre could still go ahead in-keeping with Covid-19 guidelines.

No Lockdown in the Imagination, our outdoor installation in the windows across the Southbank Centre site showcased over 60 works from across the secure estate throughout November and December.



I have been completely blown away by the extraordinary quality and scope of the artwork and the unquenchable spirit of the artists in this year's exhibition. Well done to all the contributors, Koestler and Southbank Centre for staging the exhibition in this most difficult year.

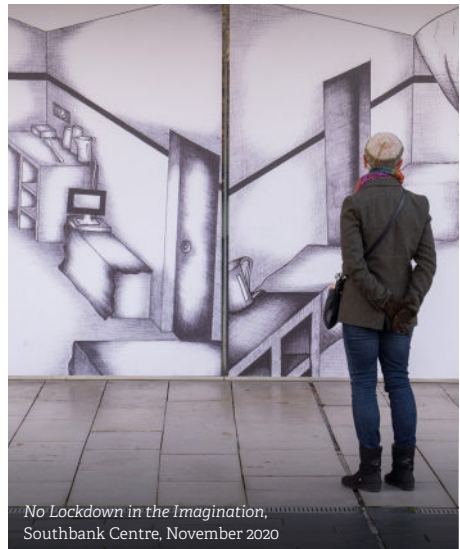
No Lockdown in the Imagination exhibition visitor

Let me begin by congratulating you guys on such an innovative response to the lockdown. The exhibition is exactly what's needed and in many ways reflects your organisation's ability to work beyond perceived barriers to create empowering human experiences...

Koestler Arts supporter, 2020

The physical display was accompanied by an interactive digital version, accessible through onsite QR codes. This enabled us to showcase additional content including insights from the artists, interviews and a video of the show, as well as the capacity to purchase artwork.

This technology also enabled us to digitally replicate feedback cards, and provide audience choice awards. Feedback from the public is highly valued by entrants, and, at the end of every Koestler exhibition we forward comments directly to the exhibited artists.



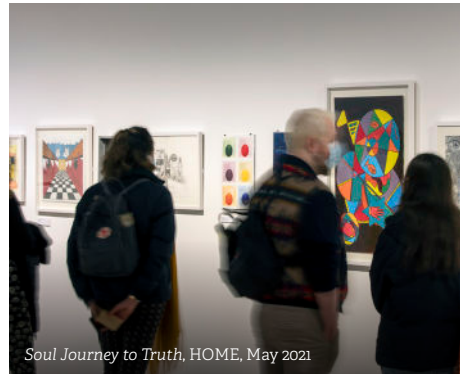
Alongside our UK exhibition at Southbank Centre, we had another 3 exhibitions scheduled to take place in 2020 across the UK, as part of our commitment as a national organisation to share artwork from secure settings with audiences as widely as possible. These exhibitions were postponed until lockdown restrictions eased, and celebrated artwork from the 2020 Koestler Awards.

My Path showcased artwork by 77 Koestler Awards entrants from across Yorkshire at Sheffield's Millennium Gallery. Despite the pandemic, we were thrilled that the curation project in partnership with young people from Sheffield Youth Justice Service was still able to go ahead, and the exhibition opened to the public in May 2021. This was the first Koestler Arts exhibition in Yorkshire.



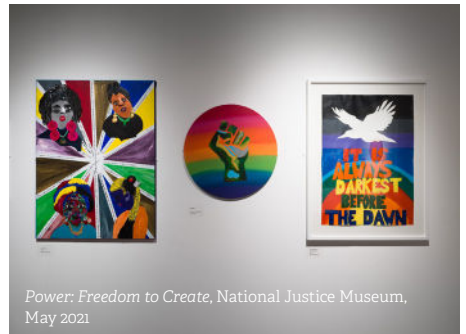
My Path, Millennium Gallery, May 2021

Soul Journey to Truth opened in May 2021 at Manchester's HOME, as part of the Ripples of Hope Festival. Over 135 artworks from prisons, secure settings, and people on probation in the North-West of England were selected for exhibition by guest curator Lady Unchained (Brenda Birungi), and ranged from drawings and paintings, to writing and music. This was our first exhibition to be curated online.



Soul Journey to Truth, HOME, May 2021

Power: Freedom to Create was produced by the National Justice Museum, Nottingham, in partnership with Koestler Arts. It was the first time Koestler Arts exhibited artwork alongside a historic museum collection, and was open from May to October 2021. Artwork from secure settings across the UK was selected during virtual curation sessions, and each artwork spoke to the theme of power and creativity.



Power: Freedom to Create, National Justice Museum, May 2021

Outreach

Our outreach programmes focus on celebrating achievement and encouraging participation, with establishment visits, family engagement programmes, an Associates programme and an Art Tutor Seminar. In light of the restrictions enforced by the pandemic, we have transformed these programmes with digital versions where possible, and adapted our support to best meet the needs of entrants in 2020.

Increased Communication

To maintain engagement and support creativity and wellbeing among people entering the Koestler Awards we created new channels of communication. We have made greater use of 'Email a Prisoner' where possible to keep in direct contact with entrants, and we have been sending regular updates to art tutors and establishment staff.

I am just a wing manager and safety manager and got involved at the start of Covid assisting with packaging up the entries. I very much understand the benefit of art in relation to self-esteem and ultimately desistance from offending, resettlement and rehabilitation. I like to promote Koestler to our residents and I have several good artists on my residential unit.

Staff member, HM Prison Haverigg

Digital Establishment Outreach

We have created bespoke video content for prisons as a stand-in for our suspended physical visits. These videos include introductions from Koestler Arts staff and insights from judges as well as award-winning artwork from the specific establishments. Sharing this material via in-cell technology means we can celebrate the achievements of those who entered the Awards, as well as encourage creativity and participation in the Awards more widely.



Through the Window into the Art Room, Brook House Immigration Removal Centre, Gold Award for Painting, 2020

Alternative Family Engagement

Ensuring entrants can celebrate their achievements with family and friends remains a crucial feature of our work. In 2020, without opportunities to host bespoke Family Days at exhibitions, all exhibited artists were invited to share a personalised, celebratory pack with their friends and family. These packs featured photographs of their loved ones' artwork in-situ, feedback on the piece from judges and posters from the show.

During lockdown being creative has really been a positive process. Using creativity to celebrate what I have good in my life, such as faith, family, friends and health. Also creativity can be a good way to process feelings and emotions you may be experiencing throughout lockdown, it has helped me tremendously. I hope it highlights that people deserve a second chance.

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020



There's Always Light, Bracton Centre, Elysium Healthcare Platinum Award for Drawing, 2020

Art Aid Sheets

Since the first lockdown in March, these creative resources have been distributed within hundreds of prisons and secure establishments, as well as among mentees and entrants in the community. Art Aid sheets contain activities and ideas which can be completed with minimal materials, resources and experience and provide purposeful activity during lockdowns.

The Art Aid sheets have evolved over the year, and are now devised monthly by mentees, who receive a fee for the commission and professional experience of working to a brief. They also include a short case study about the mentee and their creative journey, offering an example of the positive role creativity can play in the criminal justice system.

Without creative outlets within the prison system, I don't think I would have been able to cope. Being creative has opened up new avenues of progression that I did not previously know existed.

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020



Distant, HM Prison Woodhill, David & Brenda Evans Under 25s Special Award for Drawing, 2020

Mentoring & Scholarships

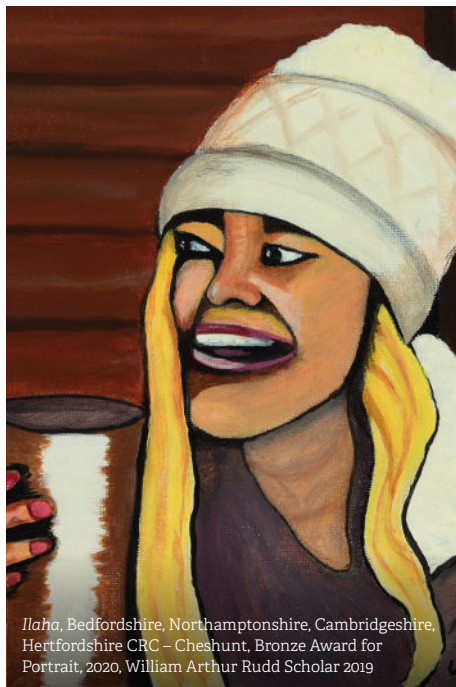
In 2020 our Mentoring and Scholarship custody-to-community programme was one of the areas of our work most impacted by the national and prison-wide lockdowns and increased restrictions. However, due to innovation, ingenuity and the incredible dedication of our volunteer mentors and staff team, the work of the mentoring and Scholarship programme did not stop.

With face-to-face mentoring forced to halt during the initial lockdowns, our mentors quickly adapted to temporarily using video calls and phone calls for mentees with restricted digital access.

As well as ensuring we maintained the regular, unbiased and open communication and support at the core of this programme, we have also been committed to finding new ways to maintain mentees' creative enthusiasm during lockdown.



Fate Would Have It So, HM Prison Wandsworth,
Highly Commended Award for Themed Category:
Window, 2020



Ilaha, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire,
Hertfordshire CRC - Cheshunt, Bronze Award for
Portrait, 2020, William Arthur Rudd Scholar 2019

Each mentee was given a bursary for arts equipment, and a fortnightly newsletter has been sent to all mentees and mentors since March including updates about the Awards, creative suggestions and opportunities to receive feedback on their work.

We are excited to see how these adaptations can be integrated into the programme going forward, and how we can develop our offer to mentees and mentors to meet the ongoing challenges which 2021 will bring.

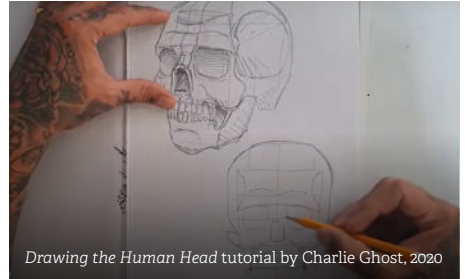
*I owe my strength to carry on to my
creative expression. Being creative is a
lifeline and has always been a beacon of
hope in the darkest times of my life.*

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020

Projects & Events

To continue sharing the skills, imagination and experiences of Koestler Awards entrants with as wide an audience as possible, in 2020 we developed new ways of showcasing artwork and engaging with audiences, principally through digital technologies.

Many of these innovations have helped us form new partnerships with both arts and criminal justice organisations, and we will be incorporating much of our learning from 2020 into the development of a fuller digital events and participation programme beyond the pandemic.



Drawing the Human Head tutorial by Charlie Ghost, 2020

We were delighted to work with the Monument Fellowship on the publication "Humane Justice", a collection of essays and creative responses exploring the role kindness, hope and compassion play in the criminal justice system.

We have also been able to commission people with lived experience of the criminal justice system to deliver online tutorials, masterclasses and workshops. Two former mentees joined us as part of *The Big Draw Festival 2020* to talk about their creative practice and deliver a demonstration, and we have also produced practical tutorials and supported former prisoners with paid commissions to edit video content.

An inspiring, brave explanation and demonstration of where an artist began his creative life and where he continues to explore his past, present and future through the power of art.

The Big Draw X Koestler Arts attendee, 2020



Soap carving demonstration by Lee as part of The Big Draw Festival 2020

Koestler initially taught me I needed a sense of purpose if I was going to survive. It gave me motivation; brought about betterment as a person; creativity; mindfulness; its share of ideas and opinions; togetherness; interpersonal relationships due to common interests and confidence to teach others how I'd developed, and I don't just mean through art; it develops us on a personal level too, where rehabilitation is hard to find.

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020

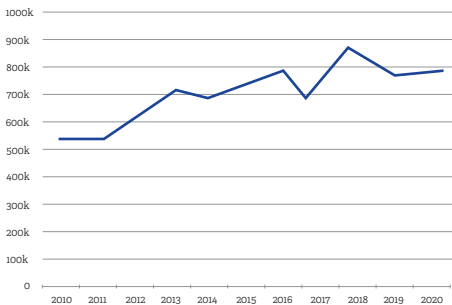
Financial Review

The individuals, trusts and foundations and corporate partners who have loyally continued to support our work are the reason we have been able to meet the challenges of 2020.

We are grateful to every person who joined us in supporting creativity in secure settings, as well as the organisations and trusts who continued to strengthen our work. These include Elysium Healthcare, Sodexo, Monument Trust and Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust, as well as grant-giving organisations and Arts Society groups from across the UK. The continuation of our mentoring programme was enabled thanks to continued support from the Henry Smith Charity and Monday Charitable Trust, and we would like to say thank you to all our Scholarship funders.

Koestler Arts is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, and continues to receive support from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

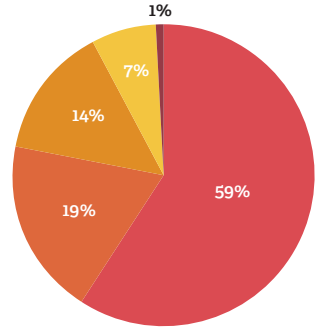
Income 2010–20



* This year we have been incredibly grateful for several exceptional gifts. These have not been included in the stated income figures, which also exclude income raised as part of our ongoing capital campaign.

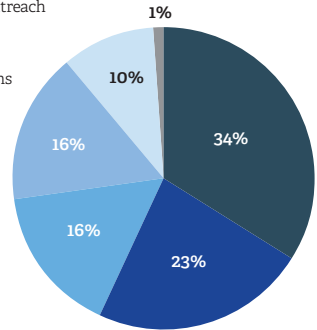
Income 2020–21

- Trusts & Foundations
- Public
- Individuals
- Corporate
- Sales



Expenditure 2020-21

- Awards Scheme
- Mentoring & Outreach
- Exhibitions
- Fundraising
- Communications & Sales
- Governance



I would like to thank the supporters of the Koestler Awards. It is really nice to know that there are people willing to show confidence and support for convicted criminals, and hopefully they will continue to do so. It is a great feeling and has increased my confidence and gives me hope for a better future – thank you.

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020

Opposite
Held Together with Hope, HM Prison Low Newton, Commended Award for Themed Category: Window, 2020

Future Plans

As we approach our 60th anniversary in 2022, we are excited to be entering this next phase with a new location and new capacity to support art in secure settings.

The next 5 years will see Koestler Arts advance and expand its way of working. We are specifically focused on broadening engagement on several levels, including increased opportunities for people post-release and an increased presence across the UK in non-traditional arts venues.

An increase in our digital offer, with content created for and by people on release from prison, will establish a community to feel part of. A hope expressed by many of our beneficiaries, and founded on learning from the past year, this will extend our ability to commission authentic projects and enable professional development.

The new Koestler Arts Centre will also underpin our ability to reach wider audiences. As we become a public-facing building for the first time, we can broaden

our offer to communities involved in both criminal justice and the arts to include talks and workshops, more frequent sales opportunities and networking events.

Every year, the resilience, imagination and compassion of our entrants and the staff supporting them shines through in the thousands of artworks, poems, letters and phone calls we receive. Since the pandemic, these qualities have never been more important, and we are grateful to all our supporters and partners for enabling us to meet our entrants' resilience with our own.

Creativity has been my most helpful outlet. I received positive comments which encouraged me to broaden my skills and boosted positive thoughts and feelings about myself.

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020



In a very quiet and special way,
my life has changed.

Koestler Awards entrant, 2020



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

