

# Koestler Associates Update - Summer 2017

## Judging

Koestler Awards judging is over! During June and July, over 100 experts visited the Koestler Trust to look through over 7,000 entries, give out awards and write feedback on as much of the work as possible. We were very pleased to welcome back previous judges including Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller, ceramic designer Emma Bridgewater, and artist Bob and Roberta Smith. We were also delighted to take on new judges this year, including documentary filmmaker Louis Theroux, grime MC Ghetts and former Koestler Awards mentees. We had a chat with former mentee Shaun Attwood about his first ever judging experience:



Shaun Attwood is a speaker, author and activist based in London, who is banned from America for life. As an inmate in Madison Street jail, Phoenix, Arizona, he used a tiny pencil sharpened on a cell door to write the first prison blog, *Jon's Jail Journal*. After winning a Koestler Award and getting onto the Koestler Trust mentoring scheme, Shaun went on to publish 7 true crime books.

*What have you most enjoyed about judging the Life Story category?*

I really enjoyed the variety and quality of the work. Judging the entries was challenging because the standard of the work was so high and there were so many. I had to come up with a scoring system that enabled me to prioritise some over others. I left satisfied that the ones who had scored the highest deserved special recognition, but all of the entries were worthy of merit.

*Can you sum up judging in three words?*

Meditating on words.

*What do the Koestler Awards mean to you?*

Winning a KA transformed my life, so it's great to contribute to the annual event.

*Who inspires your own creative work?*

Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, Franz Kafka.

*What advice would you give to our entrants?*

The competition is intense, so take your time to get it right.

## Postcards from Prison

The *Postcards from Prison* event in May was a huge success. 132 Associates returned postcards from 54 different prisons. 30 professional artists also returned postcards, including Cornelia Parker, Maggi Hambling and Grayson Perry. All postcards were framed and looked very professional.

The event was completely sold out. 110 people attended the evening, which was hosted by Lord John Bird, founder of the *Big Issue*. There were performances and talks by Koestler Award winners Benji, Erica and Shaun. The lottery was then drawn by David, a former Koestler Trust Exhibition Host. Everyone had a fantastic time:

*“It was a brilliant evening. I met many interesting people – those working in the system and other supporters like me. Definitely an event to repeat.”*

*“Thank you so much for a FABULOUS evening. We felt enormously privileged to be there - I thought it was a total triumph...”*

We raised just over our target of £10,000! THANK YOU to everyone who returned postcards for the event - without you, none of this would have been possible.

As the evening was so successful, *Postcards from Prison* is going to become an annual event. Look out for your blank postcards early next year, as we would love as many Associates to take part as possible!



**Get involved:** Do you have any feedback on how we could improve the event next year? Please write to us.

### **2017 UK exhibition**

The 2017 UK exhibition *Inside* will be curated by internationally renowned artist Antony Gormley. He will select writing, performance, visual art and design for the show from entries to the 2017 Koestler Awards. The free exhibition will be open at Southbank Centre, London from 21 September to 15 November. The opening festival will be held on the afternoon of 20 September at 2pm – the opening event is free and no booking is required. Please come along if you can!

### **Associates Day**

For the first time ever we are delighted to be hosting an event for our Associates and their friends and family at this year's UK exhibition. The event will take place on Monday 30 October 2017 and will run from 2pm to 4pm.

We have enclosed, with this newsletter, an invite to the event that you can send to friends and/or family who would like to attend. On the day, we will run tours of the exhibition and your guests will be able to meet with our staff and find out more about the Koestler Trust and its work. Tea and coffee will be provided.

We hope that it will be a successful day and a chance to start something that we can build on in future years.

### **The Koestler Awards cycle – the next stages**

The 2017 Koestler Awards results will be published on our website on 31 August – best of luck to everyone who has taken part this year! All certificates and prize money will be sent out by 31 October. Visual entries from the 2017 Awards will be returned by the end of March 2018, except a selection kept for further exhibitions or sale until June 2018.