

KOESTLER ARTS + ART AID

Hello from Koestler Arts!

Koestler Arts + Art Aid sheets suggest creative tasks that can be done in-cell. For most all you need is paper and a pencil - though if you have further materials please use them.

Please note that as the 2020 Koestler Awards deadline has now passed (7 July 2020) Art Aid sheets will be produced monthly rather than weekly.

Each month from now on Koestler Arts will be commissioning an artist/writer who has directly engaged with Koestler to set a creative task. Our entrants have told us that they would like to hear more from other people with experience of being creative in the criminal justice system. We hope that Art Aid will become a platform to share personal stories and sources of inspiration.

New Art Aid sheets will be available from the first Monday of each month.

November 2020

This task is set by Koestler Award winner, exhibited artist and mentee, Sam.

My Story

I used art and creativity to get me through my sentence, I needed a way to channel my thoughts at a difficult time in my life. It was the most positive and incredible experience. Not only did it allow me to see the real me and to understand what had happened, but it allowed me the opportunity to learn what I wanted and needed to do to become a better version of myself.

I had always been creative - card making, cake decorating, crafting - but had never taken a course, never thought about painting. I could not draw... how could I possibly take an art qualification? In the prison art class I witnessed incredible women creating amazing artwork and I realised it wasn't just about drawing, it was about using different mediums, thoughts and emotions to piece together a story. I wanted to be part of that.

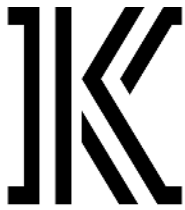
I sat looking out of my cell one weekend during bang up, all I could see was the exercise yard, the concrete wall, and D wing. I picked up my pen and started to sketch what was to become 'All I Can See', my first painting. As I was drawing what I had interpreted as very negative, I noticed positive things: the trees peering over the top of the wall, the sun lighting up the clear blue sky, the tiny flowers popping up in the middle of the so-called garden. It changed how I interpreted things. That was a turning point for me.

One day my tutor suggested I enter the Koestler Awards. From that moment my mind went into overdrive. I would work during class, I would work constantly in my cell, making the most of all that time that I had. I did not want to think about where I was, who I was missing, and this was my savior.

After being released I applied for Koestler Arts mentoring and was matched with a mentor, an artist who had worked in London, New York, Paris. We met, we chatted, we went to art galleries, we discussed techniques, we set targets that were specifically for me. This was all paid for by Koestler.

Then one day, there was the letter that changed everything: my work was being exhibited by Koestler at Snape Maltings in Suffolk. I attended the exhibition with my family and friends. We had an amazing day out and I was so proud to be able to show my work to them. I had my picture taken with my artwork. I was blown away.

Being part of Koestler has changed my life. I have created my website and am in the process of developing my art business, I have had the opportunity to create commissions, submit works to exhibitions and competitions. I don't know where it will take me, but for now I am happy to try. If it fails, I will always have my passion for art and painting, nobody can take that away from me.



Creative Prompt Cards



This task is designed to help you set your own creative tasks in the form of prompt cards for when you are feeling unmotivated.

Prompt cards can be adapted to be used in many ways, in your art or in your daily life. Write down simple tasks onto pieces of paper and put them in a jar/cup.

As a growing artist I use these cards as my prompts for those days where I am feeling less inspired. Looking at a blank canvas can be daunting. I may pick one or two or if I am still not feeling inspired then I may pick one or two more depending on how I feel each day. That's the beauty of them.

During lockdown, I adapted my prompts and added tasks that I wanted to do, but just never got round to because of how isolated and unmotivated I felt. Everything overwhelmed me. I created these cards and I would pick between 1 and 2 a day to make sure that I achieved something, keeping my mind active and engaged. You can change them each week if you want, you can add or take some away.

I have suggested a couple of prompts below. Feel free to use any that resonate with you and add your own.



Write a letter to a friend	Pick an item in your room and try to draw it with your non-dominant hand	Jog on the spot for 20 minutes
Take 5 mins to think about how your feeling and write those feelings down		