

# KOESTLER ARTS + ART AID

*Hello and Happy New Year 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.*

**You can enter the 2021 Koestler Awards now!**

*Please complete a Koestler entry form for every entry and see our guidance notes for full terms and conditions. Entry forms should be attached to this sheet. If not, or if you need more, please ask education, the library, or contact us at FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS (no stamp or address needed). The deadline for submissions is Thursday 22 April 2021.*

*Each month Koestler Arts are 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.*

## January 2021

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

### My Story

I've wanted to submit an activity sheet to Koestler for quite some time now, but have lacked the confidence to do so. Once again Koestler has inspired me to create.

I've chosen the paper mache sculpture craft as it was the very first piece of art I created, shortly after going to prison (a model of a prisoner being dragged off whilst a pregnant woman looks away). Creating that one piece led me down a whole different path of my life.

I started making sculptures from paper mache mainly just so I'd have something to do other than watching TV. I then started making gifts for my son and family... then friends, other prisoners and officers. Finally, I started making sculptures for Koestler Arts.

Since finding out about Koestler, my years in prison revolved around coming up with entry ideas, collecting the necessary resources to make them, and spending months creating my entries for their Award Scheme. Whenever I've been contacted by Koestler Arts or have met the staff, they always make me smile and I seem to be inspired to create more than before talking to them.

Entering the Koestler Awards was instrumental for me developing as an artist. I used to think my pieces were rubbish but when I started getting feedback from Koestler and the public simply saying how they liked my pieces, it really helped to change my state of mind from always being negative about my work to really enjoying and appreciating my work.

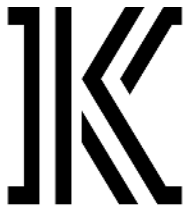
**Image:**

*Eating Like Kings*

HM Prison Dartmoor

Silver Award for Sculpture, 2019





## Paper Mache Sculptures

To make a paper mache sculpture, the first thing you'll need to do is to create a skeleton.

All you really need is a few matches stuck together in a rough form of what you are creating. If you don't have matches you could use various other materials such as; cardboard, empty pens, straws, lollypop sticks.

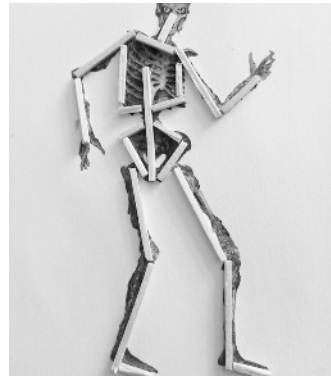
You could create your own skeleton from imagination, or you can use an image to help you (see below).



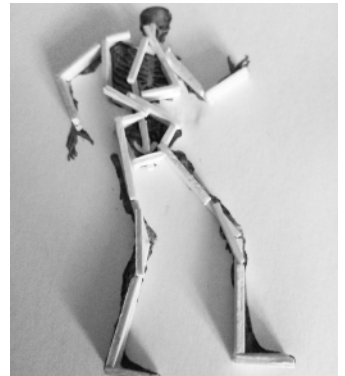
Find an image of what you'd like to create. Ask the librarian in your establishment to scan and print images.



Start cutting matches to size and lay them on the image, put your image inside a plastic wallet so glue doesn't stick to it.



Remember the matches don't have to fit exactly - the paper mache will be covering them.



Add a second layer of matches, overlapping the joins of the first layer (like a brick wall).

Once you have your skeleton, you'll need to cover it with paper mache. There are two ways of doing this:

**For larger projects** use strips of newspaper. This technique is especially useful if there are large spaces within the skeletal frame. Mix two parts PVA glue to one part water and dip the strips into the solution.

**For smaller projects** I prefer using toilet paper, as you can mould it like clay. Rip three sheets of toilet paper at a time into small squares and then add this gradually to your solution. You will need quite a few squares of toilet paper but it's important not to just rip up large chunks as this will cause the paper mache to clump together and make it a lot harder to manipulate.

Use your hands to apply the paper mache, squeeze out the solution with each piece you apply. You don't want the paper mache to be too soggy as it may run off your skeleton, cause glue on the skeleton to come apart and take far longer to dry out. If you're making a larger model I'd recommend filling the cavities first and then leaving it to dry before adding a second final layer.

Once you've created your sculpture and it's had at least 24 hours to dry, you can paint it. If you can't get hold of paint where you are try making your own from pencil leads:

- Find some coloured pencils (some pencils tend to be a bit waxy and don't work as well).
- Carefully remove the lead from the pencils: sharpen both ends of the pencil and then place it within a bottle of water, screw on the lid and put the bottle on its side so the pencil is fully submerged. Leave it overnight and then remove it from the water. Use a tin of food to crush the wood so it splits.
- Crush the pencil leads in a bowl. (I used to use a roll-on deodorant as it had a curved top.)
- Once you have a fine powder mix in a solution of two parts PVA to one part water\*. This gives you runny watercolour-like paint but if you want thicker paint just add more glue and less water.

\*I used a little splash of floor polish in mine which gave the paint a shiny finish, but I know this can be hard to source.