

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.

The 2022 Koestler Awards deadline has now passed (7 April 2022) but we will continue to produce Art Aid sheets on a monthly basis in the hope that they will continue to inspire you to be creative.

For each Art Aid sheet Koestler Arts are commissioning an artist/writer who has directly engaged with Koestler to set a creative task.

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

June 2022

This task was set by Koestler Award winner, exhibited artist and current mentee, Seb.

My Story

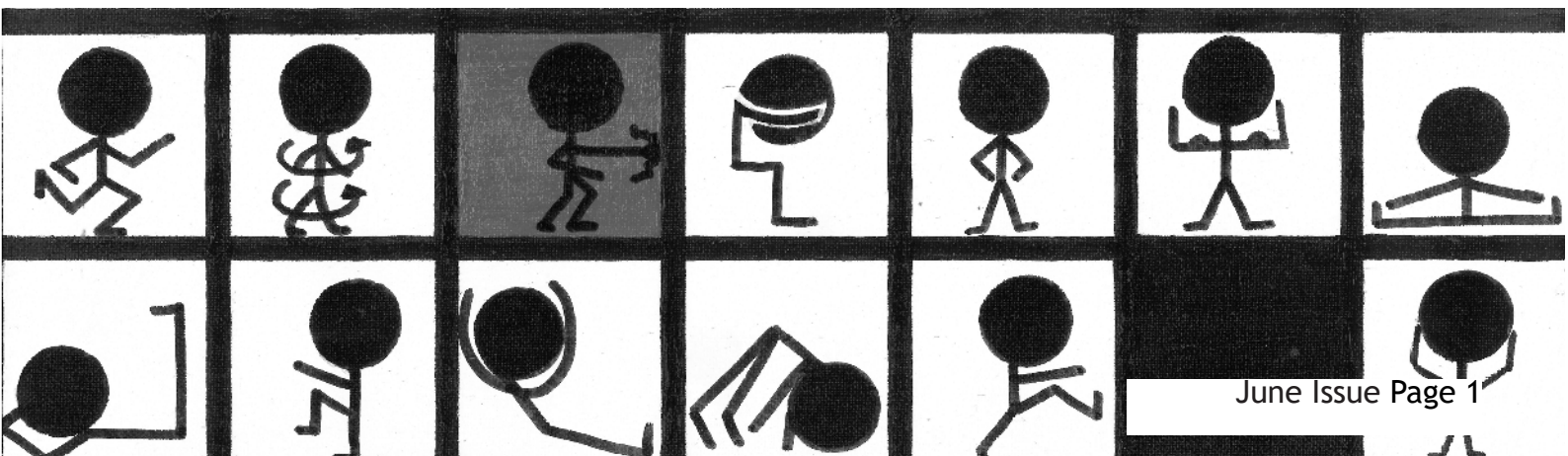
I spent nearly a decade working my way through the prison system. Koestler kept me sane.

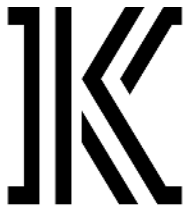
It was during my first months inside that I took an art class - just to get out of my pad for a while - and there was a poster in the art room about Koestler and their awards.

With Koestler's encouragement, I used my time inside to write three novels, four collections of poetry, two stage plays and a radio play; and to paint pictures on canvases, cardboard and wood panels. I sent my entries to Koestler each year, from any prison I was in, and was flattered and thrilled to get some great responses, incredible feedback and even money! And even better than this, I watched tons of people around me doing the same thing - creating something unique and special, and getting recognition for it. The feeling of accomplishment is priceless.

When I was released, I was accepted on to the Koestler Mentoring Programme. I meet my mentor regularly to talk all things writing. It's great. I get to bounce ideas off him, send him first drafts of new writing I've done, and get feedback and advice on what to do next with it. He's put me on to all kinds of competition opportunities, publishing ideas and different ways I can make my writing work for me. I am no longer "an offender" or "an ex-offender", I am now a writer. Things could not be better.

Image: *Single Cell Organism*, HM Prison Haverigg, Painting, 2021





My Task - Make a Scene!



The thing I love most is play-writing. When I start to write, I decide where it's going to be set - a prison, a football field, an aeroplane - and then I create characters to fill that space. For this task I'm inviting you to do the same.

Imagine two characters. Who are they? Are they family? Friends? Strangers? Are they human? There's an infinite array of choices. They might be two old men on a park bench, two hedgehogs waiting to cross the road, two dandelions about to be ripped out from between paving stones. See? Endless possibilities.

What are they saying to each other? Are they arguing? Reminiscing? Are they scared? Excited? Bored?

If you're struggling to get going, here's a couple of suggested openings:

- a) **Old Man 1:** Why would you say something like that? I thought we were friends.
Old Man 2: Who said we were friends?
- b) **Hedgehog 1:** You look left. I can't look both ways. My head's too slow at turning.
Hedgehog 2: Too slow at a lot of things, if you ask me.
- c) **Dandelion 1:** Lovely spot, this.
Dandelion 2: Perfect. Just catches the sun at the right time. Wait, what's he doing?

If someone was to read this script, would they be able to picture the characters in their head? You can't describe them, except through what they say to each other. Maybe one comments that the other is blocking their path (because they're big) or can reach something on a higher shelf (tall) or is wearing a louder jacket than usual (an outlandish dresser). Give clues that tell the reader more about your characters.

Remember, it's your conversation to create. Try and write ten lines of dialogue for each of your two characters, and then read it back aloud. Share it with a friend, get them to read one part while you read the other. This is how a play begins to form. Keep going and you'll soon have a complete script of your own.



Images: Top: *Hedgehogs*, HM Prison Eastwood Park, First-Time Entrant Award for Textile Art, 2019

Left: *Sun Rise*, Hackney & Islington Probation, Bronze Award for Painting, 2016

Right: *Helping Granda*, HM Prison Dumfries, Bronze Award for Drawing, 2020

