

Koestler Arts produce monthly Art Aid sheets featuring creative tasks that can be done in cell and with just paper and a pencil. New Art Aid sheets are available from the first Monday of every month. This sheet has been made with support from The Arts Society Northleach.

We are now accepting entries to the 2024 Koestler Awards! Send your entries and signed entry forms to 'FREEPOST Koestler Arts' by 12 April 2024. Entry forms should be enclosed with this sheet, and you can contact your education department or Koestler Arts to be sent more. See our guidance notes for full terms and conditions.

FEBRUARY 2024

For each Art Aid sheet, we commission an artist or writer who has engaged with Koestler Arts to set a creative task and share their experience with creativity. This month we asked Koestler Award winner and mentee Drew.

My Story

Having landed in HMP & YOI Forest Bank in 2019, I quickly enrolled in the art class as a way of escaping the day-to-day life of prison. It was a different environment - relaxed, there was music - and I enjoyed it and produced some good, varied work using different techniques - collage, pencils, pens, printing and pastels. Our teacher entered five of my pieces into the Koestler Awards and I forgot about it if I'm honest.

I got released a year later in the middle of covid, and a few months after that I received certificates and financial prizes from Koestler, and three of my pieces had been selected for an exhibition. I was made up. Fortunately the exhibition was local, too. I made the trip to HOME in Manchester and what an amazing feeling to see my work on the walls of a posh exhibition space. Plus one piece actually sold! £150, cha-ching! It was mind blowing. Why would somebody want my work in their home?

I felt great confidence from this and stepped up my work - some graffiti pieces, lots of photography, and some collage pieces too. I was introduced to the mentoring scheme where I meet regularly with an established artist to talk all things art and receive encouragement. Koestler have shown my work on their Instagram page and invited me to London to receive a scholarship Award.

Koestler have been really supportive in my art journey. It's always difficult finding a balance with life, work and family, but with encouragement I find being creative helps me find calm, taking me out of my own problems and overthinking and worrying. I fully endorse being creative for your mental health and wellbeing. Plus you get to look at something amazing that you've created. Keep going. The more you do, the better you get.

My Task: Self-Portrait

Finding stuff to draw when the door is locked can be difficult. An 8 x 6 metre room with bars on the window and walls, and fences and barbed wire outside it, doesn't make the best subject matter. I used to draw the bin if it was overflowing or the view from my bed but there's nothing more interesting than your face.

Trying to find reflective surfaces in a prison cell is tough, but I think using something unusual can make a self-portrait more interesting. Any reflective surface will work, from a switched off TV to a pair of reading glasses, or your cell window may be reflective at night. In my examples here I used a tile mirror and a CD to see my reflection, and drew with pencil on paper.

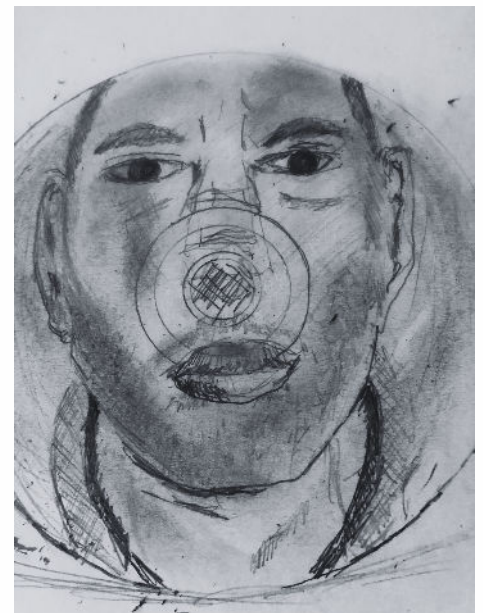
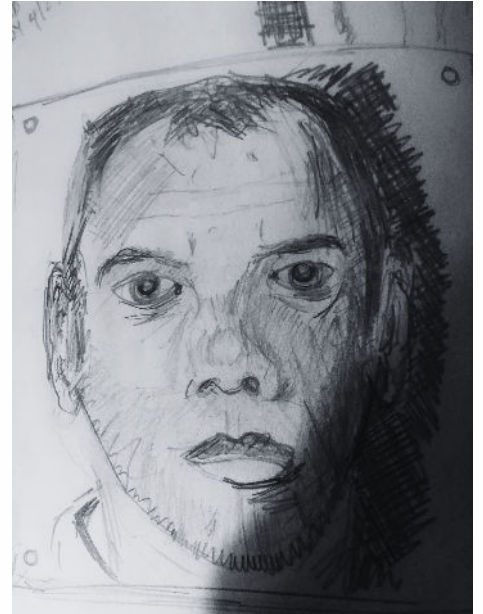
Try getting in any background objects to liven up the picture, for example the table reading glasses are resting on, or objects either side of the switched off TV screen.

You might want to draw in any marks or cracks that are on the surfaces, and think about how these maybe distort your reflection.

Depending on where you place the reflective surface and at what angle, if the surface moves the reflection will change. Try to keep the surface steady by propping it up or holding it in a fixed place, or leave reference marks on your page for where to hold it.

Bare in mind the light and shadow, this will add dimension and make your portrait look more realistic.

Good luck! Don't worry about getting things wrong, it'll only make your final piece better. Nobody achieved anything without failing first.



You don't need to send your responses to these tasks to us at Koestler, we just hope you'll enjoy giving them a go. If you do we'll be very happy to see them but please note they won't be entered into this year's Koestler Awards unless they are sent with a signed entry form.

KOESTLER AWARDS ENTRY FORM



Send a completed form with each entry in the same parcel. Maximum 5 entries per entrant, including group entries.

2024 closing date: Friday 12 April.

ENTRANT (For groups – see the next page)

First name of entrant:

Last name of entrant:

Date of birth:

ENTRY

Establishment: (Name of prison, hospital or probation service)

Title of entry:

Artform: (Choose one artform from the guidance booklet)

Visual description of entry:

AUTHORISED MEMBER OF STAFF

Full name:

Job title:

Department:

Telephone number:

Email:

Office postcode: (Probation only)

For Koestler Arts staff

K. No.	Artform	Supp. docs	No. of items
24K <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Prison or hospital number:

Signature of entrant:

Is this the first year you have entered the Awards?

Yes No

Sales of visual artwork:

Only visual artworks can be sold. Writing and music cannot be sold.

TICK ONE ONLY

- My entry is for sale. The lowest amount I'd be willing to receive is £ (maximum £250).
- My entry is not for sale.
- I donate my entry to Koestler Arts.

Can the entry be sold? (Visual arts only)

Yes No

Who should any cheques be payable to?

I confirm that this entry is the entrant's own original work, and approve it for entry into the Koestler Awards.

Signature of staff: (Entries can't be accepted without staff sign-off)

Date:

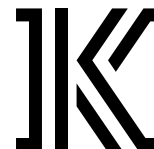
Unlock the talent inside

Turn for page 2 →

GROUP ENTRIES ONLY

Name of group:

Number of people excl. staff:



First name: Last name: Date of birth: Prison or hospital number: Release date if in 2023, and home address:

Continue on a separate sheet if needed. If there are over 4 people in the group cheques will not be split.

ENTRANTS WHO ARE IN THE COMMUNITY OR DUE FOR RELEASE IN 2023

Please contact us if these details change

Date of release:

Home address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Email:

ASSOCIATES PROGRAMME

Associates benefit from more contact with us, through the Koestler Associates newsletter.

I would like to be part of the Associates Programme.

REMINDERS

Entrants agree to the terms and conditions in the Awards Guidance. These are available on our website, from your establishment, or you can write to us to request a copy.

- Information submitted on this form will be held on the Koestler Arts secure and confidential database.
- Entrants are limited to 5 entries, including group entries.
- All work is handled with care, but Koestler Arts and its agents accept no liability for loss or damage to entries.
- Pack your work carefully. It must be under 15kg. The signed entry form must be packed with the corresponding work.
- Do not sign your work. If your artwork is selected for exhibition and has a signature of any kind, Koestler Arts staff will have to paint over or otherwise edit out the signature prior to display.
- Koestler Arts and its agents can exhibit, publish, and reproduce artworks in reasonable ways in print, online, film, audio etc to promote the charity's work. Artists retain copyright of their work.
- Koestler Arts can try to sell visual entries, if we have both your permission and that of the 'authorised member of staff.' Most work sells for under £100.
- We do not return written entries or work on CDs/ DVDs. These include writing, performance, audio, film and animation entries – so please make copies.

MONITORING FOR DIVERSITY OPTIONAL

This anonymised data will not be used to judge your work. It is for research and monitoring purposes only.

Ethnic group

- Arab
- Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian/Asian British: Indian
- Asian/Asian British: Pakistani
- Any other Asian background
- Black/Black British: African
- Black/Black British: Caribbean
- Any other Black background
- Chinese

- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller
- Mixed White & Asian
- Mixed White & Black African
- Mixed White & Black Caribbean
- Any other Mixed background
- White British
- Any other White background
- Any other group:

Formal education completed

- No formal qualifications
 - Basic skills level 1
 - Basic skills level 2
 - GCSEs or A Levels
 - Vocational training
 - Degree or post-graduate
- I am:**
- Ex-armed forces personnel
 - A care leaver
 - Registered disabled

Gender

- Man
- Woman
- Other

Age

- Under 16
- 16-17
- 18
- 19-24
- 25-29
- 30-59
- 60 and over

Religion

- Atheist
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other