

**KOESTLER
ARTS**



2024 Koestler Awards Guidance

Unlock the talent inside

The Koestler Awards for arts in criminal justice started in 1962.

Each year over 3,500 people in custody and in the community share their creative work by taking part. The Koestler Awards provide encouragement to entrants of all abilities through mentoring, awards, sales and feedback.

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My Day, HMP & YOI Parc, Outstanding Debut Award for Ceramics



Road Peace Charity 1, Birmingham Youth Offending Service – South, Gold Award for Craft

I can't emphasise enough how creativity in all its forms boosts mental health and refreshes the brain. It acts as a great distraction, it's something positive to focus on and when the end result is what you envisioned, the sense of achievement is a great boost to your self-esteem.

2023 Koestler Awards entrant

Entering the Koestler Awards

Unlock feedback on your creative work, chances to win cash awards and opportunities for mentoring, exhibition, publication and sales.



Ceramicist Rich Miller judging Ceramics entries

Recognition for your work

We give over 2,000 Koestler Awards each year. Every entrant gets a certificate and many winners receive a cash prize. The total prize money is over £30,000.

Platinum	£100 + certificate
Gold	£60 + certificate
Silver	£40 + certificate
Bronze	£20 + certificate
Special Awards	£25 + certificate
Highly Commended	certificate
Commended	certificate
Participation	certificate

Prestigious judges

Entries are judged by nearly 100 experts from different fields. 2023 judges included Jeremy Deller, Hot Chip, and Rich Miller.

Extra encouragement for new entrants

Let us know if this is the first year you have taken part in the Koestler Awards on the entry form and you will be considered for awards specially reserved for new entrants.

We give you feedback

Most entrants receive feedback on their work from the judges or the Koestler Arts team, who give their responses to the work and ideas on how to develop it.

Fast feedback for 18 and Under entrants

All entrants 18 and under can receive their certificate and feedback within 4 weeks of entry and enter at any point of the year. The parcel containing the entry must be marked '18 and Under Fast Feedback Programme' to be eligible. Please note, there is a new 18 and Under entry form.

Sales

We can try to sell your visual arts and crafts on your behalf. We do this online, in our building and at our exhibitions.



Our Time, Our Week, HMP Send, Gold Award for Graphic Novel



Standing on the Edge, Regional exhibition at the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton.
Photo by Nosa Malcolm.

Having an outlet for my feelings and ambitions, it feels like I'm being of some use, not only for myself but also hopefully for other people too.

2023 Koestler Awards entrant

UK exhibition at the Southbank Centre, London

We show a selection of the entries to the public at our annual national exhibition, which attracts c.20,000 visitors. This will take place in autumn 2024 at Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre – one of the most famous arts venues in the world. As well as work exhibited on the gallery walls, the national exhibition features events, performances and tours.

Displays of work throughout the year

Some work is selected to be shown in displays in a wide range of public spaces including offices, restaurants and prison visit halls.

Marketing

We may reproduce your work online, on our merchandise or in publications. We may send reproductions of your work to the media and other organisations to publicise our work and exhibitions, which is a great chance to get your work seen by a wider audience.

Membership scheme

The Associates Programme is a membership scheme for our entrants. Entrants opting into the scheme will benefit from greater contact with Koestler Arts through a regular newsletter. Sign up to the Associates Programme by ticking the box on the entry form.

Mentoring

We run an arts mentoring scheme for entrants to the Koestler Awards who want to develop their work further. Eligible entrants will receive further information about this bespoke programme after entering.



Beast in the Bog
HMP Stafford
Silver Award for Sculpture

What you can enter: artforms

Multi-artform

1. Themed Category: From Now On

Have a go at producing a poem, drawing, painting, song or any other Koestler Awards artform using the words 'From Now On' as a theme. Written work and DVDs/CDs submitted into this category will not be returned to you and will be disposed of securely.

2. Arts Project 📷

A project with components that cover several Koestler Awards artforms, created to engage people as artists, participants and audience. Your entry should include:

- » the aims of the project
- » the artforms involved
- » a documentation of the artistic outcomes (photos, DVD, audio, book, etc.)
- » the organisation/ individual(s) that co-ordinated the project
- » an overview of who the participants/ artists/audience were and the benefits of, or response to, the project (include quotes or figures)

Please do not enter one entry or copies of the same entry into multiple categories. Choose the category that best fits your entry.



Dragon Fly
HMP Elmley
Gold Award for Craft

Writing

3. Flash Fiction and Short Story

A short story, flash fiction or part of a novel. Entries must be no more than 5 sides of A4 paper.

4. Longer Fiction and Novel

A longer story, novel or part of a novel. Entries must be 6 sides of A4 paper or more.

5. Non-Fiction, Blog, Essay, Article and Review

One piece of factual writing as if written for a magazine, paper, biography, blog or non-fiction book.

6. Life Story

Autobiographical prose of any length. Unpublished works only.

7. Braille

Braille text, embossed illustrations and diagrams. 2024 is the 200-year anniversary of Braille! Celebrate by entering a Braille work into the Awards.

8. Poem

Enter one poem as one entry.

9. Poetry Collection

10 or more poems arranged in order with an overall title – in book or pamphlet form, or as if being submitted for publication. Short collections featuring the strongest poems are encouraged.

10. Anthology

A volume of mixed writing, such as a mixture of poems and fiction or essays. Short anthologies featuring the strongest pieces of writing are encouraged.

11. Stage Play

Script with stage directions – a short play, full-length play or part of one. Additional guidelines are available on request and on the Koestler Arts website.

12. Radio Play

Script with studio directions – a full-length drama or part of one.

13. Screenplay

Script with directions for TV or film.

14. Song Lyrics

Lyrics for a song – not including the musical score or any recorded element. Please state the genre of the music piece on the entry.

Please retain copies of all written work, as submitted entries will not be returned. We will dispose of your work securely.

Number the pages and put the title on every page. Do not put your name or prisoner number on every page.

If you write about real events, do not identify any individuals.

Performance and audio

15. Spoken Word

Audio recording of a performance or reading of an original work.

16. Performance

DVD, video or audio recording of a performance. This includes theatre, dance and performance art, as well as audio performances of existing scripts, poems or stories. E.g. this could be a reading of a story on CD (ideal for Storybook Dads) or a DVD of a dance routine. Audio recordings of original texts should be entered in Spoken Word.

17. Radio and Podcast Production

Audio recording of an original broadcast radio or podcast production or an edited compilation, e.g. spot/advert, documentary or interview. Up to 30 mins.

18. Music Composition

A written score (not a recording) with or without lyrics. If lyrics are included, say whether or not they are original.

19. Choral Music

A recording of a performance of choral music by a group of singers. Please state on the disc or packaging whether the music and lyrics are original or existing.

20. Singer-Songwriter – Original

A recording of a performance by a musician or group, that writes, composes and sings their own material including lyrics and melodies.

21. Cover Version

A recording of an individual or group performing an existing song. Your own interpretation of the song is encouraged.

22. Instrumental

A recording of a musician or group performing their own or existing music with no lyrics. Please state on the disc or packaging whether the music is original or existing.

23. Hip Hop, Rap and Grime

A recording of a musician or group performing their own material.

24. Computer Generated Music

A recording of original music generated entirely, or mostly, using computers.

Please retain copies of performance, audio, film and animation entries, as submissions will not be returned. We will dispose of your work securely.

Write the length of the recording on the disc or packaging.

Please do not submit albums. One entry corresponds to one song. Enter separate songs as separate entries (up to 5).

Film and animation

25. Film

Dramatic or documentary film on DVD.

26. Animation

Animated film on DVD.



Audio Producer Sefa Nkyi judging Radio Production entries

Please retain copies of performance, audio, film and animation entries, as submissions will not be returned.

Write the length of the recording on the disc or packaging.

Make clear which elements of the production were carried out by entrants and which by professionals.

We will not publicly screen any film entry without first consulting the establishment that submitted it.

If you are entering pieces in different artforms, make sure that they are on different discs.

If you are unable to submit entries on disc, please contact us.

Fine art

27. Painting

A painting mainly in oil, acrylic or tempera.

28. Watercolour and Gouache

29. Drawing

Pencil, charcoal, felt pen or ink.

30. Pastel

If possible, use fixative to prevent smudging.

31. Portrait

All portraits in 2D visual artforms should be entered into this category.

32. Mixed Media

2D work including collages, silk painting or use of unusual materials.

33. Sculpture 📷

Sculptures may be made with any materials but we recommend items made in clay are entered into the Ceramics category.

34. Digital Art

A digital print (with little or no text) produced or formatted by computer.

35. Graphic Novel

A full length graphic novel or up to 3 short comics, comic strips or one-off cartoons, with or without text.

36. Mural and Wall Hanging 📷

37. Printmaking

Block prints, etchings, lino prints, mono prints, screen prints, handprinted wallpaper etc.

38. Photography

An original photograph as an individual print, or up to 5 in a portfolio or book (counted as one entry). Any size or shape, colour or black-and-white. Slides and discs are not accepted.

39. Ceramics 📷

A vase, plate, bowl or sculpture made from clay, air-dried or fired.

40. Textile Art

Weaving, macramé, machine embroidery and collage. Flat or raised surface, in 2D or 3D. Includes soft furnishings such as cushions, table linen, bed linen, bath linen, rugs, etc.

All artwork should be original. The judges will not assess copies of other people's artwork highly and we can't sell direct copies or artworks made from kits.

We do accept drawings or paintings based on photographs, but, again, you will score higher with our judges if you develop your own style rather than copying exactly.

If your entry is very large, heavy, valuable or fragile, please ring us: we may need it to be delivered and collected.

In artforms marked 📷 you may enter by sending photographs with notes. Show the entry from all sides in good light, give its dimensions, and explain fully how it was made. If we choose the entry for exhibition, we may ask you to send the actual item.

If you use degradable materials, please enter your work in a sealed container so it does not attract vermin or insects. This work may degrade while in our possession.



A Day in the Spinney
The Spinney
Outstanding Debut Award for Themed Category:
A Day in the Life

Being creative has helped me see the world in a better light.

2023 Koestler Awards entrant

Craft and design

41. Handmade Book

A handmade original or limited-edition artist's book, containing visual artwork and/or text. The judges will be looking for creativity and artistry in the binding and content.

42. Calligraphy

Hand-lettering of your own or others' words in any language. May include street art-style lettering, decoration and pictorial elements.

43. Handmade Greetings Card

44. Graphic Design

A printed item with images and text which may be produced or formatted by computer, e.g. a poster, leaflet, booklet, sign, logo or up to 3 issues of a magazine, judged for visual quality. Also includes web design which should be submitted on CD or DVD with a printout on paper.

45. Matchstick Model

May be coloured and include other supporting materials.

46. Craft

Including toys, jewellery, mosaics and paper folding.

47. Woodcraft

Emphasis on skills in joinery, veneering, marquetry, turning, carving and fine decoration. Metal and other materials may be added.

48. Furniture

Only photographs may be submitted. Do not send the original item. Any material may be used.

49. Needlecraft

Knitting, crochet, needlepoint and any other items made by hand using needles or hooks. Include explanatory notes, preparatory sketches and any pattern used.

50. Fashion

Dressmaking and tailoring. Include explanatory notes, preparatory sketches and any pattern used.

51. Hairstyling

Includes cutting, dying, styling and braiding.

52. Beauty

Including make-up, theatre make-up and nail art.

All artwork should be original. The judges will not assess copies of other people's artwork highly and we can't sell direct copies or artworks made from kits.

In artforms marked you may enter by sending photographs with notes. Show the entry from all sides in good light, give its dimensions, and explain fully how it was made. If we choose the entry for exhibition, we may ask you to send the actual item.

If your entry is very large, heavy, valuable or fragile, please ring us: we may need it to be delivered and collected.

Terms and conditions of entry



Hull, the Whaling Port, The Humber Centre, Bronze Award for Painting

Who can enter?

- » Anyone in custody in a UK prison, young offender institution, secure training centre, secure children's home, immigration removal centre, or high or medium security psychiatric hospital or unit (including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man).
- » Any current client of the National Probation Service, a Youth Justice Service, the Scottish Criminal Justice Social Work Service or their equivalents elsewhere in the UK.
- » Any UK citizen currently in a prison overseas (must submit via Prisoners Abroad).
- » You may enter as an individual or as a group.


What can I enter?

- » You can enter original work in any of the artforms listed in this Guidance. You can enter up to a maximum of 5 entries, including group entries.
- » Entries must have been created in the last 12 months.
- » Do not enter artworks copied directly from other artworks.
- » Do not enter work made through purchased kits.
- » Do not enter work that includes your name in the artwork. 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.



The Blue Period, HMP Peterborough, Under 25s Special Award for Mixed Media

How do I enter?

- » You can submit up to 5 entries into the Koestler Awards. Fill in 1 entry form for each entry. You are welcome to photocopy the form.
- » Please make sure your entry form is sent with your entry. This is so that Koestler Arts staff can easily match them together and to ensure nothing is lost.
- » Ask an authorised member of staff to sign each form and give their contact details. We cannot accept your entry if it is not approved and signed-off by an authorised member of staff. The staff member should consistently work in your establishment, they should not be a temporary project worker, for example. In the community, an authorised member of staff should be a probation officer or an equivalent professional case worker.
- » In artforms marked  you may enter by sending photographs.
- » You can send items up to 61cm x 46cm x 46cm free using 'Freepost KOESTLER ARTS'. Freepost contents can weigh up to 2kg. Larger or heavier items must be sent to our full address. The maximum weight limit is 15kg per parcel.
- » Pack your work carefully so that it reaches us safely. Many establishments send a van of entries each year – ask if this happens at your establishment.

Will my name be made public?

- » We regret that we can no longer give first names of entrants next to artworks. This is because HMPPS have requested all artists' work be anonymised from September 2023 onwards. Although not all entrants to the Awards come under HMPPS' jurisdiction (Scottish prisons, Northern Ireland, non-prison settings), because this represents a large amount of our entrants, it increases the risk of identification for anyone still able to be named. For this reason, we have taken the difficult decision to extend this to all our entries.
- » Don't sign your artwork with your full name, or put it on the back of your work, or otherwise reference it in the entry. If you do, we will need to remove it before exhibition or sale, for example by painting over it, or we may not be able to display your work.

Selling visual artwork

- » We can only sell visual arts and crafts.
 - » We will sell your work only if we have permission from you and from your establishment.
 - » If your work does not sell we will return it to you, unless you have donated it to Koestler Arts.
 - » We purchase a small amount of works annually for our collection, with a view to exhibiting them at future displays and events.
 - » If your work sells you get 50% of the sales price. At the same time it raises money for Koestler Arts (25%) and Victim Support (25%).
- » If your work is for sale tell us the minimum amount you'd like to receive. The lowest amount you can receive is £10 (sales price £20) and the highest amount is £250 (sales price £500). If you indicate that you'd like to receive more than £250 we'll be unable to sell it, and it will be marked 'not for sale'.
 - » Please price your works with round number (for example £10, not £10.50).
 - » If your work can be sold but you do not indicate a minimum price we will price it for you.
 - » You can also choose to donate your artwork to Koestler Arts. This means it will not be returned to you and if sold the money raised will help us to continue our work.

We will not sell lower than the price you indicate, but we may try to sell your work for more! But, if you are keen to sell, bear in mind that most online and Pop-Up Shop buyers are looking to spend less than £100.



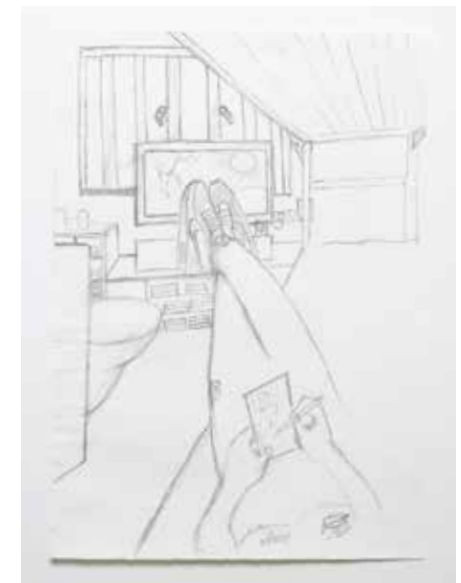
Koestler Pop-Up Art Shop at the Southbank Centre

How will I get any money from prizes or sales?

- » We issue prize money in October and money from sales in December.
- » If you are in a prison or secure setting, we send the money by cheque to your establishment. If we have your correct date of birth and prison number, we may be able to send the funds online via gov.uk.
- » If you are not in custody we can issue a cheque in your name, or you can collect cash from the Koestler Arts Centre if you let us know beforehand.
- » Cash prizes for group entries will be split between group members. If the individual sums are £5 or less, a single check is issued to the group.
- » Scotland only: Artists in Scottish prisons are aware that they cannot directly benefit from the sale of their artwork. If an artist does agree that their work can be sold, the monies raised will be sent to the establishment to be placed in the 'common good fund' or similar. An artist can of course choose not to sell, or to donate their work to Koestler Arts. This does not affect any potential prize money, which the artist will receive.

How will my entry be returned?

- » We pack all artwork carefully for its return journey.
- » If you are in a secure setting, we will return your work there, usually to the Education Department.
- » If you are in the community, we will return your work by post if you provide your home address (UK only).
- » You or your establishment can really help us keep costs down by coming to collect your work. Please let us know beforehand so we can have it ready.
- » Apart from a few exceptions, writing, performance, audio, film and animation entries will not be returned – please only send copies.



Cell
HMP & YOI Stoke Heath
Bronze Award for Drawing

What other conditions are there?

By entering the Koestler Awards, you agree to all the terms and conditions of entry set out in this Guidance. Also:

- » Information included on the entry form can be held on the Koestler Arts secure database. If you would like a copy of the Koestler Arts Privacy Policy or Safeguarding Policy, you can view them on our website or write to us.
- » All artworks are handled by our team with the utmost care. In the unlikely event of damage or loss, for example in transit to us, Koestler Arts will do what it can to put things right. But the charity and its agents accept no liability for loss or damage to entries.
- » The Koestler Awards decisions are final – we will not enter into any correspondence about these decisions. Entrants must not attempt to correspond with Koestler Awards judges.
- » Artists always retain copyright of their work. By entering the Koestler Awards you agree that we can exhibit, publish, and reproduce your entry in reasonable ways in print, merchandise, online, film, audio etc. We can allow press and other partners to do so in reasonable ways, to promote our work.
- » Visual artwork left unclaimed or donated for more than 1 year from the end of March 2025 may be destroyed, sold or donated.
- » One of our aims at Koestler Arts is to demonstrate that the arts are beneficial to prisoners, secure patients and detainees. We need evidence to show to funders and policy makers. We would be very grateful if you agreed to help with this by completing the Monitoring for Diversity section on the entry form. Any research carried out will only use anonymised data.



Stop. Unity, Peace
HMP Exeter
Bronze Award for Sculpture



A Day in the Life, The Nelson Trust – Bristol Women's Centre, Commended Award for Themed Category: A Day in the Life

Koestler Awards timeline

12 April	Closing date for all 2024 entries to reach the Koestler Arts Centre (we cannot confirm receipt of entries until later in the year)
June to July	Judging of entries
End August	Koestler Awards results published on our website
September to November	UK exhibition at the Southbank Centre
End October	Certificates and prizes sent out
End December	Sales money sent out
January 2025	2025 entry forms published
End of March 2025	All visual entries returned

The Jar

I found a cloud in a jar.
I opened my jar with a sonorous pop,
Alert to the lively, sprightly air.
Velvety, cushioned clouds,
Relaxed against the pallid, pastel blue.
And warmth enveloped me
In peace.

The Jar, Arbury Court, Secure Hospital Platinum Award for Poem

5 top things to remember

1. You can enter up to five original works, including group entries
2. Your entries should not contain your name
3. Include a completed entry form with every entry
4. Your entry form must be signed by an authorised member of staff
5. Tell us if you move address

Being creative has given me a way to express myself in a safe way and allows me to process my thoughts and emotions, putting my energy into something creative.

2023 Koestler Awards entrant



*The Siege of Fray Bentos
HMP Isle of Wight (Albany)
Platinum Award for Matchstick Model*

*Cover: From Litter, to Life
HMP Stafford
Outstanding Debut Award*

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(Freepost contents can weigh up to 2kg)

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