

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.

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. New Art Aid sheets will be available from the first and third Monday of each month as we approach the Awards deadline.

February 2021, Issue 2

This task is set by Koestler Award winner, exhibited artist, former mentee and former Koestler staff member, Lee.

My Story

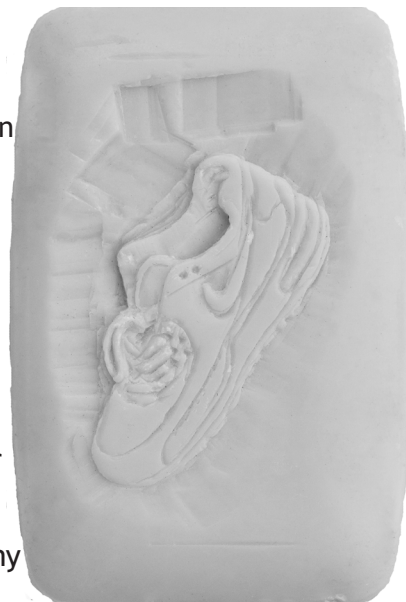
My creative journey began in a small single cell in a Young Offenders Institution. At the time, I didn't have a job or education class to go to, and I was struggling with the isolation. I hadn't engaged in art before, but I knew I had to find something that would take my mind away from those four walls.

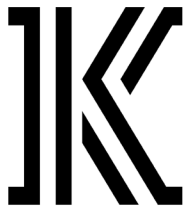
I began writing my thoughts and feelings onto scraps of paper - the back of a wing application form, an envelope, a cereal box etc. - and these soon became observational drawings. I'd draw everything that I could see - the sink, the bricks of the wall, the view from my window - and it wasn't long before I ran out of paper. Normally I would have let this hurdle stop me, but my confidence was starting to build and I just knew I had to find a way to keep the momentum going.

I picked up my prison issue soap, grabbed my pencil and my plastic fork, and began drawing into the bar. Soap carving is a traditional prison artform and something that I knew of at the time, but had never tried until this point. You see, I never thought of myself as an artist, but looking back now, I could never have imagined the journey that this small act would take me on...

I entered a drawing into the Koestler Awards, and from the thousands of artworks submitted that year, my piece was one of the few selected for exhibition. Before this, I felt like I had never achieved anything, so you can imagine my surprise to have been included! Receiving thoughtful and nurturing exhibition feedback from the public provided me with the belief that I could do something with my life once released.

When that day came I continued my art studies at College, University, and at the Royal Drawing School. I worked for five and a half years at Koestler Arts - enabling others to benefit from the opportunities I first received. I now mentor artists in prisons through the Longford Trust, deliver arts workshops, and sit on an arts and criminal justice advisory board. I've exhibited artworks in the Royal Academy, Christie's, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, as well as abroad. I've written and produced an edition of handmade books about prison culture, and I continue to make soap carvings that tell stories from my time inside. From time to time I still read the Koestler feedback I received those years ago, and think back to the first time I decided to pick up a pencil.





My Task: How to Make Your Own Soap Carving

What you will need:

A bar of soap

Anything that can make a mark: a pencil, pen, fork, spoon...

Step one

Select a theme for your carving (below are a few ideas to get you going).

A memory, an object in your cell, a word or sentence from a letter or phone call, your favourite food...

Step two

If you have a pencil and piece of paper available, you could make a few quick thumbnail drawings of your idea. You could even draw around the bar of soap and make one to scale if that helps. Don't worry if you don't have these materials, I often carve directly into the soap, sometimes using just a fork.

Step three

Think about how to best approach the carving: will it be a shallow relief with maybe two or three layers, or will it take a more sculptural form (at a soap carving workshop, someone once made an F1 car!)

Step four

Using the tools you have available, begin to chip away at the soap until you've managed to get a good general shape together. Once you've done this, you can go in with the more finer details.

Step five

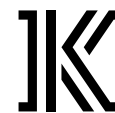
If you can get hold of another bar of soap, make another carving! I often work in series - it helps me to better tell stories. I once made a collection of sixteen soap carvings, each one being an item from a canteen sheet.



All images courtesy of Lee

If you are inspired by Lee's story and would like to apply for Koestler Arts Mentoring please contact the Outreach Team, FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS for more information and an application form.

KOESTLER AWARDS ENTRY FORM



Send a completed form with each entry.
Maximum 5 entries per entrant.
2021 closing date: Thursday 22 April.

ENTRANT (For groups – see the next page)

First name of entrant:

Last name of entrant:

Date of birth: (May be needed for processing payments)

ENTRY

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

Title of entry:

Artform: (Choose one artform from the 2021 Awards Guidance)

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

Prison or hospital number:

Signature of entrant:

Is this the first time you have entered the Awards?
Yes No

Using your name: (Authorised staff must agree)

If my entry is exhibited or published, I give permission
for my first name to appear alongside it. Yes No

Sales of visual artwork: (Tick one choice 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 entrant's first name be made public?
Yes No

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 — TELL US ABOUT YOUR GROUP

Name of group:

Number of people excl. staff:



First name: Last name: Date of birth: Prison or hospital number: Release date if in 2021, 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 2021

Please notify 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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

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
Irish Traveller/Gypsy

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

Gender

Male
Female
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

Registered disabled?

Yes No